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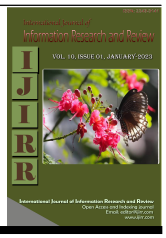

RESEARCH ARTICLE

MONITORING AND PEDAGOGICAL RELATIONS IN A DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVENTION MODALITIES OF THE TUTOR-TEACHER

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ABSTRACT

The understanding of distance tutoring must be done in relation to the tutor's interventions placed in a systemic framework of the training system. The tutor's attitudes must therefore be considered in relation to the expert designer, the structuring of the course, the host institution, the technological device and the learner. We will place our approach in relation to these different aspects in order to explain the impact of the quality of the tutor on the quality of learning within an entirely distance learning course.

INTRODUCTION

Following a distance learning course is still too often perceived as a solitary exercise, which does not allow the learner to interact with the teacher. Fortunately, the systems increasingly include group activities and, above all, the presence of tutors. These tutors then become the main institutional interlocutors of the learners. However, any understanding of distance tutoring must be done in relation to the tutor's interventions placed in a systemic framework of the training system. The tutor's attitudes must therefore be considered in relation to the expert designer, the structuring of the course, the host institution, the technological device and the learner. We will place our approach in relation to these different aspects in order to try to understand the impact of the quality of the tutor on the quality of learning within an entirely distance learning course. Indeed, following an immersion during the years (2021/2023) in a techno-pedagogical device, we were able to practice distance tutoring in all its dimensions. This immersion was a full-scale laboratory that provided an opportunity for observations and experimental perspectives. What does a tutor do? How does he intervene? What impact does he have on the learning context and on the appropriation of knowledge?.

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Therefore, the present work focuses on the problem of the follow-up and the pedagogical relationship in distance learning. It proposes to analyse the modalities of intervention of the tutor in the Specialised Master in Multimedia Pedagogical Engineering (SMMPE), at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Tétouan, whose general profile we outline here.

THE TRAINING SYSTEM (SMMPE): The skills, often acquired in the field, require complementation, methodical reflection on experience and recognition by employers and institutions. The SMMPE Master's degree trains specialists in training engineering using information and communication technologies. It is a training course for the improvement and qualification of training professionals or future professionals. This Master's degree is aimed at careers in the design, implementation and evaluation of training. At the end of the course, participants will improve their methodological and techno-pedagogical skills in order to design, implement and manage techno-pedagogical devices that are appropriate to the constraints of the professional context in which they work. The course is delivered in a hybrid mode and learning is based on collaborative work in small teams. The course uses the Moodle[1] technology platform and the support is based on synchronous and asynchronous tutoring. Assessment is based on virtual seminars taken at a distance. The content is divided into teaching units, which are in turn made up of modules.

[1]https://ens-tetouan.com/

In order to make tutoring more effective, a tutor takes charge of the group of learners for one module during one semester. Each week, he/she leads two synchronous meetings, a discussion forum and evaluates the learners' reports (reading summary, summary of the debate conducted on the forum, analysis grids, conceptual maps, etc.). In the following section, we will detail the scenario specific to the module entitled "Scripting and pedagogical mediatisation" which we will take as a study model.

PEDAGOGICAL SCENARISATION OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Basic principles: When we aim to give coherence to a learning situation by bringing together different objects and actors (learner, teacher, resources, activities, instruments, tools), we are in the process of pedagogical scripting. Educational scripting is therefore the process of developing an educational scenario that can be used in a learning context. In the "educational scripting and ergonomics of multimedia interfaces" module, the educational scenario adopted is based on the principle of "collaborative task". The task refers to the idea that knowledge is always the result of a construction on the part of the individual who learns, whereas collaboration refers to the idea of collective intelligence which is opposed here to individual intelligence. Indeed, Piaget (1969) is one of the theorists who oppose individual learning. For him, learning can only take place if the relationship between the learner and the environment is established. This relationship is none other than the interaction between his or her individual understanding of a phenomenon and his or her experience within an environment. This interaction generates a socio-cognitive conflict that can stimulate learning. Perret-Clermont & Bell (1991) add that in this environment, the learner also interacts with his peers. Oppositions can then be created, allowing the individual to question their initial understanding and discover a new perspective of understanding. The concept of the "zone of proximal development" proposed by Vygotsky (1978) is of great interest here. This zone is none other than the distance between what an individual can do alone and what he or shecan do with the help of others. Roschelle & Teasley (1995) have developed this Vygotskyian concept by adding the idea of the 'individual-plus'. This includes the abilities of the individual plus all the aids that he or she can use within an environment. These aids can be human or material. The context in which learning takes place is then a key concept that several theorists are currently emphasising in the context of collaborative learning (Viau, 1997) and (Henri & Lundgren-Cayrol, 2001). Within the framework of the SMMPE training scheme, we have been able to implement a teaching scenario based on these pedagogical principles, which we formalise in the form of a table.

Pedagogical scenario: Collaborative online learning is at the heart of this scenario, which benefits from the pedagogical and technological development in recent years (Ibrahimi et al. 2019). Pedagogically, it benefits from the development of approaches that value collaborative learning. Technologically, it is currently benefiting from efficient systems capable of managing the interaction between tutors and learners. Within this scenario, the tutor was able to interact with the learners by providing very close support (proactive tutoring) and lighter support (reactive tutoring) giving the learner more autonomy and recommending interventions at the request of the learners and according to their needs. The supervision of distance learning activities then takes on its full value.

SUPERVISION OF DISTANCE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Presence at a distance: E learning attempts to reduce the distance between the learner and the content of the training, which may be remote for geographical, temporal, structural or social reasons. Several authors have examined these aspects (Peters, 1973; Keegan, 1986; Perraton, 1992; Jézégou, 2012; Glikman, 1999). But what is particularly important for us here is the distance between the learner and the teacher, called "transactional distance" by Moore &Kearsley (1996). Transactional distance is measured by the degree of interaction between tutor and learner according to the level of constraint imposed by the type of course. Each time the course becomes more constraining, the degree of interaction between the learner and the tutor weakens and the transactional distance increases. This is true for all types of teaching, whether distance or face-to-face. On the other hand, although some people tend to invoke ICT to reduce this transactional distance, the reality may be different. A significant example is video-conferencing, where the exchange between the tutor and a large number of students is difficult. In this sense, the evolution of e-learning in relation to face-to-face teaching is nothing other than the ever-growing possibility of reducing transactional distance. Indeed, technological evolution allows for greater interactivity and the pedagogical integration of this technology provides an alternative to face-to-face training. In this vision, we defend the idea that today, at the Moroccan university, it is easier to respond to requests from learners at a distance because the system allows it (asynchronous discussion forums, synchronous chat rooms, etc.) than to respond to these same requests in the classroom, because the possibility of interaction with a large number of students is not possible. The effectiveness of distance learning can thus be measured through the notion of transactional distance. This, as Depover & Marchand (2002) have shown, should not be measured solely on the basis of the quantity of interactions, but also on their pedagogical quality.

In this sense, distance gives meaning to presence to the point that Jézégou (2012) speaks of "presence at a distance". This is to be thought of according to three aspects: socio-cognitive presence, socio-affective presence and pedagogical presence. These three aspects must be taken into account when planning to set up an online techno-pedagogical device. For this reason, distance tutoring must target clear fields of intervention.

Tutor's areas of intervention: The tutoring that we have been able to set up in this techno-pedagogical system is based on four main areas of intervention: pedagogical, organizational, socio-motivational and technical. We will review these different fields of intervention in relation to specific actions.

The pedagogical field: Through a series of questions, the tutor succeeds in getting the students to produce, during a synchronous meeting, all the ideas contained in the course that would serve as a basis for reflection and support for individual and/or collaborative work.

While the tutor encourages the students to argue and construct their knowledge, he/she also reminds them of the instructions and objectives of the activity to avoid any deviation from the predefined objectives and to orientate himself/herself in relation to the learner's line of thinking. However, the tutor himself suggests avenues of reflection if the learner is short of ideas. This type of suggestion initiates reflection and provides a framework for the work. In this way, it maintains motivation and encourages the learner to adopt a scientific approach which serves the synthesis and research work. However, the main intervention of the tutor remains that of answering content questions. The answers to these questions allow a better understanding of the course and to grasp the new concepts inherent in it, in particular the key concepts which present certain difficulties of understanding. The tutor's intervention is then said to be reactive.

The organisational field: The tutor takes purely organisational measures here which have a positive impact on the degree of involvement of the learners in the execution of the task, which in turn has an impact on their degree of appropriation of the knowledge. Before launching the seminar, the tutor sends an email summarising the instructions and suggesting a timetable for carrying out the individual and/or collaborative learning tasks. The e-mail sent a few days before the seminar starts serves as a reference for structuring the discussion during the synchronous meeting (chat). The learner is thus well prepared to start the activities of the seminar. Indeed, it sometimes happens that the learner forgets the deadlines because of the many obligations linked to his personal and professional situation. Reminding them of the deadlines is therefore a necessary step for the tutor, as is informing them. This circulation of information allows for a variety of information sources and points of view to be taken into account. But the tutor is also there to provide an appreciation of the work done on the task. This enables the learner to be well placed and to improve the contributions and inputs of each of the partners. Another aspect linked to the organisational field consists of creating a "Frequently Asked Questions" to identify the elements likely to hinder the understanding of the concepts and to be able to provide suitable answers.

The socio-motivational field*:* The tutor often gives the student in difficulty a boost, establishes a social link with the group, maintains a good working atmosphere, keeps the student motivated and provides feedback. Indeed, it is always difficult to reconcile professional and personal activities with studies. It sometimes happens that one of the learners goes through difficult times, finds it difficult to keep up to date, which has a negative impact on his or her relationship with the others, thus risking letting go. The tutor, thanks to his socio-motivational intervention, manages to revive the student who was in danger of leaving the course. In order to create a group dynamic, the tutor also takes care to express himself with a specific language and tone: he speaks most often in the 1st person plural, so that each learner feels included in a group dynamic, and he uses a cheerful tone. For it is enough to congratulate and encourage for the students to be more motivated. The group dynamic also calls for the tutor to encourage learners to read each other. The collective intelligence is thus more in demand than the individual intelligence. Apart from the scheduled appointments, the tutor is on hand daily to answer any questions.

At the end of the work, he sends feedback to the participants in good time, which enables the learners to evaluate their contributions, encouraging them to take things very seriously and to multiply their efforts.

The technical field: The tutor provides technical assistance relating to the appropriation of the technical system. This is also structural help which concerns facilitating access to the whole administrative part (timetable arrangements, provision of resource places etc.). This makes it much easier for the learner. However, the task of learning is very much linked to the task of mentoring. For this reason, the SMMPE training scheme adopts a clear organisation of mentoring.

ORGANISATION OF TUTORING IN THE SMMPE TRAINING SYSTEM

The tutor's job is to assist the learner in his training, in his process of becoming independent in relation to the target area, the device and the learning process. This task can be included in a single overall function (the pedagogical function) because the tutor is a relay actor in the pedagogical relationship, within a techno-pedagogical device. The tutor accompanies and guides the learner through the learning process. However, this (overall) pedagogical function can be broken down into different roles. Each role will call for a set of tasks which can only be fulfilled by a tutor if he/she has well-defined skills and if he/she has adequate communication tools. The following table summarises these different elements of the organisation of tutoring in the SMMPE training system, which constitute a real set of specifications for the tutor.

PEDAGOGICAL SCENARIO	
Module :	***Scripting and pedagogical media***
WEEK 1	***Appropriation of content***
Task	Read documents and synthesise them in the form of mind-maps.
Goals	This first week is devoted to an introduction to the themes of educational scripting. 1.Learners should become familiar with the framework and grasp the main concepts. 2.They should be able to understand them, make sense of them and communicate them in writing. (in the form of a mind-map).
Operating mode	**1.Read** the documents under the heading "basic resources"**.** **2.Read** the documents about the pedagogical scenario (see basic resources) and **produce** a mind-map summarising the pedagogical scenario (**exhaustively**) (**to be submitted before Wednesday at midnight**) **3.Read** the documents on interface ergonomics (see basic resources) and **produce** a mind-map summarising the interface ergonomics (**exhaustively**) (**to be submitted by Friday at midnight**) **4.Read** the documents on web usability and **produce** a mind-map summarising the different principles of web usability. (**to be submitted no later than midnight on Sunday**).
WEEK 2	***Project 1***
Task	Produce an activity diagram and a scenario specification table
Goals	The content of your readings and the production of mind-maps have allowed you to better understand the main concepts related to educational scripting. To better benefit and make others benefit from this work, you are asked to share your mind-maps via the mind-map sharing forum. In order to reinvest these main concepts, you

	will be required, for this second task, to complete an activity diagram and a table of specification of learning scenarios.
Operating mode	You are a team (of 3 or 4 people) in charge of setting up an e-learning module around "scripting and pedagogical mediatisation". You are asked to produce an activity diagram and a learning scenario specification table. This work will be carried out in three parts: **A.**The first step is to read two concrete case scenarios (see Useful Resources). **B.**An individual production will be carried out taking into account the following operations: **1.**construct the activity diagram using the blank diagram you have downloaded, (see Working Documents). **2.**Fill in the blank specification table that you have downloaded (see Working Documents section). These individual contributions will then be assembled in a single file (Word document). You will upload your work (.doc format) to the team forum so that it is accessible to other team members by the end of the day on Wednesday. **C.**Collaborative work is then required, starting on Thursday at the beginning of the day. This production will be based on the individual work and input provided by each team member. **N.B**. To carry out this joint work, you will use the team forum. There you will discuss the points of convergence and divergence between your individual works, in order to arrive at a common production. It is important that each team member works fairly. You will officially transmit your final collaborative work by submitting it in the final work submission section (.doc format).
WEEK 3	***Project 2***
Task	Carrying out an expertise in web usability
Goals	The content of the readings and the production of the mind-maps enabled the learners to gain a better understanding of the main concepts related to ergonomics. In order to reinvest these main notions, they are asked to fill in a descriptive grid for this third task. This grid enables them to better judge the general principles of web ergonomics implemented by a website.
Operating mode	Learners are divided into teams (of 3 or 4 people). They are responsible for providing expertise in web ergonomics. To better carry out this work, they are asked to fill in a detailed descriptive grid for websites. This work is carried out as follows: **A.**An individual production will be carried out taking into account the following operations: **1.**Connect to the websites whose addresses are provided in the (Working Document) section. **2.**Fill in the descriptive grid to be downloaded under the heading (Working documents). **3.**Submit the work (.doc format) to the team forum so that it is accessible to other team members by the end of the day on Wednesday. **B.**Collaborative work is then required, starting on Thursday at the beginning of the day. This production will be based on the individual work and input provided by each team member. **1.**To carry out this joint work, the learners use the team forum. Here they discuss the points of convergence and divergence between the individual works, in order to arrive at a joint production. It is important that each team member works fairly. **2.**Learners officially submit the final collaborative work by filing it in the final work submission section (.doc format). This submission must be made by Sunday at the latest at 23:00.

Monitoring tools available to the tutor-teacher: The tutor has various tools at his disposal to monitor the students. The first type of tool is technical in nature. This is the technical device used for distance learning. In the case of the SMMPE course, this is the moodle platform which integrates communication, sharing and collaboration tools (chat, forum, email, instant messaging, groupware, etc.), but also monitoring tools which allow the tutor to have access to overall data on the group and specific data on each student. The first data enables a course activity report to be drawn up, giving access to the number of consultations for each activity in the course for all the learners. The second data allows you to see which students have accessed specific course content by giving the tutor access to the course participation report. This data provides a profile of the student in relation to his or her participation in the course, which is of proven pedagogical interest in terms of student follow-up. The tutor also has specific teaching tools at his disposal: the assessment grid and the logbook. The assessment grid helps the tutor to assess the learner's work according to criteria predefined by the course designer and to provide objective feedback. The logbook provides detailed monitoring of the process of acquiring knowledge and participating in the course. It consists of an attendance sheet for synchronous meetings, a thematic report of synchronous meetings, a report on difficulties encountered and a learner support sheet, examples of which are given below.

TUTOR'S TERMS OF REFERENCE	
ROLE 1	**Resource person**
TASKS	**T1** : help the learner to understand the learning content.
	T2 : respond to learners' needs by providing subject expertise.
	T3 : respond to the learner's questions. His intervention is then reactive.
	T4 : Make the learner comfortable with the technical system (he is a facilitator).
ROLE 2	**Technical assistance**
TASKS	**T5 :**Answer simple questions on specific technical problems or refer to the technician.
	T6 : Introduction to the principles formulated in the communication charters (mail, chat, forum).
	T7 : Advise on the appropriate choice of communication tools for each type of activity.
ROLE 3	**Disciplinary support**
TASKS	**T8** :facilitate resources related to the content of the discipline concerned (references, additional files, etc.).
	T9 :Answer questions about the content.
	T10 :facilitate the linking of different contents or (parts of) courses.
	T11 :facilitate communication and sharing of resources between peers.
ROLE 3	**Methodological support**
TASKS	**T12** :Facilitate the breakdown of work steps.
	T13 :Facilitate Task Planning.
	T14 :Remind them of the deadlines.
	T15 :Encourage interaction between peers (collaboration, socio-cognitive conflicts, etc.).
	T16 :Answer the learner's questions about their working methods.
	T17 :Propose an approach, a method.
	T18 :To support the learner in his/her personal project.
ROLE 5	**Soutienaffectif**
TASKS	**T19 :**Ask about the learner if the tutor perceives a drop-out.
	T20 : Reinforce the learner's action and ideas.
	T21 : Invite the learner to act or react.

	T22 : Respond to questions within a respectable timeframe (24 hours).
ROLE 6	**Start-up of the training actions**
TASKS	**T23 :**Make contact with learners.
	T24 : Create a learning community.
	T25 : To present the functions carried out as a tutor in the context of the training device.
	T26 : Check that the objectives of the activity are known and understood.
	T27 : Remind them of the deadlines (calendar).
ROLE 6	**Regulation and metacognition**
TASKS	**T28 :**Set up a learner logbook.
	T29 : Monitoring the progress of learning.
	T30 : Regulating the learning and teaching process.
	T31 : To identify how the learner organises, presents and structures his/her knowledge in order to be able to intervene in a proactive or reactive way.
ROLE 7	**Assessment**
TASKS	**T32 :**Recall the criteria for assessing the activity.
	T33 : Ask for a self-assessment of the learner's activity.
	T34 : Giving feedback on the activity.
	T35 : Establish indicators for regulating the training system.

Attendance sheet for the synchronous meeting Date : ..... /...../……				
Name and surname of the learner	Presence	Unexcused absence	Excused absence	Comment
Learner …				
Learner …				

Report on the content of the synchronous meeting	
Date	
Agenda	
Decisions	

	Report on the difficulties encountered during the synchronous meeting		
	Techniques	Organisational	Pedagogical
Difficulties encountered			
solutions and/or recommendations			

	Accompanying sheet		
	Technique	Pedagogical	Socio-affective
Learner			
Learner			

Conclusion

The practice of tutoring enables us to highlight the strengths and weaknesses that a tutor might have in terms of his skills, his intervention strategies, his role and his way of being.
But this practice also allows us to draw the outlines of a quality tutoring which respects certain criteria, the most relevant of which are as follows:

- Provide milestones with intermediate tasks, so that the activity can be framed and readjusted if necessary;
- Communicate the details of the product expected from the student (objectives, form, structure, deadlines, etc.), thus giving learners permanent reference points;
- Explain the assessment criteria and give some examples of good and bad work;
- Allow time for discussion and negotiation of representations, especially at the beginning of a piece of work, to avoid misunderstandings;
- Give priority to questioning rather than advice: give the learner the opportunity to solve his/her own difficulties while offering him/her some ideas for reflection;
- Motivate learners by creating a climate of trust and ensuring regular communication;
- Provide the assessment grid with criteria to encourage individual reflection and self assessment.

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