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DISTANCE LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES IN LEGAL STUDIES

Abstract. Purpose. The aim of the article is to define the role of distance learning in the system of higher education, including legal studies, its main advantages and disadvantages, and the specificities of its implementation.

Results. The organization of the educational process in higher educational institutions using distance learning technologies has been updated. Specificities of the introduction of distance learning in the system of domestic legal education are outlined. The study analyses the educational potential of information resources for the effective organization of distance learning in legal studies. It is established that a differentiated approach should be taken to solving the problems associated with legal studies in higher educational institutions. Despite considerable experience in the use of innovative information technologies in education in general and in the teaching of legal subjects in particular, active creation of educational platforms on the Internet, search for the best ways to use information and communication tools, consideration of their didactic potential, as well as the use of various information technologies that meet the challenges of modern education, are still relevant.

Conclusions. Most educational online platforms focus only on their technical capacity, such as the development of qualitative templates of tables, calendars, e-mails, documents for recording lectures or meetings, however, objectively the lack of developed methodology for organizing distance learning exists. The available recommendations and step-by-step instructions are mainly concerned with the technical aspects of the organization of the educational process, from setting quality sound and image to creating a virtual background. However, the methodology of conducting training sessions remains mostly traditional. This approach is dangerous for passive students, as it is very difficult to supervise their educational activities in a virtual environment. Therefore, the focus should be on finding the best methods and techniques for organizing education in a distance learning environment.

Key words: higher educational institutions, legal studies, distance learning technologies, information resources, digital education platforms.

1. Introduction

Under global integration and the rapid development of global information technologies, a universal communication environment is emerging promptly. Therefore, the main task of education is to develop the adaptive qualities of the individual in the context of the globalization of social life, the diversity of information flows and the integration of science and culture. Modern information technologies enable all actors in the educational process to work in various formats and to implement innovative forms of acquiring knowledge. With appropriate technical support and advanced knowledge of information and communication tools of all actors in the educational process and of online teaching methods by teachers, it is possible to organize effective distance learning, in particular in legal studies.

The Ukrainian pedagogical dictionary defines distance learning as a form of learning in which Communication between a teacher and a student or teacher and a pupil takes place through correspondence, tapes, audio and video cassettes, computer networks, cable and satellite television, telephone or telefax, etc. (Honcharenko, 1997, p. 92). However, in modern education, this definition of distance learning, exhaustive at the time of the creation of the dictionary (1997), requires correlation, as such concepts as tape, audio and video cassettes are no longer relevant, a distance learning is mostly associated with the use of digital technology.

The aim of the article is to define the role of distance learning in the system of higher education, including legal studies, its main advan-

tages and disadvantages, and the specificities of its implementation.

A domestic literature review shows that the use of ICT tools for the realization of educational goals is being investigated by V. Bykov, A. Hurzhii, M. Zhaldak, S. Ivanova, S. Lytvynova, I. Malytska, N. Morze, V. Oliinyk, N. Soroko, A. Spirin, T. Tarnavska, Yu. Tryus, etc. The author takes advantage of the statement of foreign researchers T. Singh, S. Chan, who argue that ICT is not only a supplementary tool, additional to traditional teaching methods, but also an important tool for supporting new ways of learning (Singh & Chan, 2014).

2. The role of distance learning in everyday life

Distance learning is well established in everyday life, since it is almost impossible to find a person who does not make use of distance learning resources, at least for domestic purposes. Distance learning is a democratic, simple and convenient learning system which, according to the standard of higher education in the specialty 081 "Law," is equivalent with full-time (day, evening), correspondence, distance learning (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science On approval of the standard of higher education in the specialty 081 "Law" for the second (master's) level of higher education, 2020). The indisputable advantages of distance learning are its characteristics, such as mass, accessibility, openness, interactivity, comfort, efficiency, economy, etc. It is important to understand how distance learning should be organized in order to provide an effective creative dialogue-based educational process in legal studies.

In domestic education, the date of the official start of distance learning is January 21, 2004, since Order 40 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine approved "Regulation on distance learning" (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science On approval of the Regulations on distance learning, 2004), which marked the beginning of the introduction of new technologies in the field of education (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science On approval of the Regulations on distance learning, 2004). Currently the Regulation, approved by MES Order 466 of 24 April 2013, is in force with certain changes and clarifications, determined both by rapid development of digital technologies and competency orientation of the educational process.

The Regulation on distance learning provides specific definitions of the content and format of education with remote access. In particular, the concept of "distance education" has been interpreted as the "individualized process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and ways of cog-

nitve activity of a person," realized "mainly through indirect interaction of remote participants of the educational process" (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science on approval of the Regulations on distance learning, 2013). Its purpose is to provide educational services using modern information and communication technologies. The Regulation also provides a number of definitions, the understanding of which is important in the context of the organization of distance learning, in particular: "asynchronous regime," "web-based studies (programmes)," "web-based distance learning," "distance learning," "information and communication technologies of distance learning," "psychological and pedagogical technologies of distance learning," etc.

Modern computer telecommunications can provide knowledge transfer and access to a variety of educational information equivalent to traditional means of learning and sometimes even more efficiently. The quality and structure of courses, as well as the quality of distance learning teaching, are sometimes better than in traditional forms. State-of-the-art digital technologies, such as interactive disks, electronic bulletin boards, multimedia hypertext, accessible through the global Internet, etc. not only actively engage higher education applicants in the educational process, but they also enable to manage this process, unlike most traditional learning environments. The integration of sound, movement, image and text creates an extremely rich learning environment, which increases the involvement of students in the learning process. The interactive capabilities of the programmes and information delivery systems used in distance learning enable to development and promote feedback, dialogue and continuous support impossible in most traditional learning systems.

Experience shows that distance learning is particularly important in extreme situations. The ability of educators to respond to the needs of society in a timely manner, to display a high level of information culture and to be familiar with the methods of organizing distance learning in such an environment is of great importance.

In the modern world, there is a trend to rapidly update the requirements for the organization of educational environment and the qualifications of teachers. Some educational resources and distance learning technologies were used by law teachers before extreme conditions. However, the introduction of quarantine and the introduction of intensified anti-epidemic measures in a territory with a high incidence of acute respiratory disease COVID-19 caused by coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 has made

this form of education necessary and only possible.

A differentiated approach should be taken to solving the problems associated with legal studies in higher educational institutions. Despite considerable experience in the use of innovative information technologies in education in general and in the teaching of legal subjects in particular, active creation of educational platforms on the Internet, search for the best ways to use information and communication tools, consideration of their didactic potential, as well as the use of various information technologies that meet the challenges of modern education, are still relevant.

The standard of higher education in specialty "Law" is defined as "modern information and communication equipment, information resources and special software used in activities in the field of law" (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science On approval of the standard of higher education in the specialty 081 "Law" for the second (master's) level of higher education, 2020). According to the instrument, the system of ensuring quality higher education by higher educational institutions (internal quality system) provides, inter alia, for the implementation of such procedures and measures, how to ensure the availability of information systems for the effective management of the educational process.

Distance learning, as an innovative educational process with the use of information and computer technologies, assists students in realizing their own educational goals aimed at personal development. The use of distance learning implies that not only knowledge, but also the ability to use it to address specific life situations, ways to acquire and use knowledge successfully, and the ability to make responsible, well-reasoned decisions are of importance.

It should be noted that in the context of the rapid spread of digital technologies in society, of the skills to use digital devices, need to be carefully selected such forms of learning organization, appropriate for abilities and interests of applicants for higher legal education.

The use of digital technologies implies that traditional learning methods remain relevant. Therefore, a modern professional teacher should be familiar with the teaching methodology and implement it through the use of digital technologies where their application is motivated and feasible. It is important that students are not simply passive users of information, but rather that they create their own understanding of the content of education.

The introduction of distance learning technologies into the educational process is not possible without the use of information and tel-

ecommunication technologies. There are different forms of distance learning. We will briefly describe those that are most effective in organizing legal studies in higher educational institutions.

A chat session is a training session conducted using chat technology. The chat sessions are held in synchronization, that is, all participants have simultaneous access to the chat. The number of participants in chat sessions can be 2 and more. However, the optimal number is 10-12 people.

Web-based sessions are distance-learning sessions, conferences, seminars, business games, virtual tours and other forms of Internet-based training. For their organization and implementation, specialized educational web-forums are used, that is, the form of users' work on a certain topic with recordings, which remain on one of the sites with a set program. In contrast to chat sessions, web forums offer longer working hours, and do not require synchronous interaction of all participants in the educational process.

Online conference (web conference, internet conference) is organization of online meetings and real-time collaboration via the Internet. This form of organization of the educational process is appropriate for final classes, as it allows participants in the educational process to share their projects, course work, etc., and to summarize the studied.

An audio conference is an electronic conference in which participants use telephones or other equipment specifically designed for voice communication. This type of distance learning organization is rather accessible, as it does not present any particular technical difficulties. Its use is justified in introductory classes, when studying new material.

A video lecture is a presentation of educational material, where a recording of the teacher's explanation or his/her virtual counterpart (avatar) is on the monitor. Video lectures in legal studies are most effective if accompanied by videos. The advantage of this form of presentation of educational material is that the students can independently regulate the course of a video lecture, return to difficult moments; and the teacher can reuse the material, make certain corrections in accordance with actual social processes, changes in legislation and the like.

3. Features of distance and traditional learning

Furthermore, distance learning, like traditional learning, involves the control of students' knowledge acquired, the level of integral, general and special (professional, subject) competences in the applicants of education. In this form of organization of learning, the opti-

mal form is online testing, since this method does not require the direct presence of the students in the educational institution, and under methodically considered selection of tasks for testing reflects their actual level of knowledge. In particular, any model of preparing students of higher legal educational institutions on the basis of distance learning technology should include: a flexible combination of independent activities with different sources of information, prompt and systematic interaction with the course lecturer, group work such as training in cooperation with participants in the course; joint telecoms projects of participants in the course, monitoring of the educational activities of students and presentation of intermediate and final results of education.

The influence of psycho-emotional, organizational, technical and partly professional factors on the effectiveness of the organization of distance learning can be observed.

In particular, it should be noted that the process of developing and introducing information and communication technologies into the educational environment should be methodically controlled, predictable and based on methods and strategies for the use of information technologies. Distance learning, as a new form of developing the competences of students, involves the use of special means, methods and techniques for organizing educational activities, and requires a high degree of self-organization of all participants in the educational process.

Any form of distance learning organization is supervised by a teacher (tutor). In such context, the level of his/her methodological training and mastery of modern educational technologies are of importance, as well as skills in directing them towards the development of students' ability to solve research and/or innovation problems in the field of law.

Mastering various forms of distance learning requires training courses in online learning methodologies for educators, including online interactive learning methods and individual learning trajectories.

A highly professional teacher combines in his/her practice both own distance learning skills and the possibilities of educational online platforms. For example, *Google Classroom* is a free service for distance learning. Through this service, the teacher can create own virtual group and individual courses in which students are given access via special codes. One of the unquestionable advantages of this educational platform is that it can be used anywhere there is an Internet, using both a computer and a telephone. The teacher has the opportunity to publish teaching materials, announce-

ments in the tape of the group (course), adding an image or video if necessary, to communicate with students in a chat, to conduct interviews, tests, to place thematic assignments on the page of each course, indicating the deadlines for their completion. In addition, a teacher can give each student an individual assignment that others will not see, making cheating impossible. In real time mode, students' performance of tasks can be observed, a list of completed or not completed works can be seen and evaluated. Moreover, this interactive platform enables teachers to share experiences, improve their skills and interact with colleagues.

As experience shows, *Zoom* has received a considerable number of supporters as a service for conducting online meetings, videoconferences, seminars and the like. The person who has created the account can arrange the meeting. The program is suitable for both individual and group activities. The actors of the educational process may be in front of the computer or use a tablet or telephone. It is very convenient that the built-in interactive board allows to switch to it quickly from screen display. There is also a chat room where you can write messages.

On the platform of the national educational community *Vseosvita* webinars are broadcast and educational news is posted. *Test Designer* is a convenient service on the site *Vseosvita* enabling the teacher to create test tasks of different types, in particular on choice of the correct answer option (either one or several), with open answer and cross-question.

The online platform *Na Urok* provides significant opportunities for organizing remote work, exchange of experience between teachers. For example, a potential of free online testing service for remote assessment of students' knowledge is justifiably demanded. The unquestionable advantages of the service are the possibility of performing training tests for self-testing, because it enables to absorb theoretical knowledge without additional efforts. In addition, the teacher has the opportunity to promptly test the knowledge of students, to obtain an objective picture of the number of correct answers provided, to analyse both general trends regarding the gaps in the knowledge of a certain group (course) and of each student, and to identify ways of eliminating them.

The online educational platform *Test Pad* allows teachers to develop their own tests, crossword puzzles, to conduct surveys using a convenient online constructor. In addition, a significant amount of teaching material is available on the platform and is publicly available. Each student has the possibility to take training in his or her own training room and to monitor his or her learning results.

The organization of distance learning requires changes not only in the work of the teacher but also in the activities of the student. Therefore, it is important to clearly define the algorithm of the work of the actors of the educational process, to voice the rules of conduct and so forth. Direct distance learning should be preceded by training sessions that address technical issues and the specifics of a particular form of distance learning. A careful combination of different types of distance learning enables to make the learning process productive and to increase the motivation of the students.

The active introduction of remote technologies into the educational practice of the National Academy of Internal Affairs, in particular in the course of the Theory of the State and Law, has made education more accessible, efficient, comfortable compared to traditional technologies.

4. Conclusions

Most educational online platforms focus only on their technical capabilities, such as the development of qualitative templates of tables, calendars, e-mails, documents for recording lectures or meetings, however, objectively the lack of developed methodology for organizing distance learning exists. The available recommendations and step-by-step instructions are mainly concerned with the technical aspects of the organization of the educational process, from setting quality sound and image to creating a virtual background. However, the methodology of conducting training sessions remains mostly traditional. This approach is dangerous for passive students, as it is very difficult to supervise their educational activities in a virtual environment. Therefore, the focus should be on finding the best methods and techniques for organizing education in a distance learning environment.

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ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ ДИСТАНЦІЙНОГО НАВЧАННЯ У ПРОЦЕСІ ВИВЧЕННЯ ПРАВОНАВЧИХ ДИСЦИПЛІН

Анотація. *Метою статті* є визначення ролі дистанційного навчання в системі вищої освіти, зокрема правової, його основних переваг і недоліків, а також особливостей реалізації.

Результати. Актуалізовано питання організації освітнього процесу в закладах вищої освіти із застосуванням технологій дистанційного навчання. Окреслено особливості запровадження дистанційного навчання в системі вітчизняної юридичної освіти. Проаналізовано освітній потенціал інформаційних ресурсів для ефективної організації дистанційного навчання у процесі вивчення правознавчих дисциплін. Встановлено, що до вирішення завдань, пов'язаних із вивченням правознавчих дисциплін у закладах вищої освіти, необхідно підходити диференційовано. Незважаючи

на значний досвід використання засобів інноваційних інформаційних технологій в освіті загалом і навчанні правознавчих дисциплін зокрема, на активне створення освітніх платформ в інтернет-просторі, залишається актуальною проблема пошуку оптимальних форм застосування інформаційно-комунікаційних засобів, урахування їхніх дидактичних можливостей, а також використання різних інформаційних технологій, що відповідають викликам сучасної освіти.

Висновки. Більшість освітніх онлайн-платформ акцентують лише на їхніх технічних можливостях, а саме розробленні якісних шаблонів таблиць, календарів, електронних листів, документів для занотовування лекцій чи зустрічей, однак є об'єктивні підстави для того, щоб констатувати відсутність розробленої методики організації дистанційного навчання. Наявні рекомендації, покрокові інструкції стосуються переважно технічних аспектів організації освітнього процесу (від налаштування якісного звуку й зображення до створення віртуального фону). Водночас методика проведення навчальних занять залишається в більшості випадків традиційною. Такий підхід небезпечний для пасивних здобувачів освіти, оскільки простежити за їх навчальною діяльністю в умовах віртуального заняття дуже складно. Відтак необхідно зосередити увагу на пошуку оптимальних методів і прийомів організації освітнього процесу в умовах дистанційного навчання.

Ключові слова: заклади вищої освіти, правознавчі дисципліни, технології дистанційного навчання, інформаційні ресурси, цифрові освітні платформи.

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