Web-based Dialogue in Teaching

Hanna Ilola & Eeva Manni
TAMK University of Applied Sciences

MOTIVATE Conference
Budapest 11 November, 2008
We are going to talk about:

- Communality in teaching and learning
- Dialogue from the point of view of a teacher
The purpose of teaching: learning

- Communality is necessary for learning
  - Dialogue is necessary for supporting collaborative learning
Steps of Development of Communality

• Step 1: No communality; no communication, the web-based learning environment is only a store for material

• Step 2: Communication between a teacher and a student, not between students

• Step 3: Spontaneous communication between students

• Step 4: Independent learning; students plan and impact actively on the objectives of the course, also without a teacher, students have good skills for independent learning

• Step 5: Ideal communality, self-directive learning of the group working on the web
Dialogue

• Thinking together based on people's equal participation in trying to understand a matter of action
  • There are two or more participants
  • The participants bring out their own thoughts
  • The participants are equal
  • The participants build common understanding
  • Dialogue is a skill to be practised
Basic Elements of Pedagogical Dialogue

- Active involvement, participation and commitment
- Taking care of each other
- Showing respect for everyone
- Everyone brings elements to create a whole new picture
- It is important to tell your own point – all aspects are equal
- There is no best point or right comment
- Nobody takes control over discussion
- Giving up me-centricity
Responsiveness in Dialogue 1

• Be responsive enough in order to hear /see the message
• You have to stop and see what others have written
• Pay attention to how you make first moves
• Pay attention to how you continue the discussion

This is very important in e-learning because after the first move or intervention the discussion has a direction
Responsiveness in Dialogue 2

- Look for ‘hot’ words in discussion
- Make open questions

It is important that students see that you have reached some of their thoughts and continued from that
Example: The aim of discussion (Learning task: e-Learning tools and methods in future)

• Join the discussion about e-Learning tools and methods. Where do you stand now? Which tools and methods are you using now? What do you think about the pedagogical added value in using them? Have these tools and methods changed the way you see yourself as a teacher or a student?

How about 5 years from now? Use your imagination and think of possible scenarios regarding the use of education technology in the near future. Will things change? How? What causes the changes? How does this reflect in your work?
Student’s Comment

- I find e-learning a good opportunity for extending the general, well-known methods we are using in the education since who knows when. But let me flash another thing, which we rarely speak about.

In the secondary school where I teach I usually have a lot of paperwork, and there is no chance to skip it. I was always thinking about a way to ask back what I have taught them, without going through all the tests exercise by exercise, spending worthy hours in every and each occasion. I know that we use the "e-learning" expression mostly for the internet-based methods of teaching students, but I reckon asking back with the help of the network can also be an important part of it.

Now I am about to develop a new software with which I will be able to question them through the local network. In this case everybody gets different questions (a computer chooses randomly from a set of exercises), and the evaluation is also easy: they get the result in a second.
Tutor’s Comments

• Non-dialogical response:
  What an interesting idea! I have had the same problem and I really don't want to spend any more time with the exams! Maybe I suggest something alike in our organization.

  Dialogical response:
  You bring into discussion a very interesting issue: the assessment. How do you think e-learning will change assessment in general? You also write about the workload of a teacher. That would be an important topic to discuss more. What do you think will happen to teacher's workload due to e-learning?
Thank you for your attention!