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Virtual Learning in Higher Education

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Abstract

The information society undoubtedly is considering certainly new forms of communication, interaction and knowledge construction. Therefore, our universities can't be located on the outskirts of the information revolution and, to this propose, our societies must make available information systems of high quality that can be implemented in institutions of higher education, adequately investing in ICT to be at the forefront of this revolution, and thus obtaining their benefits. In this article we will exhibit important aspects to be considered in the virtual teaching, some variants taking into account and that involve a different methodology for the incorporation of teaching in virtual environments and an approximation of the pedagogical model allowing achieve quality in the process of teaching and learning in the same.

Introduction

The incorporation of technologies appropriate to teaching processes can generate the transformation of the traditional processes of teaching, "in any case, the University should feel compelled to explore in what way, for what purpose and how ICT can contribute to motivate the innovation within their classrooms" (Alonso and Blázquez, 2012 p.12).

Undoubtedly ICT have transformed classic universities, complementing traditional teaching. Therefore, higher education institutions must meet ambitious conditions which involve constant renewal, to achieve the incorporation of these technologies generate creative and innovative educational processes.

So universities will become learning organizations they have to determine what changes are needed, and to make it happen these institutions themselves should be assessed, taking into account the most common features of learning organizations, and then decide how these characteristics could be catered for its transformation.

Virtual learning in higher education

The notion of working in a virtual environment involves an activity or a set of related activities that require effort and are aimed at the achievement of one or more objectives, multiple actors can be involved in multiple roles, operating with various methods and tools, creating different artifacts that will contribute to the achievement of the common goals (Spector and Wang, 2002, p.2).

Most of the universities have not changed since they exist, in times back were created to prepare some privileged young people and turn them into adults who take decisions within society at the level of political, administrative, public and business, among others. Later scientific research became another task of the universities, and they were in the 20th century when they were involved in major development projects for society.

In the first half of the 20th century, universities were pressured them to increase the number of participants for Higher Education. Thanks to this pressure, governments created new universities offering at the same time courses of short duration to a larger number of students, however the demand continued to increase and the government did not really provide like nowadays, a realistic budget based on the needs of the Universities.

Based on this problem Barajas and Alvarez (2003) indicate that these institutions is complicated to deal with, given the recognition that there is a need to ensure continuing education throughout the life of the entire population, and that a substantial part of this task would fall directly or indirectly, in the higher education system. On the one hand, according to these authors, due to the fact that is more specialized and advanced knowledge (such as that offered by Universities assumed), quickly becomes obsolete and requires a start to the day. On the other hand, assumes that universities are the best stockers of the innovative knowledge necessary to introduce new technologies, methods and tools in the productive system, requiring that a new staff training.

Based on these needs arises the distance education, with the intention of working with a large number of students without sacrificing the quality of the offered degrees of course. One of the most significant examples is the British Open University, founded in 1969, in which the massive use of quality learning materials, in writing and supported by radio and television, along with the existence of an efficient aid the student , were responsible for giving a high credibility to this system (Barajas and Alvarez, 2003, p.36).

While these institutions were created during the time of the 70's and 80´s as single mode, others also decided to operate as institutions of mixed mode, i.e., formal programs continued teaching resident students in conventional way, while special programs such as adult education offered under the distance learning mode.

Today it is estimated that several millions of students benefit from the methodology of distance education in Europe and tens of millions worldwide. The evolution of new technologies of information and communication and its penetration into all levels of society in developed countries have created new conditions for the realization of the EAD. Therefore, "higher education should provide new ways to teach and learn, to respond to new types of students and new professions that are emerging" (Sangrá, 2011, p. 292).

As obvious advantages provided by ICT in the field of distance education, it should be noted the production and distribution of learning materials, high-quality multimedia support, making it easier and less costly interpersonal communications , making it possible to use Web for the distribution of information... (Barajas and Alvarez, 2003, p.37).

The current status of distance education is characterized by the following:

a) Change in methods of teaching and learning by distance learning paradigm.

b) Transformation increasing conventional institutions before in the field of distance education.

c) Recognized networking between institutions of distance education as a strategy to reduce expenses significantly.

No doubt, it is a complex process for conventional higher education institutions, to enter the field of distance education successfully. First, for methodological and pedagogical concerns, secondly, by the organizational and logistical forecasts, and above all, by the difference between the role, duties and levels of freedom of a teacher in a conventional University distance education. Importantly, as noted Salinas (2004) "that each university must respond within their own specificity , based on the context in which it is, considering that society should serve, taking into account the tradition and strengths that possesses" (p. 2).

Despite all the drawbacks and how difficult is the process for conventional Higher Education Universities enter the field of distance education, we conclude that the universities are evolving slowly , but with the conviction to adopt new methods , tools and organizational models. According Barajas and Alvarez (2003) there are several reasons for this development, including the following:

1. There is a real need for mass education and continuing education to throughout the life.

2. The expansion in the use of New Information Technologies in daily life and therefore in the professions.

3. The successful teaching models of distance education systems.

4. The development of the concept of mixed mode of learning, combining two methodologies under one system of teaching.

5. The effect of globalization that transnational networking has introduced in the operation of distance education.

1. Methodology from virtual education

Learn without match in space or in time lead to a methodology with a number of variants, which traditionally teachers use for their classes. In this sense, "the online training has promoted a new vision of the knowledge and learning, perception that affects new performance assigned to universities, teachers and students in their functions of receiving and disseminating knowledge, respectively" (Pérez, 2012, p. 39).

Studying at a distance involves a series of constants and a great effort by students and by teachers, requiring therefore a methodology adapted to the needs of a growing and changing social sectors

who want access to the University and who have very different characteristics age, place of residence and personal situation (Duart and Sangrá, 2000, p. 28).

The student-centered models should allow him freedom to make the most of the support that is offered. Therefore, the elements that are part of the pedagogical model will made available to make themselves managers of their own learning process. According Duart and Sangrá (2000) to optimize this objective is necessary to consider two crucial support training via the web: the quality of teaching and emphasis on personalized support. This requires that the teacher achieves promote active methods, becoming protagonist of student teaching-learning process, and the use of inductive methods by teachers and teaching materials.

All this leads to meaningful learning by students and thus the object of study takes on meaning from prior knowledge, they turn modifying, expanding the knowledge network and establishing new relationships. For that reason, the student is forced to review, modify and enrich prior knowledge schemes and establishing new connections between the same, making learning construct.

1.1. Collaborative work in virtual environments

The proper use of any educational technology, requires the rejection of some fundamental concepts and the integration of technology in social relations tools such as television and computers can only meet the expectations that seem to offer the world of education, if we can to explore their potential as mediators of social constructivist and productive in terms of education, i.e., if we build them collaborative learning (Brufee, 1986, p. 752).

According to Guitert and Jiménez (2000) collaborative work is set when there is reciprocity between a set of individuals who manage to differentiate and contrast their points of view, so that they arrive to generate a process of knowledge construction. It is a process in which each individual learns more than they learn by it, rub the interaction of team members (p.114).

The benefits of this type of work for the individual are many, as the same responsible to each of the members of the group to participate and build their own learning, supporting in this way a joint development of a particular project, "where students can share research resources, knowledge, experience and reciprocal responsibilities through this online collaboration" (Mc Connell, 2006, p. 11).

The principles of the cooperative work according to Hamada (2000) are:

1. Communication and interaction, communication processes based on clear exposition of ideas from group members, the rationale for suggestions and opinions by arguments and reasons, the constant exchange of information that should be exploratory, the definition of the channels and communication mechanisms for each moment, among others.

2. The ethical attitude as cooperative work key, through communicative work, negotiation and individual analysis of each of the group members, support and ongoing involvement, the

performance of each member recognizing that the group is responsible for decisions and not just an individual member, the achievement of the objectives which depends on the coordination work, the ability to assess the work group process and the establishment of standards or rules of work from the same group to favor the same workflow.

3. Planning strategies and organization, as individual and collective tasks, through the creation of groups of work within the team and the individual and collective work planning. Hamada (2000) proposes that in this way the students undertake in a continuous collaborative process of construction of knowledge in an environment that reflects the context in which knowledge will be created in situ.

4. The organization of the exchange of information, through work planning in detail considering different alternatives and taking advantage of the technical possibilities to organize the exchange of information.

5. The exchange and process information, bearing in mind the importance of considering individual tasks related to research and the participation of each member of the group contributing their review of the topics discussed.

6. Cooperatively support, favoring the joint involvement of all members of the group to achieve different tasks.

Gunawardena, Lowe and Anderson (1997) identify some causes that produce the reluctance of professors to adopt collaborative learning strategies, among them are:

a) Fear of the possibility of losing control of the class.

b) Lack of self-confidence.

c) Concern about the possibility of not to approach the contents completely.

d) Ignorance of different types of strategies for evaluation.

e) Resistance that can take students to adapt techniques of collaborative work.

f) Insufficient teacher training.

g) Disregard of collaborative learning techniques.

The educator should reconsider the role of ICT using more energy and resources to make the transition to this collaborative learning is achieved successfully. Therefore, "must be the guide to help students build their own knowledge, rather than play the role of expert who is limited to transmit" (Alonso and Blázquez, 2012, p. 120).

Importantly, as noted Poellhuber, Chomienne and Karsenti (2008), individualized learning that is still used in many online courses. However, the institutions offering courses on the basis of a socio-constructivist paradigm, which use a collaborative learning approach where students learn

by interacting with their peers, show better retention rates than those who do not use this type of learning.

2. Learning and teaching in virtual environments

The differences between what might be named a "face to face" training, in front of what e-learning involves, affects many different aspects, in addition to the communication modalities other variables are changed such as relations systems, the mechanisms of participation, group management, environmental influences, etc., and therefore, the role of tutor and student (Muñoz and Gonzalez, 2009 p. 135).

Before analyzing some aspects concerning the teaching and learning in virtual environments will make reference to the definition given by some authors.

Cebrián (2003) notes that it is not easy to define what a virtual teaching environment, because some authors refer to the space in which the learning takes place, others emphasize specific content or the sequence of learning activities, or there are even those who designate specific software as a tool for course design, learning management or collaborative work .

According Dillebourg (quoted in Cebrián, 2003) a virtual environment is a designed space, not a simple accumulation of HTML pages, is an architecture based on analysis of the requirements, able to evolve technically and with multiple authorship: teachers, students and experts... is a social space, a framework for interactive behavior (p. 121).

To Bouras (cited in Cebrián, 2003) an integrated environment of virtual learning and distance combines several scenarios such collaborative learning and teaching with or without a teacher, and providing a common framework to achieve goals, such as:

a) To renew the pedagogical methods of educational institutions.

b) Encourage the dissemination of information among the educational institutions worldwide.

c) Motivate communication.

d) Encourages the use of modern equipment among students.

e) Convey effectively the educational material to students.

According Duart and Sangrá (2000) virtual learning environments have the following benefits:

1. They provide flexibility and interactivity.

2. Allow bonding to a real virtual community of learners. It is the means by which the doubts are sent to teachers and various requests for guidance and suggestions, which received input from teachers, and also participates in various activities through forums, bulletin boards, among others.

3. Allow access to study materials and resources funds, as well as to the link of different materials with documentation or information placed on the internet.

Virtual learning is seen as a building process of the student as fundamental key to the quality of it, Onrubia (2005) points out that virtual learning is not understood as a simple translation or transposition of the external content to the student's mind, but as a process of (re) construction personal that content that is made according to, and from, a wide range of elements of the basic cognitive structure, domain specific knowledge, learning strategies, metacognitive and self-regulatory capacities, factors affective motivations and goals, mutual representations and expectations ... (p.3).

Peters (1996) indicates that the student's own work should be the starting point in the network learning, as this will provide organizational benefits from the first moment.

Importantly, as noted by Duff and Quinn (2006), students who use the online learning environment for the first time can be equated with students making the transition from school to college. These students must reach an agreement with different learning styles, study skills, time management, and group work and information technology.

Given the importance attached to the student's constructive mental activity, must emphasize two important aspects, to the achievement of a truly meaningful learning:

1. Difference between "logical structure" of the content and "psychological structure". The logical structure of content refers to the internal organization of the learning material itself and can be considered stable across contexts, situations and apprentices. The psychological structure of content, on the other hand, refers to the organization of the material for a particular student, and depends on what, at the time, the student brings to the learning process. It is important, therefore, that the student achieves attribute meanings to the content to be learned.

On the other hand, the logical significance, related to the structure and internal organization of content to be learned, and secondly, the psychological significance, which is related to the fact that the student has in their cognitive structure elements for linking him to substantive and deep with content.

2. The fact that the student constructs and should build in a virtual teaching and learning environment includes two different types of representations, which are dynamically constructed, contextual and situated, the first on the meaning of the content to be learned, and the second on the meaning it has for him to learn that content, the reasons for doing so, that learning needs covered and the consequences that entails.

Importantly, the interaction between the learner and the content does not guarantee 100% optimal ways to acquire construction of meanings and senses, so this is important to the work of aid offered by the teacher.

"This aid should be understood, as well as the construction itself that make the apprentice, as a process, which will allow dynamic adaptation, contextual and situated... between the content to learn and what students can bring and contribute to that learning at all times" (Onrubia, 2005, p.35).

Therefore, the role of the teacher in the virtual learning is companion to the continuous learning process that the student develops, offering support and support when you need, challenging it to the solution of problems and promoting the ability of the student to use knowledge strategically, achieving a self-learning.

Onrubia (2005) indicates in relation to this joint activity between student and teacher to the importance attributed to the educational assistance and the principle of setting of this aid to understanding the processes of teaching and learning in virtual environments advised to go beyond a model of analysis and explanation of these processes based solely on the interaction between learner and content, and replaced by a larger model, which is based on the relationship between three elements: the constructive mental activity of the student learning, sustained and continuous support of the teacher, and content that is the goal of teaching and learning.

Equally importantly as stated Dabbarh (quoted Gibbs and Gosper, 2006), online education will generate more workload for teachers in classroom teaching, estimated that online instruction requires approximately thrice more preparation by the same time.

As noted above, teachers' need special training for virtual teaching, therefore, must be qualified on some aspects that are very important to the success of mediated teaching learning context. Teachers, according to Barajas and Alvarez (2003), should know:

a) How to reduce anonymity and establish an atmosphere of learning community.

b) How to motivate and maintain high student motivation and how to avoid frustration thereof.

c) How to establish and maintain the interaction between students and teachers; and between system and users.

d) How to model the discussions.

In the processes of teaching and learning in virtual environments the joint activity between teacher and students can be conditioned by some restrictions such as:

1. The absence of collaborative tools, therefore, should be exist tools for both synchronous and asynchronous communication, tools for assessment of student learning.

2. The absence of a techno-pedagogical design that enables and facilitates certain forms of organizing joint activity between teacher and student.

Certainly, from a virtual learning environment or virtual campus should establish a model of educational performance that leaves very clear guidelines for action in each of the protagonists of the teaching-learning process, and undoubtedly should be focused on the student.

It is also important to note as stated Buckler (1996), that learning effectiveness depends largely on the environment that is conducive for it, and the performance of the managers of the organization in creating, supporting and promoting the conditions most appropriate in a virtual environment in order to reach this learning.

2.1 Competences of teachers

In recent years there has been a greater acceptance of virtual training by the higher education institutions; however, the attitude of most teachers is reflected in the attitude of resistance to this mode of learning (Mitchell and Geva, 2009, p. 71).

Cebrián (2003) notes that the changes that have occurred in knowledge societies and all the technological advances that are on par with these changes lead to reconsider the action and the role it plays of the teacher in teaching, because if this expert of knowledge not becomes at the same time new technologies expert, by introducing ICT into the teaching- learning process, worsen the quality of it.

The Professor is today demanded some pedagogical competence in the use of technologies, which go beyond being an expert in content, therefore, if we want the University professors feel that their network learning and training is valuable for development, not only its know-how but also the methodological and theoretical. We must start from their beliefs and rationalize them helping them to focus on the ultimate goal, in short, who knows how to manage his time and the new teaching-learning spaces (Hall, 2005, p. 404).

According to Salinas (quoted in Cebrián, 2003), a teacher must, "take responsibility for the whole process of teaching and learning, whether it takes place in environments where increasingly these technologies are required" (p. 34). Some of the competition this author notes related to media management and guidance of student learning are as follows:

1. Guide students in the use of information and knowledge bases as well as provide access to them for using their own resources.

2. Enhance students to become active in the process of self-directed learning, in the context of open learning actions, exploiting the communicative possibilities of networks as systems learning resource access.

3 Advise and manage the learning environment in which students are using these resources, being able to guide them in the development of collaboration experiences, monitoring student progress, provide feedback in support of the work of the student, and offering real opportunities for the dissemination of work.

4. Facilitate a fluid access to the work of the student consistent with the philosophy of learning strategies employed and with the new student-user.

Cebrián (2003) indicates that also the teacher should have or guide their training towards the acquisition of knowledge and the following skills:

a) Knowledge of the different ways to work the new technologies in their discipline and specific area. For each scientific content requires different types of learning processes and different methodologies, resources should be adapted to these objectives and methodologies

b) Expertise to develop education with different spaces and resources (laboratories of audiovisual media, networks, library, multimedia room.

c) Organizational knowledge and planning of the classroom, since if they don't exist you can take to: a lack of knowledge about the possibilities of these resources, lack of adjustment of the new resources with the technologies of the classroom and lack of new organizational rules at the institution.

d) Knowledge and mastery of the inclusion of techniques and media to the formation in any space and time, that combine face-to-face training with distance learning.

e) Knowledge valid for material selection, technical expertise sufficient to allow redo and structure the existent materials on the market to adapt them to their needs.

Therefore, it is urgent to reposition the role of teachers if we talk about virtual environments, designing new training processes that will help us meet the demands of today's world as this company keeps acting as general principles of effectiveness, immediacy, pragmatism and adaptation, colliding with the principles of action from the theoretical and curricular reform are stating: namely, reflection, critique and transformation. The thought of working from the reflexive construction, specifying and filling of educational content that make it is a challenge for all of us (Cabello, 1997, p. 133).

These changes would be also a formative preparation as noted above, that it breaks with resistances of teachers, administrations and their approaches to training trainers, in order to establish alternatives to changes that can be adjusted to different phases and rhythms that these educators are now.

3. Pedagogical model Integrator for college education

Duart and Sangrá (2000) presented as basic guidelines of what may be an integrator pedagogical model for the college education and to take advantage of the new technology. In this model the student is the center, and the three basic pillars that surround it are teaching materials, teaching action and continuous evaluation, followed by other complementary elements as the centers of support, the virtual library, face-to-face meetings and the social and extracurricular relations.

According to Duart and Sangrá (2000) these elements are part of any training institution, especially from universities, fulfilling a very important purpose, "put to the student and to the process of learning in the context of an institution" (p. 19).

Below are set out the three pillars of the model proposed by Duart and Sangrá (2000): teaching materials, teaching activities and evaluation. Importantly, according to these authors that "none of these elements is more important than another, but all have their role and students will use them to their advantage to achieve optimum results in the learning process" (p. 20).

Teaching materials: in virtual learning environments the learning materials are usually multimedia, combining different technologies (texts, records, videos) in the case of getting the most educational level. These materials are the basic guide in the development of each subject, to develop the action and evaluation about them.

The multiple teaching-learning strategies should lead to meaningful learning to a synthesis of the contents of the field from a variety of micro-metrology and personal: exercises, study cases, videos, multimedia, recommended bibliography, proposed activities, database programs, debates, forums, etc. (Duart and Sangrá, 2000, p. 36).

Teaching materials should be facilitators of learning can never be a burden on the student, but rather facilitate the teaching-learning process. Some features that should have training materials to facilitate learning and to achieve motivation in students are:

a) Present the simplest and general contents and, subsequently, the more complex and differentiated.

b) Structure first a comprehensive and overall view of the subject and then go to an analysis of the parties, to finally make a synthesis.

c) Show the relationships between the contents of a subject and different.

d) Adopt core theme or themes coming to reality.

e) Recall and review previous content related to the topic.

f) Provide guidelines to analyze and establish relationships between specialized content.

g) Consider examples of how a particular situation is studied from other specialties.

In conclusion the teaching materials must allow to the student learn to learning, providing skills and capabilities to overcome subjects, therefore the materials of the current non-presential universities must have the tendency to maximize the interactivity and the joint creation of knowledge and learning based on the use of new communication technologies. It is initiate the elaboration and experimentation of "third generation" materials (Nipper cited in Duart and Sangrá, 2000, p. 38).

It is important to highlight as indicated Prendes and Martinez (2008), to the preparation of materials can be an important and extra workload for teachers. Therefore, these authors recommend that it would be interesting to present some alternatives of collaborative work processes, in which teachers can establish strategies for the search and the use of content on the network, saving the time that could be used in productions.

The teaching action: in a virtual context teaching activities should enhance the student's activity according to their learning process, providing tools to reverse in their own learning, becoming closer to professional world that the student will face soon. Therefore, the teacher passes from knowledge transmitter to facilitator of learning, and through orientation and induction, teaching activities have as main objective to offer students different tools and resources to help you develop your own learning process, meeting their needs and constantly doubts. The mission of teachers to ensure the highest quality in the teaching-learning process will be:

a) Cater to the adequacy of the contents of the materials, scientific processes, the social and cultural evolution and the demands of the labor market.

b) To ensure students have the best educational materials, facilitating the incorporation of all those educational innovations that are of interest.

c) To directly address the needs expressed by the students during their learning process, which will oversee, will continue and will be evaluated.

d) Ensure permanent training of its students.

c) To respond directly to the needs expressed by students during the learning process, that will supervise, will monitor and evaluate.

Another major and important tasks of teachers is to contribute to research in the fields of academic specialization themselves as institutional search ways, and performance as tutor which is key for student counselling, in addition to serving to other areas of direct relationship with the student as: orientation task motivation and tracking, tasks of resolution of doubts, the continued assessment and definition of their teaching plan.

Student assessment: in virtual contexts should be deemed the evaluation continued as a pedagogical aid and as a means to promote the success of students. According to Duart and Sangrá (2000) you can have a triple sense:

a) Provide a pattern of activities that must be performed and suggest a specific work rate ensuring a better achievement of the objectives to be achieved.

b) Ensure the active participation in the construction of self-knowledge, the activities included in the continuous assessment becomes a stimulus for learning

c) Allow obtaining academic recognition (continuous assessment report) which will contribute to overcoming the subject.

These three basic elements of the educational model (teaching materials, teaching activities and evaluation) are interrelated systemically. Also there is another very important level of depth, discussed above, which offers participation in a virtual learning environment: the cooperative work.

According to Duart and Sangrá (2000) cooperative work "is the dimension of depth of relationships that are established in the educational model aimed at learning" (p. 41-42). According to these authors cannot conceive of an educational model only with bidirectional interactions, being current communication technology which opens up possibilities for cooperative learning dynamics, teamwork among members of a group class, a particular group of virtual campus or a virtual community segment.

4. Evaluation in virtual environments

The practice of assessment should be to prepare students to be effective in the knowledge society and provide them with a focus on lifelong learning, i.e., the assessment should enhance learning and be an integral part of the teaching and student learning... (Bound, quoted in Reushle and Mitchell, 2009, p. 16).

The evaluation according to Marcelo (quoted in Marcelo et al, 2002) is the decisive criterion in considering any proposal for a pedagogical change. The e-learning allows the possibility of individualized track to a very deep level of acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes by students. But usually, are many doubts as to the assessment in e-learning, therefore it is important to highlight, according to this author, the assessment in the e-learning is not a final moment, but a process that is giving us information since the students begin the course.

It is also important to note as noted by Stewart and Cuffman (quoted in Flores, 2001), that the needs assessment as part of a distance education system should benefit all stakeholders (teachers, administrators, students).

Duart and Sangrá (2000) point out that the continuous assessment can have three meanings:

1. Offer a schedule of activities to be performed, suggesting a rate of concrete work and better ensuring the achievement of the objectives intended in spare time.

2. Each activity performed by students is an opportunity, ensuring active participation in the construction of self-knowledge and providing guidance and direction of the teacher in the learning process. Therefore, the activities included in the continuous assessment become a stimulus for the learning process and personalized advice and how you can guide and focus the study.

3. Tracking the proposed activities will get academic recognition that will help to pass the course, when the tutor deems appropriate.

In e-learning training process is related to both what and how of the learning, or what is the same, not only with the final learning outcomes, but also with the process and procedures by which one learns and arrive at these results (cited in Marcelo et al, 2002, p .112).

The assessment is designed in the virtual model as a tool to promote learning, and therefore , must be built into an opportunity to learning be effective, the activities proposed for learning certain contents can be used to evaluate acquisition of it. Therefore, it is important in e-learning avoid the traditional division between learning and evaluation activities.

Similarly, regarding the formative and evaluative assessment, Dorrego (2006) indicates which is necessary and convenient to ask what needs are being addressed. According to Nightingale (quoted in Dorrego, 2006) these needs, can be categorized as follows:

1. Needs of students, related to its studies process, whether they are achieving the proper standard for certification of the achievement level.

2. Needs of teachers, as to know whether students are achieving the intended results, whether teaching materials and course activities are effective, and be able to certify that students have met the standards or requirements.

3. Needs of institutions, such as providing evidence of the achievement of institutional goals, knowing whether the programs and teaching staff are effective in its goals, to make claims concerning the qualities of graduate employers, for certify that students can practice in specific vocational areas, and making judgments on access and admission to programs.

4. Needs of the community, as knowing if the institutions and teachers are effective and deserve continued funding, if students are properly prepared for their careers and if education is being directed to achieve the broader needs and long -term societal.

Due to the characteristics of the technology platforms used in the e-learning expecting, during and end of the course, with extensive information on the activities of students, leaving these registered activities and analyzing the data used to evaluate. Some of these activities are as follows:

a) Internet sites that students have visited within the course.

b) Additional resources to those offered in the course (interesting websites, articles, etc.) that the student has made.

c) Result obtained in the pretest and posttest trials.

d) Degree of compliance with suggested activities and tasks.

e) Degree of contribution to the tasks of the group.

f) Level of quality of the contributions to the chat and discussion lists.

g) Frequency and purpose of contact with the tutor via email.

In addition to traditional schemes of evaluation which have recognized the teacher as only responsible for the evaluation process, Internet offers some of their tools to encourage the participation of the students in the evaluation process, distinguishing different forms of assessment such as the following:

a) Self-evaluation or evaluation made by the individual to their own learning process.

b) Hetero-evaluation, or the evaluation that others performed in the learning process of a particular individual.

It is important to expand assessment agents since thus is involved the student in his own assessment, making the process in a self-directed learning and continuous training.

In the e-learning has been demonstrated through the experiences of several universities around the world that the chances of success in studies are directly related, among other factors, the pace of study continued throughout the entire academic period. Therefore, "to work correctly the evaluation of the on-line methodology is essential that students are aware of how will be apply the evaluation of academic performance" (Duart and Sangrá, 2000, p. 41).

Importantly, according Salinas (quoted in Salinas, 2004) that one of the main problems for the current offer on- line courses. It is the lack of clear criteria and the lack of tools to define the range of quality academic recognition of the contents and levels of training, therefore the success of any institution to distance, dual or single, is highly dependent on the efficiency and effectiveness of the system of evaluation and monitoring" (p. 189).

Conclusion

The University is undoubtedly playing a leading role in today's information society, as a producer, by disseminating knowledge for the development of some citizens prepared for the XXI century. The purpose of it is focused on training students with a range of skills, abilities, skills and knowledge that will equip a wide range of thought. As Barrio expressed (2006), the globalization of digital literacy, "enables communication between teachers and students, among students, synchronous and asynchronous mode, and also access to the resources of other institutions and centers other services in a globalized" (p. 2).

Taking into account that each person is different in every way, capabilities, interests, you need ways to learn significantly. Therefore, the design of the learning process in virtual teaching must address this diversity of characteristics and interests. This will be achieved by facilitating basic contents, strengthening and deepening certain content, using varying degrees of complexity in work strategies, among others.

All this involves the use of a more flexible and open methodology, which provides students the tools to build their teaching-learning process, turning it into the protagonist of the acquisition of knowledge and the teacher a facilitator in the process.

The inclusion of collaborative learning techniques in virtual environments will allow student to different tasks are shared, and that the group continually exchange ideas, negotiate different points of views and positively resolve conflicts that may arise, as the constructivist perspective week who argue that students learn through interaction with others, using their combined knowledge to the solution of the problem.

As discussed so far, teaching in a virtual learning context is far from teaching in the context of classroom teaching. Given that virtual learning is booming today and importance both teachers should be prepared for the use of educational technology, be able to assess the full range of possibilities available to the planning of teaching in virtual contexts achieving a process of self-directed learning and continuing education.

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