Distance Education Techniques to assist skills of Tourist Guides

Yasar Guneri Sahin
Yasar University, Department of Computer Engineering, Bornova, Izmir-Turkey
Tel: +90 232 4614111 Ext:305 // yasar.sahin@yasar.edu.tr

Sabah Balta
Yasar University, Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, Bornova, Izmir-Turkey
sabah.balta@yasar.edu.tr

ABSTRACT

This study is a presentation of the usage of distance education technologies in a bid to support face to face education of tourist guide candidates during the training tour. The laws require tourist guide candidates to successfully complete their internship tour and get a certificate. Since the time in this internship period is limited and there are restricting factors such as transportation, accommodation; many of the tourism places couldn't be included in this internship period. Besides, the lack of experienced and competent guides in the visited places is also another negative factor reducing the quality and efficiency of the training. Technological support of the training of tourist guide candidates would effectively reduce the negativities of traditional education methods. Thus, benefiting from computer technologies and audiovisual systems during the internship of tourist guide candidates would result in an increase in the effectiveness and usefulness of the training tour and would make it possible to visit more places in a shorter period. This study is a presentation on how distance education method could be implemented and an attempt to show the benefits could be obtained from implementation of these methods along with the possible problems that are predicted to arise.

Keywords

Tour guiding, Distance education, Information sharing, Technology aided education

Introduction

Tour guiding requires professional background knowledge especially in some specific tourism places. Along with the university education, experience is also a must for the appropriation of the information learned in that education period. The first step towards the professionalism is the obligatory training tour of guiding (i.e. internship) that is conducted before the graduation from the university (Turkish Ministry of Tourism and Culture, 2006; Boz, 2004). The training tour has therefore a very fundamental role.

Tourist Guides would play a decisive role in holiday makers' satisfaction from their holiday experiences and in providing a good country image in the minds of foreign visitors and in promotion of countries' tourism potential. A good practice of this role would bring both individual and public benefits.

With the start of the usage of distance education system, the education system became more effective due to the reduction in costs and required time. Usage of distance education systems becomes more widespread with the developments in technology. In some cases usage of distance education systems has become a necessity. Despite that distance education system introduces new costs to budget in the beginning; these costs will lessen the overall expenses of the education in the long run (Keegan, 2004).

Notwithstanding that the idea of using distance education techniques in the field of tourism, this idea couldn't yet resonate with the practice sufficiently. Using the distance education models proposed in this study in the training of tour guides, would result in an increase in the quality of the education (Balta & Sahin, 2006).

Motivation

Keeping in mind that tour guide candidates would play a very significant role in the promotion of countries, it could well be expected that they should have a vast knowledge on various fields. The tour guide training would therefore

be conducted to ensure tour guides' appropriation of such a vast knowledge. In this regard, like in many other countries, there is an obligatory traineeship period that should last at least 36 days. This training requires visiting of many tourism places all across the country (i.e. approx. 11,000 km.) in 36 days and gaining accurate and adequate knowledge about the places visited.

Success of tour management usually is regarded as depending on two factors: The first factor is the planning of tour with keeping in mind the unexpected events. The other factor is the competence of a tour guide that has strong leadership capacities and good communication skills (Fay, 1992). Furthermore, tour managers and especially the tour guides have to have very strong background information and should be subjected to a multi-disciplinary education (Ahipasaoglu, 1997). Due to the age factor, some of the specialists, experienced guides (according to the tourism guide regulations in Turkey, the guides that is to give training to tour guide candidates should have at least 8 years of experience) and instructors (as required by laws) couldn't be able to participate in some stages of tours. The large number of the places that should necessarily be visited during the tour is also a complicating factor since it requires a high stamina, healthiness and high physical power. Adding to this the conditions of force majeure, it became further difficult to ensure full and effective participation of specialists in the tours (Ozbay, 2002). Using distance education systems in tour guide training in order to ensure candidates benefiting from the experiences of experienced tour guides and instructors would be very important in increasing the effectiveness of the training. It would thus become possible for tour guide candidates to benefit from training by experienced personnel without requiring those personnel to participate in the tour in person. It would also be possible for the experts to participate in training of more than one group in subsequent times.

Due to the requirements of the law, internship (training tour) should be conducted without any interruption (Turkish Ministry of Tourism and Culture, 2006). The laws do not allow the candidate guide to quit internship for any particular reason or to have a break in the internship term. In case of any quitting or giving a break to internship, the whole period of internship should be conducted again. When considered that each university can carry out only one internship program during one academic term, the candidates who have to redo internship would have to wait for one year to carry out the same training and that is a loss of one year. Sometimes candidates had to give a break within the internship period due to reasons as casual traumas (arm, leg etc.), insect bites, psychological problems or intense fatigue. By means of distance education techniques, candidates experiencing such problems could follow the training program for short temporary periods of two or three days and thus they could be enabled to complete the training without any interruption.

Spreading of education would make it possible further participation of guide candidates even before lower classes and would result in relative widening of training period. Candidates' obtaining information on the places to be visited during the internship period before they set out for visit and their learning from the experiences of experts would be beneficial in increasing the success to be obtained from the tour. It would therefore be very beneficial for tour guide candidates to learn about the tour via techniques of distance learning before they set out for tour and while they were in their schools, laboratories or even at their homes. It would thus be easier for students to firm up their knowledge on the tour with the information they got from the experiences of the previous terms in advance. Besides, these techniques would also be beneficial for experts and instructors who would want to refresh and update their knowledge.

Distance education techniques would also enable recording of training environment and would allow the documents, audio-visual files to be saved and archived. It would then become possible to revise the information which is thought to be perfect and complete. These recordings could also be used to establish Tourism Information System (TIS), which could be a further work on these recordings. In addition to all of these benefits, it would also contribute candidates' appropriation of information regarding the tourism resources that lies far beyond the scope of a 36 days training travel of almost 11,000 km and it would therefore become easier to get information about the places that it is difficult to reach due to budget and time restrictions.

Related Works

The use of information technology in tourism sector was the focus of many researchers and institutions and there have been various successful examples of implementation in this field (Poon, 1988; Buhalis, 1998; Ozturna & Roney, 2004). Among the first studies in this field, there is the work of Poon (1998) named *Tourism and Information*

Technologies. Beginning with this study, information technologies were started to be used in tourism sector in a general manner. Following these studies, seminars, conferences and symposiums were organized annually for the development of this sector.

On the other hand distance education is also widely used in the field of Tourism Management and Hospitality. Almost all of the implementations in this field were focused on Tourism Business and Hospitality Management (The Professional Development Institute of Tourism, 2006; Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2006; ACS, 2006; Indiana University, 2006; New Nouveau Brunswick, 2006; University of Guelph, 2006; NC State University, 2006; University of Houston, 2006; Southwestern University, 2006; Les Roches Swiss Hotel, 2006). The universities that carried out these implementations have started to implement distance education techniques on courses of tour guides. However, since these implementations were carried out towards specific courses, they remained only limited to the features of the courses.

Usage of distance education techniques have not been investigated adequately since it is very much important in the field of tour guiding to see the places of visit on site and to get a face to face education. The aim of this study is not to remove face-to-face education but to establish a stronger training mechanism by supporting traditional education by distance education techniques. The aim is therefore to establish a more effective education period by combining the traditional education methods that require candidates' and instructors' being on site in person with distance education techniques.

The above mentioned studies are only some examples that are carried out in this field. All of these sample works are only the visible part of the iceberg, because there are innumerable works in this field. However, the most important factor in these studies is that they do not envisage using distance education techniques in the phase of tour guide education. What is different in this study from many of the other studies is that it aims to establish a supportive environment for providing the gaining mentioned in motivation section. Thus a new training process as a new implementation would be provided.

When considered from a technological point of view it could be said that using mobile technological devices have caused a more effective information sharing mechanism (Kimber et al., 2005). In addition to these benefits, there have been also some works for the optimization of the road of travelers' tour destinations and decision making process were developed by using genetic algorithms, linear programming and artificial intelligence (Taplin & Qui, 1997; Sirakaya, 2005). Works that would be carried out through aid of mobile devices would be more efficient and would require less infrastructure cost.

Distance Education in Tourism Guidance Training

Distance education

Distance education is a system that is used to bring together students and instructors via technological means and in an interactive manner in order to provide continuous training (Keegan, 1986). It is also used to support a collaborative work and to provide a more efficient education by enabling more participation in the training (O'Malley & Scanlon, 1990). Additionally, these systems would also be beneficial for students that are working or those that have difficulty in transportation.

The materials that could be used in distance education would range from printed materials to TV and to interactive technological education tools. The basic problem with Radio and TV broadcasts is that these mediums do not allow two-sided communication (Sherry, 1996). It is for this reason that computer and Web based technologies had become very effective in distance education process. A general description of distance education model, which is understood as bringing together of physically distant points in virtual environment, could be seen in Figure 1 (Bulbul et al., 2003). These distance education techniques assisted by computer technologies enable to construct interactive and bi-directional education system.

Figure 1. Elementary structure of Distance Education

A standard method of distance education system is home, office or desktop applications. Application of a distance education system would require a more complicated structure when they are prepared towards travelers. The most important factor in this infrastructure is the usage of mobile technology devices. With the advent of technology in the recent years, service area of the mobile technological devices has become covering almost all destinations in a country. Keeping in mind this opportunity provided by mobile devices which are now an important component of distance education, it became possible to continue education while traveling along with the general desktop applications. The distance education models and the materials to be used in these models are shown in simple form in Table 1 (Taylor, 2000). Since tour guide education requires the guide candidate to see the tourism sites, the distance education model to be used in this field of training should be fully flexible, bi-directional and lowest-cost. The 5th generation intelligent models shown in Table 1 are the most adequate systems to be used in this field of education.

Table 1. Models of Distance Education

Models of Distance Education and Associated Delivery Technologies	Characteristics of Delivery Technologies				Institutional Variable Costs Approaching Zero
	Flexibility			Advanced Interact. Delivery	
	Time	Place	Pace		
1st Generation - The Correspondence Model					
• Print	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
2nd Generation - The Multi-media Model					
• Print	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
• Audiotape	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
• Videotape	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
• Computer-based learning (CML/CAL)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
• Interactive video (disk and tape)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
3rd Generation - The Tele-learning Model					
• Audio-Tele-conferencing	No	No	No	Yes	No
• Video-conferencing	No	No	No	Yes	No
• Audio-graphic Communication	No	No	No	Yes	No
• Broadcast TV/Radio and Audio-Tele-conferencing	No	No	No	Yes	No
4th Generation - The Flexible Learning Model					
Interactive multimedia (IMM)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Internet-based access to WWW resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Computer mediated communication	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
5th Generation - The Intelligent Flexible Learning Model					
Interactive multimedia (IMM)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Internet-based access to WWW resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Computer mediated communication, using	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

automated response systems.

Mobile Devices (e.g. GPRS, 3G, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Communication Methods

It is possible to choose the communication technology to be used in the system in accordance with the field that the model is to be used. It would be beneficial to use printed materials along with the products that could be used to support systems mentioned as 5th generation. Products and usage methods are as follows:

➤ Mobil phones (GPRS, 3G),
➤ Notebook computers with Internet connections (Wireless)
➤ TV-Radio broadcasts
➤ Printed materials, Slide shows

Figure 2 shows the technological infrastructure of the system. It is possible to use all of the above mentioned technological devices in this system. The necessary mechanisms that are necessary to establish the necessary infrastructure is used in almost all of the countries in the world. It is possible to use any of the mentioned technologies in the infrastructure in accordance with the conditions at the destination (physical conditions, level of development, etc.). It would thus be possible to get benefits from more than one kind of product and from as much as possible methods.

The interactive education material to be used in the tour in Turkey would differ from region to region due to some technological limitations. The most important reasons for this are that some technological products are not yet became widespread in some regions and that physical conditions of some regions do not allow usage of some kind of technologies. The interactive education materials to be used in this study are gathered in three main parts. Within the first part of these education materials are mobile phones (3G, mobile phones that allow GPRS support, PDAs and PALM computers), notebook computers with internet connection over EGDE, PSTN or ADSL technologies and online connections via television and radio signals.

Mobile Phones

The developments in mobile phone technologies made it possible these technologies to be used in many fields (Dung, 2002). Especially the invention of GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) and 3G (Third Generation) technologies have made it possible to connect to internet and to conduct audio visual conference communications via mobile phones. The most important feature of these technologies is that they allow benefiting from these services from almost all destinations with the exception of some blind spots. By using the GPRS technology it became possible to access internet and carry out some transactions via internet from almost any place by means of a mobile phone or notebook computer. The 3G technology which has been recently developed, and becoming widespread everyday allows carrying out visual and audio conference communications. Since the usage of this technology in the tourism sector would not require an infrastructure cost (almost all students are having a 3G supported mobile phone), it would be a very advantageous system in implementation.

Notebooks and Laptops connected to Internet

Mobile phone services (GPRS, EDGE), PSTN and mobile computers (notebook, laptop etc.) that can access to internet via technologies as (Telephone Network, Wireless) and ADSL could be used in almost anywhere that in the service area of these technologies. Besides that they could be used for internet services, these computers could also be used for audio-visual communication purposes. These computers, which could be used for internet services, could also be used for audio-visual communication purposes. They are also frequently used in distance education technologies (Bulbul et al., 2004). These computer systems both provide easiness for establishing firewalls and could be used as education tools since they allow free development of software. Furthermore, establishment of such a system requires very easy and inexpensive process.
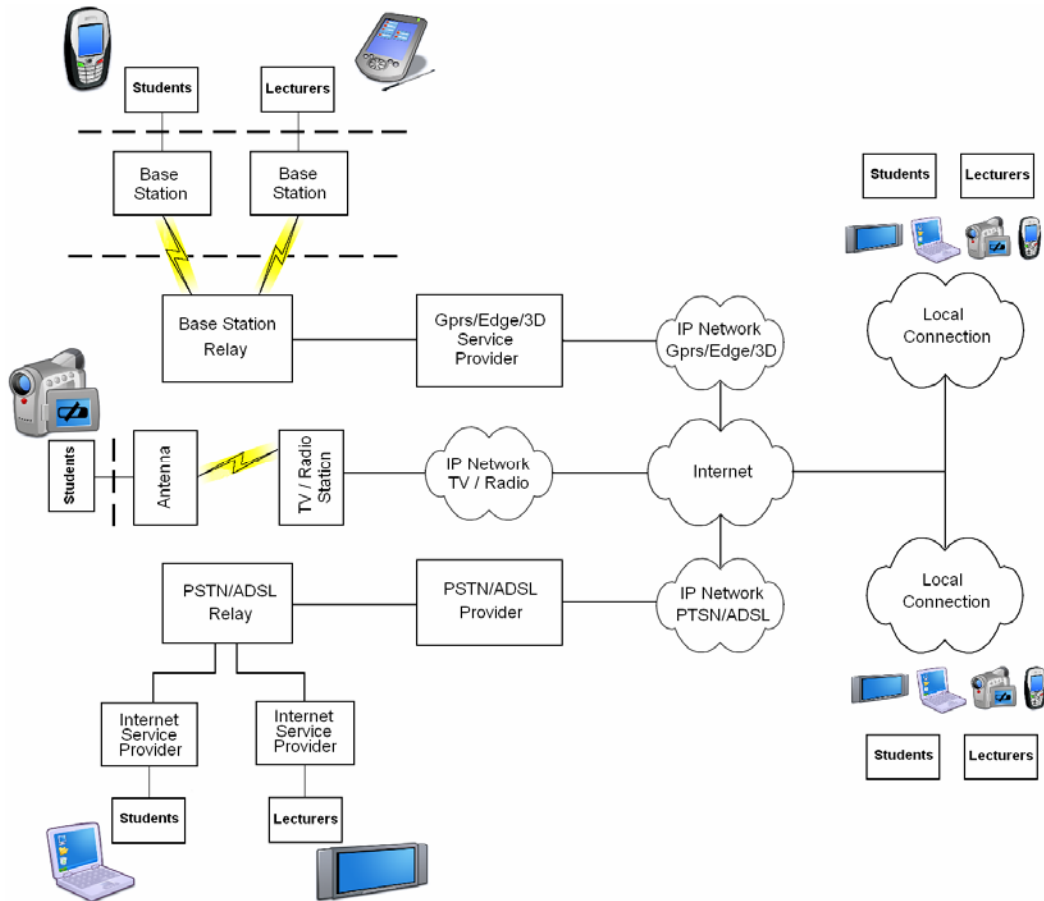
Figure 2. Technological infrastructure of Distance Education for tourist guide training

TV and Radio Broadcasts

Distance education model through TV and Radio broadcasts has been using widely since a long time. Television and Radio programs that are launched in support of printed materials under the framework of a distance education system has been developed with the collaboration of education technocrats and experienced technical teams by using advanced technical opportunities. Television and radio programs are prepared for the issues that are chosen from within the printed materials by editors, scriptwriters and directors. Following steps are scriptwriting, production of programs and their broadcast (Anadolu University, 2006). However, this requires allocating of a TV or Radio channel just for a specific target group and would be a very expensive and difficult process. It is therefore a system that is very difficult to implement.

Printed Materials and Others

This system has been using at the present. All candidates are given such kind of materials in advance of the internship period in a bid to contribute their training. However, the most important disadvantage of this system is that it is not interactive and has no mechanism that allows it to respond to the questions of users. Moreover, it would require planning of a tour in a bid to reach a system and it would require much time and work for revising the parts that could cause any unpredicted technical problems.

The choice of technologies that would be used here are totally depending on the technical and physical adequacy of the tour destination. Mobile telephones and PDA computers would mostly be chosen in the places within the service area of GPRS, EDGE and 3G technologies for the convenience they provide. However, the point that the attention

should be paid here is that the video streaming speed should be adequate and that it should not cause any interruption during the education process. In such cases especially when 3G and EDGE services are too slow to be used in distance education system, other connection methods as PSTN or ADSL should be used through mobile computers. Likewise, ADSL connection is available for use in the regions that are out of the service area of mobile phones. And in cases, when both services are unavailable, TV and Radio broadcasts could be used as a support for training either live or in pre-recorded form. In cases when the data transfer speed is not enough for visual data transfers, transfer of interactive audio data should be selected. Moreover, when devices used as tools of distance education are capable of wireless communication it would further contribute to the continuance of education by providing flexibility to movement.

Implementation of Distance Education techniques in guidance training

The interactive usage of distance education technologies that provide lack of restriction with respect to education space offers more convenience for conduction education. Two main topics of education and 4 different scenarios were considered in the proposed method. First of the main topics is, the education of students away at the destination through distance education system by experts that are away from the site; and the other one is that the education of students in their homes or schools through distance education systems by the experts that are on site. The materials and education systems to be used in interactive education in both systems are the same in both of the systems.

Figure 3 shows the model that is proposed to be used in internship training of tour guide candidates. The destinations shown at the left side (a) of the Figure indicates the places that guide candidates and trainers are in and the right side (b) indicates the candidates and trainers that are away from the place of visits and the destinations shown in the middle (c) of the Figure indicates the communication devices. The possible scenarios that could be used in this model to support education are as follows:
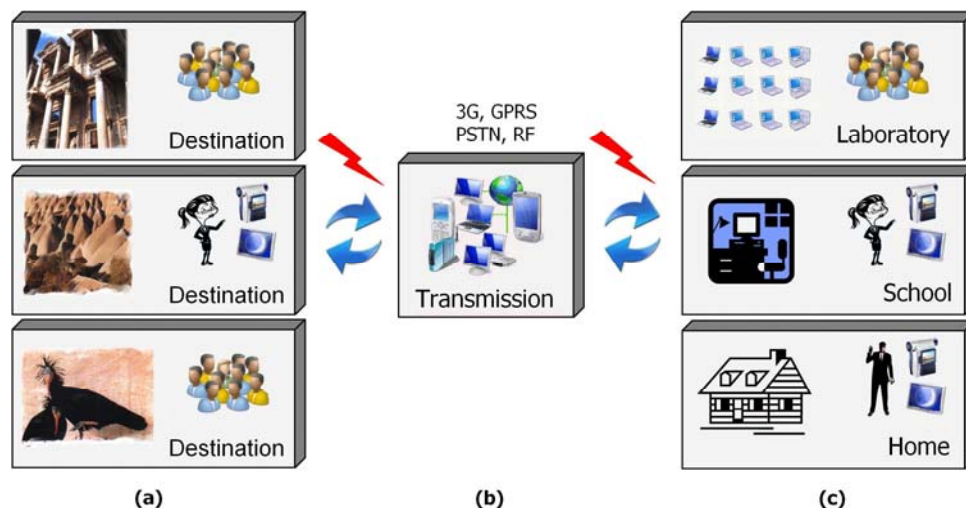

Figure 3. Distance Education model in Tourism Guidance

Scenario 1 (1:1) : Completion of the information process through interactive connection of one instructor who is at the school or at his or her home (c) while the tour guide candidates are at the destination (a). Example: A group of candidates at the destination of (a) could be informed about the Ephesus Ancient City from a guide who is with them in person and at a subsequent time they could get a more detailed information for a duration of 15 to 20 minutes about the architectural structure and artistic importance of the ancient city from an art historian at the destination (c). This scenario removes the necessity of the instructor's visiting the Ephesus Ancient City and thus results in lower costs and a gain in time.

Scenario 2 (1:N) : Completion of the information process through interactive connection with more than one expert from the school or while they are at their homes (c) when the tour guide candidates are at the destination (a). In this case it would also be possible for the other candidates (or other relevant people) that are in the laboratories to

participate in the training. Example: A group of candidates at the destination of (a) could be informed about the Ephesus Ancient City from a guide who is with them in person and at a subsequent time they could get a more detailed information for a duration of 30 to 40 minutes about the architectural structure, archeological history of the ancient city from a art historian at the destination (c) and from an architect or archeologist at the destination (c). Some other candidates that cannot, for any particular reason, participate in the tour in person could benefit from those information at the destination (c). This scenario removes the necessity of two instructors' visiting the Ephesus Ancient City and thus results in lower costs and a gain in time.

Scenario 3 (M:1) : Completion of the information process through interactive connection with an expert from the school or while they are at their homes (c) when more than one group of tour guide candidates are at the destination (a). This situation also allows participation of another expert to the training at a different destination (c) and would contribute to a more efficient information sharing. Example: A group of candidates in the Ephesus Ancient City (a) could be concurrently informed about the history of Hellas and Rome at the same time with another group of guide candidates at the Selcuk Ephesus Museum via an interactive connection with a Rome historian at the destination (c). There is a great amount of gain from time since one instructor can give information to two different groups simultaneously. It would also be beneficial in the sense of the effective usage of inadequate number of experts by enabling them to instruct to two different groups.

Scenario 4 (M:N) : Completion of the information process through interactive connection with more than one expert from the school or while they are at their homes (c) when more than one group of tour guide candidates are at the destinations (a). This scenario provides a full distribution of interaction and establishes a global education mechanism. It enables the interaction of guide candidates and instructors at the destinations (a) and of guide candidates and instructors at the destinations (c) to the same education environment. Example: All tour guide candidates at destinations (a) and (c) could get information on professional ethics and the on job information about the profession and could learn from the experiences of experts and instructors at destinations (a) and (c).

Experimental Results

An experimental study has been carried out in order to measure the effectiveness of the present research. The experimental tour conducted in the research was comprised of places of visit and number of candidates in a bid to simulate the real internship tour around Turkey (in order to keep the training efficient, at most 40 students are allowed to participate in the real tour). This tour is conducted in two stages. In the first stage, 30 students, which is the control group, were trained with traditional education methods without using any distance education technologies; and in the second stage a group of another 30 students, which is the experimental group, were trained by using distance education techniques.

Table 2. Experimental tour' information

Destination	Visiting Duration (min)	Devices and Software which are used for education	Given Information
Isabey Mosque	30	GSM, GPRS – Skype	Architecture, History of Art
Ephesus Ancient City	60	EDGE, GSM – Skype	Architecture, History of Art, Archeology, Anthropology
Virgin Marry House	30	GSM, GPRS – Skype	Architecture, History of Art, Christian's Revolution
St. John Basilica	30	GSM, GPRS – Skype	Architecture, History of Art, Christian's Revolution
Ephesus Museum	60	Wireless Lan, ADSL – Skype, VCPtoP	History of Art, Archeology

Table 2 shows the information relevant to the experimental tour. The experimental group started its visits from Selçuk Isabey Mosque and they were given information about the importance of the Mosque with regard to Turkish and Islamic history along with the information about the historical and architectural information of the mosque. Then the students in the experimental group visited Ephesus Ancient City and they were given information about the history of the ancient city from archeological, anthropological and artistic points of views. The group then visited the

Virgin Mary's house and Ayazma, and was given information about the importance of the place for Christianity. The tour then continued with a visit to St. John's Basilica and the group was about the architectural structure and historical importance of the place with respect to Christianity. The last place that visited was Ephesus Museum where the group was informed about the findings from the Ephesus Ancient City.

Only one guide and one instructor participated in the education of experimental group and the information regarding the architecture, history of art, history, archeology and anthropology was given to the group through distant interactive connections with the specialists of these fields in the university.

At the end of the tour the two groups were subjected to an exam in order to test the efficiency of the education and to observe the difference between two methods. The exam was comprised of 60 questions and was compiled in 4 sections. The sections were divided to measure historical knowledge (15 questions), artistic knowledge (15 questions), visual information (15 questions) and general understanding of the tour (15 questions). Table 3 shows the results of these measurements.

Table 3. Assessment results of experimental tour exam for tourist guide skills

Question Type / Maximum points	Application Group Average	Control Group Average
Ephesus Ancient City, Ephesus Museum		
Historical Skills (Archeological, History of Art.) / 5	4.04	2.53
Social Skills (Anthropological, Social Structure) / 5	4.11	3.62
Visual Skills (Architectural, Environmental) / 5	4.53	3.18
General Culture / 5	3.83	3.90
Isabey Mosque		
Historical Skills (Archeological, History of Art.) / 5	4.31	3.28
Social Skills (Anthropological, Social Structure) / 5	4.27	3.19
Visual Skills (Architectural, Environmental) / 5	4.78	3.76
General Culture / 5	4.12	4.19
Virgin Marry House, St. John Basilica		
Historical Skills (Archeological, History of Art.) / 5	4.42	3.13
Social Skills (Anthropological, Social Structure) / 5	4.16	4.23
Visual Skills (Architectural, Environmental) / 5	4.83	4.16
General Culture / 5	4.31	4.27
Total Cumulative / 60	51.71	43.44
Total Cumulative / 100	86.18	72.40

The field information obtained as a result of the exam is shown in Table 3. It could be seen that the rates of success are changing from one field to another. It is for sure that the education levels and fields of interest of the participants is also a factor affecting the result of the exam. However, since both groups of students (experimental and control groups) were selected from the same department of the university, those differences should be regarded at the lowest level.

The exam showed that while the group educated with distance education techniques has obtained an 86.18 success rate in general, the success rate of the control group was remained at 72.40. Looking at these results it could be said that by using the distance education techniques, the success rate of the candidates could be increased by 16% (=86.18 - 72.40 / 86.18).

Another gain that was observed during the experiment was total communication costs that was spent for GPRS, GSM, EDGE and ADSL Technologies are the same amount as the transportation costs that an expert from whom the information is got from distance would spend to reach there. Considering that the infrastructure cost would be spent only for once, it would seem obvious that the communication costs of the technological devices would be much less than the costs that would be necessary for bringing experts to the sites of tours.

Discussion

It has been seen that some important information can be provided for the candidates in a more appropriate and cheap way by the use of distance education system. In addition to this, it has been seen that the time needed for the experts to go to the visit places is lessened and thus they could provide information for more than one group simultaneously and more comfortably. In this way it was observed that significant gains can be obtained in terms of education, time, and cost.

In the studies, some problems were also observed besides the gains. The main problem is that in the regions where technological infrastructure is insufficient, especially EDGE and Wireless LAN technologies are not used (approximately %30 of the visit places are in such conditions) the connections are slow and/or connections is lost time to time affects the education in negative way. Therefore, it was observed that the system requires use of high technological products. In addition to this, the materials that will be used for the education especially visual instruments that the guide candidates and guides use (headphones, microphones) should be wireless. Use of wireless instruments is very important for not only increasing freedom of movement but also preventing disturbance of other visitors in the visit place during education.

It can be concluded that since the beginning infrastructure costs are not too high and high technological products costs less than labor power, use of this system is quite appropriate.

Conclusion

This study is an implementation of distance education model in "Big Training Tour of Turkey" education. As a result of implementation of the suggested method, many positive results and information regarding the validity of the method have been obtained. It became possible to support education of tourist guide through the use of Distance Education techniques. In this way, through use of technological products in education of tourist guide, quality of the education is increased and its cost and duration is decreased. Advantages of this method for the education can be listed as follows:
➢ A good education is provided in all places in the context of the tour that should be visited within 36 day education period
➢ It enables carrying out parallel training of more than one group and thus enabling the instructors that have expertise on more than one destination to participate in the training of more than one group in different destinations without visiting the places in person.
➢ The candidates who cannot participate directly temporarily have the chance to participate in the tour from distance.
➢ People who do not attend to the tour and want to participate as audience can benefit from the tour information over internet.
➢ Reducing of the training period by enabling the groups to be benefited from more than one expert at the visited places of the tour and thus reducing the total costs arouse out of the general process of the education.
➢ Enabling recording of the previous tour information for future usage.
➢ Spreading of education to the lower class students by enabling them to participate in the training process and therefore providing a relative widening of education process.
➢ Decreasing worries of the families about their children through forming an atmosphere that the candidate families can follow the candidates

Besides the advantages listed above, the system has also some disadvantages. One of these is the initial cost for establishment of the infrastructure of the system. Although it does not necessitate very big investments, its requiring for an obvious infrastructure cost is seen as a disadvantage. In addition to this, education of the materials that will be used in the system and a preliminary education process needed for technological products to be able to used in the system can also be seen as a disadvantage. However, despite all these disadvantages, considering the gains that can be obtained, this system can easily take its place in education of tourist guide.

Acknowledgements

References

ACS. (2006). *Distance Education*, retrieved May 16, 2007 from http://www.acsedu.co.uk/.

Ahipasaoglu, S. (1997). *Seyahat Isletmelerinde Tur Planlaması-Yonetimi ve Rehberligin Meslek Olarak Secilmesinin Nedenleri Uzerine Bir Uygulama*, Ankara, 171-174.

Anadolu University. (2006). *Learning Environments*, retrieved May 21, 2007, from http://www.aof.edu.tr/ tanitim.html.

Balta, S., & Sahin, Y. G. (2006). Tour Operation Management for Tourism Guidance Using Interactive Training Methods in Turkey's Tour. *VI International Educational Technology Symposium (IETC-2006)*, EasternMediterranean University, Gazi Magusa, TRNC, 1, 225-231.

Boz, N. (2004). Tourism Laws. *Seckin Publishing*, Ankara, 103-104.

Buhalis, D. (1998). Strategic use of information technologies in the tourism industry. *Tourism Management, 19* (5): 409-421.

Bulbul, H. I., Batmaz, I., Kucukali, M., Sahin, Y. G., & Tulgar, Y. (2003). Internet ve Intranet Uzerinde Macromedia Flash Communication Server Mx ile Etkilesimli Bir Uzaktan Egitim Modeli Tasarimi. *III. International Educational Technology Symposium*, May 28-30, Eastern Mediterranean University. Gazi Magusa. TRNC, 1, 610-615.

Bulbul, H. I, Kucukali, M., Sahin, Y. G., & Yildiz, K. (2004). SCORM Model as a Distance Education Standard. *IV. International Educational Technology Symposium*, Sakarya/Turkey, 2, 1185-1991.

Dung, C. (2002). *Security Along the Path Through GPRS Towards 3G Mobile Telephone Network Data Services*. Retrieved May 21, 2007 from www.byte.csc.lsu.edu/~durresi/7502/reading/165.pdf.

Fay, B. (1992). Essentials of Tour Management, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Indiana University. (2006). *Online and Distance Education*, retrieved May 16, 2007 from http://www.iu.edu/ ~iuonline/de/decourses/tcem.html.

Indira Gandhi National Open University (2006). *Doctor of Tourism Studies, Master of Science (Hospitality Administration), Bachelor of Tourism Studies*, Retrieved May 16, 2007 from http://www.education.nic.in/ dist_inst.asp.

Keegan, D. (1986). *The Foundations of Distance education*, London: Routledge.

Kimber, J., Georgievski, M., & Sharda, N. (2005). Developing Usability Testing Systems and Procedures for Mobile Tourism Services. *Proceedings of the Hospitality Information Technology Association Conference HITA 05*, Los Angeles, California, June 19-20, 79-96.

Les Roches Swiss Hotel (2006). *Swiss Hotel Association School of Hotel Management*, Retrieved May 18, 2007, from http://lesroches.cc/campaigns/lesroches/505/lesroches_505.asp?campaign=505&clickID=LL5050188.

NC State University (2006), retrieved May 18, 2006 from http://distance.ncsu.edu/programscourses/catalog/fall06/PRT.html.

New Nouveau Brunswick (2006). *New Nouveau BRUNSWICK Canada Department of Education*, retrieved May 5, 2007 from http://www.gnb.ca/0000/as/dl-e.asp.

O'Malley, C. E., & Scanlon, E. (1990). Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning − Problem Solving and Distance Education. *Computers & Education, 15* (1-3), 127-136.

Ozbay, R. (2002). Where Tourism Guidance Education Goes. *Tourism Education Workshop and Conference,* 11-13 Dec. Ankara.

Ozturan, M., & Roney, S. A. (2004). Internet use among travel agencies in Turkey: an exploratory study. *Tourism Management, 25* (2), 259-266.

Poon, A. (1988). Tourism and Information Technologies. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15 (4), 531-549.

Sirakaya, E., & Woodside, A. G. (2005). Building and testing theories of decision making by Travelers. *Tourism Management, 26* (6), 815-832.

Sherry, L. (1996). Issues in Distance Learning. *International Journal of Educational Telecommunications, 1* (4), 337-365.

Southwestern University (2006). Southwestern University, Retrieved May 18, 2006 from http://www.sagu.edu/sde/.

Taplin, J. H. E., & Qiu, M. (1997). Car trip attraction and route choice in Australia. *Annals of Tourism Research, 24* (3), 624-637.

Taylor, J. C. (2000). In the World of Open and Distance Learning. In Reddy, V. & Maniulika, S. (Eds.), *New Millennium Distance Education*, India: Viva Books, 475-480.

The Professional Development Institute of Tourism (2006). *British Columbia Private Post-secondary Education*, Retrieved May 16, 2007 from http://www.island.net/~htm/tourism4.html.

Turkish Ministry of Tourism and Culture (2006). *Professional Tourist Guidance Regulations*, Retrieved May 19, 2007 from http://rega.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Eskiler/2005/11/20051125-4.htm.

University of Guelph (2006). *Hospitality and Tourism Management Accounting*, Retrieved May 18, 2007 from http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/c11/c11-de.shtml.

University of Houston (2006). HRMA 6365: Tourism and travel, Retrieved May 18, 2007 from http://distance.uh.edu/courses/course.html?id=2753.