

ROLE OF E-LEARNING IN THE FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH SOFIA

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ABSTRACT

The prevailing opinion of the need to redefine the objectives of the Bulgarian education to the new requirements of the dynamic global economy. The article presents elements of the Share Point site. Described are the opportunities for implementing e-learning for students from the Faculty of Public Health – in master's programs in Public Health and Health Management „and” Management of health care. It concluded that the application of new technologies and stimulate the generation of knowledge sharing, management of tasks and effective communication, which significantly enhances activity in the training of trainers.

Key Words: E Learning, Share Point, communications.

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The prevailing opinion on the necessity of pre-defining the objectives of the Bulgarian education in view of the new requirements of the dynamic global economy. The challenges presented by the highly competitive labour market in the EU, as well as the influence of the modern information and communications technologies has significant impact on the progress achieved by the educational system (Popov N., V. Petkov, T. Zlatanova, 2008).

Some of the more significant differences between the e-learning pattern and the traditional ones are concerning the scope, cost effectiveness, technological effectiveness, equal footing and interdisciplinary characteristics.

In view of the e-learning scope we have simultaneous communication with numerous academic information sources (e-libraries, database etc.) of many trainees, as well as communication via communication networks between the students and their lecturers. The effective utilization of the academic areas and technical devices,

the concentrated and unified presentation of the educational information and the multi access to it significantly cut down the costs for preparing specialists in the case of e-learning (Petkov V., Velikov St., Zlatanova-Velikova R., 2013). Another significant difference between both learning patterns /traditional and e-learning/ is about technological effectiveness – the use of new information technologies in the educational process creates prerequisites for faster, more effective and pragmatic assimilation of the educational material in the case of e-learning. The principle of social equal footing, i.e. providing equal opportunities for education irrespective of residence, health status and material procurement is fully conformed with in the case of e-learning. Last, but not least the international character – export and import of the international achievements of the educational services' market with the help of e-learning is highly developed (Shoykova, E., 2010).

In the modern hectic and stressful world namely e-learning is the solution for most people that would like to improve their professional qualification and maintain continuously high knowledge level. In view of the specific characteristics of some students – for example the ones studying for master's degree - the Faculty of public health could fully use the opportunities provided by the e-learning thanks to attracting more students and the innovative approach when it comes to their preparation (Popov N., V. Petkov, 2006) .

The e-learning systems are defined as systems for social and knowledge-attaining activity based and enhanced by the state-of-art information and communications technologies.

The “E-learning” notion means learning that has been prepared, provided and/or managed via versatile technologies and the one that could be locally or globally provided.

The “E-learning technologies” notion means new technologically-based devices that make it possible for each and every *professional* in the educational area to be more productive, while helping the others learn as well. The e-learning covers procedures, processes and attachments for design, delivery, management and holding the learning process (Zlatanova-Velikova R, Velikov St., 2011). In this case we use Internet and mobile technologies, satellite broadband communications, interactive TV and multimedia on CD and DVD.

“E-learning” is a synergy between information-on-demand, multimedia communication, social cooperation, instructions, discovery and research whose interaction provides the trainee with better learning opportunities... “(Richard Otto)

The Share Point website is a group of web pages where one could organize training activities, work under projects, hold meetings and share information. Each department could have a website of its own for storing files and procedures. The website of each department could be a part of the portal of a larger organization (Faculty of public health), where the various departments publish information (Velikov St., 2011).

All Share Point websites share common elements: lists and libraries.

The list is a component where the organization – in this case, the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) could store, share and manage information. For example, it could create a list of tasks –in the case of accumulating data about the annual activity of each department – publications, participations in conferences, monographs etc. and these lists are accessible to everyone and events in the calendar – faculty meetings, general meeting, holiday of the Faculty of Public Health etc. Research or discussions could be held concerning the particular topic.

The library is a special type of list that stores the files. One could control the way they are being managed, created and shared.

We present an exemplary structure of the Share Point website of the Faculty of Public Health. The website is divided into seven sub-sites, one for each of the FOH departments – Department “Health Policy and Management” (DHPM), Department “Health Economics” (DHE), Department “Ethics and Law” (DEL), Department “Healthcare” (DHC), Department “Medical Pedagogy” (DMP), Department “Preventive Medicine” (DPM) and Department “Occupational Health” (DOH), and each site contains resources. Each and every

member of the particular department could also use My site while working – personal site for every Share Point user. Figure 1 presents an exemplary structure of the Share Point website of the Faculty of Public Health.

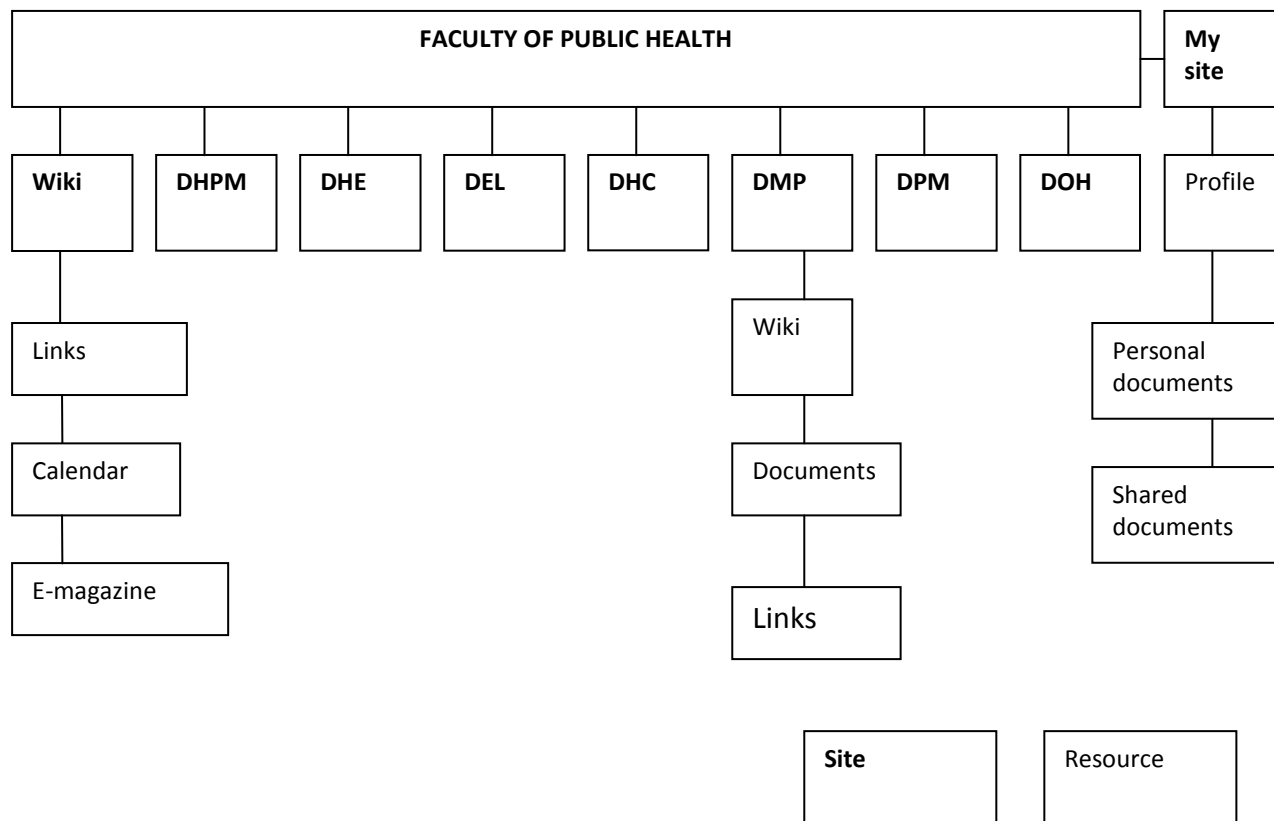


Figure 1. Scheme of the structure of Share Point website of the Faculty of Public Health

Wiki is the network technology for arranging interlinked [web](#)-pages, each of which could be visited and edited by the users at any moment, and the history and all web page versions are being preserved.

In the e-magazine one could publish the presentations from the Collegiums of the FPH, results of research work and projects of the FPH employees, as well as performances of the faculty students.

Every lecturer – professor, associate professor and assistant and every student has a website of his or her own – **My site**, where he or she could upload documents, lectures, exercises, tasks and in the case these are shared documents, part of students’ learning could take part this way.

The Share Point implementation in tutoring the part-time students of the master’s programmes could result in higher activity and interest in the studied matter, because in the case the students have the lectures and tasks and cases assigned in advance, the meetings with the lecturers could be held as discussions and case solving and this would generate many new ideas, knowledge and experience sharing. This learning pattern complements the traditional learning and stimulates students’ activity throughout the learning process and results in more effective communications between lecturers and students.

The main objectives and tasks of the e-learning are the following:

- Improving learning’s effectiveness for the individual and groups;
- Supporting the process of creating, transferring and sharing knowledge in organizations;

- Promoting the better understanding of the learning process via the study of connections between human knowledge and technologies;
- Learning progress and improvement via integrating information and communications technologies;
- Enhancing the acquisition of new educational concepts and approaches focused on the student and learning personalization;
- Non-reproduction of the classical tutoring manners but creation of solutions that could engage and motivate the students and lecturers in new ways.

All this results in passing beyond the succession of contents to succession of educational activities in socially oriented and technologically rich environments.

On the basis of the abovementioned we could conclude that e-Learning 2.0 in general and in particular via Share Point, is:

- Not only technology, but ideology;
- Students are not only content users, but content authors and;
- The tutoring process is not only lecturer-student, but student-student since everyone has access to the information uploaded on the website.

We could summarize that thanks to this learning approach the student not only has access and receives educational contents, but also develops the skills necessary for sharing, modifying and issuing recommendations via the documents' creation (Zlatanova-Velikova R, Velikov St., 2011). Additionally, via the learning in the Share Point environment the students easily overcome distance and do networking in the circumstances of support and assistance. In the capacity of team members – in this case, a particular course, they develop the skill of collaborating via uniting resources and co-authorship.

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