

THE FEATURES OF THE DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM (DLS) DURING QUARANTINE AT SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

In this article authors analyze the educational process in schools in Uzbekistan during the quarantine period, identify the shortcomings and the problems in the educational process, and also describe ways to overcome these shortcomings and problems. In the course writing the article used methods of theoretical and empirical research.

Keywords: school education, educational material, distance education, COVID-19 pandemic, internet speed, Telegram, Zoom.

INTRODUCTION

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared coronavirus a pandemic. In 188 countries around the world, decisions have been made to temporarily close educational institutions in order to contain the spread of the virus.

In the spring of 2020, due to the pandemic of a new coronavirus infection, schools, institutions of secondary vocational education and universities were forced to switch to a new unusual distance learning format. Due to the fact that the technical capabilities of all educational institutions were too different, and in previous years there was no need for the distance education in secondary schools, distance learning was organized in completely different ways. In the spring of 2020, a transition to mass distance learning took place in Uzbekistan, which, according to some researchers, became a shock innovation in education, which had a forced, forced character. Neither teachers nor students were ready to organize educational activities in such a format, they did not have such experience. The transition was carried out quickly, organizational and methodological measures were developed for conducting training sessions, the procedure for using distance learning technologies in the implementation of educational programs was adjusted. The introduction of the distance learning was forced, one of the deterrents to the spread of the pandemic.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

At first, it was not so much about distance learning, but, in fact, correspondence. The teacher gave the task, for example, to read a paragraph of the textbook, answer questions, send a photo of the completed task for verification [1, p.29]. Different schools used different channels for transmitting information: someone used the social network Vkontakte, someone used

Telegram, someone used e-mail. In addition, the electronic journal and Google forms for testing were actively used.

A little later, the realization came that the school does not involve distance learning. That is why it was decided to move away from the “read the textbook, complete the task, send it for verification” system, teachers began to teach lessons using new technologies.

The types of distance learning for primary and secondary education vary greatly across income groups of countries. For example, 75% of high-income countries offer online learning platforms (YouTube video tutorials, resource websites, online classes, etc.). Among lower- and upper-middle-income countries, education through television and online platforms is almost equally popular. Of particular note is that only 40% of low-income countries have organized any form of distance learning. It is significant that, despite the predominance of other types of learning, approximately 10% of all countries deliver printed learning materials at home to students.

In addition, the types of distance learning used vary by region of the world. For example, more than 50% of countries from all regions except Sub-Saharan Africa provide online education for their students. It can also be seen that the transmission of lessons through television is very popular among South Asian countries (75%).[13]

Programs such as:

- Mirapolis Virtual Room - a system for video conferencing, webinars, virtual classes, presentations, meetings and any other types of online meetings.
- LMS Moodle is a free open source platform, a web application that allows you to create a customized learning management system.
- Google Classroom is a convenient learning platform that combines all the useful features of Google [3 p. 127]. Thanks to this application, you can organize distance learning for schoolchildren and students, conduct training for company employees or organize master classes.
- The Telegram program is a messenger from Telegram Systems LLP that allows you to communicate with users via text messages, audio and video calls.
- Zoom is a service for video conferencing, online meetings, distance learning for students and schoolchildren.

However, this led to another problem: WHO does not recommend that schoolchildren spend so much time at the screen of an electronic device (in addition, situations are not uncommon when a family has one laptop or smartphone and several children), so one of the ways out was the transition to a combined system: and conducting lessons through conference call programs, and issuing assignments for independent work.

It should be emphasized that not all educational institutions in our country had and have the technical capabilities to organize such a format of work. On the other hand, students and teachers were immediately in a more advantageous situation: with the help of free cloud-based Internet platforms, teachers around the world had the opportunity to create, edit, and distribute their necessary educational materials.

At the same time, the situation in the outback was much less joyful: due to the lack of the Internet, some students were forced to “catch” the net outside the village or climb to a hill. In some schools, distance learning was distributed differently: students simply brought sheets or

notebooks with completed work to school, left them with a security guard, and teachers took them away and checked them.

After the introduction of distance learning in schools in Uzbekistan due to the coronavirus pandemic, teachers, schoolchildren and their parents most of all complained about technical failures, as well as the unavailability of equipment and teachers themselves to work online.

First of all, users were dissatisfied with technical failures during remote work. As social activists report, most often users complained about the technical unavailability of Internet resources recommended by schools for a remote format of work with a heavy load. General failures by region were recorded even on aggregators like the "Electronic School" or on the most important sites of the "Electronic Diary" level - for example, kundalik.uz - to track and evaluate the knowledge of students in secondary schools, i.e. students could send completed assignments for review to teachers and receive appropriate grades and comments in an electronic journal.

"In this regard, all participants in the educational process had difficulties with authorization and personal account, sending and checking homework. Previously set ratings periodically disappeared from the servers, users from different regions of Uzbekistan noted," the materials say.

According to the latest data of the Ministry for the Development of Information Technologies and Communications for March 2020, in the overall ranking for Internet speed among 176 countries, the Republic of Uzbekistan ranks 96th, and 133rd in terms of mobile Internet speed. In addition, according to the information portal Datareportal, in 2020 only 55% of the population (18.34 million people) use the Internet. Such figures indirectly indicate that most students may have problems with Internet speed. At the same time, even those who have access to the Internet are not always able to pay for its cost. Thus, according to the analysis of experts from Picodi.com, conducted in December 2019, Uzbekistan ranked 11th among 62 countries in terms of the average cost of the Internet per 100 megabits per second (m/s). For comparison: in Uzbekistan the cost of 100 m/s is \$51, in neighboring Kazakhstan it is \$11, and in Kyrgyzstan it is \$34.[13]

Средняя стоимость интернета по странам



Источник: Picodi.com

Claims were made regarding the digital skills of teachers. According to experts, over 25% of the comments were devoted to the digital competencies of teachers. At the same time, the authors of the reports note that school employees often lack an understanding of online teaching methods and remote knowledge transfer skills, in connection with which distance learning is turning into a system of self-education.

Until March 2020, it was believed that distance learning was chosen by: highly motivated people who need additional education, professional development and/or retraining; students studying in absentia or geographically distant from the place of study (for example, who are studying abroad); students with disabilities. However, after the announcement of the COVID-19 pandemic, distance learning has become massive.

Now there is an active discussion of what will change in the school after total distance learning in a pandemic. Distance educational technologies are understood as educational technologies implemented mainly with the use of information and telecommunication networks with indirect (at a distance) interaction between students and teachers.

One point of view is that there is nothing positive about distance learning. Children spoil their health, and the quality of education is deteriorating. The psychological tension of parents increases, they are forced to a certain extent to manage the educational process of their child, to become, in fact, “teachers” [6, p.246]. This point of view boils down to the fact that it is necessary to organize the educational process only at school, at desks, and there is no place for distance learning. Therefore, there can be no balance between full-time and distance school education.

Another, opposite point of view boils down to the complete approval of distance learning and a 100% complete transition from traditional forms of learning to distance learning. There are many advantages of distance learning, including the individualization of the educational process with the help of high-quality content, especially in high school. And the functions of teachers are reduced mainly to tutoring.

It is worth noting that these two points of view have their advantages and certain threats. Ideally, each school, whether urban or rural, large or small, will have to make its own managerial decision on the relationship between the traditional classroom-based system of education and distance learning. This decision is possible only on the basis of an analysis of the practice of distance learning in a pandemic, taking into account the material security of the educational process, the level of ICT competencies, the professional skills of teachers, the degree of interaction and mutual understanding between the teaching staff and parents. All this must be taken into account when organizing educational practices, reasonably combining traditional and distance learning.

Without a doubt, distance learning today is one of the realities without which it is difficult to imagine the organization of educational activities at school. The era of different opportunities is coming, and distance technologies for organizing the educational process will take a special, more significant place in the educational practice of schools than before, before the pandemic. The task of actively using distance learning in schools is a complex task, it determines the direction of management activities from within the school level to the republican level. The effectiveness of the implementation of distance learning depends on targeted, technologically

armed and provided with the necessary resources management activities in each school, where there is a need, expediency in organizing such a technology, such a form of education.

When organizing distance learning, it is important to understand and be guided by certain principles, such as the principle of consistency; taking into account the specifics of the subject area of training and the contingent of trainees; interactivity; flexibility, maneuverability of the educational process; corporatism, team approach to the organization of distance learning and the principle of information and psychological security.

In order to properly organize the process of distance learning, the school administration needs to solve a number of issues. First of all, prepare the teaching staff, provide conditions for advanced training, development of their competencies, professional improvement, both in the field of pedagogy (method of developing and conducting a distance course) and psychology (the specifics of organizing the educational process in a virtual environment in accordance with the age of students), and in the field of information and communication technologies (confident use of Internet services, etc.). Secondly, the administration must solve no less important technical issues of organizing distance learning (Internet, equipment, platform for hosting the course). In addition, for the effective work of the school in distance learning, it is important to develop local regulatory documents that would regulate the conditions for the implementation of the educational process, remuneration of teachers, and for this, knowledge in the field of organization of distance learning (standards, economic scheme, control) becomes relevant. Thus, we believe that the components of the success of distance learning are human resources, content and learning tools.

The new practices were adapted almost simultaneously by all educators, from "innovators" who actively use distance technologies to "lagging behind", those who have never used and did not plan to do it before. In fact, those digital didactics technologies that were previously planned only for a small group of 5-7-10% of the most motivated schoolchildren who are able to apply and master all these technologies, during the pandemic had to be used by almost all teachers in working with all students. [10, p.76]

These educational practices showed the importance of changing the role of the teacher in the organization of the educational process. The main thing for a teacher today is the ability to organize interaction, communication, the ability to motivate students, navigate and communicate. Of course, teachers always had to do all this, but today they simply cannot help but do it. The distance learning system provides for conducting systematic classes with students using Internet communication tools (forums, chats, e-mail, videoconferencing, groups in social networks, virtual reality), the use of new information presentation technologies (infographics, mind maps, etc.). Teachers can use the educational resources of the Internet (web quests, teleconferences), and organize the current and final control in the form of tasks with a freely constructed answer (forum discussions, blog summaries, role-playing games, etc.).

Teachers working in the distance learning system should have competencies in the field of pedagogy, such as readiness to develop a distance learning pedagogical system; the ability to master the pedagogical technologies of distance learning (methods and related technologies), as well as competencies in the field of information technology (fluency in the means of communication on the Internet; the desire to learn new tools, network services; mastery of network tools).

Competencies in the field of psychology deserve special attention. This is knowledge of the psychological characteristics of communication in a virtual environment; understanding the features of age-related changes in the perception of virtual communication and the willingness to use the principles of distance learning for children and adolescents.

Institutions sometimes face barriers and challenges in integrating technology. First-order barriers are related to equipment, education, access, time, and technical support; while second-order barriers (specific to teachers) are related to pedagogy, beliefs, and personal preferences. Students preventing online learning may be misinterpretation of expectations, interpersonal communication, time constraints, poor technical skills, inadequate infrastructure, lack of institutional strategies and support and negative attitudes of all participants. There are also three obstacles to the implementation of distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic, these are, first of all, low Internet speed in remote areas and reliable technologies, lack of skills of teachers and students, and lack of support services . [12]

FINDINGS

In the conditions of distance learning, the psychological unpreparedness of the participants in educational relations were especially manifested, in the absence of regulations, directives, very often they had to make independent decisions. In those schools where an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding prevailed, where the emphasis was on educating students' independence and responsibility, the distance learning process was more effective, classes were held in a psychologically comfortable environment.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions have gained invaluable experience in using distance learning methods. Such experience includes the development of training materials, the organization of adequate feedback and the receipt of appropriate evaluation of training. Despite problems with the Internet, especially in the regions, universities managed to use additional alternative forms of organizing the educational process (for example, the Telegram application, Skype), as well as establish friendly and almost round-the-clock academic support for students.[11] [14]

If there is no professional understanding of the changes necessary for the school related to the organization of distance learning through the emergence of new meanings for the development of the motivation of school leaders, teachers, parents, students, then there is no need to talk about the impact of new technologies on improving the quality of education. Such professional understanding can be carried out if based on the methodology of the system-activity approach, at the value-semantic, target, technological and resource levels. It is this position of professional reflection that will allow us to move on to a thoughtful identification of the problems of the upcoming activity. Only by re-equipping school equipment, changing programs and technologies, it is impossible to minimize the risks of expanding the share of distance learning in schools. It is important to understand that we are talking about a different education that develops a person as an individual, independent in designing life and professional tasks, able to think and act independently and responsibly.

But the most important problem of many educational institutions was the lack of equipment. Like it or not, there are very few schools that are equipped with a sufficient amount of technology, in which each teacher has a personal computer or laptop. Teachers are forced to

either buy equipment with their own money, or use their own equipment, or conduct classes from a computer class, as if from a Call Center.

Distance technologies open up great opportunities for teachers to organize extra-curricular activities for schoolchildren, help increase motivation and interest, and allow students to be creative. However, it is extremely important to note that multimedia teaching aids alone cannot replace teachers. Self-study on the Internet will be more effectively implemented under the guidance of the teacher who owns the methodology for including information and communication technologies in the educational process.

CONCLUSION

After the experience of distance learning in quarantine, the school will undoubtedly change. All the problems that exist in the traditional school have become aggravated and become obvious, and without solving them today, the school cannot develop further. These changes will be aimed, first of all, at creating an atmosphere of trust, mutual understanding, dialogue, at educating the independence of participants in educational relations, which implies responsibility, and responsibility - freedom.

One of the solutions to the problem may be the complete technical equipment of schools and, most importantly, a single nationwide cloud network with the possibility of videoconferencing and other educational activities.

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