

## Distance Learning Environment

BEKEEVA Anna R. (1), NOTINA Elena (2), BYKOVA Irina (3), ULIUMDZHIEVA  
Valentina (4)

RUDN University, Russia (1)

RUDN University, Russia (2)

RUDN University, Russia (3)

RUDN University, Russia (4)

### Abstract

*The introduction of information technologies in all spheres of modern life leads to their increasing use in the educational process of higher education institutions, which provides an opportunity to use not only traditional but also electronic means of education. The method of implementation of the learning process is based on the use of modern information and telecommunication technologies that allow the student to carry out training at a distance without direct contact with a teacher.*

*Distance learning is an innovative learning that is able to solve the problems of training specialists adapted to the socio-economic conditions of life and work in the information society.*

*Research shows that students with access to computer assisted instruction, integrated learning systems technology, simulations and software that teach higher order thinking and/or collaborative networked technologies showed positive gains in academic achievement. Students, who take either all or part of their instruction online, perform better than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction. The question of the formation of foreign language competences has become quite acute in the last decade in connection with the interstate joint work on the creation of educational, scientific and communicative space, undergoing continuous qualitative transformation and developing in digital and virtual format. The main mission of the teacher is the formation of full-fledged competencies, implying the ability to implement intercultural communication in a foreign language, taking into account the ethical, social, national and cultural characteristics of the language.*

**Keywords:** *Distance learning environment, computer assisted instruction, collaborative networked technologies, integrated learning systems technology, innovative technology*

### 1. Introduction

Educational institutions have a unique opportunity to expand its activities through international arena. Globalizing trade, industry and finance spheres create a world in which cross-cultural interactions occur more often than at any other time in the past. The need for new professions and specialization in many traditional occupations significantly increase the scale of the target audience for training. Professionals and students wishing to master the specialized knowledge and skills that meet the needs of a rapidly changing world, look for access to relevant educational resources, even if it has to go abroad or to study remotely. More simple and cheap communication, especially, is being fuelled by a growing desire to teach and learn in a cross-cultural environment.

Online distance education courses that are designed based on principles derived from social constructivist theories of learning usually incorporate teaching strategies that require learners to collaborate, communicate, explore, and reflect. In these perspectives learning is viewed as an active, constructive process through which the learner creates a new knowledge based on available cognitive resources by extracting information from the environment and integrating it with the information stored in memory; thus, it follows that constructivist and collaborative approaches are the most appropriate modes for managing online discussion groups.

#### 1.2 Distance learning

Distance learning is by definition carried out through institutions; it is not self-study or a non-academic learning environment. The institutions may or may not offer traditional classroom-based instruction as well, but they are eligible for accreditation by the same agencies as those employing traditional methods.

Geographic separation is inherent in distance learning, and time may also separate students and teachers. Accessibility and convenience are important advantages of this mode of education. Well-designed programs can also bridge intellectual, cultural, and social differences between students.



Interactive telecommunications connect individuals within a learning group and with the teacher. Most often, electronic communications, such as e-mail, are used. Whatever the medium, interaction is essential to distance education. The connections of learners, teachers, and instructional resources become less dependent on physical proximity as communications systems become more sophisticated and widely available.

Distance education, like any education, establishes a learning group, sometimes called a learning community, which is composed of students, a teacher, and instructional resources - i.e., the books, audio, video, and graphic displays that allow the student to access the content of instruction. In the distance learning environment, such networking can enable students' connections with each other and thereby reduce their sense of isolation.

Regardless applying constructivist principles in online distance education course design, it is important to consider whether these design principles fit the perspectives and expectations of students from different cultural background. Learners' expectations of a course, whether face-to-face or online, tend to be focused on the mastery of content for the course and on obtaining high scores on the tests.

Researchers have studied how to motivate online learners to participate actively, for example, by providing incentives and by making participation a part of evaluation. An online learning environment has many benefits for learners, such as flexibility, the quantity and quality of participation, open and accessible communication, and archived postings from participants for reference. However, as students enrol in online courses from different locations, time zone differences may keep some students from participating, especially when synchronous communication methods are used.

Advances in media technologies make open and distance education an important alternative to traditional learning format, creating favourable conditions for the formation of communities involved in an effective virtual learning environment.

In addition, you should take into account the desire to maintain diversity in response to cultural identity and strengthen community through the recognition of the right expression.

The increasing demand for access to educational resources makes students legitimately require culturally adapted educational content that ensures the full development of the individual. As it has been noted, the students acquire knowledge in a multicultural context which is not synchronized with their own culture, sometimes there is a serious conflict. This conflict is associated not only with an incompatible way of learning and teaching, but also because of the growing wish to maintain contact with the local culture in which the student will ultimately work. Consequently, educationalists, teachers, methodologists – especially those who work in the online environment must possess the skills to prepare content that is tailored to the cultural specifics [3].

If the organization of the educational process and development of didactic materials are essentially social in nature, suppliers of learning content should not take a neutral position when creating their courses. Learning efficiency will be significantly improved, if the developers of educational material, providers of educational material are aware of the importance of considering the cultural stock of their students and how these cultures can occur in the learning preferences.

They have a clear understanding of how their cultural views are represented in materials. Moreover, providers of educational content must analyse your expectations regarding how students will and should react, to be ready for unexpected reactions. In addition, they must balance the need to help students to adapt to specific professional, educational and dominant cultures.

### **1.3 Distant learning environment**

The specificity of language learning as an academic discipline is determined by the fact that it is characterized by features inherent in language as a sign system, at the same time it is determined by a number distinguishing features of mastery and possession from the native language.

At the same time it differs significantly from any other academic subject. A significant feature of the language learning as a subject is that its absorption does not give a person an immediate knowledge of reality [2].

The activity of each learner should be built under the guidance of an experienced teacher, i.e. on the basis of interactivity. The educational process should be built in such a way that the teacher has the opportunity to monitor, adjust and evaluate the activities of the students. An independent activity of the learner needs an effective feedback. The student should have a variety of contacts in the learning process with partners. Types of independent activities of trainees should also include a variety of individual and a paired group.

The advantages of distance learning activities over traditional forms are their efficiency, productivity, and richness, possibility of fast and effective self-actualization of students. New information

technologies have a significant impact on the psychological and ideological quality of students. A necessary condition for distance learning is a gradual transition from the information orientation to the interactive one. Multimedia training programs have an increasingly significant role that involves the freedom of choice of action and obtaining effective results. The development of interactive training programs will complement the facilities and capabilities of distance learning technologies.

Information and communication technology has a great potential in solving problems of intercultural competence development to build the teaching process as an intercultural activity which can be considered as a promising distance learning environment [4].

### Conclusion

More research is also needed to address students' personal factors and social factors in an online distance learning environment. These include interpersonal, social interaction and social presence among learners, all of which to be taken from a culturally sensitive perspective.

Distance technologies were originally intended to serve as a means of improving efficiency in the educational process. Furthermore, it has been shown that well-designed distance learning environment can help improve memory retention, increase motivation and generally deepen understanding. Distance learning environment promotes collaborative learning, including role playing, group problem solving activities and articulated projects. Generally, distance learning environment is promoting new approaches to working and learning, and new ways of interacting. Distance learning environment improves student understanding, increasing the quality of education, and thereby increasing the impact of education on the economy. ICTs are transforming schools and classrooms by bringing in new curricula based on real problems, providing tools to enhance language learning, giving students and teachers more opportunities for feedback and reflection, and building local and global communities that include students, teachers, parents, practicing scientists. Information and communication technology has great potential in solving problems of intercultural competence development to build the teaching process as an intercultural activity which can be considered as a promising learning environment, the formation and development of intercultural competence of students. The use of distant technologies can be seen as a process of computer-based educational environment designed to solve problems of intercultural competence of students of different specialties. ICT is the technological basis of international information exchange; they create didactic conditions for the development of personality, development, communication, intercultural competence. Learning through the use of computer technology develops analytical thinking, intellectual and creative abilities and autonomy in constructing their own knowledge. The teacher is irreplaceable: the students see the instructor as a person who can assist them by regulating their learning activities. The observation also showed that the students seek information, feedbacks and corroboration with the instructor in the distance learning environment. Supportive learning environment provides communication between students and instructors, and an efficient access to study materials and instructors.

We consider the distance learning environment from the students' perspectives. There is a great need to understand the experience, advantages and anxieties brought into the flexible learning environment by students borne out of the existing didactic teaching and exam oriented educational system. The pedagogy of distance learning environment has to be studied and scrutinized.

Due to its unique didactic properties (along with the development of language skills and the formation of language skills) modern information and communication technologies can significantly enhance and boost the effective distance learning environment.

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