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EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF MASS OPEN ONLINE COURSES AS MODERN INFOCOMMUNICATION TRAINING TECHNOLOGIES

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Abstract

The authors endeavor to carry out a scientific understanding of the process of creating mass open online courses, importance, richness and diversity of which are undoubtedly valuable for modern educational practice. The relevance of the use of MOOCs as new information and communication technologies requires the analysis of their pedagogical potential, educational, cognitive and educational role in the modern learning/teaching process, as well as methods and techniques of the teacher with students. The article reveals the main approaches to the content of MOOCs and formation of a humanistic educational environment in the process of their creation. The use of methods of theoretical analysis of philosophical, socio-political, pedagogical, socio-cultural, geopolitical, historical, psychological literature on this problem in combination with scientific, interpretative analysis of pedagogical knowledge leads to conclusions about the progressiveness of MOOCs, the effectiveness of their use in the educational process, the expansion of freedom of choice in the learning process. The advantages of MOOCs as a distance educational model are highlighted. They include accessibility and openness, technological effectiveness, modularity, flexibility, ability to transmit visual, audio, text, graphic and dynamic information over distances. It is shown that the educational value of MOOCs consists in the possibility of access to various sources of information, interactivity, rapid feedback "trainee – teacher", to stimulate the independence of students. The authors argue that MOOCs as modern information and communication technologies contribute to the development of the education system in a society where the priority is the educational needs of each individual.

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1. Introduction

Modern educational space is capacious, flexible, mobile, susceptible to new trends. The most profound changes occur under the influence of information and communication technologies. Modern educational theory and practice strongly require the lighting in the studies of the influence of information and communication technologies in the educational process, determination of their productive maintenance and predictive potential.

Currently, mass open online courses or MOOCs are widely used. They are training courses designed for mass interactive participation of students, with the use of e-learning technologies and open access via the Internet. They are one of the forms of distance education that has made significant changes in the modern educational space. As a complement to traditional course materials such as videos, reading and homework, MOOCs provide an opportunity to use interactive user forums that help create and support communities of students, teachers and tutors. Video recordings of lectures of various educational institutions began to appear on the Internet in the late 1990s, but only MOOCs, which appeared for the first time in the early 2010-ies, made it possible for students and teachers to communicate online, as well as take and pass exams online. Such courses are designed for students of different levels of training – from beginners to experienced professionals. The most popular mass online courses gather hundreds of thousands of students.

Currently, such courses are provided by leading universities of the world, such as Harvard, Stanford, MIT, Johns Hopkins University and others. The most popular MOOCs are placed on such platforms as Coursera, Edx, Udacity. In Russia, the most famous platform is "Universarium" which is an open e-learning system. The second one is being established, in terms of increasing interest in the study of Russian as a foreign language - the portal "Education in Russian".

MOOCs are identical to the courses that University teachers give to their own students. These lectures are recorded on video, posted on the Internet for open free access and accompanied by other training materials and tests. MOOC expands the possibilities of opening up new areas of knowledge, preparing for graduation/entrance examinations, taking a course of necessary retraining, improving existing skills or satisfying interest and curiosity. Such courses are interesting for schoolchildren, students, teachers and professionals – in short, for everyone who strives for self-education.

2. Problem Statement

MOOCs have become a fact of educational life today. In domestic and foreign studies there accumulated a set of data, which can be the basis for further study of mass open online courses.

Thus, in foreign studies of the functioning of MOOCs it is noted that they are "one of the emerging technologies in the field of education" (Viswanathan, 2012, p. 32). The MOOC movement has arisen due to the proliferation of technology, the increasing demand for educational opportunity (Prpic, Melton, Taeihagh, & Anderson, 2015; Saadatmand & Kumpulainen, 2014). When using MOOCs, the role of the teacher shifts from his function "as the repository and transmitter of knowledge to the flipped classroom model where the learner interacts with other students, peers, and has flexible access to all information and resources around him before coming to the classroom" (Brahimi, 2015, p.604). MOOCs

have opened up a huge number of questions for us as higher education instructors and administrators, but they have firmly established the need for open and more flexible learning (Miller, 2015, p. 114).

The positive aspects of MOOCs are described in detail by a number of methodologists all over the world: Mohamad, Jawawi, and Ahmad (2018), Sonwalkar and Maheshkar (2015), Costello, Brown, Mhichíl, and Zhang (2018), Bozkurt, Akgun-Ozbek, and Zawacki-Richter (2017), Cruz-Benito, Borras-Gene, Garcia-Penalvo, Blanco, and Theron (2017), Shen and Kuo (2015), Zawacki-Richter, Bozkurt, Alturki, and Aldraiweesh (2018), Zhu, Sari, and Miyoung Lee (2018).

In Russian scientific works on MOOCs there is marked a need to adapt them to the needs of the Russian-speaking user and the requirements for basic educational programs (Makoveychuk, 2015, p. 66; Aynutdinova & Aynutdinova, 2018, p. 72; Borshchyova, 2017, p. 86; Bolodurina, Zaporozhko, Parfonov, & Antsiferova, 2017, p. 24; Travkin, 2015, p. 441; Titova, 2015, p. 145).

The Ukrainian scientist Borzenko (2017) emphasizes

the importance and necessity of purposeful realization of scientific, comparative-pedagogical analysis of foreign experience in organizing distance learning" in order to "stimulate the mobile introduction of world innovations into the national system of pedagogical education and increase the possibilities of its integration into the world of pedagogical space. (p. 38)

However, the educational value of MOOCs has not been fully represented yet, their pedagogical potential remains insufficiently studied. There is no scientifically based system of the preparation and meaningful content of MOOCs. Despite the accomplished research, many questions of scientific understanding of the process of creating mass open online courses still remain neglected by the researchers. The importance, richness and diversity of MOOCs, their undoubted value for modern educational practice indicate the existing contradictions between:

the value of new information and communication technologies and the existing underestimation of their educational value;

the relevance of the use of mass open online courses as new information and communication technologies and insufficient scientific level of analysis of their pedagogical potential in modern domestic and foreign pedagogical literature;

the widespread use of new educational technologies in the form of mass open online courses and the lack of sufficient work to reveal their educational, cognitive and educational role.

In this regard, the understanding of the educational potential of mass open online courses becomes relevant and significant.

Taking into account the revealed contradictions, the research problem was formulated: What is the educational value of mass online courses?

3. Research Questions

In the course of the research it is necessary to answer the questions: How do mass open online courses influence the changes in the modern educational space? What are the main approaches to the

content of mass open online courses and the creation of a humanistic educational environment in the process of their creation?

4.   Purpose of the Study

is to reveal the educational value of modern mass online courses, to describe their educational, cognitive and educational functions, to analyze possible ways of content-methodical solutions in the creation of MOOCs, to identify vectors of creating a humanistic educational environment in preparation and implementation of MOOCs.

5.   Research Methods

To achieve this research goal, the following research methods were used: theoretical analysis of philosophical, socio-political, socio-cultural, geopolitical, historical, psychological and pedagogical literature on this problem; scientific, interpretative analysis of pedagogical knowledge.

6.   Findings

It is common knowledge that improving efficiency is the general idea of any progress. In the field of education, it can be implemented in the form of more progressive contents or effective principles, methods, techniques, forms of activity of teachers and trainees. The expansion of freedom of choice in the learning process is also inextricably linked with the components of the pedagogical system, which provides for the choice of educational programs, the choice of curricula; the choice of methods and parameters of the learning process, as well as alternative organizational forms of education.

Such broad new opportunities of freedom of choice are opened in the conditions of e-learning, in particular, teaching the Russian language for native speakers and Russian as a foreign language, literature in a distance format, with the use of mass open online courses. The advantages of distance learning include adaptability, accessibility and openness, flexibility, modularity, the ability to transmit visual, audio, text, graphic and dynamic information over distances, access to various sources of information, interactivity with the help of specially created for this purpose multimedia programs, prompt feedback "trainee – teacher", encouraging independence.

From a pedagogical point of view, there are several important questions to take into consideration: Who will teach? Whom will he/she teach? How will he/she teach? Answers to these questions reveal what methods and technologies will be used by the teacher in the pedagogical process, how he/she structures all modules of training, in what sequence the necessary material will be submitted and in what form the information will be controlled. Pedagogical personnel has to deal with these and many other issues when they use distance learning. In the study of specific material in the e-learning system, general didactic methods and techniques of learning are embodied through a large number of ways of learning, each of which is a certain action that is aimed at achieving the goal of education. It is carried out by means of various didactic means of training.

While teaching Russian as a foreign language through distance learning, researchers recommend the use of demonstration, illustration, explanation, story, conversation, exercises, problem solving, memorization of training material, written work, and repetition.

With the transition to a new information society, characterized by the constant development of modern computer technology, the demand for a specialist who can easily navigate in a large number of information flows is rapidly increasing.

Changes in education, involving the use of new technologies, have led to a completely new branch of educational services, united under the common name "distance education model". This model and its use in educational sphere can solve many problems: the problems of access to educational services, the problems of the level of interactivity of the pedagogical process, the problems of the effectiveness of training.

It is the form of distance learning that corresponds to the development of the education system in society, where the need of each individual is put at the forefront. At the same time, the distance learning system acts as a tool for the formation of better opportunities in accordance with the interests of each person.

A positive experience of creating mass open online courses is available at Pyatigorsk State University. There, in the framework of the program of promotion of the Russian language and education in Russian, a team of authors prepared courses with a focus on the MOOC-model to be presented on the portal "Education in Russian". The names of the courses are as follows: "Russian language in life and career: practical advice", "Humor and satire in Russian literature of the 1920s" and "History of linguistic teachings".

Let us consider the ways of creating a humanistic educational environment in the conditions of e-learning and the principles of creating such courses on the example of the course "Russian language in life and career: practical advice". This course includes the actual educational part (6 educational modules with control and measuring materials) and the methodological part (with the necessary supporting curriculums). The aim of the course "Russian language in life and career: practical advice" was set as the qualitative improvement of the speech portrait of the modern man and his speech behavior in different aspects: personal, business communication, professional activity, acquisition of competencies. Various competencies represent different abilities: linguistic (knowledge of the language system, the role and importance of language in society), sociolinguistic (assuming the ability to formulate thoughts with the help of units and rules of language), socio-cultural (assuming knowledge of national and cultural characteristics of social and speech behavior of native speakers), improving the level of Russian language proficiency, expanding linguistic horizons, training competent participants in communication and in general – the popularization of the Russian language in the world, increasing interest in the Russian language and education in Russian.

The course solves the following problems of training:

1) knowledge about the system of language, its role and importance in society;

2) familiarization with the concepts of "speech portrait", "speech behavior", "social behavior", "speech error", "grammatical error", "effective business communication", "business letter", "ethics of business communication»;

3) familiarization with the basic lexical units, figurative and expressive means and possibilities of their use in the texts of their own production;

4) overcoming the main morphological and syntactic difficulties; overcoming common spelling and punctuation difficulties;

5) familiarity with the language norms of business communication and the rules of business documentation;

6) development of the ability to formulate thoughts with the help of units and rules of language.

The course is designed for a wide range of participants – from school students of the middle level to students with secondary and higher education, as well as foreigners interested in the Russian language. In our opinion, the results of the course should be the following:

the subject result – the completion of knowledge about the language system;

the metasubject result – understanding of national and cultural specifics of social and speech behavior of native speakers;

the personal result – improving the overall speech portrait of modern man and his speech behavior, enriching vocabulary, developing the ability to correct and accurate usage of words, the ability to formulate thoughts using units and rules of the language, overcoming common difficulties of the Russian language, the formation of business writing skills, presentations and negotiations, confident use of lexical, grammatical resources of the Russian language in personal and professional communication.

The structure of the course is as follows: for each topic there is a block of 6 parts (mini-lectures) with illustrations, presentations, fragments of feature and animated films. At the end of each part of the video-lecture there is one test question. At the end of each module (topic) the course offers 10-15 questions on the listened material, the task of additional literature and the topic for discussion on the forum. At the end of the third and fifth themes the course offers a home assignment. After all six modules, 30 questions are offered throughout the course as a final assessment.

Students are given guidelines for the implementation of the curriculum, which consist of the following tips:

1. Listen to each part of the topic. Write down the main points contained in the presentation. It is recommended to listen to one part per day.

2. After completing the part, answer the test question.

3. After listening to the lecture topics (all parts), run the test.

4. For a full understanding of the lecture material, get acquainted with the recommended literature.

5. At the end of the 3rd and 5th part it is necessary to fulfil homework pertaining to the content of all the studied topics.

6. At the end of the course, questions related to all the topics are offered. We recommend that you review all modules again before doing the test.

7. The success of the course depends on the attention, concentration in the study of the material.

Students are also supplied with the list of literature (basic and additional) and other types of teaching materials and manuals necessary for the study (lecture notes, video lectures, laser discs, etc.). To attract the attention of students to the training, the authors used interesting names of lectures and their parts, for example: "Why is grief not a woe? The use of words-synonyms", "Cold boiling water – paradox

or reality? Antonyms in Russian", "Put on a jacket, but put the jacket on the child. The meaning and use of paronyms", "Is it possible to beat the buckles with the sleeves rolled up? The meaning and usage of Russian phraseological units".

In addition, to create additional motivation, the authors of the MOOC used interesting facts from the content of the module, for example: "It is known that the vocabulary of Ellochka (the character of the novel "Twelve Chairs") contained 30 words, the vocabulary of a first grader in primary school is about 2000 words, a person with higher education knows about 10 thousand words, scholars – up to 50 thousand words, and "Pushkin Language Dictionary", containing the words used by the most famous Russian writer, contains more than 20 thousand words. Where is our place in this row?"

Or this one: "A classic example of the misuse of the participle turnover is the well-known Chekhov's phrase: "Driving up to this station...my hat flew off." Of course, the writer was ironic, but even modern printed publications give us, in this regard, the richest material. Become a confident "user" of Russian grammar – do not repeat the mistakes of Chekhov's character!"

Video lectures contain the authors' drawings: portraits of scientists, illustrations to the rules, as well as examples from famous movies, cartoons and songs, which make learning interesting, and the rules memorable. For example, one of the means of expressiveness is illustrated by a line from the famous song (from the legendary Russian film "Diamond Hand"): "Crocodile wouldn't get caught, coconut wouldn't grow" (a short fragment of the film is shown in a video lecture). Teachers use interesting visual interactive methods and teaching techniques: question-answer form of presentation, diagrams, summary tables, dialogue, problem presentation, appeal to the readers' life experience and that of the students, relying on the authoritative opinion of domestic and foreign linguists. In the process of creating mass online courses in philology, the authors, focusing on the interest of students, are guided by the idea of the most important role of Russian literature in the study and popularization of the Russian language (Petrenko, 2016, p. 22). In these conditions the student becomes the main figure of the learning process, the humanistic educational environment is created for him and around him. MOOC generates creativity, independence, stimulates self-education.

Actually, the education system, aimed at the future development, should be able not only to equip the student with knowledge. Due to constant and rapid updating of knowledge, it should be able to form in the student the need to continuously and independently master the language, develop skills and use self-education, creative approach to new knowledge throughout an active life. Education should eventually become a social institution that is able to provide a person with a variety of educational services that allow you to study continuously, to provide the opportunity for postgraduate and additional education (Tappaskhanova, 2011, p. 44-48).

Approach to learning, aimed at communicative activity, remains the leading one and is considered to be the basis for building a modern system of teaching Russian as a foreign language in a remote mode as well. This approach fully contributes to the creation of a humanistic educational environment, as it has the following indispensable features:

the subject of educational activity is the listener, who occupies the central part of training;

the structure of training involves maximum consideration of individual psychological, age and national characteristics of the individual listener;

attention is mainly paid to the creation and maintenance of students' needs for communication and assimilation of significant information;

the teacher selects exercises that maximally recreate significant situations for students in all sections of the language.

The cognitive approach is undoubtedly essential, as it is based on creating a set of exercises and tasks related to the modules of the discipline for self-fulfillment. This approach is most interesting for students who are eager to know the Russian language fluently, as it requires a conscious study of individual sections of the language via the recommended additional literature.

Tests in the described MOOCs are made up with a focus on the students' interests. The main requirements for the test system of control and assessment of knowledge are appropriate and beneficial for learners: questions and answers to the tests should be clear and understandable; the tests should be easy to use, test questions should be sufficient to cover the entire content of the course; questions should be submitted to the listener randomly to avoid memorizing their sequence; possible answers should also be presented in random order; the time given for answers should be reasonably limited.

Thus, modern teaching practice, including e-learning, can make a significant contribution to the development of a person, his socially valuable moral and ideological qualities that he needs in the present and will need in the future. The humanistic philosophy of education is aimed at the benefit of a man, at creating opportunities for his growth, at the realization of his needs and interests in the modern continuously moving and developing world.

7. Conclusion

Thus, the analysis of the current state of mass open online courses allowed the authors to identify their educational value, which includes their availability and openness, flexibility, modularity, technology, continuity in education, the ability to transmit different types of information (visual, audio, text, graphic and dynamic), access to various sources of information, interactivity, prompt feedback "trainee-teacher", stimulating the independence of students. A variety of methodological techniques in the creation of mass online courses (demonstration, illustration, explanation, story, conversation, exercises, problem solving, memorization of educational material, written work and repetition) ensures the effectiveness of the learning process, and the humanistic educational environment created for the student and around him, generates creativity, independence, stimulates self-education of the students.

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