

LMS as Bologna Process Support at the Faculty of Economics in Osijek

Maja Lamza – Maronić, Ph.D.
Faculty of Economics in Osijek, Full professor
maja@efos.hr

Jerko Glavaš, graduate student
Faculty of Economics in Osijek, Assistant
jglavas@efos.hr

Milan Puvača, Dinko Roso, Luka Samardžija
Faculty of Economics in Osijek, students

Abstract

The Bologna process is under way in all the Croatian universities, which has meant "reengineering" of the entire higher education system. Faculties of social sciences have to deal with specific issues and dynamic changes such as post-transition, the EU harmonisation process, problems on the labour market (relatively high unemployment rate), high enrolment (which impedes communication), and low student mobility. Given all this, the indispensable teacher-student interaction is usually modified or even completely absent. The Faculty of Economics in Osijek, as part of J.J. Strossmayer University in Osijek, emphasizes the need to improve the interaction between a professor (head of the teaching team) and individual students. The aim is to build a personal approach to each student and thus contribute to educating high quality professionals capable of competing in turbulent and demanding EU market conditions. One of the possible approaches is to make additional investments in order to achieve the program tasks more quickly. The idea presented here is the design and implementation of our own LMS system.

1. Methods

The analysis of the current situation has shown a considerable waste of time involved in paperwork (attendance records, mid-term test results), the need to individualize teaching and to involve students in research work. On the basis of this analysis we initiated the design of KNEX application (LMS system) that could reduce the stated problems and contribute to enhanced

communication between a professor (and his/her teaching team) and a student. After introducing the system and some adjustment time, we conducted several surveys to obtain feedback from the application users, i.e. undergraduate students at the Faculty of Economics in Osijek who are taking the course "Business Information Systems".

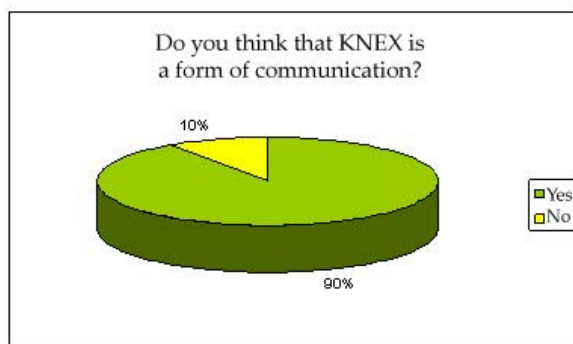
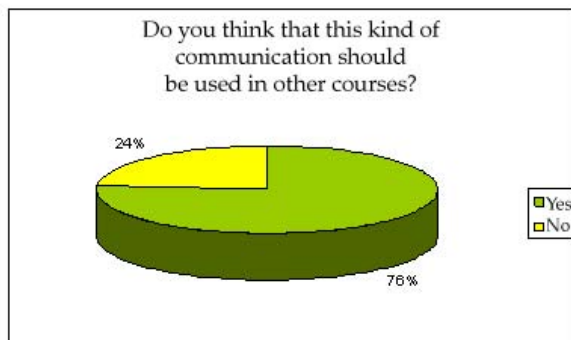
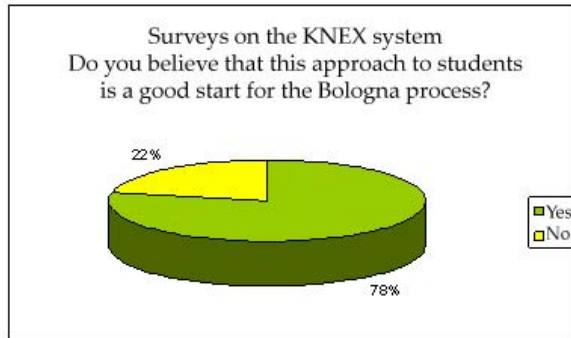
2. Results and discussion

In the initial stages of designing the LMS application, both the analysis results and the experience of the teaching team – professor, assistant, and student tutor – were used. In designing the application special attention was given to the simplicity of use – both for students and the teaching team. It took everybody just a short time to adapt to LMS application. More than 95% of students taking this course were registered in the application within days after the presentation and knew how it can be used for the course and the tasks associated with it.

All the students who used the application recognized it as a new form of communication. Given the large number of students taking this course, student teams and clusters were formed, following the expressed interest in particular parts of the course syllabus. Each team and each individual member used the LMS application (KNEX application) in order to complete their assignments. By making the course more competitive the teaching process became much more dynamic. The students were continuously commenting the educational and research aspects of the course, their assignments (seminar papers)

through suggestions, praise, criticism, thus taking an active part in achieving the syllabus goals.

According to one survey, as many as 103 out of 108 students polled were satisfied with the functioning, simplicity and design of the LMS application. About 80% of respondents stated that this system represents a good start in implementing the Bologna process.



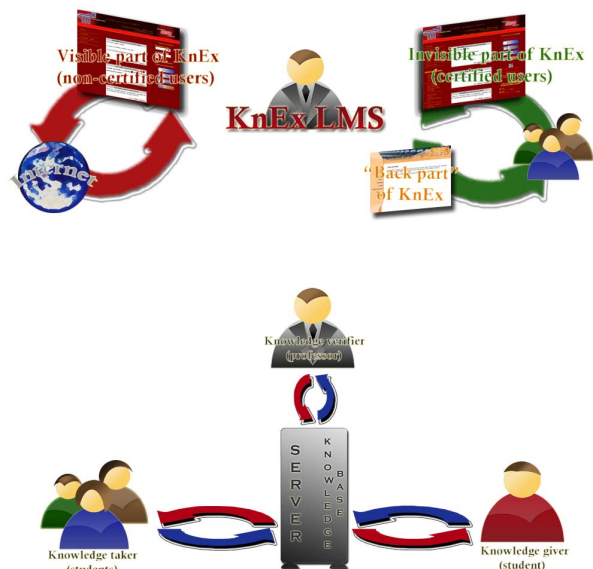
Furthermore, over 70% of students taking the course “Business Information Systems” (350 in total) thought that similar systems should be introduced to other courses at the Faculty of Economics as well. During the semester, i.e. throughout the course, the students were active

participants and contributed with their suggestions to enhanced operation of the KNEX system.

3. Summary

The process of LMS system design and implementation was quite long and cumbersome, but the ultimate goal was successfully achieved. First of all, the benefit of saved time that could then be used for better class preparation and organization was felt throughout the semester, together with a more modern approach to students. By decreasing the cumbersome paperwork, the teaching team could give more time and attention to class, especially outstanding or demanding students. The analysis of visits, i.e. registrations showed a constant percentage (70%) of students who participated in the KNEX system on a daily basis.

Using the Internet application as a basis, the teaching in the undergraduate program “Management” at the Faculty of Economics in Osijek became more dynamic and interactive, with two-way communication. The students became more active and creative in doing their assignments. Communication between students themselves improved, fostering team work. This proved to be another addition to the range of knowledge transfer possibilities, to be used by students as a competitive advantage in the future.



Operating principle of the KnEx – LMS system

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