

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Learning in Universities

Ventajas y desventajas de la educación a distancia en las universidades

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Summary

Distance learning has always been of interest to researchers and scientists since its inception. In the current environment of the modern world, this type of training is becoming increasingly popular despite the large number of its opponents. Of course, it can not be called absolutely perfect, because it requires the availability of impeccable technical equipment of educational institutions, uninterrupted Internet, a perfectly working portal and an appropriate platform for such training. The Article is devoted to the description of the advantages and disadvantages of learning in higher education. In the context of modern realities, distance learning is spreading faster and faster in all areas of our life, in particular in the educational process. However, it cannot completely replace traditional learning. There is no doubt that distance learning has a number of advantages, but in view of the lack of uninterrupted Internet outside of large cities, and sometimes its complete absence, there are many problems regarding the organization of this type of training. It should also be noted that distance learning requires a lot of self-discipline of a person and the ability to independently study a particular subject. Therefore, before making a decision to completely replace traditional distance learning, it is necessary to weigh all the pros and cons, remembering that distance learning cannot be perfect enough and that it cannot be a worthy replacement for traditional learning.

Keywords: Online Training, Interactive Communication, Electronic Textbook, Video Application, Communication Tasks.

Resumen

El artículo está dedicado a la descripción de las ventajas y desventajas del aprendizaje en la educación superior. En el contexto de las realidades modernas, la educación a distancia se está extendiendo cada vez más rápido en todos los ámbitos de nuestra vida, en particular en el proceso educativo. Sin embargo, no puede reemplazar completamente el aprendizaje tradicional. No cabe duda de que la educación a distancia tiene una serie de ventajas, pero ante la falta de Internet ininterrumpida fuera de las grandes ciudades, y en ocasiones su ausencia total, existen muchos problemas en la organización de este tipo de formación. También debe tenerse en cuenta que el aprendizaje a distancia requiere mucha autodisciplina de una persona y la capacidad de estudiar de forma independiente un tema en particular. Por lo tanto, antes de tomar la decisión de reemplazar completamente el aprendizaje a distancia tradicional, es necesario sopesar todos los pros y los contras, recordando que el aprendizaje a distancia no puede ser lo suficientemente perfecto y que no puede ser un reemplazo digno del aprendizaje tradicional.

Palabras clave: Capacitación en línea, Comunicación interactiva, Libro de texto electrónico, Aplicación de video, Tareas de comunicación.

Introduction

Distance learning is becoming increasingly popular in the modern world. Without a doubt, this type of training has many advantages – it does not require physical presence in the classroom, as well as the ability to listen to a lecture or seminar on a particular subject at a convenient time and in any place, which is especially convenient for those working without a flexible schedule. It should also be noted that distance learning is very suitable for introverts, people with limited mobility, women on maternity leave and people with disabilities. Thanks to such training, there is a good opportunity to independently plan your schedule and workload, choose a list of certain subjects that you need to pass the training course at the moment.

Methodology

The methodological basis for studying this article is distance learning. This study is based on a survey of students, as well as supplemented with material from scientific and

newspaper articles and electronic resources that fully revealed the problems of this type of training, which significantly helped to identify both the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning.

Results and Discusison

Let's now look at what distance learning is and whether it will be able to compete with traditional education in the future. First of all we need to understand how we perceive it: how to communicate between a teacher and a student online, via email, Skype, video chat, video conference, or webinar. Distance learning itself is a process of interaction between a student and a teacher at a long distance using Internet technologies while preserving all the components of learning. The task of the teacher using this type of training is to teach the student the ability to plan and organize their activities in the information and communication space (Geikhman, 2009). He should also take into account the different cognitive styles of his students and, accordingly, build a special interactive scheme of interaction with them and try to diversify the content of training, the forms of working with the material being studied, as well as various types of communication tasks (Kovaleva, Shavshukova: 2009). In distance learning, electronic textbooks are actively used, which are a good tool for independent training of a student in a particular subject. Since the book is made in electronic form, it is possible for the teacher to constantly and quickly make adjustments to the content of the educational material, updating it for students of a particular group (Bondarenko, 2017).

The use of information technologies in the educational process allows you to:

- * present educational materials not only in print, but also in graphic, audio, animated form, which gives many students a real opportunity to learn the subject at a higher level;
- * automate the system for monitoring, evaluating and correcting students' knowledge;
- * automate the process of assimilation, consolidation and application of educational material, taking into account the interactivity of many electronic manuals;
- * carry out differentiation and individualization of training;
- access and manage a large amount of information;
- * create an information culture, including teaching students to find and use various types of information, which is one of the most important skills in the modern world;
- to organize self-educational work;
- * provide distance learning opportunities to those who need it (Artamonova et al., 2012).

One of the valuable advantages of multimedia technologies, which are also used in distance learning, is that they help the student not to fall out of the educational process due to certain valid reasons, such as illness or family circumstances. Almost every student has a computer or laptop connected to the Internet, which allows them to keep up with their study group in the learning process, as well as receive advice from the teacher on a new topic, that is, individualization of training (Kotrikadze, 2017).

As mentioned earlier, the main principle of distance learning is close interaction between the student and the teacher. The technology of distance learning itself is primarily aimed at conducting traditional, understandable, convenient for the student classes, which are held in the form of an Internet video conference. Simultaneous transmission of video images, sound, slide and graphic information, tone, facial expressions, emotions from the teacher to the student and back creates the effect of a full-time lesson and allows you to achieve a result close to full-time in distance learning (Lvova, 2011).

The very form of distance learning, as we see it now, appeared long before the advent of multimedia technologies and the Internet, as well as satellites that help to carry out interactive communication between students and teachers, as well as other groups of people. Thanks to

regular and affordable postal service in the XVIII century in Europe, it became possible to study remotely. It looked something like this: the student received assignments and study materials by mail, corresponded with teachers, and passed an exam or wrote a scientific paper to trusted persons within the established time limit (Demischenko, 2016). In Russia, such full-time distance learning appeared only by the end of the XIX century. Despite the rapid technological development in some countries, you can still find this type of 'correspondence training'. Subsequently, with the advent of radio and television, distance learning opportunities expanded significantly: there were many educational TV shows that could be watched by millions of people, but with the only drawback-the lack of feedback, which was later eliminated thanks to satellites and Internet technologies.

The world's first distance education University was opened in the UK in 1969 and was called the Open University of great Britain. As the name implies, this University provides an opportunity to get education remotely without the need for daily attendance at classes at an acceptable cost for training.

Other universities with distance learning that have become well-known abroad have also started to appear in the world:

- University of South Africa;
- * National University of technology in the USA (1984);
- The Open University Hagen in Germany;
- * Spanish national University of distance learning;
- * INTEC-Cape town College in South Africa;
- * Australian territorial information network;
- * Open business school of the British Open University (Demischenko, 2016)

In Russia, the beginning of distance learning was laid in 1997, when the Ministry of Education issued order No. 1050, which allowed conducting experimental distance education. In 2005, the Ministry of Education issued order No. 137 'On the use of distance learning technologies', according to which the University can carry out training in person or remotely using distance learning technologies. Based on the above, we should note the gradual transition to the introduction of distance education in our country on a par with the traditional one, as well as the possibility of using it together with it.

And although the popularity of distance learning is growing every year due to the modern person's desire for self-education and the desire to be constantly up to date with the latest developments in their field, nevertheless, it has its own opponents. For example, after the HSE announced that " a number of subjects will be taught online next year, students were outraged and wrote an open letter to the rector's office asking them to reduce the number of classes online. In their opinion, such training deprives a live dialogue with teachers, leads to superficial knowledge, and negatively affects health. Rector Yaroslav Kuzminov has long advocated digitalization of education. Part of the academic community objects to this for obvious reasons: it is both harmful to health and treating education as a business, which can significantly damage the quality of education,' although online training is cheaper and has a number of advantages ("Why students don't like online?", 2020). However, progress cannot be stopped and distance learning will continue to be introduced and actively used along with traditional education, especially since it is ideal for distance learning, advanced training and professional retraining, as well as for those who want to get a second higher education.

There are different types of distance learning that can be applied in a given situation and learning goals. The most popular of them is the webinar due to its wide features. For this type of training, a virtual environment (webinar room) is created, a remote version of the audience. The teacher tells the material using an electronic whiteboard. Students write in a chat or ask questions via a microphone (Vuz24ru, n.d). Another type of distance learning is an online

lecture (telepresence), during which the student attends a University lecture on a schedule. On the screen, the student can see both the teacher and their classmates through a webcam, and also has the ability to write questions in a chat or ask them verbally through a microphone. Web lessons are held in the format of forums, where participants can discuss, comment on a particular topic or problem, and find appropriate solutions under the supervision of the teacher. In this kind of forum, you can send text and image files, plus such a forum is the absence of any restrictive time frames and the ability to send and read messages when convenient.

In technical and some other universities, you can use simulators (simulators) for conducting, for example, laboratory and control work, as well as workshops. This simulator is a software with virtual tasks for students of any specialty. Simulators create special business situations and request solutions to economic, mathematical, and physical problems. Calculations, drawings, and graphs are performed here.

Teleconferencing is mainly used in universities focused on distance learning. It is a group session in which several students and a teacher communicate via a multi-channel video and audio conference. This type of activity requires high-speed Internet, a webcam, and a microphone. Teleconferences are intended for creative projects, various competitions, and intellectual games.

Classes in the chat, as well as a teleconference, are more focused on universities with distance learning. These are lessons that are conducted in an electronic communication channel. In the chat, the teacher gives students a task or project and then there is a discussion of this issue or project, the proposal of various solutions; and all this is carried out in the form of an exchange of messages between students and between the group and the teacher.

Undoubtedly, all of the above types of distance learning look very convenient and quite affordable for the implementation of a full-fledged educational process. However, there is no denying the fact that distance learning, despite all its many advantages and disadvantages, still requires a high level of self-discipline, great motivation to learn, and a responsible approach to learning.

Although distance education was introduced in our country in the early 2000s, during which universities created and tested special educational materials textbooks, videos with educational material, audio programs, specialized computer training programs and all educational institutions had the opportunity to work in a remote format, however, practice has shown that most Russian universities are not ready to completely switch from traditional to distance learning (Golovanova, 2011).

According to Golovanova Yu. V., in the future, our education will be prioritized by distance education, although traditional education should not be discarded. Distance education is a special form of education that combines elements of full-time and distance learning in their unique combinations based on modern technologies. Modern means of telecommunications and electronic publications allow you to circumvent the disadvantages of traditional education, while maintaining all its advantages.

As mentioned earlier, Russian universities, which are mostly focused on traditional education, were not quite ready to switch completely to distance learning, even if they had the funds and programs necessary for this type of training. It is quite possible that this was due to the lack of an appropriate base for such training, high-speed Internet and Internet technologies. And although some, including the Minister of science and higher education of the Russian Federation, believe that distance learning in Russia was successful, 'the auditors of the accounting chamber have a different opinion: a significant part of the classes did not take place, or were not conducted quite qualitatively. According to St. Petersburg experts, it takes 25 hours to prepare an hour of lectures with a presentation. Plus, Russia did not have its own e-learning

platforms" (Borta, Smolin, 2020). Based on the above, we should not rush to transfer all educational institutions, such as schools and universities, to the distance learning format. In addition to the many advantages of distance learning, it also has its disadvantages. One of the disadvantages of this type of training is that in a comfortable environment (in nature or at home on the couch) it is very difficult to set yourself up for the learning process due to the presence of numerous distractions that prevent you from focusing on your studies. Another disadvantage is the technical side of the issue, because not every student has access to high-speed broadband Internet. Of course, if the city still has the opportunity to provide itself with relatively uninterrupted Internet, then outside the city and in rural areas, where sometimes there may not only be no Internet, but also there may be power outages, which can seriously complicate the possibility of attending a remote lesson (Demischenko, 2016).

In addition to uninterrupted Internet, it is necessary that the portal is in constant working order, which is not always possible to ensure due to accidental failures in the operation of equipment. It is also necessary to have one full-fledged working platform for distance learning, rather than several, which can significantly reduce the quality of training.

It should be noted that a person is still a social being who simply needs regular communication with his fellow human beings, so distance learning, which cannot provide live communication, is preferable to use as an alternative to traditional training, an additional option, but not as a complete replacement for traditional training. It follows that distance learning is absolutely not suitable for the development of communication skills, since the learning process is carried out with minimal contact with other people, and sometimes its complete absence. Therefore, in order to develop communication and teamwork skills, it is better to choose universities with traditional training. Also, the disadvantage of distance learning is the lack of practical knowledge, which excludes the full development of a particular profession. Another problem with this type of training is identifying the student when they pass online tests and complete tasks. Undoubtedly, there are programs that are based on the identification of a person or the features of printing text on a computer, but there are very few of them, so sometimes it is necessary for the student to be personally present at the final certification.

Conclusion

Summing up, it should be noted that we should not rush to replace traditional distance education due to the lack of a full-fledged educational platform for this type of training, the lack of high-speed Internet access and periodic failures in the work of portals. Therefore, first of all, it is mandatory to solve the technical side of the issue, prepare an appropriate base for distance learning, and provide students and staff with sufficiently detailed information about the style of classes, educational materials and technical base of the educational institution, as well as organizational issues regarding the training itself.

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