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Peculiarities of Distance Learning Platforms Usage in Law Enforcement Educational Institutions during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: The article reviews the peculiarities of distance learning platforms usage in law enforcement educational institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Distance learning at U.S. Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, which is based on the Online Campus have been substantiated. Particular attention is paid to topical issues of training on such online training modules of the Campus: crime scene, driving training, drugs, firearms, health, interviews, investigation, law, topography, maritime training, personal security, technical means, terrorism, stopping vehicles, etc. There are also programs to study the courses "Small Arms" and "Use of Force" in the online training modules of the Campus. The specifics of professional training of border guards in Asian countries have been revealed: the use of platforms of law enforcement agencies; focus of training on the development of basic competencies and the ability to solve problem situations; the opportunity to take online courses for all categories of staff at a convenient time; creation of a three-level round-the-clock system of functioning of training of specialists. Peculiarities of professional training of border guards of European countries have been outlined considering the usage of both the platforms of institutions and joint platforms of international organizations, namely: web platform Virtual Aula of Agency FRONTEX; CEPOL DL (e-Net) web platform; European Coast Guard Training (ECGTP) platforms; ILIAS EU Mission EUBAM; Connect & Learn UNHCR; UNODC and others. Special attention is paid to the capabilities of the Virtual Aula web platform for training teachers, instructors, external experts, etc. Web platform Virtual Aula of Agency FRONTEX presents up-to-date information on educational programs conducted in Europe. Characteristics of distance learning platforms usage in higher law enforcement educational institutions in Ukraine have been presented. Distance learning course of the English language for border guards have been developed and implemented. Considerable attention is also paid to the disclosure of online assessment of knowledge: the test of self-control on the topics, modules, and procedure of final assessment.

Keywords: *distance learning platforms, law enforcement educational institutions, Covid-19 Pandemic.*

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Introduction

Formulation of the problem. A number of countries today are participating in large-scale socio-economic, medical and educational experiments because of the Covid-19 Pandemic due to the contagiousness and mutation in coronavirus infection. Decisions, which could usually be preceded by years of discussion, should be made now immediately (Silistraru et al., 2021). Traditionally, hardly anyone would dare to do such experiments. Now the situation is completely different.

One such experiment is to bring the education system online. We are talking about distance learning (DL). Despite its relevance and proliferation in recent decades, the transition to an online education system has caused a number of problematic issues. In different countries they have their own specific character, but they are also largely common: unequal conditions of consumer access to educational resources, insufficiency of media literacy of scientific and pedagogical staff, and so on. Relevant government organizations are constantly working to address these issues - but we are talking about the tactical level at this stage.

Analysis of researches and publications on the issue

Determining the effectiveness of computers' application in the educational process was investigated by I. Bloshchynskyi (Bloshchynskyi, 2017a). The methods of using computers oriented technologies of students were investigated by Melnychuk, et all. (Melnychuk, Rebukha, Zavgorodnia, & Bloshchynskyi, 2018). Usage of some computer programs usage in the learning process of law-enforcement personnel was presented by (Karpushyna, Bloshchynskyi, Zheliaskov, Chymshyr, Kolmykova, & Tymofieieva, 2019; Bloshchynskyi, 2017b). The principles of the use of electronic educational and methodological software packages in teaching different disciplines were revealed by (Bloshchynskyi, Halus, Pochehalin, & Taushan, 2018). Taking into consideration the postmodern era, some scientists emphasized that solidarity of efforts as a common condition for world survival. (Hanaba, Mysechko, & Bloshchynskyi, 2020). Considering the role of education as a social institution, G. Berea (2015) offers her own ways of developing a person's inner potential through acceptance of different social roles and statuses (Berea, 2015). Regarding socio-cultural shifts in education, we have to pay special attention to the influence of information and communication technologies. A. A. Rodideal (2019) focuses on the risks of using network technologies in the education and she suggests

a more detailed research of this topic in the practical way (Rodideal, 2019). Some scholars presented the study of the development of critical thinking and personality transformation of first year student pilots according to level of English proficiency, critical thinking skills, age, and gender (Herasyenko, Muravska, Radul, & Pidlubna, 2019). Relevant issues on how some types of postmodern art have been used during the emergency and alert states in Romania were revealed by (Purcaru, 2021). Understanding postmodern education as one that is able to develop and discover human qualities is substantiated by (Çemberci, Civelek, Gürol, & Cömert, 2021).

The foreign pedagogical experience on the studied phenomenon is reflected in the works of (Cai Ke-tian, 2015; Cao Wei-fang, 2009; Daniel, 1996; Ding Ji-ming, 2012; Fang Liang, 2013; Jiang Tao, 2015; Keegan, 1993; Perry, 1976; Peters, 2010; Wedemeyer, 1981; Wei Chen-guang, 2015; Zhang Yan, 2015) as well as in the studies of other scholars. Their developments require careful study and generalization, encourage the search for patterns and ways to use DL technologies in the Ukrainian law-enforcement education system.

However, a number of unresolved strategic issues remain. Relevant questions need to be rethought: what, how, how much, and for what purpose to teach. The effective solution of this problem is facilitated by DL, which is organized and implemented on the basis of modern pedagogical, information, computer and telecommunication technologies. DL is widely implemented abroad, in particular in European countries, the United States, Japan, Australia, China, etc., but the platforms and technologies of distance learning in these countries differ. DL is carried out on the basis of platforms or technology - a set of techniques used in the organization of training of future professionals at any time and in any place, covering such components (goals, principles of implementation, content and methods of training, organizational forms, means of training, etc.).

The **purpose** of the article is to describe the peculiarities of distance learning platforms usage in law enforcement educational institutions during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Specifics of distance learning development in higher education law enforcement educational institutions in foreign countries

In different countries, the DL of specialists in higher education law enforcement educational institutions has certain features. The use of the online Campus in the U.S. in Border Guard Training System allows the U.S. Federal Law Enforcement Training Center to significantly expand cadets'

audience and strengthen international ties. Particular attention is paid to topical issues of training on such online training modules of the Campus (crime scene, driving training, drugs, firearms, health, interviews, investigation, law, topography, maritime training, personal security, technical means, terrorism, stopping vehicles, etc.). In addition, there are programs to study the courses "Small Arms" and "Use of Force" in the online training modules of the Campus.

Online Campus provides training in four separate modes: on-demand training: online learning in the FLETC virtual learning environment, which the cadet receives on schedule; asynchronous learning under the guidance of an instructor: an online course with a certain duration, where students and facilitators rarely interact in real time; cadets perform tasks online and can work together in a forum; teachers interact with learners and evaluate online performance; training under the guidance of an instructor is synchronous for the audience; allows the teacher to be geographically separate from the cadets who are gathered in one place; requires the presence of another teacher or assistant together with the cadets; training under the guidance of an instructor synchronously for students; allows the teacher to teach in real time when the teacher and cadets are in different places. This method provides one-on-one training for teacher-cadet feedback, as well as the possibility of providing control measures.

The peculiarities of professional training of border guards using DL platforms in Asian countries, universities in Australia and Taiwan are similar and based on the Internet platform of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is special. The specifics of professional training of border guards in Asian countries in the conditions of DL is the use of platforms (full-scale systems of open distance courses) of educational law enforcement agencies and international organizations; focus of training on the development of basic competencies and the ability to solve problem situations; the opportunity to take DL courses for both men and women, for all categories of staff at a convenient time and without interruption from work; creation of a three-level round-the-clock system of functioning of training of specialists. The People's Republic of China systematically and purposefully implements the Border Guards DL in universities based on the MOOC platform, which contains: a virtual room for communication between subjects, profiles of the best cadets and their achievements, online theater, etc.

As for the EU experience, in January 2019, Bohdan Khmelnytskyi National Academy of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine received

associate membership in the network of Frontex Partner Academies and became the fortieth Partner Academy.

Peculiarities of professional training of border guards of European countries (Lithuania, Poland, Hungary) are that not only the platforms of individual universities are widely used, but also joint platforms of international organizations. In addition, agreements on cooperation in the field of teaching have been concluded between the Lithuanian border, customs and police services: holding joint meetings and seminars of teachers, constant exchange of materials, conducting joint classes for students of different services. The qualification requirements of the Concept for officials indicate the correspondence of the level of foreign language proficiency to the scope of performance of official functions. For example, a border guard serving in primary positions must have a basic level of A1, to advance in his career he needs to have a level of A2, senior officials - B1, etc. (levels are determined in accordance with the European guidelines for the study, language teaching and assessment).

It is efficient and convenient to use the "NEPTUN" system of electronic document management in the border universities of Hungary as a tool for planning the educational process (working with curricula, classes) and accounting for permanent and variable composition of the educational institution, reporting, internships, etc. DL is carried out through an internal Intranet based on the Moodle platform. Cadets are trained in their specialty to perform tasks in border control, border protection and criminal investigation, border management, work with foreigners and asylum seekers.

In higher education, special attention is paid to the capabilities of DL platform, which are used in the border guards professional training: web platform Virtual Aula of Agency FRONTEX; CEPOL DL (e-Net) web platform; European Coast Guard Training (ECGTP) platforms; ILIAS EU Mission EUBAM; Connect & Learn UNHCR; UNODC and others. The main purpose of the Virtual Aula web platform is to train specialists involved in the border guards' education (teachers, instructors, trainers, external training experts, etc.), to present up-to-date information on educational programs conducted in Europe.

The DL platform of CEPOL is an online platform through which law-enforcement personnel can obtain a wide range of knowledge in border related sphere and attend different training courses. The ECGF Training Network is a voluntary association of coastal training institutions in the Member States of the European Forum of Coastal Protection Offices ECGFF. The Coast Guard Education Portal includes trainings on modules

related to Coast Guard functions, student exchange opportunities, seminars, events and news on Coast Guard education activities.

In addition, the educational DL platform ILIAS of the EU mission EUBAM is widely used. This platform was chosen because of its flexibility: opportunities for DL courses management, systematization of presented training modules, assessment, portfolio work, organization of surveys, blogging, etc. UNHCR Education and Learning Platform is the learning management system of this web platform includes webinars, the use of online and offline media, mobile applications, tools for self-study, the organization of student communities. UNHCR's main teaching aids are seminars, refresher courses, blended learning courses and self-study software. This organization currently trains 16,000 people in 130 countries.

Characteristics of distance learning platforms usage in higher education law enforcement educational institutions in Ukraine

Officially DL implementation to educational institutions and centres of State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGSU) is regulated by the Order № 882 "On the Instruction approval of DL as the remote form of vocational training". In other words, each border guard using the computer at the workplace will have access to educational resources of the SBGSU and can be enrolled to DL courses of different fields of operational and service activity or be required to take tests. It supplements full-time or part-time training, and furthermore, it provides vocational training of the personnel career development during service. It will also improve mobility of education and will provide preserving and renewal of knowledge base, accumulated in the education system of the SBGSU. For the purpose of realisation of this task the Concept, specifying basic directions of DL, stages and terms of its creation, its normative base, etc. was developed. The following courses for officers' DL were conducted for: the commanding staff of the border protection units and their deputies, deputies of the chiefs of border detachments (management and administration course), and a course on "Human rights" (developed by the International Organization for Migration).

Moreover, several DL pilot projects for non-commissioned officers were conducted on basis of three training centres of the SBGSU: *Educational centre of personnel training* - «Modern passport documents and possible ways of their falsification»; *Training centre of marine protection* - «Training of inspection groups of SBGSU marine guard while carrying out Ukrainian and foreign civil vessels inspection»; *Velyki Mosty Educational border detachment* -

«Theoretical bases of preparation and service deployment of inspectors-cynologists with service dogs».

Considering the expansion of international relations and cooperation in the context of the fight against transnational (cross-border) crime and terrorism, English acquires the status of "lingua franca" (a functional type of language used to communicate between speakers of different languages in limited social contacts). In view of this, one of the main demands for the professional training of personnel is to increase the level of foreign language mastering. According to the order № 205 of Administration of SBGSU «On State Border Guard Service of Ukraine personnel training» on the basis of the Main Center the following DL courses of foreign languages (English, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak and Turkish) are developed, implemented and conducted. For the foreign language professional training, teachers-coordinators were appointed to ensure the organization and conducting of DL, consultative work, development of teaching materials for English language courses; prepared and posted training programs, information and reference materials, tests for final and current tests of knowledge, materials for practical tasks, literature, training audio and video materials, etc. on the DL server in the border departmental network Intranet.

The duration of DL course of the English language for the SBGSU is 6 months. Three modules have been developed for effective study during DL course of the English language for border guards (Fig. 1.).

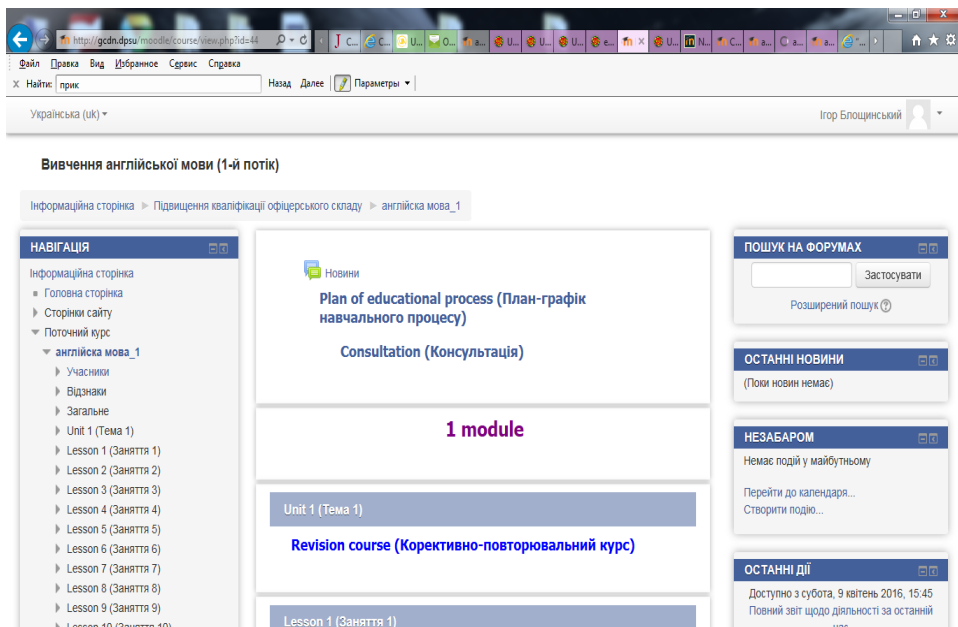


Fig. 1. English language DL course for the SBGSU personnel (developed by the author of the article)

Having successfully completed the English language DL course the border guards must:

- *know* the lexical material on the studied modules; rules for the use of grammatical constructions in oral and written speech; factual material on the topics of the modules;
- *be able* to read and translate texts on socio-political and border issues; communicate in a foreign language at the professional level; conduct a conversation-dialogue in English for professional purposes; use vocabulary of everyday usage, socio-political and border terminology during professional communication and translation; discuss current socio-political events and videos; correctly use grammatical constructions in speech; use communication strategies to overcome difficulties in communicating with foreigners; use English in the performance of official duties; make decisions in service situations that require knowledge of a foreign language and may arise in professional activities;
- *to familiarize oneself* with methods of independent work of learning English; the main types of reference literature and features of working with them; peculiarities of work with dictionaries of general and special purposes.

The assessment of knowledge is organized after studying the proposed modules (topics). The border guard answers (using a computer) test questions based on the materials of the study of the appropriate topic (including lexical and grammatical issues). If the result is positive, he/she can continue to study the next topic, and if unsatisfactory - it is suggested to study course again or cover additional material and re-answer the control questions. Passing the test of self-control on the topic contains 15 tasks. In addition to self-control tests for each topic (6 tests) it is necessary also to pass modular control test, which provides the ability to assess the quality of learning material (30 tasks).

Peculiarities of DL in law enforcement educational institutions during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Law enforcement educational institutions as well as military educational establishments in Ukraine has created a central repository of resources for the distance learning systems of these agencies, which is used by educational institutions of the security and defense sector, as well as military authorities and individual military units. There is also a resource for video conferencing with the help of the software product BigBlueButton. The most used resources during the forced transition of NASBGSU to online learning were platforms and programs of widespread use Moodle, Zoom, Skype, Google Classroom (Forms), Google Meet and others. An important place in the DL is also played by electronic textbooks (ET) - pedagogical software that cover a significant amount of educational material (e.g., training courses).

Based on individualized learning objectives, educational process should provide each student with the choice of techniques and methods of training, learning strategies, content, type and form of teaching material presentation. In turn, multivariate representation of individualized curriculum and need to cover all the required fields of knowledge necessitates selection of options that would best fit every student, and the possibility of expanding the presentation of material, if necessary, its revision or when identifying "gaps" in the knowledge of students. DL incorporates the best features of traditional forms of education (full-time, part-time, and post-graduate) and integrates well with them. On the one hand, it offers a unified service regardless of time and place of learning, on the other hand - interactive forms of interaction between student and teacher, as well as progressive knowledge control. Search for new models of education and empowerment of computer technology have led teachers to the idea of implementing computer technology in the learning process. A

key tool for professional readiness of future professionals in the DL process is interactivity - constant systematic interaction of teacher and learners in the classroom. Interactivity is implemented in DL at levels between teachers and students, students' interaction with each other and at the level of interaction between students and learning tools, which are used by them, primarily electronic means.

The main areas of DL of personnel in the SBGSU include a variety of interactive teaching methods: online learning (Interactive Learning); focused on student learning (Learner-centered Learning); co-education (Cooperative Learning); learning content (Content-based Learning); training based on tasks (Task-based Learning). At this stage, the choice of teaching methods is strongly affected by Internet technology, including e-mail, newsgroups, Web pages, etc., which can significantly extend the boundaries of the educational process, make it interesting, effective and optimal. Practical experience of integrating Internet technology into the curriculum suggests that they stimulate the individual activity of students, enhance their motivation and independence, which in turn leads to increased self-control, encourages independent search for the necessary information.

It is known that there is no direct communication in the DL between the teacher and students during lectures, workshops, etc., in other words, learning occurs by means of new IT, that considerably affect the choice and the specifics of teaching methods. DL incorporates both traditional teaching methods and innovative. Leading role belongs to programmed instruction methods that provide a significant increase in the proportion of independent work which is carried out in individually controlled pace and under the control of special software. In terms of the distance learning process we can effectively use all the methods of traditional training, but they have their own specific. It should be noted that all methods of DL of SBGSU personnel are effective if cases or problems previously have been discussed in class and students share some experience and opinions acquired earlier in the learning process.

The instructor should also consider the fact that the topics for discussion should be of professionally-directed nature. Another feature of the DL method of border guards is that they motivate the cadets not only to express their own points of view but also modify them under the reasoned influence of partners in the communication process. It should be mentioned that if we take into account the cost of time, effort, transportation costs and living expenses during training, it becomes clear that distance learning allows you to significantly reduce them to ensure the implementation of various

courses; the virtual conditions of training of cadets are sufficiently close to stationary; personal orientation in DL.

Conclusion

The peculiarities of DL platforms usage in law enforcement educational institutions during the Covid-19 Pandemic have been substantiated. It is concluded that DL in U.S. Federal Law Enforcement Training Center is based on the Online Campus. Particular attention is paid to topical issues of training on such online training modules of the Campus: crime scene, driving training, drugs, firearms, health, interviews, investigation, law, topography, maritime training, personal security, technical means, terrorism, stopping vehicles, etc. There are also programs to study the courses "Small Arms" and "Use of Force" in the online training modules of the Campus.

The specifics of professional training of border guards in Asian countries include: the use of platforms of law enforcement agencies; focus of training on the development of basic competencies and the ability to solve problem situations; the opportunity to take DL courses for all categories of staff at a convenient time; creation of a three-level round-the-clock system of functioning of training of specialists. Peculiarities of professional training of border guards of European countries are that not only the platforms of universities and institutions are widely used, but also joint platforms of international organizations, namely: web platform Virtual Aula of Agency FRONTEX; CEPOL DL (e-Net) web platform; European Coast Guard Training (ECGTP) platforms; ILIAS EU Mission EUBAM; Connect & Learn UNHCR; UNODC and others. Special attention is paid to the capabilities of the Virtual Aula web platform for training teachers, instructors, external experts, etc. It deals with up-to-date information on educational programs conducted in Europe.

The main attention is paid to the outlining of characteristics of DL platforms usage in higher law enforcement educational institutions in Ukraine. The duration and organization of the DL course of the English language for border guards have been revealed. Considerable attention is also paid to the disclosure of assessment of knowledge: the test of self-control on the topic contains 15 tasks for each topic (6 tests); and modular control test includes 30 tasks for each module (3 modules). Students must pass a questionnaire before testing. The final assessment is conducted for border guards who have passed all tests of self-control of the quality of learning material and received positive marks for passing control tests for all

modules and topics based on the materials of the study of the English language DL course.

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