THE PROBLEMS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

During the Covid-19 pandemic, all educational institutions switched to online education. Although the transition to online learning has gone quickly, teachers and students experience some discomfort in this regard. First of all, this is the low level of development of the Internet in the country, in the regions of Uzbekistan there is no continuous connection and the speed of mobile communication is low. As it turned out, the teachers felt a double burden, as it was necessary to upload high-quality video materials, endlessly check written assignments, etc. Most of the students came to the capital to study from the regions, for them it was a tangible step forward, but the conditions of the pandemic returned them to the past.

I.INTRODUCTION

The problem of online or distance learning has been sufficiently studied in the post-Soviet space. Since the beginning of the 2000s, they started talking about the need to technologize the pedagogical process, its theoretical development and implementation into practice were carried out by prominent scientists: M.V.Klarin (1997), V.V. Guzeev (1996), V.V.Davydov (1996), I.A.Zimnyaya (1999), M.I.Makhmutov (1975), V.P.Monakhov (1997), V.P. Slastenin (2013), P.I.Pidkasisty (1996), I.P.Podlasy (1996), G.K. Selevko (2005) and many others [1- 10]. In recent years, distance learning has become popular due to the numerous MOOC on the Internet. Online learning is a completely different approach. You are not just competing with established businesses on the Internet; you have to compete primarily with a TV, computer games, a refrigerator and other pleasant pastime. This is not a

classroom lesson where it is easy to control the attention of students, track reactions, have non-verbal communication, and so on. Many of our teachers have failed (Quarantine is an opportunity, 2020).

Uzbekistan, like all countries in the world, is experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic. From March 16, 2020, education at the country's universities was discontinued and the students went home. The country faced such a situation for the first time, never in modern history, and even during the period of the USSR, classes were not interrupted for so long. The education system, like the health care system, is being tested for strength. The creation of a new pedagogical paradigm of education and upbringing in Uzbekistan is undergoing certain difficulties. It is a tribute to the government and ministries; the transition to distance learning was, one might say, painless. The state and level of IT, unfortunately, are not sufficiently developed in our country. As of June 1, 2020, the speed of the Internet in Uzbekistan was up to 27.12 Mbit / s, mobile - up to 11.92 Mbit / s, the republic is in 94th place in the world rating of the speed of the fixed Internet (Sputniknews, 2020). Moreover, this, one might say, is the main problem of distance learning in the country.

Before quarantine, the use of IT technologies in the educational process was mainly limited to showing presentations in Power Point, in the capital - using an interactive whiteboard in lectures and practical classes. The active use of the Moodle program began in April. All courses and subjects were loaded with lectures, assignments, presentations, videos and tests. It was assumed that students, having studied the presented materials, would be able to pass tests and complete the proposed homework. This was where the difficulties began, although 100% of students have mastered the rules of Moodle, many were unable to continuously access resources and complete tasks by the specified deadline due to objective reasons. Most of the students live in the regions of Uzbekistan, where the Internet connection is worse than in the capital. If in Tashkent almost every house has Wi-Fi, then in regions even close to the capital, a wireless local area network in the house is a rarity. With this in mind, teachers have established communication with students through Telegram channels and e-mail, which required Internet access, but uploading and sending materials was much easier. At the same time, it turned out that communication problems were used by some students as an excuse not to study.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

At the end of the academic year, we asked students and teachers to comment on distance education, its pros and cons. The survey was attended by teachers-colleagues (30 people) and students (about 200). The poll was conducted orally through messages in the Telegram channels. We deliberately tried not to give official status to our study so that the participants felt free and did not worry about their negative answers.

III. RESULTS

It should be noted that in March and April, both teachers and students, as well as all workers and students, felt comfortable because they did not have to go to work and study. However, in May the situation changed, teachers completely immersed themselves in distance learning, which, as it turned out,

had its own difficulties. The teachers noted the following items as benefits of distance learning:
• working at home
• improving skills in working with new programs, systems and applications (Moodle, Zoom, webinars)
• raising the level of pedagogical skills (new forms and methods of teaching, recording lectures and video lessons)
• freedom to manage your time

The disadvantages of DL (distance learning) are as follows. Teachers associate online learning with their higher workload than in normal offline conditions. It is about preparing and posting training materials in a Moodle, which takes a long time, for example, downloading tests or recording a video lesson. The problem of developing high-quality educational and material support for distance education involves an integrated approach of a programmer-methodologist, a specialist in the field of Internet technologies, computer communications, as well as a teacher, a specialist in the field of modern pedagogical, psychological theories, modern pedagogical technologies (Bukeikhanov, Gvozdkova, Butrimova, 2020). Teachers received a certain amount of stress when preparing video materials; this work, as you know, requires not only resources, skills and abilities, but also experience, which in most cases was absent. Practice convinces that the majority of video lectures only with a certain degree of leniency can they be classified as such. In fact many of them represent a "talking head" and do not use the full potential of the educational video (Shabalin, 2012). Checking homework is another challenge. If a teacher has 10 groups with an average of 12 students, then for each lesson he needs to check 120 works, set a mark and fix it in the program, if there are more than 2 hours per week in a subject, then the work is doubled. In addition, although the last semester was considered an adaptation, it was possible not to set the deadlines for completing assignments; nevertheless, the teachers felt a great physical and psychological stress. The work of teachers was often duplicated. As, students who did not have constant access to the network, or had a low Internet speed, posted their work on the Telegram channel or sent it by mail, which also had to be opened, downloaded, and checked separately. Teachers spoke of opaque control in online learning. While checking their homework, they increasingly came across the identical works of students, which was very similar to cheating. Moreover, it was revealed that many students even without opening the educational materials on the topic received high marks on tests (more than 85 points out of a hundred). It is impossible for the teacher to control process of testing - students can complete assignments together, use the Internet and other sources of information (Lex.uz). Another inconvenience of online learning is the difficulty of separating time for work at home. The non-fixed working hours, on the one hand, were convenient; on the other hand, the working hours did not end.

It should be noted that schools also switched to online education and parents had to organize conditions for their children at home, as well as devote more time to explaining and monitoring homework. In addition, the question arose about the need to share a computer or laptop between children and parents.

The ministry urged teachers not to forget about educational work with students. In Uzbekistan, each teacher is also the supervisor of one group. The

supervisor's duties include monitoring progress and students' attending classes, establishing communication with parents, collecting various information on a group or on an individual student, meeting with students and talking on relevant topics, before pandemic - obligatory joint visits to theaters, museums, sports events. Although this work is paid additionally (10-15% of the salary), and maybe therefore, this type of activity takes a lot of time and effort (Lex.uz).

In addition to educational work, the teacher is obliged to conduct research or scientific and practical activities: write scientific articles, participate in conferences, publish textbooks and training manuals. Teachers also complained about the lack of live communication with colleagues.

Thus, the majority of the teaching staff are not against distance learning, but they believe that it will not be able to completely replace the stationary one, and the quality of education, in their opinion, will be worse. An online survey of students about their attitudes toward distance learning provided new material for thought. It should be noted here that the attitude towards work of adults and the attitude towards education of young people are different things. If in the first case work is a vital necessity, maybe even a duty, then for students it is primarily communication with peers, a fun time of students, a place where almost everyone wants to assert themselves - both by the appearance (mainly girls) and character, mind, attitude to the world and people. Moreover, although students are already fully formed personalities, their development continues precisely due to the new conditions of life at the university.

Therefore, in the first place, almost all respondents put the lack of communication not only (but primarily) with students, but also with teachers. It was the daily visit to the institute that, in their opinion, formed their cognitive and human qualities. Most of the students came to the capital to study from the regions, for them it was a tangible step forward, but the conditions of the pandemic returned them to the past. As you know, the environment is of great importance for the formation of personality. Many students complained that they could not focus on their studies, as they were distracted by household chores - helping their parents with farming, construction or other.

As they wrote, "I can't sit and watch my parents work and not help them." Most students study on a paid basis, and they understand how difficult it is for their parents to pay for the contract. The second important reason for the dissatisfaction of DL is the low and unstable Internet speed, the lack of normal communication. 90% of students complain about this, almost everyone who come from the regions. In some cases, students are unable to complete the test due to a disconnected Internet connection. If the Internet is disconnected during testing, the system does not count the attempt. This, of course, is not a drawback of the system, but students still have a negative impression from using Moodle (Shabalin, 2020).

The next problem of DL from students' the point of view is the lack of explanation by the teacher. Even those students who neatly completed all the assignments and received good grades felt as if they were studying individually according to a self-instruction manual.

Many difficult specialized subjects in a medical school require more detailed and repeated explanation by the teacher. The undergraduate students suffered

from discontinuation of their practical training during the pandemic. Many students after classes worked with their tutors and studied the profession in a dental clinic.

Students also noted such advantage of DL as improvement of their digital skills. The student who made a report for the first time at the students' conference on the ZOOM program was very pleased with herself that she understood and mastered this connection. At the same time, there were complaints from both students and teachers about computer fatigue.

IV.CONCLUSION

The beginning of the new academic year online forces us, teachers, to take a closer look at our work and make it more convenient, attractive and interesting for students. Scientists and practitioners around the world are trying to improve the online learning environment and itself. It is gratifying that more and more resources are becoming available to everyone. Until recently, we had been complaining that classroom lessons were not interesting for the new generation of millennials, whose entire conscious life, to one degree or another, was connected with the Internet. We studied new forms and methods of work using IT. For example, the "flipped classroom" model, the benefits of which, as it turned out, coincide with online learning in the current pandemic:

1. Students are forced to acquire knowledge themselves.
2. The responsibility and independence of students increases.
3. An incomprehensible place in a video or lecture presentation can be reviewed as many times as you like.
4. You can send questions to the instructor via email to receive clarification about an upcoming class in the classroom.
5. When studying the material, the student begins to think critically.
6. And most importantly, we are approaching a new, problem-based learning (Slastenin, 2013).

However, the pandemic has shown that online education can divide more and less wealthy students. While virtual classes on personal tablets may be the norm in Hong Kong, for example, many students in less developed countries rely on lessons and assignments sent via WhatsApp or email. Moreover, the less wealthy and digitalized individual families are, the further their students lag behind. When lessons go online, these kids lose out due to the cost of digital devices and tariff plans.

If the cost of access does not decrease and the quality of access does not improve in all countries, the gap in the quality of education and hence socioeconomic equity will further widen. The digital divide could become even more serious if access to education depends on access to the latest technology (Weforum, 2020).

In order to avoid negativity in self-isolation, a number of measures are proposed that will undoubtedly diversify and make more comfortable DL during a pandemic. For example, teachers are encouraged to use a variety of tools to communicate with students, including bulk text messaging services or telephone applications. In addition to electronic communication, we need to establish an emotional connection, especially in times of anxiety and uncertainty ... emotions are the key to learning (Madeline St. Amour, 2020).

Some studies show that, on average, students memorize 25-60% more material when studying online, compared with 8-10% in the classroom. This is mainly due to the fact that students can learn faster online; E-learning requires 40-60% less learning time than a traditional classroom because students can learn at their own pace, going back and re-reading, skipping or speeding through concepts of their choice.

In the course of this pandemic, it became clear that it was important to spread knowledge across borders, companies and all segments of society. If online learning technology can play a role here, we must all fully explore its potential (Weforum, 2020). The key to an optimistic transition of the educational process to a digital format is high-quality service, which will allow not only learning with comfort, but also communicating more closely to students and teachers, so as not to feel lost in isolation.

The convergence of online education and offline education has already begun.

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