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DISTANCE EDUCATION TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' INDEPENDENT LEARNING CULTURE FORMATION

M. Martynenko
Kremenchuk Mykhailo Ostrohradskyi National University
vul. Pershotravneva, 20, Kremenchuk, Ukraine, 39600.
E-mail: marinamartynenko@mail.ru

The article analyzes the possibilities and generalizes the peculiarities of distance education in order to use it for students' independent learning culture formation at High School. Theoretical and practical backgrounds of distance education have been determined. The author comes to the conclusion that distance education is students' independent learning oriented and its issues may help students formulate their own independent learning culture strategies: managing time, responsibilities and priorities, managing stress, understanding of expectations, proactively seeking for clarification, self-discipline development, setting goals.

Key words: distance education, distance technologies, independent learning, culture of independent learning.

ДИСТАНЦИОННОЕ ОБУЧЕНИЕ В ПРОЦЕССЕ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ КУЛЬТУРЫ САМОСТОЯТЕЛЬНОЙ РАБОТЫ СТУДЕНТОВ

М. Ю. Мартыненко
Кременчугский национальный университет имени Михаила Остроградского
ул. Первомайская, 20, г. Кременчуг, 39600, Украина.
E-mail: marinamartynenko@mail.ru

Проанализированы возможности и особенности использования дистанционного обучения в процессе формирования культуры самостоятельной работы студентов. Охарактеризованы теоретические и практические основы внедрения технологий дистанционного обучения в процесс профессиональной подготовки будущих специалистов в условиях высшего ученого заведения. Показано, что использование дистанционного обучения благоприятствует формированию культуры самостоятельной работы, а именно следующим ее аспектам: умение ставить цели самостоятельной работы, определять задачи и выбирать способы их достижения, ответственность, определение приоритетов, положительно эмоционально-положительный настрой, высокая мотивация, адекватная самооценка результатов самостоятельной работы и соответственная саморегуляция данного процесса.

Ключевые слова: дистанционное обучение, технологии дистанционного обучения, самостоятельная работа, культура самостоятельной работы

PROBLEM STATEMENT. Today graduates need the abilities to practice own knowledge independently, get ready to change and adapt to new requirement of the labor market, stay active, make quick and effective decisions, operate up-to-date technologies and information. Students' independent learning culture has a crucial

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role in such activities. Distance technologies are able to satisfy the proses of students' independent learning culture formation as they help students intensify cognitive activities and independent thinking, discover their talents, develop creativity as well as educate the forceful and moral qualities. Distance education is ubiquitous in contemporary Higher Education. Its presence has brought changes of paradigms in students' independent learning organization.

EXPERIMENTAL PART AND RESULTS OBTAINED. The issues of distance education implementation into the process of professional training at High School have been studied by a cohort of scholars. Among them are: V. Bykov, R. Gurevych, V. Kukharenko, V. Oliynyk, Y. Polat, T. Poiasok, P. Stefanenko and others. They studied distance education as the personality-oriented education, accenting attention on the fact that the subject of education is a personality: free, active, initiative, developed, confident, being able to survive in all variety of contradictions of the modern world and owns strategies of creative activity and professional intuition [2] and a modern graduate with a high level of independent learning culture should have these characteristics to adopt to modern economic society.

Meanwhile, it is worth saying that the question of distance education usage to support students' independent learning culture formation is still the problem waiting for its solving and further deep researches.

The aim of the investigation is to analyze the possibilities and generalize the peculiarities of distance education in order to use it for students' independent learning culture formation at High School.

Independent learning is one of several strategies students apply. Students' independent learning culture determines the result of this process. Students with high independent learning culture are able to approach education tasks with confidence, diligence, and resourcefulness. They are aware of when they do or do not know something. They seek out information when needed and follow the necessary steps to master it. When they encounter obstacles such as poor study conditions, confusing teachers, or abstruse text books they find a way to succeed [7].

Distance learning is not a new experience although online distance education is a more recent and evolving phenomena. Distance learning has been a method of teaching and learning for many individuals for at least one hundred years, starting with correspondence learning via postal mail [6].

Presently, distance education uses emerging technologies such as e-learning to enhance traditional education. For example satellite links, computers, telephone and Internet conferencing, two-way interactive video and the Internet. As a result, the student during his/her independent learning can have almost the same instructional contact and interaction as the student on campus. The introduction of live two-way audio and video communications means that face-to-face interaction and interpersonal communication can be combined at the same time when teaching at a distance.

In other words, distance education is a process that utilizes various teaching technologies to overcome separation of the teacher and the student. Distance education is also characterized by the discretionary control of the students' independent learning process by the learners rather than the distant teacher, and the non-contacting

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communication between the learner and the instructor, mediated by some form of technology or print.

For separated groups of learners, Internet-based (online) instruction can be more appealing than traditional face-to-face learning. Distance learning not only adds technology to instruction; it utilizes technology to advance potentially new approaches to the teaching and independent learning process.

It is a phenomenon that has changed the learning relationship. It has shifted the focus from the common, centralized school model to a decentralized and flexible model. The process had reversed the dynamics of conventional education. Instead of bringing students to the classroom, it brings the classroom to the students.

The two theories of independent learning on which distance pedagogical strategies are increasingly being modeled are objectivism and constructivism. In an objectivist view, knowledge is external to an individual and therefore objective. Hence, learning involves a transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the student. In a constructivist view, knowledge is not external to an individual. Therefore, learning involves constructing one's own knowledge from one's own experiences. Constructivism has been broadly classified into the categories of individual, radical and social.

Each of the objectivist and the constructivist approaches has its advantages and disadvantages. Constructivism vs. objectivism: Where is difference for designers of e-learning environments? For example, while objectivism focuses on the knowledge of the subject and not on the learner, constructivism is hard to follow in today's classroom environment of "e-class". Indeed, the two theories should be seen as complementary and in certain cases no mutually exclusive rather than in conflict. It has been shown that the same instructional activity can contain both objectivist and constructivist elements and can be carried out in a feasible manner.

The different theories of learning provide the basis and motivation for the different instructional design models in distance education. The objectivist instructional design models are associated with behaviorism and cognitive science. The constructivist instructional design models are associated with cognitive science, social psychology and social learning paradigms.

All the distance courses for independent learning often have assignments to be conducted outside the classroom. However, a distinct aspect of these courses is often the presence of a required project component that requires teamwork. These practices are in agreement with a constructivist approach, where the educator plays the role of a guide. This could, for example, entail providing a balance between discipline and flexibility to the students in carrying out a project with minimal guidance and timely feedback by the educator when needed.

The role of the teacher should be changing to be one who designs experiences where students examine thinking and learning, collect, record and analyze data: form and test hypothesis; reflect upon previous understandings; and construct their own meanings. The crucial aspect is that the students play the primary role and the educator plays the secondary role.

The current Higher School system is not the fault of the teacher. An institutional shift in planning along with a change in the way teachers are trained can go a

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long way to reach the goal of developing self-regulated students. There are five principles to follow while integrating constructivism into students' independent learning process [3].

Principle 1:

– maintain a buffer between the student and the potentially damaging effects of instructional practices;

– increase effectiveness on the affective domain of independent learning;

– make instruction personally relevant to the student;

– help students develop skills, attitudes and beliefs that support self-regulation of the learning process;

– balance the tendency to control the independent learning situation with a desire to promote personal autonomy;

– independent learning process should be set up to allow for success. Give more responsibility to the students. Make them want to take hold of the new style of learning and be successful.

Principle 2:

– provide a context for independent learning that supports both autonomy and relatedness;

– real-life examples relevant to the students and their environment allow internalization. Students should find personal meaning in what they are studying.

Principle 3:

– embed the reasons for independent learning into the independent learning activity itself;

– make the outcomes of the assignment fit into the procedure.

Principle 4:

– support independent learning by promoting skills and attitudes that enable the students to assume increasing responsibility for the developmental restructuring process;

– create a list of skills the student should try to achieve. Include with this a set of easily implementable steps or logical sequences. Feedback will be critical to give the learner reinforcement and correction when needed.

Principle 5:

– strengthen the students' tendency to engage in intentional independent learning processes, especially by encouraging the strategic exploration of errors;

– an oral review of mistakes or debriefing helps to increase the ability to reflect. Point out the need to examine a problem and then determine the best strategy to use in solving it.

These are not radical or impossible tasks. Too often for the sake of time teachers do not revisit previously prepared instruction to improve upon it. A simple review with the above list in mind can lead naturally to modification of existing courses for students independent learning organization. Construction of new material can be based on the revised work and that which is already being applied.

Distance education provides new opportunities and challenges for students' independent learning by:

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– offering a wider range of teaching contents (teaching methods);

– enabling more self-directed learning, offering a range of choices, individual learning pathways and freer forms of independent learning;

– offering teachers and learners the chance to plan and organize courses together (empowering learners to influence the choice of teaching contents);

– freeing learning and teaching from the limitations and constraints of the traditional classroom by opening up and using spaces outside the teaching institution;

– facilitating communication between learners and between learners and the teacher via the Internet.

To provide students' independent learning with distance education technologies teachers implement: the electronic module course-book; computer tests and self-tests; study with the help of foreign and local educational web sites to obtain additional professional information and to broaden worldwide professional outlook; language and professional laboratory; students consulting during the semester in face-to-face classes and over the telephone, e-mail, Skype, social networks [4].

Such implementations have a great number of advantages: the academic materials are completed at high methodical level; teaching material is flexible, current and dynamic; students have the opportunity to set the goals, choose particular independent learning educational means and schedule; formation of studying environment out of the university with the help of electronic and computer devices; increase of students' independent learning motivation; the possibility to track the process and result of independent learning by teachers and student himself.

Students' independent learning in online courses is of two different types: synchronous or asynchronous. Synchronous one takes place in "real-time," or at the same time. To be online at the same time as your peers and interact with them is to communicate synchronously. Chat and instant messaging are two examples of synchronous communication tools. Chat sessions and instant messaging can have a lively, immediate feel, and may feel casual or conversational in tone. On the other hand, asynchronous independent learning takes place over time, not requiring group members to be online simultaneously. With asynchronous communication tools, students browse, read, and respond at pace to what others have already sent or posted. Students may use one or many of these tools. If possible, practice with the tool before the assignment takes place. It's useful to ask the teacher for help if you are unsure how a tool works before you need to use it.

Distance education is students' independent learning oriented and its issues may help students formulate their own independent learning culture strategies: managing time, responsibilities and priorities, managing stress, expectations understanding, proactively seeking for clarification, self-discipline development, setting goals [1].

– Managing time. Students often benefit from carefully structuring what time they have available. Identify what time of day or night you do your best work, and when you are able to access to the Internet and your course materials.

– Responsibilities and priorities. Vital to a successful online learning experience is the ability to balance the responsibilities, both within and beyond the course. Knowing how to set priorities is a key to getting the greatest benefit from indepen-

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dent learning experience. Find out before or as the course begins exactly what work is required, and do your best to plan ahead.

– Managing stress. Strategies for managing independent learning-related stress include: know your deadlines. These include course deadlines as well as deadlines and important events occurring elsewhere in your life while you are enrolled in the course. Plan ahead: if you know that your time will be consumed by a non-course related activity during a particular week, do your course-related activities ahead of time. Ask for help resources, especially technological resources, and have them at hand when you are working in your course. Keep in touch with a teacher if you do fall behind, let the teacher know immediately, and ask him/her for assistance in planning how you will catch up.

– Expectations understanding. In order to meet and exceed independent learning requirements and instructor expectations, students need a clear understanding of exactly what those requirements and expectations are. Individual assignments may have their own instructions which give more clarification.

– Proactively seeking for clarification. If something about the independent learning or the material is not clear, don't wait for the teacher to make it clear. Especially in an online environment, teachers have fewer cues to alert them to student confusion.

– Self-discipline development. This need may seem fairly obvious, but without self-discipline, student cannot be a successful learner. In an online independent learning environment, especially if you do not meet at specific times, it's much easier to put off assignments, discussion, and responsibilities. In this context, self-discipline means motivating to pay regular and consistent attention to the task that needs to be done, and doing it without delay or procrastination.

– Goals settings. Goals keep student on target. If they don't set goals for independent learning, then you may not know if you've achieved something worthwhile. It's important to have personal goals in mind, both longer-term goals for program of independent learning and desired skills, as well as short-term goals for assignments. If students have these goals in mind, they'll have a much clearer picture of what they need to do to meet these goals, and thus have deeper motivation to improve independent learning.

CONCLUSIONS. Distance education is not a new trend, but has got a huge increase due to developing technology. New and well established institutions are coming up with latest equipment and large data base to provide distance independent learning to a growing number of young people that wants higher education out of traditional classroom setting. Introduction of distance education into the process of students' independent learning organization increases study motivation, enlarges the level of students' self-regulation, assists the effective self-mastering of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, and as a result lead to the higher level of students' independent learning culture formation.

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ДИСТАНЦІЙНЕ НАВЧАННЯ У ПРОЦЕСІ ФОРМУВАННЯ КУЛЬТУРИ САМОСТІЙНОЇ РОБОТИ СТУДЕНТІВ

М. Ю. Мартиненко

Кременчуцький національний університет імені Михайла Остроградського
вул. Першотравнева, 20, м. Кременчук, 39600, Україна.
E-mail: marinamartynenko@mail.ru

Проаналізовано можливості та особливості використання дистанційного навчання у процесі формування культури самостійної роботи студентів. Визначено теоретичні та практичні засади впровадження дистанційних технологій в процес професійної підготовки майбутніх фахівців в умовах вищого навчального закладу. Автор доводить, що застосування дистанційного навчання сприятиме формуванню культури самостійної роботи студентів, а саме наступних її аспектів: уміння ставити мету, цілі, обирати засоби та планувати час виконання самостійної роботи, відповідальне ставлення до процесу виконання самостійної роботи, визначання пріоритетів, емоційне, мотиваційне ставлення до процесу самостійного виконання навчальних та професійних завдань, адекватна самооцінка результатів та відповідна саморегуляція даного процесу.

Ключові слова: дистанційне навчання, технології дистанційного навчання, самостійна робота, культура самостійної роботи.

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