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DISTANCE LEARNING: IS IT CONVENIENT OR EFFECTIVE?

***Abstract.** The article discusses the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning compared to full-time and correspondence education. The student's qualities that he/she must have in order to get a positive result in distance learning are shown, as well as the difficulties that he/she will encounter. The indisputable advantages of this form of training and the reasons why distance education can be ineffective are given in the paper.*

***Keywords:** distance learning, e-learning, remote education.*

If we look at the history of the human development, we will notice constant progress in all areas of human life, as well as emergence of new industries from existing ones. With the change in lifestyle and living conditions, the knowledge that a person needed, as well as the ways of obtaining this knowledge, have changed. The means and methods of teaching the young generation have also varied dramatically, responding to the development of society. The age of information technology has brought us a new learning format – distance learning.

Now anyone with access to a computer and the Internet can master knowledge in various fields, saving money and time. Many educational platforms and online courses have appeared; they are ready to provide you with knowledge in the field of electromechanics, accounting, programming, learning foreign languages etc., sometimes completely free of charge. But before you make a choice towards distance or full-time study, you need to consider the advantages and disadvantages of each of them.

Distance learning is an up-to-date topic. The specifics of this type of training were studied by Vodolad S.N., Zaikovskaya M.P., Ananyev A.N., Kravchenko G.V., Vishnyakov V.A., Kovalev A.P. and others.

Modern computer telecommunications can provide knowledge transfer and access to a variety of educational information on an equal, and sometimes even more effective, basis than traditional teaching aids. The experiments confirmed that the quality and structure of training courses, as well as the standard of teaching, are often much better with distance learning than with traditional forms of training. New electronic technologies, such as interactive discs, electronic boards, multimedia hypertext, accessible via the global Internet, can not only ensure the active involvement of the student into the educational process, but also allow him/her to manage this process unlike most traditional educational environments. [1, p. 130].

Distance learning integrates all existing learning methods and gives them a whole new level. There are a large number of tasks designed for independent study, with the possibility of receiving daily consultations. [2, 476]

The term "distance learning" means such an organization of the educational process in which the teacher develops a curriculum, based mainly on a student's individual study. This educational environment is characterized by the fact that a student is separated basically and often completely from the teacher in space or in time; at the same time, students and teachers have an opportunity to carry out a dialogue with each other using telecommunications. Distance learning makes it possible to study for inhabitants of regions where there are no other opportunities for professional training or getting qualitative higher education, there is no university with the necessary profile or teachers with the required grade of qualification. [1, p. 130]

Some teachers compare distance learning with extra-mural tuition, but there are a number of significant differences. With the distance form, the educational process can take place unilaterally, i.e. a student himself chooses a convenient time and sometimes the form (text, video, audio recordings) of learning. In some cases, online tutorial services are also possible. Final control tasks can also be performed from home. In the correspondence form of training, traditional teaching methods are mainly used, without involving interactive technologies. Besides, the verification of acquired knowledge takes place during a personal meeting with the teacher at end-of-term exams

at the university, and therefore a number of living and financial issues arise if a student lives in another town.

It is worth noting that we are talking about innovative distance learning, involving various types of activities including multimedia and not just paragraphs for independent study and tasks to them.

In the distance educational process such teaching aids can be used: print media; information on electronic media; computer training systems in conventional and multimedia versions; audio and video educational materials; laboratory remote workshops; training programs; remote access databases and knowledge; electronic libraries with remote access; educational materials based on expert teaching systems, etc. [2, p. 476].

If we take as a basis that the most advanced technologies can be found on the Internet, and refer to one of the sites offering distance learning, we can see its main advantages:

- ability to link the various resources in several varying formats;
- efficiency in delivering courses online;
- availability from anywhere and at any time, especially for part time students or working full time;
- access to the net 24x7, so training can be anytime and from anywhere also, even at the weekends or at nights;
- independence from anything;
- an ability to interact with everyone online and also clear your doubts if any through discussion boards and chats;
- an opportunity to rewind and see and hear audio and video learning again and again if you do not happen to understand the topic first time around. [3]

But, no matter how ideal distance learning looks through the eyes of the provider of this service, the disadvantages of this form of training are also presented on this site. One of them is the acquisition of knowledge exclusively in the aspect of theory, which can cause difficulties in applying this knowledge. Also, with distance learning, some

students may lack face-to-face communication with the teacher. And the disadvantage from the point of view of checking the acquired knowledge may be the dishonesty of the student when someone takes control tasks for him. [3]

The analysis of different forms of training shows that the main advantages of distance learning are the following:

- students does not attend classes in the form of lectures or seminars, they can choose any of the numerous training courses, as well as plan the time, place and duration of classes of their own;

- the speed of learning the course is set by a student himself, depending on his personal circumstances and needs, it is not limited to any external factors;

- with distance learning, a student can combine studying with professional activities without interrupting work for exams;

- no need to waste time travelling to and from an educational establishment, you can study directly from home;

- there is no need to find time convenient for both a teacher and a student, since with this form of training the educational process can be implemented according to a convenient schedule and at a convenient pace;

- distance learning uses the latest achievements of information and interactive technologies;

- all students have equal educational opportunities regardless of place of living, health, elitism and financial security of a student;

- an assessment of foreign and domestic educational systems of distance learning shows that they cost about 10-50% cheaper, mainly due to a more efficient use of existing training areas and technical means of information technology, as well as the presentation of a more concentrated and unified content of educational materials and orientation of distance learning technologies for a large number of students. Accordingly, the cost of this form is slightly lower than on traditional forms of training.

[4, p. 3]

After analyzing the remote work of students during involuntary quarantine, we identified the main disadvantages of this form of training:

- there is no individual approach to the student, i.e. information cannot be presented in another format if it is not clear;
- process of learning a subject can turn into a routine, as it is not colored emotionally, as in live communication;
- lack of practical knowledge and skills, which is critical when studying certain subjects (a foreign language, for example);
- most tasks are carried out in writing, which leads to problems with communication skills (which also matters while learning a language);
- lack of constant monitoring of the educational process by the teacher, because of which errors are not fixed on time and there may be large time intervals when studying the subject;
- strict self discipline and consciousness of a student should be the key psychological qualities to obtain a positive result;
- technical problems. Many people, especially in rural areas, do not have access to a computer and the Internet. And this is the key point, since it makes distance learning impossible in principle.

Summing up, we can say that the existence of distance learning is a good competitive form to full-time and extra-mural education. Its main advantage is accessibility at any time and any place convenient for a student (with certain technical capabilities). But in order for the training to be effective, a student must have motivation and a high level of self-organization, as well as natural abilities to master the subject being studied.

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