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ORGANIZATION OF STUDENTS' INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION IN A WEBINAR.

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Abstract

The modern paradigm of pedagogy development is aimed to foster not only a trained and intellectual member of society but also to create a comfortable environment to contribute to their development, social and professional formation. This article is devoted to the study of students' interactive communication phenomenon in the conditions of information educational environment, as well as its implementation in the modern educational process, and particularly – during webinars. In the work, such conceptual definitions as "interactive information environment", "educational environment", "educational process specifics", "interactive communication", etc. are used. Within the framework of the study, the specifics of these definitions were considered, their most important features in the context of the chosen topic were identified. The authors believe that webinars implemented through information educational environments have great potential for students' interactive communication organization both within the educational process and in extracurricular activities. The use of information educational environments significantly changes the quality of educational process, allows to implement blended learning. Information educational environments support synchronous and asynchronous modes of interaction between educational process subjects. The article provides a description of the research aimed at identifying the advantages and disadvantages of information educational environments in the educational process and identifying the pedagogical conditions for the organization of students' interactive communication during webinars. The questionnaire questions were aimed at studying students' satisfaction with the capacities of information environments used in the educational process and the level of their readiness for interactive communication in the conditions of information educational environments.

1. Introduction

The dynamic processes taking place in the world today entail multiple technological and economic changes (Kivarina, 2019; Kiselev et al., 2019), which imposes certain conditions on the organization of the educational process aimed at training specialists in various fields.

As a consequence, the modern educational process is the subject of many scientific works. Thus, for example, Oleshkov and Uvarov (2006) regard the modern educational process as an extremely dynamic and constantly transforming process that maintains two major, dominant trends: humanization and personal orientation. Today, this predominance of individualization, centrality, and personality-oriented approach clearly demonstrates the quest for educational process optimization and largely determines the direction of the conceptual deformation of pedagogical values and the pedagogical process itself. Therefore, the issue of improving not only the educational process from the pedagogic perspective but also the entire system of modern education is particularly acute. According to many scientists, the most effective method, in this case, is the designing, active application, and continuous development of interactive information environments at both secondary and higher education levels (Donina & Vodneva, 2019; Gorbunova & Subbotina, 2013).

In this regard, the focus is precisely on the personality of a student, the process of their development, contribution to their further civil and professional functioning, as well as on diagnostics and analytics of their professional abilities through the use of innovative technologies.

For the fullest consideration of this topic, it seems necessary for us to draw attention to such structural definitions as "webinar", "student group" and "interaction" within the present study because, in our view, it is precisely this type of communication that is especially important and relevant in modern pedagogical space (Ilyashenko et al., 2019; Kochkina & Kulikova, 2016). This makes it possible to identify the most significant conceptual problems in the training of future educational managers and the potential of information tools for interactive communication organisation in the conditions of virtual environment (Nesterov et al., 2019; Pevzner et al., 2017; Pevzner et al., 2019).

The development of interactive subject-subject relations, with the help of which interactive educational environment is formed and developed (Sirotina et al., 2013), is equally important for the study. Kochkina and Kulikova (2016) are of the view that the formation and development of information-educational environment is embodied and regulated by means of ICT.

However, not all educational process subjects are ready to use information systems in their training process practice. Their readiness to reflect on the effectiveness and efficiency of educational activities becomes significant (Romanova et al., 2019; Sazhneva et al., 2019; Sirotina et al., 2013; Tatarenko et al., 2019).

Gorbunova and Subbotina (2013) believe that the main problems in the field of the application of innovative technologies, forms, and methods of the educational process are:

- information quantity balance problem that consists in a significant predominance of information in the global digital space over students' ability to perceive it. In other words, students are not able to assimilate absolutely all (even extremely important) information that the digital space provides, since there is too much of it;

▪ the difference in the specifics of technological algorithms and human reasoning, namely the ability of the latter to create, to use creative thinking, to design, etc. without taking into account special algorithms and frameworks; psychological stress on a student, under which they are not always able to perform certain tasks formed by means of ICT, and thereby self-evaluative judgment and self-actualization are deteriorating significantly (Gorbunova & Subbotina, 2013).

Let us note that communication skills, precisely in information environments, have an even greater role in the professional development of future educational managers since the vector of the development of media didactics and information management is associated specifically with information environments.

2. Problem Statement

One of the main challenges a modern head of an educational organization faces is the educational environment transformation in accordance with the principles of digital pedagogy and ensuring the use of interactive information environments (henceforth IIE) both in the educational and management processes, in particular – interactive communication organization when conducting educational webinars – online classes and online conferences.

In this regard, let us draw attention to the results of an anonymous questionnaire among students of FSAEI HE "V. I. Vernadsky Crimean Federal University" on the topic of "Professional development with the help of ICT and IIE". 256 people, mostly full-time students (78.3% of the total number of respondents), to a lesser extent – part-time students and blended study mode students (the remaining 21.7%), took part in the questioning. The majority of respondents agree that education today is aimed at providing relevant theoretical knowledge and practical skills – 46%; however, 23.8% believe that modern higher education lacks newer training programs (such as game design, digital pedagogy, SMM management, etc.); 16.1% are not interested in this issue; and 14.1% rely on mass and generally accepted professions.

Based on these data, we can conclude that today, the majority of respondents turn to traditional training programs and consider the quality of their teaching good and satisfactory (60.1%), but there are those who believe that the innovative and interactive component not only in the educational process itself but also in the matter of this process is not developed or partially developed (23.8%). It is important to pay attention to the means used within IIE, especially to interactive communication, which becomes the basis for both collective (group) interactions (for example, in the processes of team design and project development at different stages), and individual or teacher-student interactions (within the framework of the webinars which require teacher-student communication).

Let us refer to the definition of "interactive information environment" which is the essential and fundamental basis of this study. Demina (2015) is of the following opinion regarding this term definition: information interactive environment is "an information and educational environment associated with the management of information technology and didactic support, with the formation of an interactive position in the interaction of educational process subjects (student, teacher), and aimed at addressing their needs and interests in quality educational services within general education (and in this case, higher education) organization.

Table 1. Satisfaction with the quality of the application of existing innovative technologies and IIE in the educational process (results are presented in percentage)

	Absolute satisfaction	Partial satisfaction	Partial dissatisfaction	Absolute dissatisfaction
Material and technical equipment of the university	13.6	63.3	15.1	8.0
Material and technical equipment of a department	10.5	37.1	36.5	15.9
Webinars application in the educational process	2.8	10.7	85.3	3.2
Working with department IIS	13.2	45.5	22.1	19.2
Pedagogical work level in the field of IIS	66.9	17.1	10.0	6.0

The questionnaire results, presented in Table 01, clearly illustrate students' attitudes to interactive technologies and webinars in particular and to their application in the educational process.

3. Research Questions

3.1. What are the challenges to the effective use of webinars in the educational process?

3.2. What information environments capacities to organize interactive communication are the most attractive for students?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore information environments potential in organizing interactive communication in the process of conducting webinars and to identify the effectiveness of the methods and techniques used for organizing students' interactive communication in educational webinars.

5. Research Methods

This study takes a questionnaire as the main research method. The questionnaire was carried out in two stages, due to which the advantages and disadvantages of interactive information environments in the educational process and students' interactive communication during webinars were formulated. The questions were aimed at exploring satisfaction with the quality of application of existing innovative technologies and IIE in the educational process and determining the degree of their effectiveness as the main components of the process of acquiring and assimilating knowledge, due to which a conclusion was made about the effectiveness of students' interactive communication. Also, the specificity of this communication and its influence on the entire learning process at the university were identified.

The questionnaire among students of FSAEI HE "V. I. Vernadsky Crimean Federal University" on the topic of "Professional development with the help of ICT and IIE" consisted of two conceptual blocks (the first one was "Satisfaction with the quality of the application of existing innovative technologies and IIS in the educational process", the second one was "ICT use effectiveness degree within IIE as the main components of acquiring and assimilating knowledge").

6. Findings

The study has illustrated a significant number of problems associated with the use of IIE: the problem of "traditional" education and the absence of the newest specialties that have emerged in the 21st century; university teachers' competence in the field of ICT and IIE is quite low today; material security problems, etc. We have found that students' attitude to the use of IIS and interactive forms of communication is more positive. They believe (67.4) that such structure is much more effective than the traditional one and contributes to better assimilation of knowledge and skills in a specialized field.

The purpose of our study was to identify the level and quality of the use of IIE, innovative approaches, and technologies. That is why one of the illustrative questions of the questionnaire was the question about satisfaction with the conduct of innovative forms of training and webinars at the university. The respondents almost unanimously agreed that IIE are functioning unsatisfactorily, as evidenced by 88.5% of the answers. In our opinion, this is due to the problem we described earlier: to the lack of the latest training programs and newest specialties, as well as webinars rare use, which is why much remains inaccessible to students. According to students, teachers are not ready to use modern synchronous training tools, because it is easier for them to work within the framework of traditional forms of organizing the educational process at the university. This is confirmed by the following two indicators: students' satisfaction with the quality of the information educational environment (58.7%) and the level of the educational process organization with new information technologies and distance learning tools (84%).

Furthermore, an important issue, in our view, is the quality of educational services provided in this field in on-line and off-line formats. The main, final, and summarizing block of the questionnaire is the following, presented in Table 02 and aimed at assessment by the respondents of the readiness to perceive innovative forms of organizing the educational process.

Table 2. The degree of effectiveness of the use of ICT and interactive communication means in the framework of IIE as the main components of acquiring and assimilating knowledge (results are presented in percentage)

Questionnaire questions	Technical means (ICT) application	Interactive communication with a teacher (within the framework of webinars and other online classes)	Teachers' competence in the field of IIE application	Distance learning technologies application
Points				
5	26.0	80.2	9.1	75.7
4	57.1	14.0	25.0	10.4
3	12.0	5.0	45.9	8.8
2	4.9	0.6	11.8	4.1
1	0	0.2	8.2	1.1

The results of this block make it clear to us that the most progressive and effective elements of the interactive information environment of the university – interactive forms of communication with a teacher – webinars and other online classes (94.2% of respondents rated this element above 3 points), in which the

teacher and the student interact in the same information field practically on equal terms (apart from the fact that the teacher still assesses tasks performance, etc.), ICT use (83.1%) and distance learning technologies use (86.1%). In our view, this is largely due to the fact that the student feels more confident in the digital environment and is able to concentrate on the knowledge that they need, reinforcing it with constant interaction with the teacher. This is the most effective model for acquiring and optimizing knowledge from the respondents' point of view. Despite the high assessment of the effectiveness of the use of interactive forms of communication with a teacher, 65.9% of respondents rate teachers' competence in the field of ICT and IIE from three points or less, which suggests that they are ineffective from the students' point of view. This is largely due to the predominance of the older generation of teachers who are proficient in the methodology and technologies of traditional education but far from the digital one.

Such results indicate that, in general, students are satisfied with the fact that IIE are starting to be introduced into educational programs, and they highly estimate their effectiveness. They believe that new digital technologies are capable of optimizing and organizing the educational process in a new way, which provides new opportunities for communication and interconnection. However, there are also problems in this area, the solution of which is possible only after a period of active use of information educational environments.

7. Conclusion

The study showed the presence of a high potential of information environments for organizing educational process subjects' interactive communication and motivating the majority of students and teachers of educational organizations to use information environments in the process of educational managers' professional training. Teachers' interest in obtaining new knowledge and skills in webinars organization to use them in the university educational process was revealed. At the same time, obstacles to the effective use of webinars in the educational process were identified. An important result of the study was the decision to conduct a corporate training session on the problem of using webinars, which involves not only the development of participants' skills in organizing interactive communication but also the development of their IT competence.

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