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**СУЧАСНІ РЕАЛІЇ ОНЛАЙН-ОСВІТИ**

*Дана стаття присвячена проблемам дистанційної освіти в умовах світової пандемії вірусу COVID-19 та шляхам адаптації до нового освітнього формату. Автори статті вивчають поняття дистанційної освіти, онлайн-освіти, висвітлюють різницю між ними, їх загальні положення та особливості; обговорюються різні способи якісної подачі матеріалу та впровадження цифрових інструментів у процес навчання.*

*Основна увага дослідження зосереджена на вирішенні завдань сучасного онлайн-навчання. У даній роботі розглядаються різні освітні платформи та зручність їх використання учнями та викладачами. Також представлено порівняльний аналіз таких онлайн-платформ як Skype, Zoom, Moodle і Google Meet, їх можливостей та функціональних систем; вивчаються переваги та недоліки найпопулярніших із них з точки зору як учня, так і викладача; визначаються проблеми в оцінюванні системи знань тих, хто навчається, та компетентності викладача у їх використанні. Автори*

підіймають методичні проблеми дистанційної та онлайн-освіти та шляхи їх вирішення. У статті також порушується питання організації навчального процесу учнів різних вікових категорій та актуальності вибору конкретної освітньої платформи в поєднанні з традиційними методами навчання. Дібрані ті з них, які вважаються найбільш часто використовуваними під час пандемії; перевірено їх можливість, якість, доступність і зручність використання.

Переваги та недоліки онлайн-освіти, такі як гнучкість, ефективність та широкий спектр інноваційних інструментів, що допомагають учням отримати якісні знання незалежно від їхнього місцезнаходження, а також технологічні проблеми, відключення з'єднання, труднощі з використанням освітніх платформ та ін. впливають на мотиваційний аспект, відчуття ізоляції тощо.

З метою визначення якості знань та пошуку ефективного підходу до навчання та впровадження його в освітнє середовище проводиться порівняльний аналіз студентів денної та дистанційної форм навчання; висвітлюється проблема мотивації як ключового фактору успішності та причини її зниження при дистанційному форматі набуття знань.

**Ключові слова:** дистанційна освіта, онлайн-освіта, якість знань, онлайн-платформи, методичні проблеми.

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### MODERN ONLINE EDUCATION REALIA

*The article is dedicated to the problems of distance education in conditions of the world pandemic of COVID-19 virus and the adaptation ways to the new studying format. The authors of the article consider the notions and the difference between distance and online education, their general ideas and specific features; discuss the ways of qualitative material presentation and digital tools implementation into the learning process.*

*The main focus of the research is aimed at the solution of modern online education. This work examines various educational platforms and their ease of use by students and teachers. A comparative analysis of such online learning platforms Skype, Zoom, Moodle, and Google Meet and their usage convenience by learners and educators. The work introduces a comparative analysis of the Internet platforms, their possibilities and functional system; the advantages and disadvantages are discussed from the point of view of both the learner and educator.*

*The pros and cons of online education such as flexibility, efficiency, and a wide range of innovative tools that help learners to get qualitative knowledge regardless of their location as well as the flaws such as technological issues, connection blackouts, difficulties with educational platforms usage, a motivational aspect, a sense of isolation etc. have been mentioned.*

*The problems of the learners' knowledge system evaluation and educators' competence in the platforms mastering are also noted. The authors consider methodological problems and the ways of their solution. The issue of the educational process organization of different age categories learners and the relevance of the particular educational website choice in a combination with traditional teaching methods are risen in this article as well. The comparative analysis of the full-time and distance learners is held with the aim of the knowledge quality determination and the effective teaching approach searching, and its implementation into the learning environment. Motivation as the key factor of the successful learning and the reason of its decrease in the remote educational format is highlighted too.*

**Key words:** distance education, online education, quality knowledge, online platforms, methodological problems.

**The relevance of the problem.** In the century of modern technology, distance learning and online education have become the reality of higher education.

Due to the world pandemic of COVID-19, the educational system and its format has suffered big changes. The learners of all age categories have had to shift from face-to-face education to online studying which has been a forced necessity throughout the world. Educational platforms were not developed enough. The lack of experience in the usage of a particular online platform caused difficulties for the educators and learners as well. Besides, the new educational format took a lot of time and effort to understand the specifics of its work comparing with offline education. Technological and psychological

aspects have become one of the inability reasons to evaluate the online education quality. However, some positive features of distance learning are the following: availability, flexibility, teaching materials interactivity and engagement in the learning process (in case of a strong motivation).

**The aim of the article** is to investigate the general ideas of online (distance) education and their implementation into the studying process.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.**

The problem of online (distance) education has been under the scientific interests of a number of scientists all over the world. They are deeply engaged in the solving of online education issues and challenge themselves to tackling the digital format education

quality as well as to the didactic and methodological materials development for the electronic environment work. Thus, the basis was considered by T. Bienz, J. Condie, S. Schismenos, G. J. Stevens, N. Wali; general provisions of online (distance) education were initiated by T. Anderson, J. Marcus, P. N. Maurice, A. Muhammad, N. El Rouadi, R. Vargas; feedback technology in online (distance) education was the research interests field of E. O. Estrella, S. Litvinova, B. Stauffer, N. Vodopyan; O. Taranchenko, G. Tazarachev, E. Tyutyunyk, E. Pollard, G. Umanets, M. Williams were interested in the problem of online education accessibility; psychological and pedagogical support of online learners was investigated by T. Degener, A. Houghton, L. Kharchenko, F. Lechner, B. Norwich, L. Rudenko, I. Semkina, O. Shevkin, V. Smirnova and others.

T. Anderson and P. R. Vargas state that distance education is “the education of students who may not always be physically present at school, or where the learner and the teacher are separated in both time and distance... it involves online education, and the learning is usually mediated by some form of technology” [2].

According to Bri Stauffer there are three major differences between online and distance learning, namely: location; interaction; intention. So, the key difference between online learning and distance learning is location. When online learning (sometimes called “eLearning”) students can work together in the classroom with their teacher while working through their digital lessons and assignments [6].

O. Ogiyenko considers that the final difference between online and distance education is the intention of the teaching strategy, i.e., teaching style. Learning online is just a variety of other in-person teaching methods, an additional method of giving the material and usually provides a variety of learning opportunities for learners [1].

E. Dzhumagulov claims that “educators who develop learning materials face difficulties related to the necessity of transformation of the working programs in electronic environment especially considering that the most of them are not experienced enough in autonomous distance learning. Besides, they face technical problems such as internet and computers lack, time management problems as not everyone can be present in one place at the same time in order to undergo training of the new skills. The situation is similar for the learners” [34]

D. Keegan divided the problems related to the distance learning realization and implementation into the following groups:

1) organizational and technical, entailing equipment reluctance to the distance learning organization in the institute or at learner’s home and as a result technical failure related to an overload of Internet resources;

2) methodological, related to insufficient formation of educators’ digital competences, methodological unawareness of online teaching.

3) valeological, caused by an increased workload on the learners and educators and the result of which is physical and mental health declining [5].

R. Fojtik conducted a comparative analysis between full-time students and distance students searching for the effective teaching approach and its implementation into the learning environment in order to find the way to improve the quality of distance education [4].

Moreover, the scientists highlight the problem of professional education implementation into online education format. They note that “the formation of informational literacy has become primary- the ability to solve standard tasks of professional activity with the help of informational, bibliographical resources, medical and biological terminology, informational and communicative technologies, considering the main informational safety requirements”; and the ability to work with information [1], [4], [6].

**Presenting the main material.** As one of the main online education components is the educator himself, whose task is to solve distance education methodological problems, has appeared to be incompetent in the situation of the new educational format. We suggest the solution by creating the conditions which contribute to educators’ training in a new digital format. In our view, such conditions are the following:

1) creation of a digital educational environment;

2) providing the availability of informational and digital resources to all the educational relationship participants and the maximum usage of digital technologies;

3) providing future specialists’ simultaneous training in conditions of digital environment as well as the university professors’ digital competence formation;

4) including not only the students, teachers and parents but primarily the employers as a subject of educational relationship.

We can state that challenges of modern society make adjustments in the system of distance education. It becomes more demanded, increases the relevance of problems related to the study organization of different age categories education receivers, online platforms choice for the organization of students’ educational activity and the combination of traditional teaching methods with specific for the distance learning. We can also note that the method of conducting distance classes is now in the formation process, and the principles of distance learning and its peculiarities have become a serious challenge for the educational system as a whole”.

Therefore, it is possible to point out eight challenges of online educational system. They are as follows: students’ ability to self-education; students’

motivation; communication in the process of the distance learning: between lecturers and students, and between students themselves; accurate time regulation setting for online classes and education receivers' independent work; education personalization (ability to choose learning pace, time of the classes, tasks fulfillment etc.); the necessity of students' identification; formation of a particular skills level regarding digital technology usage; the lack of a single standardized electronic educational platform.

Likewise, many foreign methodologists and linguists deal with the issue of searching distance learning versatile methods and strategies. Following them, we can take up the issue of teaching approach and strategies among foreign language learners paying particular attention to students' needs and expectations.

It is necessary to mention synchronous or asynchronous types of learning as one of the major advantages of distance learning is the flexibility in scheduling, particularly in asynchronous courses. Students can control time and determine the place study will occur since the learning styles of some students are benefitted by the distance learning format, and the additional responsibility for learning motivates students.

Among disadvantages of online education, we would single out internet downtime or technological glitches on the part of the school's provider or the student's provider can prohibit students from accessing course materials. New technology and the Internet users have to learn computer skills first, which adds additional time to the course requirements. The students who are not highly motivated and focused, may struggle keeping up with course material.

Taking into account the distant learning of foreign languages, the lack of classroom or lecture room work is very important for the training material assimilation as they are an exciting place for acquiring communicative skills. Training in a lecture room creates a special language environment which contributes to the effective mastering of communicative skills and better perception of learning material. In this way students are able to find and correct their mistakes and exercise their speaking skills in the process of dialogical expressions.

Multimedia tools implementation gives the opportunity to enhance the appeal of presented material and helps the learner to move from a passive form of education to the active one, broadens horizons of the younger generation, develops their communicative and social abilities.

As one of the disadvantages of online education, lecturers find a gradual decrease of motivation during the learning process and problems related to the involvement in class discussions.

Nowadays, educators do not have the possibility to determine the online teaching standards and track the learners' competence or knowledge credibility.

Among other problems is impossibility to conduct practical training which is critical for many specialties. Among psychological factors which prevent from effective learning are the problems with self-organization, interpersonal interaction and lack of communication.

Based on the given information, we can state that online and distance learning are different concepts and can exist separately from each other. Though online learning is often a tool by means of which distance learning is performed.

In our study, we have investigated the most popular online platforms and have made their detailed comparative analysis. We decided to take Skype, Zoom, Moodle, and Google Meet as the samples for our research and to look at their benefits and shortcomings as well as the effectiveness of learners' material perception.

Firstly, the absence of charge is the common feature of all four platforms. It gives the opportunity to study and/or conduct classes for any educational establishment with no additional fee. Let's dwell on them in detail.

Skype appeared on the market in 2003. Its main goal was to use the internet infrastructure for price declination of international calls and make audio messages free of charge. Now we can use Skype on any device: personal computers, smartphones and tablets, smart speakers, Xbox and PlayStation, via web browsers without installing the application. Skype is a multifunctional platform and available on the biggest number of devices.

One of the advantages of Skype platform is that any learner can work from home in any part of the world. The simplicity of its usage gives opportunity to exchange data online and offline and possibility to save the material so each learner could look through the given information and repeat the material saving it into personal devices such as smartphone or a tablet. There's also an option of application which can be downloaded on any gadget. One of the greatest advantages of Skype is the possibility to send big volume files free of charge with no limitations. Moreover, it has a function of translation in real time which facilitates communication between people of different countries who don't speak English. Due to this function, language barriers have remained in the past.

Another Skype potential is a Skype number itself. Companies who want to start business abroad can take Skype number in rent of that country where they can't be physically present. Potential clients can connect with the company without using any other mobile applications for message exchange or making international calls. But there are some drawbacks of this platform as well. One of them is a risk of technical issues, camera malfunctions or choppy video streams. We find these disadvantages quite common for any online platform. There are also paid functions like making calls on stationary phones, sending messages

on mobile numbers, though the price is an order of magnitude lower than any other mobile operator. So, we wouldn't consider it as a disadvantage of the given platform.

The next online platform under consideration is *Zoom*. Originally, *Zoom* appeared on the market in 2011 and in 2020 it became the main platform for online conferences. This platform was actively used by small and big companies which switched to remote working. Now it is one of the most popular educational platforms among schools and universities and it has its benefits over others.

The main advantage of this platform is that it has the largest meeting participants from business-oriented to user-centric features. Their amount constitutes up to 1000 persons and for a webinar – 10 000 participants. It is worth noting that a conference is free of charge, but for conducting a webinar you will have to buy a subscription.

Now let's dwell on *Zoom*'s functionality in detail. The given platform has the capability of screen demonstration so each learner could see the screen of the educator's laptop, organization of chats between learners, possibility to share files, divide a group of learners into subgroups for training dialogues and monologue expressions. It has the option of immediate and pre-scheduled conferences creation which is very convenient for working meetings and urgent discussions. Moreover, the platform has a function of messaging invitations to the forthcoming conference. There's also an option for online meeting recording which is quite helpful for learners and for business-meetings as well.

In addition to the aforementioned advantages of *Zoom* platform, we noticed some vulnerability in its system. Many users as well as researchers have doubts in its reliability and security. This flaw consists of the possibility to counterfeit messages and data by an unauthorized user, intercept image from the screen, delete participants. There are facts of data breach, poor connection and deterioration of signal quality which only had strengthened dissatisfaction.

The next educational online platform worth attention is *Moodle*. The acronym Moodle stands for "modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment". It has been translated into 100 different languages and is popular in many countries. Its key concept is the option for placing various electronic educational resources (further EER) for each separate course. Great advantage of this platform is the capability of assignment correction for groups of different level of training.

Educators have the opportunity to post tasks and assignments on the EER necessary for accomplishment after a webinar. The function of attendance control gives the possibility to see the attendance percentage of each student which stimulates the learner not to miss classes. Plug-in modules help to change the design and expand functional possibilities of the system which are worked

out by the its community participants. In order to connect with an educator, learners have the option to leave comments beneath courses or chat in forums integrated in the system. The platform has a mobile application *Moodle Mobile* which allows studying and passing tests on a tablet or a smartphone.

Furthermore, there are some difficulties in the work of this platform, the first of which is the registration problem. Educators and learners sometimes have problems with entering the system and have to turn to IT specialists to solve them. The second flaw involves not well enough worked out interface. There had been difficulties with searching of the needed course and/or in case a learner didn't know the full name of the course – he had to look through a lot of similar courses to find the needed one. One more problem of Moodle is too slow work of the website that impedes the usage of the resources. Despite the platform is free of charge, learners have to pay for the start of studying. They have to buy a server for installation system and to set up integration with other services which expand Moodle possibilities. In the light of these disadvantages, we must admit that such problems in this system usage have negative feedback from learners and educators.

The last platform under consideration for now is *Google Meet*. In general, Google is the American multinational largest search engine, email provider, online advertising, computer software company which has been found on September 4, 1998, by Larry Page and Sergey Brin. It offers a wide range of training instruments, namely email service Gmail, web browsing Chrome, video calling Meet and many others. We have decided to describe some peculiarities of these services in order to have a better understanding of what Google Meet is and why it is one of the leading online platforms in the world so far.

Gmail is a free email service which nowadays has the capacity of 15 gigabytes of storage for each user. Gmail works on all browsers and has its own application. Google Chrome is a cross- platform developed by Google. It was launched in 2008 and serves as a platform for web applications. Chrome allows users to make desktop shortcuts that open web applications in the browser. Google Chrome has a built-in translation bar using Google translate. Chrome allows users to synchronize their bookmarks, history and settings across all devices with the browser installed by sending and receiving data through a chosen Google Account.

Thus, having studied the capabilities and a wide range of Google functions we can state that Google Meet is a video-communication service that was launched in March 2017 and became actively used during the COVID-19 pandemic. Google Meet is in the focus of our attention because it is one of the most popular platforms which has become incredibly popular not only among businessmen and companies but among learners and educators as well. It is the second the most used online platform after Zoom with

100 million users a day accessing Meet. Among its benefits is a high quality of streaming, availability of mobile application, the presence of a free of charge version and a browser for work, possibility of videoconferences organization up to 500 participants (only on paid version). In some versions of Workspace subtitles with translation can be available and the function “raise a hand” which is one of the benefits of Google Meet as well. It has a screen sharing function, virtual boards, background images and animations, and data security which is essential for both educators and learners.

Among the drawbacks of the system there is a bad functioning of the service when poor Internet. Recording of a videoconference is possible only when using a paid version. In contrast to Microsoft Teams which is similar to Google Meet in many ways, we have chosen this platform for description because it is much simpler in a way of its functionality. Google Meet is just a videoconferencing application that is convenient for any user. Microsoft Teams is a complex collaboration platform that combines functions more suitable for business as it has more extensive capabilities. It includes calendar, chat rooms, video communicator and it has certain limitations in the number of participants. Moreover, it functions as a part of Microsoft 365 suite and cannot be purchased separately.

#### Conclusions and prospects for further development.

Having thoroughly investigated the problems of online and distance education, we can come to a conclusion that a lot of educators seek for a versatile teaching method in a new online environment. Flexibility, efficiency, and a wide range of innovative tools that help learners to get qualitative education regardless of their location as well as the flaws such as technological issues, connection blackouts, difficulties with educational platforms usage, motivational aspect, a sense of isolation etc. can be regarded as the advantages and disadvantages of online education in general.

In the future we are planning to study the motivational aspect of online education and its influence on the learners' performance.

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