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STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TO DISTANCE LEARNING AS A COMPONENT OF THEIR MOBILITY

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Abstract. The presented article examines the problem of students' readiness to distance learning from the point of view of developing their mobility, as a priority characteristic of a modern specialist. The relevance of the problem is due to the processes of informatization of education as a modern trend in the development of education and the rapid introduction of distance learning in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, mobility is a significant quality of a specialist's personality, which is manifested in readiness for various spatial movements and adaptation to different situations. The article presents the results of an empirical study of students of specialty 016 Special education, based on the results of an online survey. The results of the study showed the predominance of positive attitude of students to distance learning, the main advantages of which are convenience, time savings and the ability to get an education at home. The main disadvantage, in addition to poor-quality internet connection, is the lack of live communication, which is also the main need of students. Despite the positive assessment of distance learning, students do not consider it as high-quality and do not want to teach children with special educational needs remotely. In order to form students' readiness towards distance learning and remote work, it is advisable to define the formation of mobility as the quality of a specialist in the process of professional training, since distance or blended learning is a modern form of education and has a significant potential for further development.

Keywords: mobility; distance learning; students of specialty 016 Special education

Introduction

The current global trend in the development of education is its informatization, which is caused by various socio-economic, technological and political factors. Informatization processes expand the possibilities of obtaining education, cause changes in the forms and means of education. One of the modern forms of organizing the educational process, which opens up new prospects for improving its effectiveness, is distance learning, the

success of which involves the use of the latest information and communication technologies.

Recently, the world scientific community has been actively investigating various aspects of the problem of distance learning, which has rapidly entered the learning space in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic. The introduction of distance learning in the context of a pandemic has caused multiple spatial shifts that are within the framework of the mobility paradigm. Research on spatial practices and mobility is relevant to understanding learning in modern conditions, the context and space of which has numerous mobility practices (Chattaraj & Vijayaraghavan 2021).

Ensuring the mobility of users' information and communication activities in the information space, the development of mobile-oriented tools and information and communication technologies for accessing electronic data is one of the key conditions for informatization of education (Bykov, Spirin, Pinchuk 2017). All this has an impact on the success of distance learning, which puts forward requirements for both learning tools and technologies, as well as for participants of the educational process. At the same time, the mobility of students and teachers contributes not only to the improvement of education, but also to the level of professional training of future specialists in accordance with modern requirements.

Literature analysis

The term "mobility" has several meanings. It is defined as the ability to move freely or easily; the ability to quickly navigate situations, find ways to solve problems (Busel 2005). Movement as the basis of mobility can manifest itself both in the sense of "movement" (spatial, social, academic, professional, etc.), and in the sense of "development". According to personal development, mobility is considered as the ability of a person to navigate in constantly changing situations, make adequate decisions about rational actions and implement them in practical activities (Artyushenko 2010). In our research, we consider student mobility from the point of view of readiness for various spatial movements (real and virtual), as well as personal readiness for change.

One of the manifestations of student mobility in the learning process is the willingness to study in various forms (offline, distance, blended) within the same educational institution, or different educational institutions, including studing abroad (international academic mobility). At the same time, distance learning reduces the spatial mobility of participants in the educational process, but actualizes other types and manifestations of it, primarily virtual mobility.Distance learning is a platform for implementing and developing virtual academic mobility of students, which creates the opportunity to study remotely for a certain period of time in another educational institution, including abroad (Vasilevska 2014; Stoicheva 2022). Virtual

mobility is related to the virtualization of the physical learning environment, which involves live participation in classes using various online platforms that are used for distance learning (Valtins, Muracova 2019). Mastering the skills of distance (online) learning ensures the development of virtual mobility, as well as students' readiness to learn and interact in the virtual space.

Distance learning changes the learning process itself, making it necessary to master information technologies, which in turn increase the educational and technical level of future specialists (Vasilevska 2014). Students' readiness for distance learning should become the basis for further ability to implement professional tasks remotely, reorient the forms and methods of their professional activities, as well as be a virtually mobile specialist.

A number of studies are devoted to the study of various aspects of the problem of students' readiness to distance learning, which consider the ideas, motivation and attitude of students to distance learning, advantages and disadvantages, its impact on academic work, needs and problems of students during online learning, etc. (Amir, Tanti, Maharani, et al. 2020; Armstrong-Mensah, Ramsey-White, Yankey & Self-Brown 2020; Drobot 2020; Barrot, Llenares, & Del Rosario 2021; Fidalgo, Thormann, Kulyk & Lencastre 2020; Stevanović, Božić & Radović 2021). The analysis of scientific research has shown that students' attitude to distance learning affects not only the quality of the learning process itself and students' academic performance, but also the development of their personality and professional competence.

Based on a review of literature sources, ***the aim*** of our research is to determine the attitude of students of specialty 016 Special Education to distance learning as a component of their mobility.

Methods and materials

To achieve this goal, we developed a questionnaire and conducted a survey among students using Google Forms. All students were informed about the study and its purpose. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous to get the most reliable answers.Students who volunteered to participate in the study completed a one-time online survey.

The questionnaire contained closed and open-ended questions aimed at determining students' attitude to distance learning. The questionnaire also assessed its quality, positive and negative characteristics, difficulties and needs of the learning process, self-assessment of the level of readiness todistance learning and working with children with special educational needs.

The questionnaire contained 17 questions, the answers to which together are aimed at determining the state of readiness of students todistance learning in terms of forming their mobility. Here is a list of questions that were asked to students in the questionnaire:

1. Do you like distance learning?
2. Has your attitude to distance learning changed since the beginning of the quarantine: yes, it has changed for the better / it has not changed, it has remained positive / it has not changed, it has remained negative / it has not changed, it has remained indifferent / it has changed for the worse?
3. How do you assess the quality of distance learning?
4. Is the quality of the acquired knowledge higher in offline or distance learning?
5. Is it possible to get a high-quality education only remotely?
6. What do you prefer: distance learning / offline learning / a combination of distance and offline learning?
7. What are the advantages of distance learning?
8. What are the disadvantages of distance learning?
9. What do you lack during distance learning?
10. What are your emotions towards distance learning?
11. In the conditions of distance learning, do you prefer lectures or practical classes?
12. What are the most convenient distance learning tools (platforms) that you like the best? Why?
13. Is your academic performance higher offline or in the process of distance learning?
14. What difficulties do you have during distance learning?
15. How do you assess your level of readiness to learn remotely: high / medium / low?
16. What kind of help do you need in mastering distance learning?
17. Would you like to work with children with SEN remotely?

Sample of the study

The study involved 242 students of specialty 016 Special Education.About 68.6% of them were undergraduate students and 31.4% were postgraduate students. The 105 students who took part in the survey are full-time students, and 136 are part-time students. The respondents ranged in age from 17 to 50 years. All the students surveyed had experience teaching both in classrooms and remotely.

Results

The survey results show that 73.97% of students like distance learning in general. At the same time, 49.17% of students noted that since the beginning of online learning due to quarantine, their attitude towards it has changed for the better; 28.9% indicated that the attitude has not changed, has remained positive; 8.3% – has not changed, has remained indifferent; 7.02% – has not changed, has remained negative; 6.61% – has changed for the worse. The results show that the change in attitude to distance learning for the better did not contribute to the formation

of a general positive attitude of individual respondents, taking into account the percentage of those who do not like this form of education.

In response to the question "How do you assess the quality of distance learning?"17.35% of students said *"very good"*, 62% – *"good"*, 6.6% – *"bad"*, 14.05 – "*I can't decide*". In general, students rate distance learning positively, but do not give it high marks. According to the survey results, 73.3% of students believe that the quality of gained knowledge is higher when they study in classrooms, and 27.7% believe that in the conditions of distance learning. Also 42.15% respondents said that it is impossible to get quality education only remotely, 27.7% respondents believe that it is possible, and 30.16% did not decide on this.

At the same time, 42.15% of students prefer distance learning, 36.78% – a combination of distabnce and offline learning, and 21.07% prefer only offline learning. Such responses indicate that the quality of education is not a determining indicator for students to form attitudes to learning.

We analyzed all the responses to identify factors that contribute to the formation of a positive attitude to distance learning.The results are presented in Table 1, which were obtained by superimposing similar factors on their duplicates.

Table 1. Advantages of distance learning

№	Answer	Number of mentions
	More free time	46
	Opportunity to study at home	43
	Convenience (does not depend on the place and time of training)	35
	Ability to combine study and work	29
	Money savings (travel expenses, accommodation)	24
	No need to go to another city	15
	Safety	14
	More time for studying	10
	Developing self-education skills	8
	Availability of materials	8
	Using modern gadgets and technologies	5
	Better perception of the material	3
	Opportunity to study in two institutions	1
	More interesting training	1
	There are no advantages	12
	Undecided	13

Along with the advantages of distance learning, students also identified a number of its disadvantages. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Disadvantages of distance learning

№	Answer	Number of mentions
	Lack of live communication	60
	Problems with the Internet and websites	59
	A lot of time in front of the monitor, with gadgets, harm to health	15
	The need for the necessary equipment	12
	Lack of practice	12
	Poor organization (unclear, similar tasks)	11
	It is difficult to learn something new, low level of concentration and self-organization at home	10
	A lot of independent work and tasks	9
	Poor quality of training	9
	Lack of literature, inability to use the library	3
	Lack of a full-fledged student life	2
	Low level of interaction with teachers	1
	Difficult to combine with work	1
	There are no disadvantages	38
	Undecided	6

Approximately 52.5% of students said that during distance learning they were most lacking *"live communication"*, which actually explains the dominance of the lack of opportunities for live communication and interaction as the main disadvantage of distance learning. Among 6.2% of students noted that they do not have enough practice during distance learning. Despite the fact that a significant percentage of students identified the advantage of distance learning as the availability of free time, 5.37% of respondents noted that they do not have enough time to study. Also, 4.13% of students answered that during online learning they experience a lack of literature, educational materials; 2.9% interaction with teachers; 1.65 structuring of the learning process and control; 1.65% – high-quality internet connection and programs; 0.82% self-organization and motivation to learn.

When asked about the emotions that distance learning causes, 51.24% of students noted that they experience positive emotions, 16.5% – negative, 14.46 – neutral; 11.57 % – mixed, that is, a combination of positive and negative emotions, and 6.2% – could not decide.

During distancelearning, it turned out students enjoy lectures more (65.7%) than practical classes (34.3%). At the same time, students identified Moodle, Google Meet, and Zoom as the most convenient means and platforms for distance learning (Figure 1).The Moodle platform is used as the main one in the higher education institution where the study was conducted.The choice of Google Meet and Zoom

was mainly due to the possibility of interaction and communication, direct video communication, providing contact with the teacher and students.

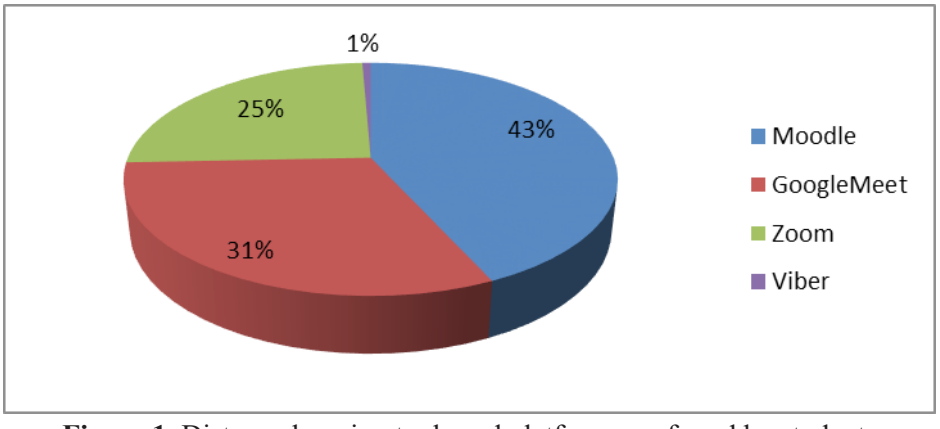

Figure 1. Distance learning tools and platforms preferred by students

There were no significant differences in student performance indicators in conditions of distance learning or in classrooms. Thus, 54.13% noted that their level of success is higher in conditions of distance learning, 45.87% – in the conditions of studying in classrooms.

Respondents also mentioned the difficulties that they have during distance learning. Thus, 44.21% said that these are problems with the network connection and the operation of sites and programs; 4.96% of students said that there are problems with technical equipment, lack of high-quality devices for working online. For 5.8% of students, the main difficulty is online interaction and communication; 6.2% noted that it is difficult for them to assimilate material during distance learning, in particular because of its large amount, independently process the material, etc.; 3.3% of students have difficulties with finding information, using electronic libraries; 4.13% – can not independently organize their educational activities, allocate time, etc. A significant percentage (26.9%) of respondents indicated that they do not have any difficulties withdistance learning. Another 4.54% did not answer this question.

The survey found that 31.81% of respondents considered their readiness to remote distance to be high, 62% – average, and 6.19% – low. However, 68.18% of respondents said that they do not need any help in mastering distance learning technologies; 21.07% said that they need to improve the level of digital literacy; 10.74% are undecided.

According to the results of the survey, 66.53% of students noted that they would not like to work with children with special educational needs in a distance format;

22.31% of respondents are still undecided. And only 11.61% of future special education specialists want to work remotely with children.

Conclusions

The study showed that despite some difficulties faced by students, they were able to adapt well enough to distance learning and prefer it over classroom learning. However, they note a lower quality of knowledge in the conditions of online learning. The main advantages that students named were "more free time", "convenience", "the ability to study at home", which does not involve visiting an educational institution, spending time on the road, and choosing a place to study. Given the situation of the pandemic and the quarantine conditions in which distancelearning took place, this choice is quite reasonable from the point of view of safety and health care. However, these preferences do not indicate a choice in favor of distance learning from the point of view of the need for high-quality professional training and development.

The main disadvantages of distance learning were "lack of live communication" and "problems with the network, sites". Students also identified the need for live communication as the most significant in distance learning, and called online learning tools and platforms that provide video communication the most effective. This may indicate difficulties in the "transition" from classroom learning which is built on the basis of communication and interaction with classmates and teachers, to distance learning in which this aspect is less realized. This factor is not in favor of the formation of personal and professional mobility of future specialists and outlines the need to develop virtual mobility for virtualization of physical communication and interaction within the online learning process.

Most of the students assessed their readiness to distance learning at an average level, while noting that they do not need help to master it. Nevertheless, some students pointed out the need to improve their digital competence and ICT proficiency. At the same time, the majority of students expressed reluctance to distance work with children with special educational needs.

A generalized analysis of the results of the study shows that distance learning is really convenient for students and most of them were able to adapt to this form of learning. However, adaptation to distance learning did not contribute to the development of mobility in a broad sense, as it reduced the need and readiness for spatial movement. Virtual mobility in terms of transferring physical interaction to the virtual world has not reached the desired level, due to the lack of contacts and communication; the lack of desire to work remotely in professional activities shows low mobility indicators from the position of a future specialist in special education. This makes it necessary to form student mobility both in the process of teaching relevant disciplines, and through the introduction of various technologies and forms of organizing professional training.

Our future research will be focused on determining the level of self-organization, adaptation and effectiveness as predicates of future professional mobility of students in the process of distance and blended learning, since both of these forms are potentially relevant for education.

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