Covid-19 Presents New Challenges and Opportunities to Higher Education

Ellana MOLCHANOVA¹,
Kateryna KOVTONIUK²,
Oleksandr SAVYCH³

¹ Ph.D, Assoc. Professor, Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics, Kyiv, Ukraine, e-mail address: ellanam@ukr.net

² Ph.D, Assoc. Professor, Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman, Kyiv, Ukraine, e-mail address: k.kovtoniuk@gmail.com

³ Dr Ec. Sc., Professor, Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman, Kyiv, Ukraine, e-mail address: savych@kneu.edu.ua

Abstract: The article analyses the organization of activity of two leading universities in Ukraine. Emphasis is placed on previous experience in the use of distance learning technologies at Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman and Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics. Modern management features, features of implementation of distance learning methods during the COVID-19 pandemic are researched. The obstacles to the development of distance education are identified during the COVID-19 pandemic. The real state of readiness of teachers and the management of universities in limited time and opportunities to introduce and improve distance learning are analyzed.

Keywords: *higher education; distance learning; full and part-time students; Moodle; COVID-19; Zoom Technologies; Teams Microsoft Office 365; TestPad.*

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1. Introduction

Higher education has been transformed over the last decade through sharp changes caused by dramatic changes in the labor force structure, new technologies and generational differences in knowledge and skills channels (Kimberling, 2020). Teachers need to constantly improve and monitor the implementation of new teaching methods and technologies. The next generation of youth is a constant contributor to the challenge, creating new challenges for middle-aged and older teachers. Young people spend more time on gadgets, their attention is less focused, they can spend less time listening to lecture material. Such challenges created the preconditions for transferring education material online. Despite the fact that most universities began to introduce the elements of distance learning, there was still opposition from the professors of the old school. There is a misconception about the system of organizing such a form of education: management tries to keep the old system of education and balances between innovations. So, in addition to constant challenges from society, competitors and qualification requirements, we are constantly affected by various external factors. COVID-19 has become another driver of change that can accelerate the radical transformation of higher education. Consider the organization of the educational process during the pandemic, using the example of two leading Ukrainian institutions: Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman and Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics.

2. A practical case of online study during a pandemic in economic universities of Ukraine

Most governments around the world have temporarily closed high schools to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the growing number of cities, regions, states and even entire countries closing schools through the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected about 91% of students from 188 countries (UNESCO, 2020). Thus, stimulating the emergence of new studies to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the education mechanism and the national economy. The paper (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020) indicates interruption of the learning process, violation of the principles of internal (system) evaluation, replacement of grades for public defense of qualification works with a lower quality alternative. In article (Lochner, 2011) states that the transformation of traditional education can reduce long-term costs of education from state budgets, which in most countries of the world are unbalanced. Reduced funding for education will adversely affect the

country's productivity and well-being. Another negative effect is poor health (Cowan & Tefft, 2020) and chronic diseases with the exception of diabetes (Janke et al., 2020).

Thus, we can conclude that the policies of most countries in the world were faced with the dilemma between closing schools (reducing contact and saving lives) and maintaining their openness (to employees to do their work that will stimulate economic development). The New challenges are forcing universities to adapt to changing learning conditions without diminishing their quality, which will stimulate economic growth in the future, even in the face of reduced education costs.

Nowadays reflect how we are ready to take a challenge in case of COVID 19. During the short period university staff quickly organized himself. Now we know, we think everything, in theory, all forms of distance learning and e-learning. Basically all universities have Moodle. The same basic principles. But the top management has different understanding how to manage distance learning.

Consider the examples of two Universities.

Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman started to implement distance learning 5-6 years ago. The university's management has been granted permission to open a distance learning course at the Ministry of Education and Science. According to the law of Ukraine on higher education, there is no distance-learning form of education. That is almost the same like part-time education. Another challenge was the elaboration of the platform and the systematic training of the trainers (professors).

As a result - in 2016, first 7 children applied to distance learning bachelor's programs. The first year shown a lot of weak places in distance learning system. Such as a lot of assignments for students, time-management, system of punishment, additional counseling for students etc. As a result, most students decided to change a distance-learning to part-time study, which provided them with broader time limits for completing assignments and reducing their number.

Also in 2016, the Faculty of International Economics and Management opened a double degree program with Business School of the University of Redlands (U.S., California): Master of International Management and MBA. The main requirement was using Moodle. The US Coordinator suggested making some functional changes that would be most relevant to the U.S. context. Starting in 2017, the Master of International Management distance-learning program was announced. All classes were on the Moodle platform.

At the University there no faculty stuff that has classes on distance-learning platform without certificate. That was great decision. In addition, almost all professors in join degree programme had classes at the Business School University of Redlands and used Moodle. So, the University KNEU was ready for distance learning using Moodle during the COVID-19. The Distance Learning Center has developed instructions «How to us Moodle». The top management of Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman does not expect that in this education period students will back to classes. That's why today the Department of Distance learning made new instructions such as "How to make exam tests" and requirement for this tests; "How to make a distance conference" for final defense of master's thesis for part-time students in April 2020.

A slightly different situation occurred at Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics. A few years ago, the university also created a distance-learning system and implemented Moodle. All professors simultaneously took courses and began to develop distance courses. The first problem, that has arisen now, is the technical fulfillment of the courses on Moodle without their using. The second feature is that several professors use the same page in Moodle. This means that the page contains one Syllabus and different course topics. The Center of Distance Learning Technology had to join professors' pages because there were empty. They didn't use its. Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics has already begun to create different pages for faculties and have increased monitoring of the timeliness of material attachment.

Interesting experience with the University of Redlands Business School. They create pages in Moodle before classes. At the end of the course, the page is copied and could be closed. Before you begin a new class, a can us a copy. In Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman this pages are constant. All professors have experience and high ratings, therefore, only students change.

What's different? Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman transferred all to distance learning from March 16, 2020, from the first day of quarantine. As a result, everyone works according to the schedule. Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics completely suspended training during the first wave of quarantine from March 12 to April 04. From April 4, classes are started in distance format. Every week, the schedule changes, which is not effective in all cases. The most interesting - have a lectures classes. However, distance learning does not require lectures. The lecture material should be accessible for students learning themselves. An amazing decision had taken the top management of Kyiv

National University of Trade and Economics to view how professors had lectures classes. It's meaning that all students and professor might be «attendance» on the Moodle platform according to the schedule. Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman has left the schedule unchanged, with lecture classes. However, professor had no explanation how to teach lecture classes with 100 and more students.

Another challenge for all professors was the lack of access to libraries. Universities didn't digital the textbooks. Professors tried to find any textbooks on the free access and adapt the content of the course to the new sources.

Therefore, during the first week of quarantine, professors were forced to adapt quickly to new conditions. Establish remote communication with students. Created forums on Facebook and shared their experiences and practices with others professors. This proved to be the most effective remedy. Why are teachers forced to look for alternative service platforms?! They are not ready to attach all documents in Moodle in a short period and in time attach all materials. Everyone who has used this platform knows how difficult and convenient to create tests on Moodle. We found alternative - OnlinetestPad.

In addition to handy tests, you can additionally create crossword puzzles and puzzle games. Setting up tests are very simple, with the ability to analyze test results by question and students' results. Also a disadvantage of Moodle is the lack of online communication with students. Because of this, the most easy and simplicity was the video service Zoom - Zoom Technologies. Investors have even confused Beijing Zoom Technologies' ticker maker Zicker - Zoom Technologies with Zoom and Zoom Video Communications. (Lipanova, 2020).

An alternative is Teams Microsoft Office. But its disadvantage is the presence of all members of corporate mail. All students and professors of Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics have corporate email, so this service is an alternative for them. In Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman student have no corporate email. Besides, there was a problem with the inadvertence or inability to change the settings in the email box, which resulted in a large number of non-recipient emails. Thus, working with corporate mail was complicated, which led to the waste of time for both teachers and students.

Another feature of the distance learning education environment is a free access to the materials of leading Western universities and Coursera. But in order to create your own course you need to spend time learning best practices and properly preparing training material. In the context of the

COVID 19 pandemic, a considerable amount of time is spent by teachers on ongoing communication with students, preparing and checking assignments, and there is no time left to create something new. And to use the developed courses by other teachers instead of their lectures is also not entirely effective, because each teacher works according to the approved syllabus. Therefore, it is not possible to use other professor's lectures. So we're looking for video on YouTube and uploading it to Moodle.

3. Conclusion

Combinations of all platforms and methods, due to its characteristics, allows to carry out activities in a twofold form. „Distance learning” (distance education) is the education that excludes the physical presence of the teacher. The source of the material to study and examiner is in fact a computer connected to the Internet. The second way is „blended learning”. E-learning is used here only as a tool to support the teaching process. In parallel with the electronic form of communication, classes are held in the traditional way, with the physical presence of teachers and students (Górska, 2016). Low cost alternative and open source Course Management System (CMS allow instructors to design and deliver their courses within a flexible framework that includes a number of different tools to enable learning and communication to occur) include: Moodle, Zoom Technologies, OnlinetestPad, etc. The most advanced, yet easiest technology to use and implement is the educational platform capable of conducting e-learning classes. A platform for distance learning is the professional Internet service with teaching profile. The introduction of a variety of learning and teaching methods using an interactive method of communication is a response to the COVID-19.

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