Knowledge management and eLearning

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This paper describes academic evaluation methods from the perspectives of its components: professors, disciplines, learning and evaluation methods and graduates. The knowledge management model and its relations to the e-Learning environment are presented.
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Introduction
Development of information society and of information technology brings a lot of improvements to classical study represented by daily form of learning but, more important, it eases distance study and on-line courses. Quality standards of learning in each of its forms are desired to be as high as possible. The interests are on both sides of education providers (universities) and education beneficiaries (students) which also have different point of views:

▪ The former, the universities, desire to attract students by providing a good quality learning and a good adaptation to labor market requests.

▪ At the same time, the latter, the students, desire to attend a faculty which allows them to be prepared on a certain domain and to obtain a recognized diploma.

Components of academic evaluation
In order to keep both parties satisfied, professors and students, it is necessary to periodically have academic evaluation of universities and, at certain moments of time, to have a general university evaluation. The client (student) will make the rules. He is the one going to choose the superior learning provider that suits best his needs.
When it is done, the academic evaluation of an university must take into consideration the following entities:
a) Professors
Professors are providing education and a good course depending on their professionalism and pedagogic abilities. Through the methods they use, professors can increase or, on the contrary, can decrease students' interest in their course.
Academic evaluation implies didactic personnel evaluation based on feedback from students and colleagues, and on the number of articles and books published in a certain amount of time on a certain domain. It is also required to have permanent documentary and research activities in order to maintain the innovation character of the course and not to lose students interest and enthusiasm.
Professors must have the ability to integrate results of their recent research along with results of others researchers on the domain into the courses they teach. In E-Learning systems, professors must also provide continuous feedback to the system in order to improve its efficiency [5].
b) Disciplines
Analytical programs that support disciplines for courses and seminars are those which attract students the best. In most of the cases, when choosing a specialization, students' options are based on the interest they have for studying certain disciplines.
The quality standards that a university must fulfill state an exact structure of analytical programs. Proposed disciplines must be related to specialization of the faculty and, also, must include novelty elements by referring to social and economic life.
At the time of evaluation / reevaluation a superior learning institute, it is checked, on the basis of analytical programs, if general and specific objectives, courses and disciplines structure are in accordance to faculty specialization and according to reality. The checklist includes:

▪ Logic and clarity of course objectives from analytical program;

▪ Teaching support management with structure made for each course of the discipline;

▪ Structuring of practical activities of the discipline (seminars);

▪ Course adaptation according to feedbacks from students and colleagues.

Lately, as a consequence of transition towards informational society based on knowledge, the focus is set on the quality of the information the students should receive.

There are many different study and access to information modalities but, inside a university, these must be:

▪ Filtered, in order to keep only scientifically correct information;

▪ Structured, in order to give students the ability of quickly understand and assimilate knowledge;

▪ Connected to real world, economic and social environment and also to other disciplines inside faculty specialization.

Otherwise, students could assimilate, from the Internet, information provided by different unadvised persons or by books and brochures written by such persons, without sufficient training and experience in the domain.

c) Learning and evaluation methods

A good course is based on a very good background in the learning domain combined with didactical abilities of the professor. Answers he gives to students, the way he communicates with them, the clarity of his speech, the dynamic of the course and the capacity of stimulating students' interest lead to the interest of the students in studying thoroughly the discipline and the domain that this belongs to.

Students have a diversified background. They approach different methods to study and assimilate knowledge. Universities must take very good care of the way students learn during their studies. They should have the opportunity to learn based on their character and personality. This would be possible by having an assisted, personalized instruction system.

Evaluation of students must be correct and transparent. Students should now from the very beginning of the course the tasks required to promote the discipline. Depending on the discipline, the methods for evaluation of the students must be accordingly.

On the basis of students' results, the professor can evaluate its own course, he can evaluate the interest of the students and can take decisions of improvement or approach changes.

d) Graduates

A student choice for a certain faculty/specializations signifies that he has already analyzed the opportunities he would have after the graduation.

The evaluation of the university must take into consideration also:

▪ The number of students enrolled at the beginning of the faculty studies,

▪ The number of those who graduated,

▪ The ability of being related to requests on labor market.

If graduates cannot find a job on the labor market or if abandonment or unpromotion rate is significant reported to the number of enrolled students, then the faculty should reevaluate its learning plans, methods of working with students, teaching personnel and, not at last, the socio-economic environment.

Knowledge Management

The efficient management of resources always represented a continuous challenge in the evolution of humanity. KM assumes collecting, organizing and distributing information in such forms that it can be practically used [2]. The simultaneous development of IT domain supported Knowledge Management through continuously increasing storing facilities and updating of the information.

Knowledge Management is found at the intersection of several disciplines and practices like: cognitive sciences, information sciences, document management, decision support systems, organization sciences.

Nonaka proposes a knowledge model represented by a two rows – two columns matrix, where knowledge can be divided into explicit knowledge (knowledge that the user is aware of) and tacit knowledge (knowledge that the user is not aware of).

	Tacit Knowledge	Tacit Knowledge	
Tacit Knowledge	*Socialization*	*Externalization*	Explicit Knowledge
Tacit Knowledge	*Internalization*	*Combination*	Explicit Knowledge
	Explicit Knowledge	Explicit Knowledge	

The four ways of knowledge conversion (Nonaka)[1]

Explicit Knowledge, is mainly situated at a social level and expressed in formal language. Explicit knowledge has a rational, objective character. Explicit knowledge, like textbooks or class notes can be easily captured and retrieved.

Tacit Knowledge, situated especially at individual level, hard to be formalized and communicated. These have, generally, a subjective character, being based on experience and intuition. Tacit knowledge like skills developed in the classroom or in the e-learning environment, and the enhancements and experience a professor has added to the curriculum prove to be one of most important challenges in providing knowledge. Knowledge management has a unique model for handling both tacit and explicit knowledge: the ability to share and create knowledge as a group, archive that knowledge, and provide an easy space for future learners or e-learners to retrieve it [4].

Socialization represents the tacit knowledge transfer process from one person to another. Through this process, mental models and common abilities of those sharing tacit knowledge are obtained.

The process of conversion tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge is called *Externalization* and takes place inside a group of individuals, being based on dialogue.

Conclusions

Both e-learning and knowledge management have the same base: learning, improved capacity to perform work tasks, ability to make effective decisions, and positively impact our environment. The difference between them is time-based: knowledge management is dynamic while e-learning tends to be static.

E-learning uses the knowledge that has been tested, researched, organized, while know-ledge management always approaches new domains. In order to increase their dynamic characteristic, e-Learning environments should be periodically evaluated and have their content improved and updated through the feedback from the student and the professor, according with the requests of the informational society [6].

Knowledge management becomes the base activity of knowledge society for all the levels: enterprises, organizations, institutions, local and national administrations. The most dynamic domain which had a significant evolution regarding knowledge management is represented by information technology – software, domain which uses knowledge management for acquiring the knowledge and the experience resulted during software development.

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