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With the development of information technology and the advent of the Internet in particular the concept of distance education has spread throughout the world. Since that it has become an established part of the educational world with trends pointing to ongoing growth. Nowadays distance learning can be defined as a form of education in which the educational process uses traditional and specific methods, means and forms of education based on computer and telecommunication technologies.

However, despite the popularity of this method of obtaining education it hasn't been widely used at the universities of the Republic of Belarus. Polessky State University responded to the COVID-19 restrictions happened in the spring of 2020 by implementing distance learning in the education process extensively.

The first traces of distance learning date back as far as the 1700s. In fact, it was in Boston, Massachusetts in 1728 when a teacher C. Phillips advertised the first shorthand correspondence lessons ever to be offered by mail [4]. It wasn't long before universities began to recognize the need for students to receive an education no matter where they lived and by the late 1960s distance learning was becoming accepted under the moniker "independent study."

Nowadays, to develop a course of distance learning, special software is usually used in the form of so-called shells. Examples of such shells are Microsoft Teams, the hub for team collaboration in Microsoft which integrates the people, content and tools that the team needs to be more engaged and effective, and Moodle, a learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a single robust, or, in other words, a secure and integrated system to create personalised learning environments. Meanwhile, the content and design are interdependent components of the distance course. The pedagogical design of the course is the structuring of texts, the formation of a system of links and transi-

tions between concepts, sections, the choice of tools for the implementation of the educational process, external design, accounting for ergonomic requirements [5, c. 78].

Moreover, distance learning is useful for a range of people when it comes to linguistic education. Those who are just beginning to study languages; those who want to continue their professional development and those who must familiarize themselves with a changing curriculum can all benefit from distance learning.

Distance learning offers various types of control over student learning such as tests, final graduation event, portfolio, self-control and mutual control. Students do not feel lost and denied from the world as teachers constantly provide feedback, pedagogical communication which involves the presence of a special place, for example, a forum for consultations between students and a teacher as well as communication between students. Opening distance education tends to be flexible and more affordable than full time study.

However, distance education has its problems especially for students who learn foreign languages since each language has its own difficulties even when learning in person. Modern researchers identify a number of problems that students face during the period of remote education.

The first problem to be mentioned is lack of interaction between students and teachers. In a distance environment the student's ability and disposition to self-monitor and accurately evaluate content comprehension and request help accordingly may represent a crucial variable which affects both learning and teaching processes. In a distance learning environment the tutors lack direct access to verbal and non-verbal feedback from their students. This feedback enables the teacher in a conventional learning environment to use verbal and nonverbal signals to adjust the instructional process in real-time in order to meet their student's needs.

Secondly, the researchers underline the problem of lack of practice of the material having been already learnt. It is difficult to teach specialties that involve a large number of practical experience remotely. Even the most modern simulators will not replace future physicians or teachers of «live» practice.

Finally, there is a disadvantage concerned with a large amount of material for self-study. Lack of time is one of the most common reasons why students do not pay enough attention to one topic. While some people do face unexpected personal circumstances, others simply don't know how to properly manage their time.

In order to identify the relevance of the problems we have conducted a study among the students of the linguistic specialty of Polessky State University. The students were asked to list the pros and cons of distance learning. Based on the results of the research we can admit that only the minority of the students are satisfied with distance learning. So, they highlighted such advantages as convenience that means the autonomous decision on the learning program and its schedule; flexibility of distance learning programs that helps students to pursue and complete their desired courses from anywhere with the use of the computer and internet connection; and, eventually, efficiency which actually saves one's precious time as there is no need in wasting any time on traveling to class and there is no downtime before and after courses.

However, the majority of students argued their dissatisfaction with the above reasons and they identified additional shortcomings, namely, disorientation, lack of physical and social interaction, technology issues.

In relation to the disorientation, distance learning is a new technology, and as it is with the introduction of new means, it doesn't fit people who have technology fears and cannot adopt new technical skills easily. The work with any shells requires having technical orientation, such as computer knowledge, working with new software and experience using internet tools. In addition, some people are disoriented by the absence of personal contact [3].

As for the lack of physical and social interaction, education is a lot more than just learning. It is also a great opportunity to meet other students. With distance learning you lack opportunities to interact with others and you need to cope by yourself. By the way, social and administrative barriers can be a challenge for students. This can be a challenge especially if students do not know the best method to communicate with lecturers or what their progress is in a course or module [2].

In relation to the technology issues, any student seeking to enroll for a distance learning program needs to invest in a range of equipment including computer, webcam and stable internet connection. This overdependence on technology is a major drawback to distance learning. In case of any software or hard-

ware malfunction, the class session will come to a standstill, something that can interrupt the learning process [1].

Thus, distance learning has its pros and cons where the main advantage is the flexibility offered by the distance courses, because there is no need for the frequency to the physical space and, thus, the student can attend classes wherever he is. On the other hand, the main disadvantage of this method of getting education is the lack of physical and social interaction which leads to a decrease in both the students' motivation and the quality of the learning material.

However, it is important to understand that a person should not rely only on scientific and technical achievements. Since personal qualities play an important role the ability to organize the learning space independently, to distribute time for the assigned subjects effectively and to perform work both during school hours and homework conscientiously can lead to successful learning foreign languages in context of distance learning.

Список использованных источников

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