DISTANT ASSESSMENT: PARTICIPATION, PROGRESS, ACHIEVEMENT
L. Borbotko, E. Vishnevskaya, E. Nersesova
Moscow City University (RUSSIAN FEDERATION)

Abstract
Back in September 2003, Russia joined the Bologna Process aimed at harmonizing European education standards. It has several basic characteristics: 3 cycled system of higher education; usage of a credit system; mobility of students and staff around the European Higher Education Area; the joint European Diploma Supplement; quality control of higher education; creation of the European Higher Education Area. If to focus on one of them – credit system – it has made the students willing participants of the assessment process. It has made the assessment process transparent and flexible. From here on the students have started to analyze and evaluate the tasks and credits in a new light. Unfortunately, sometimes it leads to students counting which task to fulfill to get more points, and where to go soft, still in the general perspective the system has proved to be reliable and efficient.

In the light of this evidence teachers have to invent new tips, tools and techniques to organize the whole process of education with more polish, power and professionalism.

The tools to control and assess students’ participation, progress and achievement could be as follows: Edmodo, Moodle, Google sheet, Google Classroom, Google Scholar etc.

These tools prove to be much more convenient than already traditional e-mail. And as for online interaction with students to opt for social media is a good idea, as it usually promotes immediate response.

Within the framework of distant assessment Google.sheets are to be used in the form of online register where the teacher marks attendance and progress of the students. All of them have access to the page and can regularly visit it, especially during deadline periods and always during midterm and final term assessment.

Attendance and progress both are measured in percentage and in case of progress this data can be transferred into final grade automatically with the means of special formula, that can be specifically designed upon the request. As students tend to miss some classes and to accumulate so-called debts (not fulfilled on time tasks) having all this information on-line they can always see their current progress and the tasks they should complete to catch up with the group.

As for Moodle system – it is widely used by the universities. It is a learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a single robust, secure and integrated system to create personalized learning environments. It is proven and trusted worldwide, designed to support both teaching and learning and easy to use. Actually, this system gives all the opportunities needed to organize distant teaching and assessment.

The ultimate purpose of assessment is to create self-regulated learners who can turn able and confident to continue learning throughout their lives. It can be based on diverse information sources and technologies, but all in all this variety fosters collaboration between students and teachers to ensure that successful learning takes place in an engaged and vibrant learning community.

Keywords: Assessment, distant assessment, Edmodo, Moodle, Google sheet, Google Classroom, Google Scholar.

1 INTRODUCTION
Post-industrial society is characterized by new approaches to data processing. For many centuries people had to manually accumulate and process information using primitive tools (paper, writing instruments, etc.), but nowadays data processing became significantly easier due to various options which emerged along with advances in information technologies. Apart from this, we witness proactive development of information management system for the educational process. The goals of education involve accumulating, processing and sharing information, and the approach to these tasks has completely changed within the time when information and communication technologies started
developing. Computerization of all spheres of modern society life has ensured system automation for different areas of human activity.

Information and communication technologies have completely revolutionized the education system and provided new options for teacher-student interaction, as well as for progress monitoring within the learning process. It should be noted that implementing information and communication technologies has ensured faster and more efficient process for accumulating and sharing experience gained in the social and technological advance of the society.

Information and communication technologies substantially improve the quality of education, thus helping everyone easily adapt to environment changes, and enable considerably more people to learn despite their social status, age, place of residence and other constraints. The article aims at generating a set of practical recommendations on how to introduce information and communication technologies into educational process relying on the example of students from linguistic universities. The main goal is to identify the efficiency of information and communication technologies as a tool for educational process planning and monitoring.

2 METHODOLOGY

Current studies covering the issues of organizing, planning and improving educational process efficiency have a strong focus on information and communication technologies. For instance, A.F. Manako and A.S. Voronkin contend: "Contemporary technological revolution attaches new characteristics to the whole modern activity, including educational activity, thus influencing and transforming its phases, form and content, and, probably, understanding in general" [Manako, Voronkin 2014]. Indeed, information and communication technologies have revolutionized the education sector and provided opportunities which nobody could have ever imagined having before: the environment for distance learning has been created, the platforms for online teacher-student interaction on all levels of education have been developed, as well as platforms for educational process monitoring, including practical training as well as independent studies. Technologies don’t always mean exclusion of a teacher from the educational process, such forms of educational interaction as webinars have also gained momentum and promote fruitful cooperation between educational institutions not only within the country but on the international basis.

Information and communication technologies in education are considered as a specific set of tools which allows generating a comprehensive management mechanism for educational process. In this regard, T.V. Glukhova and S.V. Bazhanova emphasize: "The major issue is to build knowledge and skills in that area according to the current demands of the information society which handles the vast majority of information in digital format" [Glukhova, Bazhanova 2013]. Computerization and informalization of education solve this issue by developing and implementing information flow management systems in education.

Distant assessment goes hand in hand with Project-Based Learning which is being studied and developed by many scholars, and as O. Souleimanova and V. Yaremenko admit encourages students, boosts their creativity and enhances their motivation. The projects can be focused on solving some practical problem or research, directly related to the theory the students are studying; which means that the students are expected to practically implement their theoretical knowledge in practical research in the environment simulating real life [Souleimanova, Yaremenko 2018].

Recent studies strongly focus on distance learning technologies and their pedagogical implementation features. For instance, G.V. Kravchenko maintains: "pedagogical features of distance learning include distinguished characteristics of distance learning environment, particular aspects of interaction within that environment and information organization in the context of virtual interaction" [Kravchenko 2015]. These characteristics predetermine the mechanism of the said learning format, what means and methods are to be relied on, as well as monitoring format and assessment activity. Nowadays, information technologies and virtual domain are yet to become culturally universal practices, still they hold a greater potential in education development.

Thus, the contemporary teaching theory and methodology (especially in higher school) view information and communication technologies as the most efficient mechanism of educational process planning and monitoring. The majority of scholars studying the role and place of information and communication technologies in education agree that these technologies have revolutionized and made major adjustments to education system in general. Information and communication technologies in education
keep drawing undivided attention from teaching methodology experts and are considered in the context of streamlining the unification and ensuring full access to education.

Up-to-date trends in theory and practice of teaching (especially in the higher education) show that implementing of information and communication technologies facilitates planning and monitoring of educational process along with extracurricular activities. The capacities that distant technologies provide have already revolutionized the educational system and yet can be further extended and might benefit from in-depth research, investigation and development.

Over the past decade all the developed countries have witnessed a substantial rise in use of distance learning technologies within the higher education. The most promising one is interactive communication with students via systems specially tailored to distance learning. We can arrange current information and communication technologies relying on various criteria. You might have to pay to use them or they might be offered for free. For example, the majority of Google tools are free of charge including services that are designated for ensuring information management of the educational process (Google Classroom, Google Scholar).

Some copyright holders of the software products essential for the learning process provide preferential subscription for the offered tools (for instance, Microsoft actively cooperates with universities).

Cloud technologies play a significant role in the current educational process as they ensure a fairly fast and efficient data sharing with little or no restriction for their size or amount. Various anti-plagiarism systems are becoming increasingly important for the contemporary education. The most prominent ones are as follows: antiplagiat.ru (антиплагиат.ру), corp.antiplagiat.ru (антиплагиат.вуз), text.ru (текст.ру), etxt.ru. The following systems help estimate the amount of borrowed information in the student’s paper and evaluate the extent of student’s individual input. Moreover, we can arrange information and communication technologies used in education according to their functions and indentify the following types:

- technologies used to search and process information;
- technologies ensuring educational process monitoring;
- technologies ensuring efficient teacher-student interaction, including online-interaction.

Communicative objectives of educational process are successfully fulfilled via such information and communication technologies as social networks, e-mail, e-classrooms. Nowadays, many educational institutions at different levels launch public pages in social networks for each study group (class, subdivision, etc.). V.K. Danilina defines a social network as “a platform, an online-service or a website which is meant to build, reflect and establish social relations, which are visualized with social graphs” [Danilina 2010].

For instance, public pages in such a social network as “VKontakte” are most popular among Russian students. “VKontakte” public pages allow students to discuss hot topics related to the learning process and extracurricular activities, exchange relevant news, post notifications, share useful information. As of today, such public pages are mainly launched by higher education and general school students, their parents, etc. The page might be open to any user, as well as be private. In any case, you can invite a particular person, for example, a teacher of a certain subject to notify him or her on an urgent matter or share relevant information. Nowadays, we see a proactive development of such services which are meant to unify existing tools and streamline the educational process. The following services involve Moodle distance learning system, the Edmodo platform for interaction, cooperation and learning, Google Classroom web-service, etc.

It should be noted, that Google Classroom web-service helps unify the existing tools and create a comprehensive online platform adjusted to a particular course. Google Classroom learning system is only available for public schools and universities on G Suite for Education domain. Apart from this, to allow private education centers and small private schools to work with Google Classroom resources, Google has launched a private version of the product that can be accessed via personal Google account.

Google Classroom web-service and Moodle distance learning system help open assignments with or without assessment option, at the same time the assignments can be in the form of a test, questionnaire, creative or practice tasks. Moreover, Moodle distance learning system is teamwork-oriented. The system involves a lot of tools: wiki, glossary, forum, and practicum. Apart from this, the learning process might be carried out asynchronously, when each student studies the materials at his or her own pace, as well as synchronously by running online lectures and seminars.
The system supports exchanging files of any format between teachers and students, as well as between all students. Moodle distance learning system allows creating and storing electronic learning materials and establishing their studying order. As Moodle distance learning system can be accessed via the Internet or other networks, there are no bounds for students concerning the place and time, they can pace their own studying of the materials, while being in any part of the world.

Moreover, let us consider such an innovation in the context of education informatization as Edmodo platform for interaction, cooperation and learning. Edmodo platform is an American social network designed specifically for elementary and secondary schools. It offers teachers practical options of educational process management, student assessment mechanisms, as well as facilitates professional experience sharing. To break away from standardized tests and unified performance metrics, many teachers employ that platform to diversify educational process, increase its efficiency and make it more appealing to students, who regularly browse such websites as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Presumably, that project appears to be quite promising, as it ensures optimum conditions for further global integration of key education goals and principles. Moreover, students are familiar with that service as its interface associates with well-known mainstream social networks.

3 RESULTS

There is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that nowadays information and communication technologies market is vast and diverse with the tools offered. The range of applicable tools depends on a particular educational institution as each institution generates its own optimal and streamlined mechanism to computerize educational process. The variety of technologies used in education still has its benefits and drawbacks. On the one hand, a highly competitive nature of software products facilitates their continuous development and increases their quality with lower costs. On the other hand, the use of different information and communication technologies in various educational institutions results in failing to unify educational process and ensure information flow across the education system.

Let us consider the application of information and communication educational technologies while training bachelor’s and master’s degrees’ students in Linguistics and Translation Studies at Moscow City University. The most illustrative example is while conducting monitoring through the intermediary of Google tools. Thus, Google Sheets are used to systematize the data of students’ attendance and progress.

Assessing the number of classes attended by students in ballpark figure of attendance (percentage). Such an approach proves relevant for the students either to provide any document to justify their absence from classes as well to prepare the material necessary to get the credit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group: Pera.182</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject: 1st foreign language practical course</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Герасимова Анна | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 53 | %
| Быкова Александра | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 94 | %
| Брылев Дарья | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 94 | %
| Гуков Михаил | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 68 | %
| Еремина Анастасия | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 94 | %
| Захарова Полина | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 | %
| Казанцева Тимур | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 62 | %
| Котова Константин | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 94 | %
| Лапух Александр | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 94 | %
| Николина Наталья | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 100 | %
| Нечаева Анастасия | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 100 | %
| Шестова Валерия | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 100 | %

*Figure 1. Students’ attendance*

The table also accumulates the data of students’ progress in various fields. The aspects that are assessed are as follows:

- oral answers in class;
- written assignments;
- tests;
- home assignments (essays, reports, etc.);
- project work.

![Figure 2. Students’ progress](image)

Specific formulas implemented in the Google Sheets table enables to assess every student each student automatically on the account of their academic performance, accomplishments and in accordance with the rating system applied in the educational institution.

```excel
=IF(AS1<50,5,"unsat"),IF(AND(AS1>=50,AS1<65),"sat"),IF(AND(AS1>=65,AS1<80),"good"),IF(AND(AS1>=80,AS1<100),"excellent")
```

![Figure 3. Formula to calculate points automatically](image)

The teacher, monitoring each student’s progress thus manages to reveal the gaps in knowledge and to master the skills that demand upgrading. In other words, there appears a tendency to automate assessment process as well as to free the teachers and supervisors from the necessity to inform every student of the possible academic problems. Thus, the teacher is granted with more quality time for professional development together with educational process optimization.

Another compelling argument for the use of Google Sheets is students’ positive attitude, who welcome the latter as a tool that eases the way they are engaged in the educational process. Moreover, both the teacher and the student are empowered to leave commentaries to this or that point, add relevant data as well as modify it, thus the efficiency boosts.

Another distant education and assessment tool that is opted for in Moscow City University is the Moodle system aimed at engaging students in interaction as well as distributing materials relevant for their studies. What appears of primary importance is that not only textual files but also various e-resources (from a link, hypertext to a video file) are employed while studying. The systems stores the data, the latter labelled and tagged.

Moodle as a distant education system combines:

- wordlists to be applied in class;
- extra tasks;
- presentations to accompany every lecture;
- questions to be addressed in class;
- exam preparation materials;
- audio files;
- videos and lecture scripts.
Nevertheless, to ensure efficient communication with students social networks seem useful. Group communities enable the teacher to provide rapid answers to students’ questions, to do surveys on both curricular and extracurricular practices, post test results, etc.

Data storage proves of much concern due to the amount of information exchanges and acquired daily. Cloud storage banks prove mostly beneficial since they allow to gather materials in certain folders and to exchange links whenever it is necessary.

Google Classroom accompanied by Google Drive cloud storage system is another tool that comes in handy while gaining knowledge, classifying and sharing it along with assessing the results.

Google Classroom and Moodle platforms allow setting fixed time limits for fulfilling the tasks. The systems inform the student about the deadline and the teacher about the students who didn’t cope to conform strictly to the guidelines. Besides these systems provide the service of automatic multiple choice questionnaires which facilitates the process of written tests checking and grading.

All this makes it plausible that as of today distant teaching and assessment systems incorporate communicative, monitoring and educative functions. The material can be provided, explained, discussed, revised and controlled.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Informatization and computerization of education have revolutionized the world and significantly reduced hazards of teaching profession which is related to student performance monitoring and learning process planning.
Information and communication technologies save time on sharing relevant materials, prompt immediate response to any questions and comments from students and teachers. Furthermore, information and communication technologies help create distance learning systems which provide full access to education.

In the framework of linguistic education distant education and assessment systems enhance the whole process of teaching with the help of a set of effective tools that make the students feel intellectually involved, boost students’ interest in the activities provided and help him / her feel relaxed, hedged, and consequently give some space to get better concentrated and focused on the material studied.

Communication and information technologies and distant assessments systems in particular give an opportunity to customize and personalize the information provided for the students and they in their turn obtain an opportunity to choose the format of working on the material themselves, either they opt for individual work or in a team. This parameter makes education more flexible and even provides health-saving technologies.

Introduction of information and communication technologies into education has ensured such conditions which made learning process cohesive, open and sufficiently personalized. Personalization of education coupled with information and communication technologies is achieved by establishing efficient interaction system between a teacher or an academic advisor and each student. At the same time, information and communication technologies enable students to monitor, manage and streamline the learning process.

REFERENCES