УДК 372.862 (575.2) (04)

KIRSANOVA N.A.
Balasagyn KNU
КИРСАНОВА Н.А.
КНУ им. Ж. Баласагына

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ONLINE LEARNING

Онлайн окутуунун көйгөйлорү жана мүмкүчүлүктөрү

Проблемы и возможности онлайн обучения

Abstract: The global pandemic has changed many aspects of everyday life. Education workers also had to adapt quickly to the demands of the new realities. The first part of the article examines a number of topical challenges that teachers and students faced when switching to online learning, and also suggests ways to address them. The second part of the article is devoted to the analysis of the opportunities that opened up for us as a result of the transition.

Аннотация: Глобалдык пандемия биздин жашообузга көп өзгөрүүлөрдү алып келди. Билим тармагында иштеген адистер тез арада жаңы талаптарды аткаруу үчүн адаптацияга муктаж болушкан. Макаланын биринчи бөлүгүндө окутуучулар жана окуучулар онлайн окутуу режимине өткөндө көп актуалдуу көйгөйлөргө туш болду, ошондой эле аларды чечүү жолдору сунушталды. Макаланын экинчи бөлүгү, анализ мүмкүнчүлүктөрүнө арналды.

Аннотация: Глобальная пандемия внесла изменения во многие аспекты повседневной жизни. Работники образования также должны были быстро адаптироваться к требованиям новых реалий. В первой части статьи рассматривается ряд актуальных проблем, с которыми столкнулись преподаватели и студенты при переходе на онлайн обучение, а также предлагаются способы их решения. Вторая часть статьи посвящена анализу тех возможностей, которые открылись перед нами в результате перехода.

Keywords: education, online learning, problems, opportunities, solution, strategy.

Урунттуу сөздөр: билим берүү, онлайн окутуу, көйгөйлор, мүмкүнчүлүктөр, чечүү, стратегия.

Ключевые слова: образование, онлайн обучение, проблемы, возможности, решение, стратегия.

Not much more than a year ago, the world faced a previously unseen problem. The pandemic and quarantine forced many states to take urgent measures to support the learning process. The abrupt transition to online learning proved to be a difficult task for both students and teachers. We were unprepared for such changes and as a result the education system was weakened. Now that some time has passed since the beginning of online learning, we can draw conclusions based on our own mistakes, the problems that we had to deal with and the lessons we learned. We have realized that online learning is a multi-faceted phenomenon, which has both advantages and disadvantages. Identifying and understanding the positive and negative aspects of this issue can help educational institutions develop effective strategies for continual and quality education. Therefore, every effort should be made to make the most out of the current situation.

The transition to the online classroom can be successfully achieved if attention is paid to several key areas. They include: ensuring access to and familiarity with the technology in use; establishing straightforward guidelines and procedures, which are developed with significant input from participants of online learning; striving to achieve maximum participation from the students; promoting collaborative learning; and creating communicative loops in the learning process to enable participants to reflect on their learning process. All of these components

undoubtedly contribute to the development of an online learning community, a powerful tool for enhancing the learning experience. Each of these will further be reviewed in more detail.

Technical issue. One of the key challenges of online learning is Internet connectivity. Almost the entire territory of our country has been provided with an Internet signal over the past few years. But there are small towns and remote villages where a consistent connection with decent speed is still a problem. In addition, not every student has access to computers, mobile phones, tablets and other technical devices. Teachers also faced the same problem. Online learning requires teachers to have a basic understanding of using digital forms of learning. However, this is not always the case. Very often, teachers have a very basic understanding of technology. Sometimes, they don't even have the necessary resources and tools to conducts online classes. When teaching a class offline, teachers rarely resorted to using any technical devices other than a CD or DVD player. For some teachers, especially for the older generation, it was difficult to simply browse the Internet and keep in touch with students, not to mention building an effective online class which involves sharing the screen and sending out various types of video and audio files and worksheets. Faculty members needed to rethink their course design and use different strategies for teaching, engagement and assessment in the online environment.

The so-called technical illiteracy, lack of high-quality Internet connection and means of communication make the continuity of the educational process impossible, which is detrimental to it. More active implementation of information technologies, providing teachers and students with a high-quality Internet signal, investing in training teachers with the latest technology updates to eliminate technical illiteracy and developing a single standard of online learning can be a good strategy to combat this problem.

Lack of personal communication between teachers and students. Every teacher will probably agree that being with students in the same classroom makes it much easier to establish contact with them, convey information, get a feedback, see emotions and identify problems. In our "new reality", there is no direct contact and physical interactions between students and teachers, students do not feel a proper connection with the teacher and their peers. At the same time, there may be an emotional tension and misunderstanding between teachers and students, as a result all participants of the online class might feel isolated and misunderstood.

In this situation, it is imperative that the educational institution allow for other forms of communication between the students, peers, and teachers. This can include online messages, emails and video conferencing that will allow for face-to-face interaction and reduce the sense of isolation.

Another key to building strong connections with learners in an online environment is feedback loops. When students complete a task, they get feedback and make adjustments accordingly. Feedback is meant to be non-evaluative and focused on a specific course learning objective. To give effective commentary, teachers have to explain why a student is receiving the feedback, and suggest how they can improve in the future. This process also encourages students to reflect on that feedback, thus creating an iterative loop focused on individual progress and improvement over the course of a semester. Since this is an ongoing process, regular online formative assessments can build a continuous feedback loop.

Classroom response systems can also help faculty members understand how students are performing. When questions are posed to the class, for example, students can respond anonymously through their personal devices, the responses are then displayed on the screen in real-time. Some online learning platforms also offer weekly course reports to track student comprehension, outlining where they performed well and where they need more work. This can make it easier to identify students who are struggling and allows teachers to reach out with additional resources and support.

Passive students, collaboration issue.

The absence of a familiar educational environment can have a strong impact on the level of motivation of students. In connection with the pandemic, the line that separated work from

leisure has been blurred. Students used to receive almost all the information related to their academic life while in the university building, now they are forced to stay in touch 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so as not to miss out on any important information from their peers or a teacher. Being in the comfort of your own home and not being able to personally communicate with your peers and a teacher makes it extremely easy to lose motivation to study and hard to stay organized, disciplined and determined to complete a task. Many discussion assignments do not support organic conversation. Posts are often asynchronous, responses tend to be formal and the required discussion of other students' ideas is understandably forced.

To encourage collaboration, teachers should consider a more specific task for students than simply "commenting" on each other's ideas. Ask directly for constructive feedback about their classmates' responses. For example: "Focus on one statement in your partner's response that you think deserves to be developed in more depth. Suggest how that statement could be further developed and supported with your ideas."

Problem-based learning is a collaborative learning strategy that gives students the opportunity to apply course material to real-world case studies in small groups. This method, whether used in group learning or individually, helps students build upon their creativity and critical thinking skills. Students are asked to analyze, synthesize and then critique the information presented. By reflecting on one another's expertise and through seeking out online resources and tools, students who use problem-based learning can reach their course's learning objectives in collaborative, meaningful ways [1].

Procrastination and time management. It is quite expected that procrastination and poor time management have a negative impact on the academic performance of individual students and the learning process as a whole. Scholars have indicated that it is easier to procrastinate in an online learning situation as compared to a traditional face-to-face classroom primarily because online classes often do not provide strict schedule [4]. In a face-to-face class, though students may procrastinate, the required physical presence in each class session exposes them to the materials on a regular basis. However, in an online situation, learners may not engage in course-related reading until the last minute [4]. Therefore, online learners need enhanced motivational strategies to avoid procrastination in learning. One of the most valuable skills a person can have as an online student is effective time management. The better you manage your time, the easier it is to achieve your goals. Some students may have a part-time job, take care of the family, or juggle other commitments. Without the camaraderie of peers to motivate students or having a set time where students need to be at the university, effective time management is crucial to stay focused.

Despite the flexibility in being an online student, it's important to have frequent engagement with the studies throughout the week. The strategies to addressing the issue of procrastination and time management may include: providing plenty of time to space out the required readings, assignments, and online discussions; avoiding multitasking - focusing on one assignment at a time, arranging the tasks in order of importance; setting up a virtual office - it's important to work in the optimal setting needed to complete the work. Students have to make sure there's high-speed Internet, and that they are in a comfortable space with the right lighting, sound, and background; blocking distractions - the best online students know how to set aside time to focus. This includes having a consistent time and workspace, and avoiding surfing the internet [8].

Despite the fact that many people consider traditional education as a guarantee of obtaining knowledge and a degree, online education can be a good alternative. Many educational institutions offer their courses online, which can be very convenient for working people or students living in rural areas, those with health concerns or disabilities. For example, in the United States, Japan and some European countries, the share of online learning in the educational environment is 20-30%. What are the opportunities of online learning?

Convenience and flexibility. In the conditions of self-isolation, when we do not have the opportunity to leave the house, online learning becomes the only possible way to get an

education. Provided you have a good Internet connection, this is a great teaching tool. Students have the opportunity to record a lecture or seminar session from any location and refer to them at any time to review or clarify any questions. They get announcements, access notes, review assignments, take practice quizzes, discuss questions, and chat with fellow students online.

Efficiency and diversity. The transition to online learning has opened up many tools for teachers to teach more effectively and in a more diverse way. Online learning offers teachers an efficient way to deliver lessons to students. It has a number of tools such as videos, PDFs, podcasts, and teachers can use all these tools as part of their lesson plans. Students can also be provided with training materials online. By extending the lesson plan beyond traditional textbooks to include online resources, teachers are able to become more efficient educators.

Affordability. Another advantage of online learning is the reduction of financial costs for both teachers and students. Most students study in their homes, which has saved them from having to pay for food, transportation, and most importantly, housing [5]. Without having to spend time traveling, students can devote more time to completing tasks, self-education or leisure, and teachers can use this time to prepare an online presentation or lecture, or review students' work.

The opportunity to attract a large audience. Since teachers are no longer constrained by the walls of small classrooms, they can invite an almost unlimited number of students to their online lectures, webinars or seminars at the same time. On webinar platforms, teachers can deliver lectures and practical classes, show students clearly the implementation of their actions, or invite students to speak at the lesson.

The opportunity to work with each student individually. Online learning helps educators find an approach to each student. The classroom is not always filled with talkative and motivated students. There are usually several students who require additional work on the part of the teacher. They are shy and taciturn, they do not like to share their opinions or give their feedback on other students' responses. When studying online, such students feel more relaxed; they can ask the teacher questions via emails or chats or during a video conference. The teacher can select additional tasks for such students that will correspond to their interests in order to support them psychologically and maintain their interest in studying.

Having studied the issue of online learning in detail, we can conclude that with the correct approach, this process has more advantages than disadvantages. In the current epidemiological situation, this way of learning may become the only possible one for an indefinite period of time. Having solved all the problems discussed in the first part of the article, online learning will no longer be an unpleasant and inconvenient process for teachers and students.

The transition to online learning turned out to be a complex process that required the revision and reconstruction of the curriculum, the involvement of new approaches to teaching and new skills in its delivery, the revision of the assessment tools base, the promotion of a sense of community among the students to enhance their learning process and much more. Success in enabling collaboration, frequent communication, and active learning in online classrooms, can ensure that students get a valuable and engaging educational experience and are able to navigate the demands of a modern society, no matter where the learning takes place and, in the process, teachers learn something new themselves, thus supporting their own pursuit of lifelong learning.

References:

1. Rena M. Palloff, Keith Pratt, "Making the Transition: Helping Teachers to Teach Online", Crossroads Consulting Group, 2000.
2. Brown, G.T.L. "Assessment of Student Achievement", London: Routledge, 2017
3. Budhair, S.S. & Skipwith, K., "Best Practices in Engaging Online Learners Through Active and Experiential Learning Strategies", London: Routledge, 2017

4. Liyan Song, Towson University, Janette R. Hill The University of Georgia "A Conceptual Model for Understanding Self-Directed Learning in Online Environments" Journal of Interactive Online Learning, 2007
5. https://elearningindustry.com/advantages-and-disadvantages-online-learning
6. https://tophat.com/blog/online-teaching-challenges/
7. https://myownconference.ru/blog/online-obuchenie/
8. https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/time-management-tips-online-students/

Рецензент: *Караева З.К. – доктор филологических наук, профессор МУК.*