

ADVANTAGES VS DISADVANTAGES OF E-LEARNING INTRODUCTION INTO THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IN THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

The article highlights the basic principles, advantages and disadvantages of e learning as a modern method of implementation of educational activities in higher medical educational institutions. The attention is focused on the change of teacher's role in distance education and the much wider opportunities for students when using MOODLE platform. Certain aspects of the probability of displacement of the traditional system of education by distance learning are revealed.

Key words: distance learning, higher educational institution, individual work, MOODLE system, training methods.

У статті висвітлено основні принципи, переваги і недоліки електронного навчання як сучасного методу здійснення освітньої діяльності у вищих медичних навчальних закладах. Акцентується увага на зміні ролі викладача при дистанційному навчанні та значно ширших можливостях студентів за використання платформи MOODLE. Відкриваються окремі аспекти ймовірності витіснення традиційної системи освіти дистанційним навчанням.

Ключові слова: дистанційне навчання, вищий навчальний заклад, самостійна робота, система MOODLE, методи навчання.

В статье отображены основные принципы, преимущества и недостатки электронного обучения как современного метода осуществления образовательной деятельности в высших медицинских учебных заведениях. Акцентируется внимание на изменении роли преподавателя при дистанционном обучении и значительно более широких возможностях студентов при использовании платформы MOODLE. Открываются отдельные аспекты вероятности вытеснения традиционной системы образования дистанционным обучением.

Ключевые слова: дистанционное обучение, высшее учебное заведение, самостоятельная работа, система MOODLE, методы обучения.

Distant education in Ukraine, being new, is still not implemented into the educational system of the country, although, judging from the latest tendencies, has high chances to enter the lives of students and professionals of all categories, giving them the opportunities to realize the concept of continuous training by «in-service» education.

Traditional methods and forms of training give way to new tools and technologies of training, able to improve the efficiency of the educational process in the steady increase of educational information, which the student has to perceive and learn. New technologies are effective for self-study, what is an important aspect at the stage of transition to the lifelong continuous education. This transition requires not only changes in educational technologies, but also new human qualities – his/her ability to self-assessment, self-learning, self-improvement etc. [8, p. 302].

The *topicality* of the given paper is stipulated by the fact that information exchange in the modern world is in fact very fast and traditional methods of communication are being displaced by progressive technologies in higher educational institutions as well. It is possible that lecture-seminar system will become history.

The article *aims* at describing the main principles, tasks, advantages and disadvantages of distant learning system.

Objectives of the article are as follows: 1) to determine what opportunities the system of distant learning gives to students/teachers; 2) to trace the introduction of the main distant learning principles into the system of higher medical education; 3) to find out advantages and disadvantages of distant learning system in higher educational establishments.

Distant learning as a new strategy of the educational process has been studied by many scientists. Some of them, O. Vasiuk, A. Veremchuk, M. Kademiya, O. Mamon, S. Romaniuk, A. Hladyr pay attention to the e-learning in a higher educational institution, that is why their investigations are especially valuable for this very research.

Advantages and disadvantages of the use of distant learning platforms constitute the *object* of the research.

MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) is free, open (Open Source) system of distant learning. It realizes the philosophy of "pedagogy of social constructivism" [1] and is first of all aimed at organizing interaction between the teacher and students, even though can also be used for the organization of traditional distant courses and the support of full-time instruction as well [3; 5].

The undoubted advantage of Moodle platform to the point of view of S. Romaniuk, is the possibility of its free use, large geography prevalence worldwide. Among the disadvantages researchers name: the complexity of maintenance and technical support. But still, Moodle helps to organize the learning process effectively. The author also calls it the most promising and most convenient solution at present [9, p. 320].

Traditional full-time education has much in common with distant learning. Unlike the traditional study, distant learning gives the possibility to: study in a convenient time, place, at a convenient rate; study simultaneously with professional activity; maintain relations with each other and a teacher; use in the educational process modern information and telecommunication technologies.

The range of functional duties of a teacher extends: s/he has to organize students' individual cognitive activities, teach them to gain knowledge by themselves and introduce the obtained experience into practice.

For higher medical education distant learning cannot be a panacea, replacing the daily classroom work of students, since the system of obtaining medical profession by itself makes no provision for an independent organization of educational process (partly the equivalent of such approach is a nonresident instruction). Therefore, in our opinion, combined approach in understanding the content of distant learning would be successful: full-time education model is in its base, but certain elements of dynamic learning at a distance are involved [3].

The appearance of Moodle system on the site of Bukovinian State Medical University has shown the first results: according to the students inquiry and the frequency of visiting the distance course "Foreign Language", "Foreign language for professional purposes" (the first and the second year of studying respectively), availability of 24-hour access to the didactic, methodical, testing materials generally facilitates the preparation process, optimizes the process of thematic vocabulary learning, since the terms are given with a contextual translation.

Grammatical commentary deserves special attention: thus, the students can not only receive a written synopsis on grammatical material (in the so-called "sufficient volume for a particular purpose"), but also take an on-line testing, check their knowledge, analyze correct answers. In the lexical aspect attention is focused on the terminological, professional vocabulary, term-like units, i.e. primarily it refers to the course of foreign language for specific purposes, at the same time grammar is uniquely universal, the students do not need to look for additional literature for the preparation to the module control.

The advantage of creating distant learning site is that the teacher can attach all the necessary material on-line, and, in addition, offer much more information:

video, audio materials for both individual use and with the possibility of their further use in class for the purpose of listening, discussing, and written assignments.

It should also be noted as S. Romaniuk states that these platforms can be effectively used in teaching students of full-time study, as the system contains tasks for individual work of students, and the teacher can get the fulfilled tasks electronically by the deadline, create and hold a variety of tests, which can greatly optimize teacher's work, particularly due to the fact that there would be no need to check the test answers that would be done automatically [9, p. 321].

The distant learning system requires significant increase of the proportion of individual work, and this in its turn leads to changes in the content of forms and methods of teaching-learning process. The essence of teachers' work in these conditions is slightly shifted towards creating educational methodical data for subjects in electronic form, and it consists in the continuous work on making the necessary changes in the educational material, selection of illustrations, graphs, creation of animations, tests for self-control.

M. Kademiya also dwells upon the growth of material amount for self-study: «In contrast to the representation of knowledge in final form in the traditional form of education, without the possibility of students' development while using the explanatory-illustrative and reproductive methods of learning, E-learning stipulates an increase in students' independent work, learning at an individual rate, wide possibilities of communication with other members of the educational process, joint planning of their activities» [7, p. 78].

Permanent free access to the resource, the opportunity of regular improvement of the existing materials and their correction, providing with specific volume and content of information, availability of interactive testing, teacher's access to check of student's work, their results can be singled out among the positive features of creation of distant learning site.

Advantages and disadvantages of distant learning systems are abundantly described by different researchers [2; 6-9]. Among the advantages of distant learning system in comparison to traditional forms M. Kademiya highlights the following: greater access opportunities – the students get access through the Internet to e-courses from any place where there is connection with the global information network; lower prices for obtaining educational materials via the Internet; ability to develop e-courses created on a modular basis; flexibility of education – duration, sequence of material learning, and the possibility of self-selection according to their own capabilities and needs; studying at the work place, at home, on the way using mobile Internet; ability to develop and improve oneself according to the requirements of time; objective knowledge assessment [7, p. 80].

Successful management of students' education is possible only with regular and accurate information about student learning. It can be ensured only by properly organized step-by-step thematic control. After studying each topic (module) final control class can be performed – a test or written paper in the Moodle system.

According to A. Veremchuk [4, p. 322-323] some negative aspects of distant learning system can be singled out. These disadvantages one can come across while introducing distant education into the educational

process: weak coordinating function of the Ministry of Education (inconsistency in the legal provision, in standardization, in economic and financial issues, in assessing the quality of education); competition among universities for students – as the main source of funding – led to the autonomy of many universities, closed development, which is also associated with the fact that the issue of copyright protection is not processed; the human factor plays an important role in the learning process, because the teacher by direct contact with the student, can transmit and inculcate a range of skills, and in distance education it fully or partially disappears; existing before methods of education do not easily combine with new technologies, and most teaching and learning materials are not suitable for distance learning; distant learning is not possible for some specialties, as some disciplines presuppose the existence of sophisticated laboratory workshops, which are conducted under the supervision of a teacher; many teachers have lack of work experience with information technologies. In this regard, there are some difficulties with the preparation of educational material suitable for use in distance education. The resistance of the faculty to the introduction of modern technologies; expenses for teachers' mastering modern information technologies, as well as financial expenses of universities for the purchase of necessary technical equipment; the need of standardization of requirements to the given educational materials necessary for distance learning; creation of informational and educational environment, especially in the content of filling the database with electronic textbooks and educational-methodical materials; increase of a transmission capacity of telecommunication channel, development of corporate universities and branches network to a level that provides the organization of educational process on all types of training and pedagogical communication technologies.

Distant learning today is a topical issue for many categories of population. Therefore, universities that want to go with the times, should provide students with modern education that meets international standards and is available to most Ukrainians.

O. Vasiuk makes the list of distant learning system disadvantages longer: the most urgent problems arising in the implementation of distance learning in higher education are: control of students' knowledge; problem of assessing the quality of educational services; difficulty of an objective assessment of student's knowledge. There is no guarantee that a student learns independently, performs certain tasks necessary for mastering the discipline, confirming their knowledge. A partial solution of the issue is an on-line control, or using blended learning technologies [2].

Today the system of education in Bukovinian State Medical University may be called full-time with the elements of distant learning, where the first part is compulsory, and the second – the requirement of time, one of the ways to ensure the first one properly. In the twentieth century no sphere of human activity can do without electronic technologies. Distant learning system

growth rate is quite high, so universities are interested in expanding the network of service provision in this area. Now it is too early to talk about the possibility of displacement of the traditional system of full-time medical education by such a form of study as distant learning, but the tendencies and achievements of the modern science and technologies may change this run of things.

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