

**Galina Cherednichenko, candidate of
pedagogical science, docent**

Liudmila Shapran, docent

National University of Food Technologies, Kyiv, Ukraine

DISTANCE LEARNING: METHODICS, POTENTIAL, AVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Annotation

In the article the authors disclose concept, characteristics, peculiarities of distance learning, which is gaining popularity around the world. In Ukraine, distance education is extremely actual. The reason for this success lies in regular training and retraining, as well as distance education is an alternative to extramural courses. The authors analyze theoretical, legal and methodological resources of distance education, reveal the advantages and disadvantages, problems and prospects of implementing distance education in Ukraine.

Key words: *distance education, Ukraine, distance learning*

I. Introduction. In the period of rapid technological change and changing market conditions, the education system is challenged with providing increased educational opportunities without increased budgets. Many higher educational establishments and technical schools can answer this challenge by developing distance education programs. Distance education takes place when a teacher and student(s) are separated by physical distance, and technology (i.e., voice, video, data, and print) is used to bridge the instructional gap. These types of programs can provide students with a second chance at a college education, reach those disadvantaged by limited time, distance or physical disability, and update the knowledge base of workers at their places of employment.

II. Materials and methods. The theoretical, practical and social aspects of distance learning in Ukraine were developed insufficiently. Scientific works of such Ukrainian scientists as V.E. Bykov (В.Е. Биков), E.V. Verenysh (Е.В. Веренич), P.V. Dmitrenko (П. В. Дмитренко), S.P. Kydriavtseva (С.П.Кудрявцева),

V.V.Kolos (В.В. Колос), N.O.Korsunska (Н.О. Корсунська), V.M. Kykharenko (В.М.Кухаренко), V.V. Oleinyk (В.В.Олійник), Y.A. Pasachnyk (Ю.А.Пасічник), S. Sasonov (С. Сазонов), P.M. Talanchuk (П.М. Таланчук), O.V. Tretiak (О. В. Третьяк) and others, were published mainly prior to 2000 and they don't have any important influence on the general situation with Distance learning in Ukraine. The same problem concerns the local achievements in the sphere of Distance learning in certain higher educational institutions and scientific organizations.

Having a few centres of distance learning, Ukraine has already made first substantial steps to expand the system of Distance learning in the country. Thus, distance learning was defined as a separate form of education in the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" 14, "The Concept of Distance learning Development in Ukraine" was developed and adopted, and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine introduced the distance learning development program . But still considerable work is required to accredit distance learning programs and ensure state validation of diplomas, received after distance learning. Innovations in the field of information communication technologies create new complex challenges. They involve pedagogy, methodology, administrative management and financing, ensuring quality of learning, defending intellectual property rights and other aspects [1,3,].

Within the framework of radical transformations in the system of higher education, caused by knowledge societies and introduction of new information communication technologies, we can distinguish a number of important issues.

The development of distance learning in Ukraine began considerably later than in West European countries and was carried out in unfavourable conditions. For quite a long time, actually up to 2000, there was no state strategy of distance learning development. And there was informative inequality, which was a very important factor in Ukraine. On the one hand, our country belongs to the group of fifty biggest countries in population and territory, but according to the Network Readiness Index it is only 70th out of 80 countries (www.weforum.org/gitr). On the other hand, information resources and their users were allocated very unevenly in our country [4].

It is necessary to emphasise that annual growth rates of all types of information resources in Ukraine considerably outrun European countries, as there is a lack of information communication technologies on domestic market. Moreover, the market of information communication technologies has become very profitable in Ukraine in the last five years.

The International Scientific and Educational Centre of Information Technologies and Systems of the National Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Education and Science was one of the first Ukrainian scientific and educational organizations, which began a real introduction of information communication technologies in education in 1995. This centre was the first to combine the advantages of new communication technologies with corresponding pedagogical technologies by creation of telecommunication didactics laboratory to introduce new methods and pedagogical technologies of distance learning on the basis of modern information communication technologies in Ukraine. While creating this telecommunication didactics laboratory and further developing its structure, the results of broad international cooperation with the leading universities of England, Holland, Norway, France, Mexico were used. Experience acquired in the process of both distance learning and development of distance courses, made it possible to define some important concepts and understand problems which arise in the course of introduction of distance learning in Ukraine. Today, the majority of educational institutions of Ukraine provide distance learning and widely use computers [2].

Today, the majority of educational institutions of Ukraine provide distance learning.

Although distance learning in Ukraine does not fully meets the requirements of information society, and does not provide full-fledged entering of Ukraine in international educational space, the development of distance learning in Ukraine incorporates all achievements in this sphere. Current situation is characterized by some propositions on how to create the Ukrainian system of distance learning. Thus, National Technical University "The Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute" published the Memorandum of Creation of Information Educational Network "Ukrainian distance

learning". The Lviv Institute of Management (<http://www.lim.lviv.ua/>), which claims to be the leader in the creation of Ukrainian system of distance learning in western regions, made similar proposition. With the assistance of the World Bank the Centre of distance learning Global Development Network (the Centre of Global Development Educational Network) was created on the base of The National Academy of Public Administration under the Office of the President of Ukraine.

According to the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine №293 of 07.07.2000 the Ukrainian Centre for Distance learning, the structural subdivision of the National Technical University the "Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", was created, whose primary objective is to create a system of distance learning in Ukraine according to the tasks of the National Program of Informatization.

III. Results. We can see the main advantages of distance learning in Ukraine: availability to all segments of population; it isn't necessary to attend lectures and seminars; democratic relations with a teacher and students; a complex software; modern educational technology; individual learning process; flexible consultations.

Prospects of providing the distance education in Ukraine lie in the process of implementation of computer and audio -visual equipment. At present the problem of distance education is being developed by almost all universities of Ukraine[10].

Despite the relatively positive characteristics of distance education, as no other form of education, it has several drawbacks. First of all, it is difficult to assess remote students as at present stage of technology development it is difficult to check who takes the exam. However, the universities, providing learning in distance courses, require obligatory presence of students on several exams in high school. And students must provide documents which identity personality.

In addition, quite a significant problem is the low capacity of electronic network during training, examinations or teleconferences. The students of remote small towns of Ukraine suffer most of all because of geographical remoteness from centers of research.

Important disadvantage of distance education in Ukraine is insufficient contact between a personal tutor and students studying by distance because teachers are

highly overloaded. Foreign students who take distance learning courses can receive answers to their emails within hours, as there are more teachers than students in countries with large experience in implementing distance education. Unfortunately, the situation is opposite in Ukraine- there are a lot people who want to get distance education but there are no many experienced teachers who are familiar with the latest technologies of distance communication.

IV Conclusions. In general, distance education in Ukraine does not meet the requirements that relate to information society and does not provide full integration of Ukraine into the international educational space. In order to take right place the system of distance education of Ukraine, it is necessary first of all to create a global network of computer science and education, as PC allows to get the course material both in a library and in a center of reference information and communication center, which makes it one of the participants of the program of life-long education in Ukraine.

A significant backlog of Ukraine from foreign countries in distance education, because of objective and subjective reasons, hampering the development of education, slows its entering into the global educational community as an equal partner.

There is no scientifically based and clearly articulated strategy for distance education in Ukraine. The country does not have the relevant programs of national and regional levels. The low level of computerization of society and education in particular, the development of low educational institutions of network information technology, unformed national educational space in the Web- environment and other factors at present make it impossible to realize the significant potential of distance learning. Individual initiative and the positive results of their implementation do not solve the problem in general [5].

The analysis of the state of distance learning shows that all educational institutions, organizations and establishments, which introduce or use distance learning technologies, face real difficulties, overcoming of which requires targeted financing, combining the efforts of these institutions with the efforts of state bodies,

co-ordination of general activities and creation of legislative environment which will enhance the process of introduction of distance learning, and will eventually decrease intellectual, material and financial costs on the introduction and development of distance learning on the whole.

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