



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Possibilities of the Information and Educational Environment in the Organization of Distance Learning Using the Internet in the Field of Social Work

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: MAY 15, 2026	<p>The article examines the practice of describing the features of the information and educational environment used in organizing distance learning in the field of social work. It is argued that the introduction of distance learning during the coronavirus pandemic did not take into account the nature and results of the theoretical discussion regarding the effectiveness of distance learning. At the same time, in modern pedagogy, we can observe a well-established discourse that suggests that the features of distance learning correspond to the main characteristics and targets of education. Distance learning technologies are supposed to improve the quality of education and expand its capabilities, although in its modern implementation, the information educational space often does not provide sufficient conditions to meet the educational needs of students and the requests of employers, which makes it relevant to study the possibilities, threats and prospects of distance education. To conduct this study, analytical, synthetic, inductive and deductive methods of processing case studies and relevant literary sources were used. The article considers the concept and features of the information educational space of an educational organization, identifies the advantages of distance education declared by modern pedagogical discourse, existing didactic approaches to distance learning: copying the traditional class-lesson system and focused on independent cognitive activity of students. The article provides data from sociological studies of students, teachers and employers, on the basis of which the main opportunities and threats of distance learning are identified, as well as the attitude of participants in the educational process towards it. It is noted that in its current form, most respondents assess the quality of the distance learning system as unsatisfactory. A conclusion is made about the contradiction between the obviousness of the theoretical description of the advantages of distance learning and a significant level of its rejection among teachers and students, which allows us to talk about the incompleteness of the process of constructing theoretical interpretations of distance learning and the digitalization of education in general.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

In the context of the coronavirus pandemic, distance learning (DL) technologies have become extremely widespread, which has legitimized the continuation of theoretical and empirical research into their capabilities, as well as the associated threats and prospects for the education system. It is interesting to note that the widespread use of distance learning during the pandemic restrictions was not based on any conscious decision regarding the pedagogical effectiveness of this form of organizing the educational process. The availability of technology that, at least potentially, could ensure the functioning of an educational institution without direct contact between teachers and students was enough for the decision to make its widespread and, in fact, mandatory use. It can be reasonably argued that the ability to match the nature of the forms of response to the spread of coronavirus adopted by the state - whether they were successful or not -

was a determining factor in the decision to transfer educational institutions of all levels to distance learning.

Even before 2020, pedagogical science had accumulated a significant amount of theoretical and practical research on the phenomenon of distance learning, but the modern discussion of this issue is conducted rather *post factum* and has the appearance of “normal science” existing in the context of a general paradigmatic decision on the necessity and desirability of developing forms of distance learning carried out using digital technologies. Before the pandemic restrictions, consideration of the prospects of this option for obtaining education had to take into account only the actual existence of a technology capable of implementing it, which, moreover, was increasingly penetrating everyday life, changing the usual forms of social interaction and making the distance learning format less and less unusual. Currently, the direction of research is also determined by a management decision, which for a significant part of researchers in itself serves as a marker of the demand for both the study of distance learning in itself and a certain kind of results of such research. In the short and medium term, this will mean that we will see a further increase in the number of scientific works in the field of distance learning, which will probably finally consolidate a certain language for describing the phenomenon of distance learning and its consequences, analyzed with regard to this language and the space of possible assessments previously marked out by it. This will become - if it has not already become - generally accepted practice even before the two most significant factors that can once again problematize the discourse at the theoretical level can manifest themselves. Firstly, we will see the delayed results of the spread of distance learning, presented, among other things, in the format of pedagogical, psychological and sociological studies that included long-term observation of distance learning participants and its practice itself. Secondly, the gradual spread of digital technologies as a societal factor is quite capable of not only quantitatively but also qualitatively changing the usual sociality, as a result of which it will be impossible to determine the attitude to distance education without taking into account the assessments of the emerging new society and its language of description. In this last respect, the key trends have not yet been determined, and we have every chance of seeing an extremely conflictual discourse, the admissibility and stability of certain tropes within which will be supported not only by the scientific position of researchers as such, but also by political forces and movements that react in different ways to the facts of depersonalization, growing inequality, inevitable leaks of increasingly significant personal data, transparency of money flows, expansion of control over speech, etc.

One of the significant contexts in which distance learning appears in modern research is the discussion of the need to create an information educational space (IES), which could, as one of its functions, ensure the direct process of distance interaction between teachers and students. This movement - from distance learning to an information environment - most accurately represents the desire to create full-fledged ecosystems, not limited to the performance of any one function, characteristic of the current stage of development of digital technologies. Taking into account this most important characteristic, we defined the goal of the study as considering the current state of the language for describing the composition, functions, capabilities and effects of the IES, implementing distance learning using the global Internet. To achieve this, analytical, synthetic, inductive and deductive methods of processing case studies and relevant literary sources were used.

Analysis of Theoretical Concepts

When considering specific definitions and classifications proposed by researchers, it should be taken into account that they all exist in a context defined by general assessments of modern education as aimed not simply at training qualified specialists in a particular field, but also at educating individuals with active creative potential, able to adapt to various dynamic changes in the external environment and navigate in a heterogeneous information space, and also aimed at the continuous gradual development of their own knowledge, skills, and abilities (Bystrova et al., 2020). Regardless of how much the listed aspects of education correspond or do not correspond to real processes, the given definition, like numerous similar definitions, suggests that an appeal to achieving specified qualification characteristics is only one of the forms of legitimization of a new, or even “innovative,” educational technology. Additional aspects that are usually appealed to in such cases can be represented by statements about the potential development of students' creative

potential and ability to self-educate, about the possibility of achieving an educational effect, as well as about the relation to the world of information in one form or another. We can observe all these topics in the case of IEP and DO. According to one of the characteristic definitions, IEP is “a set of systemically organized information, technical, educational and methodological support, inextricably linked with a person as a subject of education, as well as sources of information and networks that unite them, technologies that support the management of the organizational activities of an educational institution, taking into account the social, economic, cultural and psychological-pedagogical conditions for the implementation of information and processes associated with it” (Ivanushkina, 2021, p. 18).

It is assumed that participants in the educational process can not only consume elements of this “space” for the implementation of educational and other goals, but also create the educational space itself, which meets the tasks of “self-realization”, “self-actualization” and “self-development”.

When working in an IEP, an educational organization needs to solve a number of additional management tasks, such as (Gerasimov et al., 2020):

Designing an IEP for the effective implementation of educational programs;

Maintaining and strengthening the physical and mental health of students in the IEP;

Developing students’ independence in all areas of activity and increasing their motivation through the activation of cognitive activity;

Increasing the effectiveness of the educational system using IEP resources for the successful social adaptation and integration of students;

Strengthening cooperation with students’ parents in order to provide individual systemic assistance aimed at improving their psychological and pedagogical competence;

Creating comfortable conditions for teachers in the IEP.

Taking into account the implementation of these tasks, an effective IEP can be formed in an educational organization, within the framework of which it is possible to use all the advantages of distance learning, defined as follows (Goncharenko, 2018):

Expanding the opportunities offered by a higher education institution due to an increase in the degree of personalization of training;

Reducing the contact load of students while simultaneously increasing their motivation for independent learning, as well as flexibility in planning and implementing the educational process;

Releasing the necessary human resources;

Reducing the costs of implementing educational programs;

Saving material and technical resources and increasing the efficiency of planning the use of classroom space;

Improving the quality of implementation of taught disciplines due to the use of international experience in distance learning and the possibility of conducting an independent assessment of each student's knowledge;

Providing clear and simple learning mechanisms that help increase the level of trust in its final results.

A key role in the organization of distance learning is played by information systems developed to solve various problems of the educational process (Sergeev, 2020). These systems are focused primarily on working on the Internet and are most often created in the form of educational web platforms that make it possible to develop the necessary educational resources and implement training taking into account local requirements and tasks. Web platforms can be aimed both at ensuring interaction between a teacher and students located at a distance (Zoom, GoogleMeet, Skype, Discord, etc.), and at implementing the learning process using educational resources located in the electronic environment. The second category includes, among others, the Moodle distance learning system. It is one of the most common distance learning platforms and the reason for this situation is the availability of wide opportunities for independent creation of electronic educational

resources of various types, a simple and convenient interface, a wide range of tools for interaction between teachers and students, and elements of knowledge control (Toropova, 2020). In addition to web platforms, the distance learning system uses technologies such as video conferences, webinars, e-mail, chat technologies and virtual laboratory work, which are analogous to lectures, seminars, consultations and practical work in the traditional education system (Yashina, 2019). Case technologies are used as auxiliary technologies, which imply sending sets of educational and methodological materials to students in multimedia and text forms for independent study and further use (Bulaeva et al., 2020). Smart technologies are relatively new in education, which have the ability to instantly respond to changes in the conditions of interaction with the outside world (Astashova et al., 2020). An intelligent system based on smart technologies currently performs an optional function in education, facilitating the collection of information and forming an organizational structure to accelerate the work of human intelligence. In total, various distance learning technologies can be combined into full-fledged educational programs implemented in the IEP (Olkhovaya, Poyarkova, 2020). To successfully master the disciplines, they must contain such key elements as electronic courses, presentations and plans for practical and lecture classes, practical assignments, auxiliary video content and screencasts, materials from professional databases and electronic library systems, various reference materials, virtual laboratory workshops and tests to check knowledge. Completion of test assignments as part of the current control is admission to the credit and exam (Krasko et al., 2018).

DO technologies can be applied in different ways depending on the chosen didactic approach (Solovov, Menshikova, 2021). Thus, the educational process in the IEP can either copy the traditional classroom-lesson system or focus on the independent cognitive activity of students. Training in higher education institutions can be organized in one of the following modes (Gulaya, Romanova, 2021):

1. Asynchronous (correspondence). Within its framework, students study the educational material at their preferred pace and at a convenient time, focusing on the deadlines set by the teacher.
2. Synchronous (contact remote). In this mode, teachers and students simultaneously participate in the learning process, interacting through the appropriate web platforms.
3. Blended. This learning mode involves combining asynchronous and synchronous interaction, allowing for the preservation of live communication between all parties to the educational process.

The distance learning system gives students the opportunity to independently form an individual educational trajectory (Lukyanov et al., 2021). In such conditions, the authenticity of students' independent work is of great importance, since the risk of imitation of activity is maximum in the distance learning format. To ensure transparency of knowledge control, technologies for monitoring the digital footprint of users in the IEP are used, based on their biometric characteristics, emotional status, functional state, cognitive styles and other factors (Bredun et al., 2021).

The psychological basis of distance learning is the process of self-knowledge based on intellectual flexibility, which is a factor in creative thinking (Butenko, Bogatyrev, 2020). The need to build individual educational trajectories requires students to understand the role in which they solve educational problems: as active participants in the formation of educational content or passive recipients of information (Belogash, Kondrakhina, 2020). In this case, reflection and self-management skills are of particular importance, ensuring the optimal organization of one's own time (Asyutina, Kostyukova, 2021).

Research, including a survey of not only students and teachers, but also employers, allows us to highlight the following opportunities of distance learning (Rudnev, 2021)

- A high level of computer literacy of young specialists
- The ability to comfortably combine training with work
- The possibility of an individual nature of training, choice of pace and time
- The ability to study in several educational organizations in parallel

- Acquiring experience in remotely solving problems of varying complexity in a high-intensity mode.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The conclusions presented in the article are based on the data of a study conducted at the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Bunin Yelets State University. A sociological survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire, which was attended by 200 elderly people living at their place of residence (age = 60 years).

The questionnaire included questions aimed at studying the practices and problems of the use of information computer technologies by the elderly. The object of the study is the elderly. The subject of the study is the problems of the use of information computer technologies by the elderly. The method is a questionnaire. Among the respondents, 50% are men and 50% are women, most of whom are aged = 60 years.

THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Digital technologies and the use of the information and educational environment have great potential to improve the quality of life of older people, not only facilitating their daily lives, but also helping them to remain active, socially active and independent. This is also evident from the survey results. The majority of respondents (35.5%) answered the question "How do you assess your level of digital technology proficiency?" I chose the option "the rate is low, I often need the help of relatives, acquaintances, and employees of the MFC" (see Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of answers to the question "How do you assess your level of digital technology proficiency?" (%)

Answer options	Total	Men	Women
Very tall, I consider myself an advanced user	0,5	0,5	0
Rather tall, I have basic skills, but difficulties arise from time to time	8	9	7
Average, I face difficulties quite often	31	39	23
Most likely, I often need the help of relatives, acquaintances, and employees of the MFC	35,5	37	34
Very low, skills are missing	19,5	12	27
I find it difficult to answer	5,5	2	9

When answering the question "Specify which of the following skills you possess", 94.5% of respondents answered "I can start and turn off a computer, I can work with a keyboard and mouse" and "I can go online and search for the necessary information" (see Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of answers to the question "Specify which of the following skills you possess" (%)

Answer options	Total	Men	Women
I can start and turn off a computer, I can work with a keyboard and mouse	94,5	98	91
I understand standard programs (notepad, Paint)	77	78	76
I can go online and search for the necessary information	94,5	98	91
I can work with e-mail	46	46	44
I know how to use social networks and messengers	51	49	53
I can download simple programs and work in them	8	9	7
I can format text in Word, use formulas in Excel and create presentations in PowerPoint	32	33	31
I know the "hotkeys" that are used to speed up work in programs	14	15	13
I can install the operating system on my computer on my own	0,5	1	0
I understand professional programs, understand the purpose of each and the main differences	1	1	1
I speak programming languages	0	0	0
None of the above	5,5	2	9
All of the above	0	0	0

When answering the question "What difficulties do you experience in the process of mastering digital technologies?" 35.5% of respondents answered "the state of health does not allow", 34% - "poor memory" (see Table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of answers to the question "What difficulties do you experience in the process of mastering digital technologies?" (%)

Answer options	Total	Men	Women
poor memory	34	32	34
health condition	35,5	39	32
does not allow me to concentrate	22	21	23
age is not for learning	31,5	33	30
lack of internal motivation to master digital technologies	10,5	11	10
unpreparedness for active life	5,5	2	9
I'm afraid to make a mistake	19	20	18
I'm afraid to damage equipment	12	10	14
lack of personal computers or laptops	5,5	2	9

Thus, such barriers on the way of introducing and using digital technologies in old age as physiological and psychosomatic difficulties, lack of internal motivation to master innovative technologies, unwillingness to active life and the presence of a specific terminology of the world of digital technologies complicate the development of digital competencies by older people. People of retirement age experience ambivalent experiences when interacting with information technology, the focus of which depends on the initial experience.

DISCUSSION

Thus, on the example of these and similar statements, we see a well-established discourse that presupposes successful adaptation to the problems of traditional patterns for modern social work, including statements about the exceptional importance of education for the "formation of personality" that meets idealized ideas about modern society and its prospects. This, of course, does not mean a complete refusal to discuss the "shortcomings" or "threats" of distance education. The latter, for example, may include the following (Endovitsky et al., 2022): decreased authority of management; limited development of communication skills; deficit of practical skills; excessive formalization of training; decreased perseverance and attentiveness; decreased emotional component of training; deterioration of the physical condition of students; decreased quality of transmission and assimilation of information; the possibility of falsification of academic work.

The most significant threat to distance learning is often called its lower quality compared to traditional education, associated with the complexity, and sometimes the impossibility of developing the necessary skills in a distance format, as well as the difficulty of acquiring knowledge due to the significant difficulty of independent organization by students of the level of discipline and control that is achieved when working under the guidance of teachers (Mikhailov, Denisova, 2020), although we can also observe results proving the opposite and recording the absence of a significant decrease in the quality of education (Chaban et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the rejection of distance learning really does manifest itself stably, rather in sociological surveys than in theoretical constructs. This allows us to assert that its source is an understandable stress from the introduction of new technology, which can be overcome over time. That is, it makes it possible to interpret the rejection of distance learning as a result of the rejection of the very possibility of personal participation in the formation of distance learning as a new practice, on the one hand, and outdated ideas about the possibilities of distance learning, on the other (Rogozin, 2021; Rogozin et al., 2022). Various surveys conducted among students and teachers demonstrate an extremely high percentage of negative attitudes towards distance learning, even taking into account the fact that in some cases we observe a high percentage of those who have successfully adapted to the changed requirements. For example, according to research data on the attitude of students and teachers to work in the distance learning system, the majority of students have successfully adapted to the transition to a new format of education (Frolova et al., 2020). Most students (about 85%) are generally satisfied with the organization of the educational process in a distance learning format, but only more than a third of them find it convenient, and over 63% of respondents experience discomfort to one degree or another (Gafurov et al., 2020). Every fourth student, according to self-assessment, is in a stressful situation caused by a lack of live communication and a depressing environment. In addition, a significant portion of students (61.4%) note an increase in complaints about their well-being and health during the period of distance learning (Popova et al., 2020). Most

often, respondents complained about eye fatigue, headaches, back and neck pain, fatigue, nervous and mental stress, and difficulty falling asleep.

All aspects of the educational process note a decrease in the effectiveness of training due to the lack of live communication, low quality of feedback, routine and insufficient interactivity of the classes (Popov et al., 2020; Rogozin, 2021). In its current form, the quality of the distance learning system is assessed by most respondents as unsatisfactory (Starchikova, 2021). The main difficulties in organizing distance learning, according to respondents, include technical problems (quality of communication, Internet connection speed), lack of necessary equipment (microphones, headphones, cameras with good resolution), poor organization of information support by the educational institution, as well as personal characteristics, such as difficulties with self-organization and motivation (Aleshkovskiy et al., 2020). Also, all participants in the learning process noted the predominantly low level of teachers' proficiency in information technologies required to organize classes (Dedyukhin et al., 2020). The teachers themselves assess the distance learning system as more labor-intensive and requiring more time to prepare lessons due to the need to master new technologies and transfer educational content to digital platforms (Neborsky et al., 2020). At the same time, some traditional materials cannot be digitized, which requires teachers to rethink the fundamental principles of building the educational process and selecting methods. Most teachers do not consider distance learning to be a high-quality form, which is due to its lack of universality, which does not allow for the full teaching of a number of disciplines, and the difficulty of ensuring the proper level of control over students' knowledge.

CONCLUSION

A review of modern research on the technologies and capabilities of distance learning in the IEP allowed us to identify the following main characteristics of their discussion:

- Distance learning technologies are interpreted as possessing innovative potential, due to which professional training acquires the character of a problematic scientific search, and also provide extensive space for self-expression, professional and personal self-realization;
- The main opportunities of distance learning, highlighted by all stakeholders, are increasing the level of computer literacy and training over a long period of time without interruption from practical activities;
- The most significant threats to distance learning are an unsatisfactory number of practical classes, leading to weak practical skills, the negative impact of the electronic form of learning on the physical condition of students and the limited development of communication skills.

Attracting older people to receive social services using distance technologies and learning opportunities is relevant, but is complicated by their low motivation to use modern means of communication), as well as resistance to their development (learning). This is due to age-related characteristics: anxiety, high fatigue and a general weakening of basic mental functions. However, the life experience of older people constantly puts them in situations where the need to master certain digital services becomes a necessity. These circumstances can serve as a basis for achieving success in involving them in remote interaction with social service organizations.

Thus, we observe a characteristic combination of the use of a traditional set of value-colored characteristics of educational practices when describing distance learning with an extremely wary attitude of teachers and students to the dissemination of distance learning. As a resolution of the contradiction, which would be favorable for the development of distance learning, a statement about the connection between the effectiveness of further application of distance learning and the choice of a certain special vector of its development, corresponding to the promising tasks of improving education, can be proposed. The logic of pedagogical language leaves in force the statements about the need to ensure the competitiveness of domestic education on a global scale, taking into account various modern educational technologies as the main task of domestic education. Its solution requires, as can be argued, the active development of the IEP, which consists not only and so much in the application of existing electronic educational technologies and platforms, but in the creation and development of competent fundamental methods of distance learning. This process is highly labor-intensive, but high-quality and complete formation of educational and methodological support for the electronic educational environment, capable of

minimizing the consequences of the spatio-temporal gap between the teacher and students and providing pedagogical, psychological and technical support to all participants in the educational process, will allow to fully use all the possibilities of distance learning. The designated vector of further development of the distance learning system will make it possible to more quickly adapt educational programs to modern conditions and challenges and improve the quality of professional training of students. In general, this path is not associated with any serious revision of the forms of theoretical interpretation of distance learning and digitalization of education in general. This once again shows that digitalization of education is successfully combined with the accumulated experience of interpreting the phenomenon of education and does not contradict its main theoretical postulates. Time will tell whether a theoretical model adequate to the critical attitude of participants in the educational process to distance learning will appear, and to what extent it will require a revision of our attitude to education in general.

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