STAFF ASSISTANCE PROBLEMS OF THE DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE MODERN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The large-scale introduction of distance learning technologies in the educational process of a higher school (universities, institutes, academies) and at the level of secondary vocational (colleges) and school education has demanded to form the respective professional competencies for educators, teachers and educational support staff. There is the need to analyze the willingness of teachers to carry out educational activities under the new technological conditions, and in case of unwillingness - in its formation.

On the basis of the theoretical analysis of literature and the research conducted by a survey method, the author attempted to mark the factors that influence the readiness of teachers of different age groups for the introduction of distance learning technology into the learning process, and to identify psychological problems that teachers face in this regard.

KEYWORDS: *distance learning, learning process, teachers, psychological problems*

1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction of the distance learning system for the last twenty years has been one of the leading ways to develop basic educational programs, allowing to solve such strategic tasks of the governmental policy in the sphere of education, as an increased availability of the qualitative education, training effectiveness, corresponding to the contemporary needs of society and its citizens. The distance learning allows using the best traditional and innovative means and forms of education and based on the self-study principle, reaching a creative personal self-development.

The main task of the distance education, in contrast to the traditional model is not provision of information buy teaching the methods of its receipt and use.

2. DIFFICULTIES OF THE TEACHERS USING THE DISTANCE LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

The distance learning process with using information and computer facilities is differed from the traditional mostly by the lacked common interaction between trainees and the teacher in one learning auditorium, which results in more qualitative development of the didactic material used in the training process. As it is rightly pointed by A.A. Styugina, all material should be formulated maximally precisely to avoid wrong perception (Styugina, 2011). The lack of oral communication at the distance learning provides the need for the teacher to use widely the written speech, additional efforts for the adequate interpretation of each other, making accents in the text and also using the written types of the knowledge control. In online variant of the learning process there should be a remote access of participants to each other, at that not only participation of the teacher is important but the direct involvement of the trainee also with an access to the information content

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(Glasner, Gavrikov, 2010). As the teacher and the trainee are communicated through computer technical means, it demands from the teacher to be experienced in organization of online-communication and fluent printing on the keyboard.

The above-stated differences lead to difficulties which are not only technical, but also psychological among teachers using the distance education technology (further on as - the distance education technologies) in their professional activities (Tenitilov, 2013). The proposed solutions have both theoretical and practical importance, as it directly presupposes the efficient use of the distance education technology in the learning process.

3. RESEARCH OF THE ATTITUDE FORMED BY THE UNIVERSITY TEACHERS TOWARDS USING THE DISTANCE LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES (SECONDARY ANALYSIS MATERIALS)

We are to give results of the research carried out by teachers of the Krasnoyarsk state pedogogical university named after V.P. Astafiev (further on - as KSPU of V.P. Astafiev) in October 2015 (Shelud'ko, 2015). To generate the modern and vaster strategy on development and implementation of the distance learning technology in this educational organization the research was made to reveal the factors, in one way or another affecting the teaching with using the distance learning technologies. During the research the attempt was made to identify an attitude of the university teaching staff towards such way of educational activities (further on as - the research).

20 teachers of different age groups from the KSPU of V.P. Astafiev took part in the research (traditionally three age groups were formed: 20–35 years old, 36–50 years old, older than 50 years) with different work experience in the scientific-pedagogic activities and in teaching technical, humanitarian, natural science disciplines. The research was made as the written survey by means of the previously prepared forms, which were personally filled in by the respondents and included the following questions:

- Identity of the respondent (concerning its age, experience in the scientific-pedagogic work, available perception of the distance learning technology and the teaching experience through it) which made possible further to process the survey material within this or that subgroup, if required by comparing the similar information from various subgroups;
- Opinion of the respondent in relation to purposes of implementing the distance learning technology in the educational process; the attitude towards the educational services to be realized (or already being realized) through the distance learning technology in the university; the factors that prevents using the distance learning technology; psychological and other problems of the teacher due to using the distance learning technologies in the university.

Depending on the response form, to find out more precisely and clearly individual opinions of the interviewed persons, the questionnaire presupposed the closed, semi-closed and open questions. Procession of the research results included analysis of interrelated features. As the measure of interrelated features there was the Spearman's correlation coefficient. Calculations were made by means of the applied computer program StatgraphicsPlusv.2.1.

Data of the performed survey demonstrated that the teachers determined the following purposes of implementing the distance learning system to be mostly important: using opportunities of the unified open educational space and formation and creation of new learning forms at their integration with other training forms (such data of the purpose was determined as the most relevant by 48,18% respondents), and also development of new educational service segments (stated by 37,72% from 220 interviewed teachers). The most valuable in using the distance learning technologies, according to the teachers, are as follows: individual flexible training schedule (noted by 67,27% of respondents), individual learning rate (stated by 54,09% of teachers), use of more modern and efficient learning methods (actual for 34,09% of respondents).

In addition the relationship of some above-stated factors was discovered with the age of respondents (Table 1).

Table 1. The most important purposes to implement the distance learning technologies according to the teachers from different age groups

Most significant purposes to implement values of the distance learning technology		Age of teachers in the educational organization		
		20-35 years	36-50 years	Over 50 years
Most important purposes to implement the distance learning system	Using opportunities of the uniform open educational space		0.16**	-0.22**
	Preservation and reproduction of the pedagogic experience and unique teaching methods	0.11*		-0.15**
Mostly valuable in using the system of distance learning technologies	Individual flexible training schedule		0.11*	
	Individual training rate		0.12*	
	Using more modern and efficient training methods	0.15*		
	Satisfaction from the computer work		-0.11*	0.12*
	No advantages	-0.11*	-0.12*	0.21*

Here and further:
*** - highly significant relationship in 99%
** - significant relationship in 95%
* - tendency to the authentic relationship in 90%

Source: adapted from Shelud'ko, 2015

As it is seen from the table, teachers of 20-35 years old see advantages in the use of distance learning technologies, in particular for applying more modern and effective learning methods, as well as preservation and replication of pedagogical experience and unique methods of teaching. The latter is mostly important for this age group of teachers because they are open to a new experience.

Teachers of 36-50 years old also see advantages of using the distance learning technology. And though they don't get pleasure from working on computer, they see the value of implementing the distance learning technology for realizing possibilities of the uniform open educational space, and their experience of pedagogical work at the university led to the understanding that there is the need of individual flexible training schedule and individual learning rate of students, which is provided by introduction of the distance learning technology.

Teachers who are over the age of 50 note that they enjoy working on computer, at the same time they do not see advantages of using the distance learning technology. They do not believe that these technologies empower opportunities of the uniform open educational space. Preservation and reproduction of their pedagogical experience and unique teaching methods using the distance learning technology also causes negative reactions from them. Apparently, these teachers see in that not the transfer of knowledge, but mechanical reproduction without taking into account the unique experiences of teaching

Also according to the survey results it was revealed that the major factor that makes difficult to use efficiently the distance learning technology in the university, is insufficient technical equipment of educational process (noted by 54% from 220 interviewed teachers). However, the correlation analysis showed no significant relationship of this factor with any age groups of teachers.

Using the correlation analysis it was established that there is a significant relationship between the age of teachers and some other factors that make impossible to use the distance learning technologies (Table 2).

Tables 2. Factors making impossible to use the distance learning technologies according to teacher of different age groups

Factors making impossible to use the distance learning technologies	Age of teachers in the educational organization		
	20-35 years old	36-50 years old	Older than 50 years
Insufficient development of the normative-legal documents in the sphere of distance learning		0.19**	
Imperfect system to diagnose the quality of training results		0.15**	
No psychological willingness of teachers and the teaching-support staff of the university		0.13**	

Source: adapted from Shelud'ko, 2015

As we see, the greatest number of factors impeding the use of distance learning technologies were noted by teachers of 36-50 years, who in contrast to other age groups, have personal experience of teaching activities using the distance learning technologies (there is the significant reliable correlation of 0.14 *). At that the distance learning tool for them is often teleconference - there is the tendency to the authentic relationship of 0.14 *. Apparently, insufficient development of the normative-legal documents in the sphere of distance learning and imperfect system to diagnose the quality of training results prevent them from using other distance learning technologies.

4. PECULIARITIES IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE TEACHERS AT DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISTANCE LEARNING TECHNOLOGY IN THE TRAINING PROCESS AND POSSIBLE WAYS TO OVERCOME THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES

According to the survey results it is possible to mark out the following peculiarities in the attitude of the teachers at certain age groups towards implementation of the distance learning technology in the training process and their psychological difficulties.

1. The age group of 20–35 years old is characterized by the available perception of the distance learning and approval of the idea to implement it in the learning process and also the lack of psychological willingness in this group of respondents to teaching by using the distance learning technology.

In terms of these peculiarities, the possible ways of solving psychological problems may be as follows: organization of computer courses for teachers, coursed of advanced training, involvement of other teachers as tutors who already have personal experience in teaching, psychological support for the process of adaptation to using the distance learning technologies, development of simple interfaces for users with a modular design principle.

2. The age group of teachers at the age of 36–50 years old is characterized by the positive perception of the idea to implement the distance learning technology in the training process, and also the available personal experience in teaching with the use of distance learning technologies. In this group there are no important psychological difficulties when using the distance learning technologies in the educational process.

To increase the number of teachers belonging to the group and using the distance learning technology in training activities, it is necessary to pay attention to the factors which, in the opinion of respondents, prevents from introducing the distance learning technology: insufficient

development of the normative-legal documents in the sphere of the distance learning technologies and imperfection of the system to diagnose the quality of the learning results. To minimize the negative impact of these factors it is need to work out carefully local regulations of the educational organization governing the learning process by using the distance learning technology, for more detailed regulation and elimination of the gaps in regulation and also to develop a methodology for diagnosing the quality of learning results using the distance learning technology, which certainly would confirm its effectiveness.

3. The age group over 50 years is characterized by unavailable perception of the distance education, the teachers of this age group do not see its advantages, do not consider it necessary to organize the advanced training courses, on implementation and introduction of the distance learning for the teaching staff in the university. It is possible to make teachers from this age group use the distance learning technology in the educational process through identification and implementation of conditions to motivate, stimulate the teachers to use the distance learning technology and also by encouraging the teachers, trained in new technologies, including material conditions formed for their training at work.

Regardless the age, teachers knowing the distance learning technology mark out the factors preventing from using the distance learning technologies, such as insufficient technical support of the learning process and improper level of mastering the information and communication technologies. It is supposed that the increased number of teachers involved in the distance learning technologies, can be achieved by modernization of the material -technical university facilities, maximal automation of the routine operations; organization of courses to improve qualification in development and implementation of the distance learning for the teaching staff in the university. To overcome such a psychological problem as the teaching laboriousness with using the distance learning technology is possible by minimizing the auditorium load of teachers, using various technical opportunities of informational systems in the educational process.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Summing up it can be resumed that the attitude of teachers from different age groups to the distance learning is nowadays one of the key factors affecting successful implementation of the distance learning technologies in the educational process, but currently the psychological - pedagogic support of this process is not developed at the due level. Further study and more detailed consideration of this problematic can become the base to form a unified approach to the process of overcoming psychological difficulties experienced by the teachers that is to expand the practical use of the distance technologies in the educational process.

Thus, it seems to be reasonable:

- to develop and realize the teaching staff training program, oriented to development of competencies in organization of the educational process with using the distance technologies;

- to provide psychological support (consultations on relieving the stress, psychological unloading, etc.) for transfer of the teachers to new educational technologies;

- to implement the mentoring system enabling to share the experience and skills of teaching, using special methodological methods, didactic materials and others from more experiences teachers to beginners.

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