

## PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS OF DISTANCE LEARNING

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In the last years, distance learning has been evolving in several interconnected environments, namely training, professional, social and some other environments, which are created and maintained by a higher education institution. In this case, students are educated owing to the interaction between the student and the lecturer rather than by means of a selection of textbooks. Moreover, there has been a trend to acquire education along with working part-time and full-time. Distance learning has created a fruitful ground for acquiring higher education without the necessity of constant presence in class. Distance learning has also encouraged physically disabled people to study, thus, providing for their successful adaptation in the modern society. These changes have been fostered by the extensive use of information communication technologies, which have become an effective solution for these people. Internet has become one of the most widely used information sources. Thus, research into psychological and pedagogical aspects influencing distance learning has gained particular topicality.

Distance learning as an innovative education form was introduced in the

Ukrainian education market around twenty years ago. It is defined as the education form with the application of computer and telecommunication technologies, which provide for the interaction between lecturers and students at various stages of the educational process as well as self-development work, which presupposes study and analysis of materials available on the net. This education form enables students to access education materials, virtual simulators and other technological solutions as well as get support and tutorial instructions from lecturers and methodology experts on the permanent basis, which provide for effective learning. Distance learning helps to meet students' individual needs in education and at the same time solve problems characteristic of the traditional educational process, namely insufficient use of active teaching methods, directionality of the educational process, weak motivation for individual cognitive activity, subjective assessment of the study results. On the other hand, distance learning increases attendance of classes, attracts students who lack time or live in remote areas, provides access to abundant electronic materials and lecture videos, provides for

the accessibility and economic feasibility of studying to various layers of the society including the socially and economically disadvantaged.

Professional development is a lifelong process. At every stage, this process gains new contents and organizational and pedagogical forms and techniques. Thus, higher education is grounded on interdisciplinary links and various aspects of human development (physical, moral, intellectual etc.) at different life stages, ability to assimilate innovative developments in the field of science, upgrades to learning techniques, stimulation of motivation to study, creation of conditions and atmosphere appropriate for learning as well as creative and innovational approach realization and emphasis on self-study.

Individual psychological processes form the basis of cognitive activity. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account its specificity in distance learning. Several psychological and pedagogical aims of distance learning can be defined: 1) intensification of all educational process levels by means of distance learning, which presupposes enhancing efficiency, educational process quality and maximizing efforts in cognitive activity as well as increasing the data mining intensity and optimization; 2) students' personality development and their preparation for comfortable life in the modern developed information society, which can be guaranteed by various communicative skills and mindsets development, building up skills of finding the optimal solution or potential solutions to the problems arising in their life, aesthetic education with the ap-

plication of advanced computer graphics and multimedia, information culture formation, problem and situations modelling skills development, building up skills to conduct experimental research activity; 3) work on service procurement of the information society, which includes training a person with a well-furnished mind who is a skillful user of computer devices, and professional orientation work in the field of informatics[2, c. 26-30].

The critical prerequisite of high-quality educational process provision is forming the psychological grounds for distance learning. Thus, in the process of distance learning curricula development, it is necessary to take into account a series of psychological principles influencing the quality of the educational process. The necessity of a detailed plan of the learning activity, its organization as well as well clear goal setting, are worth particular attention. Students need to understand the ways in which they can apply the skills obtained within the course program. The efficiency of the students' learning activity depends considerably on the contents of learning materials, which define the structure and level of their cognitive interests both general and specialized.

Students' cognitive processes have a direct impact on internalizing the learning material. Therefore, when elaborating the education materials for distance learning, it is essential to take into account the psychological patterns of perception, memory, cogitation, attention and age peculiarities of students for who the educational program is being developed. This is the necessary prerequisite of boosting

the level of information perception and learning materials internalization by those who take distance learning courses [4, c. 42-46].

One of the advantages of employing information technologies in learning is the ability of self-study and feedback, which enable to achieve the state of psychological comfort in the interaction between students and lecturers in the distance learning process. The use of computers may create any environment for the student, which demands the creative approach. Use of the Internet encourages transition from the authoritative teaching style to the democratic style, in which the student can find different points of view on the problem under scrutiny and formulate his own viewpoint [2; c. 26-31].

The essence of feedback lies in the fact that in interpersonal communication the information exchange process is virtually doubled. At this stage, a new psychological barrier arises in interaction between the partners – the communicative barrier. The communicative barrier is a psychological barrier, which impedes proper information transfer between the communication partners. When this barrier appears, information is garbled or its contents changes. The communicative barrier develops into the relationship barrier, which is a purely psychological phenomenon, in which distrust and hostility spreads onto the proposed information. There are different psychological communication barriers: 1) the semantic barrier, which is connected with the use of different meanings of the same notion by the interlocutors; 2) the stylistic barrier, which

is formed when there is inconsistency between the communicator's and the recipient's speech styles; 3) the logical barrier, which appears when the communicator's reasoning is too complicated.

It is important to take into account the fact that any information received by the recipient has a certain impact on their behavior, cogitation and mindset. In certain cases, the communicative barrier serves as protection from the psychological impact exerted by another person, which appears the process of information interchange between the communicators. Thus, the personality of the lecturer in the distance learning system is crucial in providing the relevant psychological comfort for students [4; c. 39-42]. However, regardless of the way feedback is provided, it is necessary to provide for its regularity with reference to the training schedule.

Self-study is the basic element of the learning activity in the distance learning process. That is why it is necessary to pay attention to the development of students' ability to process information. Psychologists emphasize the importance of students' ability to process information independently. The following levels of students' preparedness to self-study can be distinguished: 1) high level, when the professional cognitive motive prevails; 2) intermediary level, when there are various incentives actualized by various problems; 3) low level, when the external motive to pass a test or take an exam prevails. The dominant motives for self-study can be learning and cognitive as well as professional motives. Certain incentives encompass interests, responsibility, fear of expel-

ling etc. These motives, being various in contents, have a different impact on the quality of the learning activity. The following psychological problems, namely the absence of self-study experience, insufficient conative self-regulation, impact of the group mindset etc., can impede self-study process. Another indicator of motives to self-study is convenience, i.e. the ability to take a course almost at any time and at any place. Distance learning courses provide students with elements of management, which cannot be implemented in the ordinary course of study (in-class learning). Online study enablers to self-pace the learning process, avoid absenteeism in case the student must make a forced interruption in learning due to the external factors or simply does not understand the contents of information he obtains from the lecturer. Thus, distance learning enhances the quality of knowledge acquisition.

Therefore, it is necessary to begin training to take distance learning courses with a profound analysis of the aims of study, didactic as well as psychological and pedagogical capacity of advanced information technologies.

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