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CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING DISTANCE LEARNING AT UNIVERSITIES IN UKRAINE

Despite being relevant Ukrainian universities distance learning faces a lot of problems in the process of its implementing. The problems are connected not only with the technical aspect but also with the cultural one. Moreover, there are much more barriers that should be overcome. However, the conducted research proves the perspective and importance of online courses implementing for the increasing the effectiveness of the education at Ukrainian universities.
Key words: *on-line course; distance learning; quality of on-line education; on-line course structuring.*

The pointed problem. Computer technologies are considered as not something innovative but as a part of modern life. They are used in all areas of life including the education. The implementation of the education system, oriented to the integration of the country to the global information world, means accepting changes in pedagogical theory and practice on all levels. Computer technologies are too be oriented to becoming not something additional but an independent part in the education practice as well as the separate means of teaching with the purpose of increasing its effectiveness. Distance learning started to develop in Ukraine not long ago. Before 2013 there were only separate approaches (experiments made by different universities) about distance and on-line learning implementation but there was no complex program and, what is more important, there was no official document proving the support of distance learning by the state. However, modern terms «distance education» and «on-line courses» come from the notion «correspondence education» which was a kind of external education quite wide-spread in Soviet Union period.

Four years ago Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine adopted the law about the distance learning at educational establishments (secondary schools, universities and institutes). However, a lot of aspects left unclear including implementing and designing the courses, the ways of increasing the distance learning effectiveness and the quality of education.

The references analyses. The distance learning issues were investigated by different scientists in different aspects, such as: the development and content (C. Avdoshyn,. K. Korsak, S. Viller, V. Zinchenko), usage of the information technologies in pedagogical practice (Y. Pasichnik, P. Stefanenko); the designing of online courses (V. Rybalka, T. Oliynyk); the quality of distance learning (N. Mulina, V. Yakovenko); psychological aspect of on-line courses implementation (E. Isaev, M. Nazar); interaction of the participants of the educational process (O. Honchar, S. Komarov) and other aspects. However, the analyses of the theory only does not show the current situation with the distance learning implementing at the Ukrainian universities. To realize the challenges and the perspectives of the designing and using the on-line courses, the complex analyses of theoretical and practical bases and the experience of foreign universities in this field.

So, the aim of the article is to point the peculiarities of designing and implementing the online courses at Ukrainian universities.

To reach the pointed goal the following tasks should be solved, such as:

− to analyze the current situation with the designing and implementing the online courses at Ukrainian universities stressing the difficulties occurring during on-line studying;

− to predict the perspectives for the on-line education pointing the psychological conditions of implementing them.

Body of the research. The approaches to the distance learning vary depending on the content of the scientists who worked on it. As M. Nazar points «on-line education» is the purposeful process accompanied by a formalized statement of achievements and conducted via Internet; the base of such education is the transferring the knowledge and information from on-line resources and the accepting them by the student [14]. The pedagogic theory considers the education as the communication between a lecturer and a student. (O. Honchar) [4]. In the context of on-line learning it is interaction which includes educational communication. As V. D'yachenko points the educational communication can be in pairs (the most wide-spread in Ukraine), front (one speaker and a number of listeners), collective (communication in small groups but different members all the time), group (the permanent group members) and mediated (communication without personal contact via Internet) [13].

As O. Honchar says «distance learning» can be defined as focused interactive, asynchronous interaction between participants of education as well as with the means of education. The most important benefits of it can be: at first, the ability to communicate with a lecturer any time; at second, the student does not feel embarrassed asking a question not face to face; and finally, as students often prefer short advice than detailed explanation because it stimulates creative solving the learning objectives and gives opportunity to develop self-control.

The adopted law about distance learning points [9] that the aim of on-line education is providing educational services through the use of ICT for education or specific training levels according to state standards; training programs for citizens, foreigners and employees. The target group for distance learning in Ukraine according to the law is physical disable people, citizen of Ukraine who live abroad, those who are getting ready for entering the university, pupils who would like to get additional knowledge, pupils who live far away from educational establishment. This law gave definitions to the terms «distance learning», «e-learning» and «online education» making them almost the synonyms with minimum difference in the used means of education.

The target group for distance education in Ukraine is mainly physical and mental disable people (according to the law). But actually the penetrated market here should be extended by:

– those who would like to increase their qualification or get additional knowledge on a certain field,

– students who can't attend certain course because of work and prefer to have a distance one (but there should be limits for the number of distance course);

– those who are having internship or academic grant programmes abroad and do not want to miss a year.

Absence of the detailed explanation of the target group makes the process a bit confused. So those who can bring money to the university can not be sure whether they will be allowed to take the required course online or even will be given an opportunity to have this course. One more thing that a student should keep in mind choosing taking a distance course in Ukraine is the quality of education. Distance learning mainly means self-preparation work with the high level of motivation and responsibility. Not every student is ready for such kind of work.

Based on the experience of the USA universities [12] about arranging the on-line education, the algorithm of conducting the online course should have a number of stages, such as:

– testing the personal qualities of a student (online);

– admission to the chosen course and accepting the tuition fee per course;

– pointing the tutor;

– making the individual academic plan to have credits,

– passing the control tests/exams (online or mixed);

– getting the certificate about the course; continuing the on-line education.

The main person in the online-education is a tutor who is considered to be an expert, an advisor, a leader. The directions of his activity are the following: projecting, consulting, facilitative and organizational. The professional functions of a tutor are managerial, diagnosis, mo-

tivation, planning, communication, controlling, reflexive and methodological [4].

The first stage of the experiment (analytical) was conducted at 12 universities in Ukraine and 2 foreign universities (Germany). The next stage of the experiment (the implemented) was made at Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University, Mykolayiv, Ukraine. Based on the experience of this university, the structure of the on-line course «Management» as well as the advantages and disadvantages of its using will be discussed.

The course was designed for the second year students of Economic science faculty (specialization Finance and credit with the knowledge of English, language of studying is English).The course consists of 4,5 credits and contains 15 lectures (L). Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University uses Moodle so the course is a part of it. There are video lectures and power point presentations (PPP) to all topics; self-checking (SC) questions and tests to each topic are also included. There are 5 video webinars and teleconferences during the course. These webinars are aimed to discuss the unclear moments by the students. The on-line students are to apply for taking part in webinar so that the tutor knows the number of participants.

The course contains midterm (MT) and final exams (FE) as well as individual paper (IP) and presentation of this paper. Midterm is written after learning 7 topics. Midterm consists of short, long answers and case study. The time for midterm is proved both by the tutor and the student. The course moderator opens the access to the midterm and a student has 2 hours to complete it. Final exam is written after obtaining 15 topics and also consists of short, long answers and case studies; time for writing final exam is also 2 hours.

The next type of student's work is individual paper which should be written according to academic writing standards and sent to the tutor before the deadline. Presentation is done based on the individual paper and presented to other students (mainly it is done on-line by different students and it is open for public; any person can register to see and then discuss the presentation).The presentation used to be sent directly to the tutor like the additional type of work but now the students make 10–15 seconds promo of their public speaking and upload it to the group of the conducted course trying to make the promo as attractive as possible. Other students evaluate the promo and according to the range the best three presentations are chosen. Then these people present the works during online conference. The public speaking can be seen and discussed not only by the listeners of the course but also by other students (it's open). The listeners discuss and evaluate the presentations and send the feedbacks.

The on-line course consists of on-line resources (the storage of all current, support and additional information which becomes available for the students every week), communication activity (aimed to involve students into online discussion of the presentations on individual projects/on-line conference, webinars), project activity (aimed to develop the creative skills of students and means interacting with students individually on-line) and control/effectiveness of the course (consists of the anal-

yses of students' feedbacks ad the students' evaluation by the tutor).

The effectiveness of the course is rather high (based on students' feedbacks). However, the level of individual papers and power point presentations remains not good at all. In individual papers the level of plagiarism is very high (almost 70 %). So it is not an IP, it is work on copying and pasting the borrowed information without any analyses. One more problem is the question about cheating on exams. It happens quite often with full-time students and of course it is common for distance students. In Ukraine midterm and final exams do not show the real level of students' knowledge – only their ability to look for the information. Other negative moment is that the students mainly ignore the self-evaluation questions and tests. So their level of knowledge is lower than average. They have little knowledge of the course but would like to get «A» or at least «B» grade for the course and to gain the certificate. The validity of this certificate is minimum. Of course not all Ukrainian students are like that but because of the domination of such attitude and such behavior, the stereotype about the level of preparation of the Ukrainian students has been formed.

The main reason of the listed problems is the mentality difference (attitude to cheating, responsibility and success-orientation, trust in fairness, attitude to neglecting the rules/legal). One more thing that should be solved before implementing the online course in Ukraine is the support of the university as there can be: lack of the facilities, less than average level of technical providing and not always accepting the course by the university authority.

The difficulties of on-line learning for students and lecturers at Ukrainian universities:

– The existence of the psychological barriers of students and lecturers;

– Peculiarities of work and communicate using Internet;

– Perceptive processes of a person

– To increase the effectiveness of the online learning positive environment should be created. The moderators of the distance education should pay attention to:

– The level of computer using awareness:

– The ability to present the information in the proper way;

– The existence the technical facilities;

– Modeling the education environment that expresses the necessary content presented by the educational resources of the Internet.

Peculiarities of on-line learning of the students at Ukrainian universities are the following:

– Increasing the level of self-support of students;

– Speeding the process of transferring the knowledge from internal to external forms;

– Increasing the level of searching skills; the analytical skills; the decision and conclusion making skills;

– The possibility to review the process returning to intermediate stages

Conclusion. The importance and relevance of distance education is evident. However, its implementation at the Ukrainian universities is not so good as it could be. The reasons of it are different, technical, personal and legal. The most complicated problem is the personal one. The attitude of students and lecturers to distance learning is a bit contemptuous.

At first, on-line teaching is the easiest and the most lightweight way of gaining education (as it is thought by the Ukrainian students). This stereotype is common both for Ukrainian employers and for students. The students consider this type of education to be a kind of so called «legal fake». In other words, a person pays money for the course and expects to be given a certificate without doing anything.

At second, the Ukrainian students got used to looking for excuses for not doing something and online learning suits it well. The name of this way of learning gives an excuse for not performing the task. The results of the research show that about half of students explain their not succeeding in the on-line course by poor Internet connection but not by their incapability.

And finally, implementing the online course into the education process at Ukrainian universities, a person should be ready for resistance from the side of the university authority as it demands extra efforts and expenses.

The advantages of implementing the distance education at the Ukrainian universities are the following:

– Interactive education – good cooperation between the participants of the educational process;

– Adaptability – provides the intensity of learning according to the wish of a student;

– Mobility and flexibility – such kind of education is available for everybody;

– Economically advantageous both for the university and for the student.

However, despite such visual advantages, the implementation of effective distance learning is occurring rather slowly. Such paradox can be explained by the disadvantages of on-line courses, such as:

– Low level of computer skills of both the staff and the students;

– Difficulties in designing the programs;

– Resistance of lecturers to change anything in their work;

– Mental and cultural peculiarities of the participant of the training as well as of the potential employers from Ukraine;

– Low level of the self-education skills, low level of motivation and self-control.

The article analyzes the current situation with the designing and implementing the on-line course at the Ukrainian universities. The general situation is not very good. But there's a positive tendency. New young lecturers oriented to the western approaches and with the European views to the education are able to enhance the importance and increase the popularity and effectiveness of distance learning.

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ПРОБЛЕМИ РЕАЛІЗАЦІЇ ДИСТАНЦІЙНОГО НАВЧАННЯ В УКРАЇНІ У ВНЗ

Українські ВНЗ дистанційного навчання стикаються з безліччю проблем у процесі його реалізації. Проблеми пов'язані не тільки з технічним аспектом, але і з культурним. Крім того, існує багато перешкод, які потрібно долати. Однак проведене дослідження доводить перспективу і важливість онлайн-курсів реалізації для підвищення ефективності освіти в українських університетах.

Ключові слова: онлайн курс; дистанційне навчання; якість освіти на лінії; на лінії курсу структурування.

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**ПРОБЛЕМЫ ОСУЩЕСТВЛЕНИЯ ДИСТАНЦИОННОГО
ОБУЧЕНИЯ В УНИВЕРСИТЕТАХ УКРАИНЫ**

Украинские ВУЗы дистанционного обучения сталкиваются с множеством проблем в процессе его реализации. Проблемы связаны не только с техническим аспектом, но и с культурным. Кроме того, существует много препятствий, которые следует преодолевать. Однако, проведенное исследование доказывает перспективу и важность онлайн-курсов реализации для повышения эффективности образования в украинских университетах.

Ключевые слова: он-лайн курс; дистанционное обучение; качество образования на линии; на линии курса структурирование.