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EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR MATURING DEMOCRATIC APPROACHES TO EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES IN UKRAINE

Анотація. Вінницький державний педагогічний університет робить важливі практичні кроки на шляху демократизації освіти. Відомо, що українські університети досі не досягли європейських стандартів, регламентованих Болонським процесом і спрямованих на досягнення якості освіти, рівній якості освіти європейських університетів. Поверхневі зміни не побороли корупцію, не покращили якості, не зменшили адміністративного тиску, а навчальне навантаження залищає обмаль часу на дослідження і творчість. У статті розкрито певний досвід ВДПУ із застосування освітніх технологій у процесі демократизації навчання, наданні викладачам і студентам нових можливостей для професійного зростання і підвищення конкурентоспроможності.

Ключові слова: Демократизація; Україна; дистанційне навчання; технології, змішане навчання, міжнародна співпраця.

Annotation. Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University has taken significant steps in policy and practice toward democratization of education. However, many Ukrainian universities have failed to meet European standards required of the Bologna Process, intended to render Ukrainian higher education equal to leading European universities. Superficial changes have not eliminated corruption, poor educational quality, excessive administrative control, or a workload that leaves little room for research or creative work. This paper shares the VSPU experience integrating educational technologies to promote democratization of pedagogy, providing students and faculty with better opportunities for professional growth to become competitive on the educational market of our time.

Key words: Democratization; Ukraine; Distance Learning; Technology; Web-Blended Learning; International Partnership

Introduction. On May 19 2005 the Ukrainian Ministry of Education (MES) signed a letter of commitment to join the Bologna Process (Educational Portal 2013). At the time, the Bologna Process was viewed as a breath of fresh air, offering a ready-made, time-tested model of serving knowledge without corruption, and with a strong focus on the quality of educational practices to facilitate close cooperation between governments, universities, students, and faculty (Bologna Process, 2007-2010).

Despite nearly 15 years of independence, attempts to modernize and democratize Ukrainian higher education away from the corrupt and highly bureaucratic system inherited from the Soviet Union had reached a stalemate. A university education was no longer free for all students, but educational costs continued to increase and the content of educational practices remained essentially unchanged, with the same pedagogies, governance structures and lack of technology, resulting in poor quality education. Consequently, Ukrainian diplomas were still not valid in any other country except the post-Soviet Union republics.

Joining the Bologna Process represented a serious attempt to break away from the approaches and practices propagated in the Soviet Union, which were rooted deeply in the minds and habits of teachers and administrators. Alignment with the goals of the European Higher Education Area promoted mobility and diversity, providing students and faculty from Ukraine with equal opportunities to grow deeper in professionalism through cross-cultural exchange, democratizing and enhancing the quality of education (Bologna Process, 2007-2010).

Official Support for Technology-Based Education in Ukraine. The Ukrainian government has struggled to integrate technology necessary to upgrade and democratize education. In 2000, the Ukrainian President endorsed support for Internet access (Alekseychick, 2001) and the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) established the Ukrainian Distance Learning Center (Shunevych, 2002; EdNU, 2010). This initiative was expanded on April 17, 2002, by a Regulation of the President, creating a consortium of six universities to establish «a pedagogical experiment in distance learning.» On January 21, 2004, MES Order #40 established official policies and practices for technology-based distance education. When Ukraine joined the Bologna Process in 2005, a five-year plan was developed, «providing all Ukrainian schools and colleges with modern computer equipment ... establishing special regional centers of distance education and local internet networks in universities» (Government Portal, August 12, 2005). However, there were few new developments in policy or practice as follow-up.

Renewed interest in technology-assisted distance education re-emerged in 2011, as a way to optimize work plans and reduce «obsolete forms of work and themes.» Training of teachers for informatics was identified as a priority (Government Portal, September 12, 2011), and in 2012 and 2013, there was a significant surge in official government support for distance learning (MES: October

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17, 2012; January 18, 2013; April 19, 2013; April 23, 2013; June 12, 2013; June 17, 2013). On April 25, 2013, Order No. 466 «On approval of distance education» updated and superseded the 2004 law with extensive definitional and logistical support.

Official state announcements and practices in the field can be difficult to reconcile. Even the MES acknowledged in a press release on June 17, 2013, «For many years in Ukraine there was not a clear idea of distance learning» and «different approaches to its organization in different schools» resulted in negative and low-grade examples adversely affecting public perception. Many Ukrainian Internet sites claiming research or practice in distance learning are outdated or without substance. Many courses that do exist appear little different from correspondence courses or remote lectures via television or Skype, however there are a handful of institutions of higher education in Ukraine that are significantly involved in distance education. Significant barriers to technology-based education include lack of funding (especially for smaller districts and institutions), lack of faculty experience designing technology-based courses, psychological unpreparedness for interacting via technology, lack of computer literacy, and lack of computer or Internet access (Shunevych, 2002; Valiliev, Lavrik&Lyubchak, 2007; Klokar, Benderets&Borbit, 2011; MES, January 18, 2013).

Corruption: The Dark Legacy of Ukrainian Higher Education

Ukraine has the eighth largest number of university students in the world, with more than 800 institutions of higher education, but none are in the top 1000 worldwide (Abramovich, 2012). According to the World Economic Forum, «the country's most important challenge is the needed overhaul of its institutional framework, which suffers from red tape, a lack of transparency, and favoritism» (2013, p. 31), all of which severely undermine democracy. Ukraine ranks 144th out of 175 countries in perceived corruption (Transparency International, 2014) in the form of bribes, kickbacks, deceptive contracts, patronage, and retroactive tenders (Abramovich, 2012).Fifty-two percent of students surveyed reported that engaging in corrupt practices was «the easiest and most reliable way to solve problems» in higher education (Osipian, 2008, p. 325).

In 2008, university admissions processes converted to independent external assessment to make the process of university qualification more transparent and democratic, but «loopholes» quickly emerged, including advance or bootlegged test copies stolen from poorly monitored testingsites. In 2010, several additional admission criteria were reintroduced, including grade point averages, credit for unsupervised academic awards, secondary school leaving certificates, and false documentation as a member of a minority or socially protected group (Zhuk, 2010; Abramovicy, 2012; USETI Alliance, 2011; Council of Europe, 2011). The net effect was a reversion to «business as usual.»

According to Ihor Likarchuk, Director of the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment, «teachers fake teaching and students fake learning» (2013). Professors' wages are chronically so low that additional income is needed just to meet minimal living expenses. Oral student end-of-year examinations have little regulation or oversight to monitor the marks received, so instructors accept payments to retake exams, raise grades, or use course books or notes during the examination. «Private lessons,» gifts, extra services, or textbook purchases are common in exchange for academic favors (Osipian, 2009; Council of Europe, 2011; USETI Alliance, 2011; Waldie, 2014). There have even been documented «price lists» circulated with specified amounts for a grade of A, B, or C (Osipian, 2009; Council of Europe, 2011).

Education is a crucial leverage point for combating corruption in government services (Mylovanov, 2014).Merit-based grades and reward systems must be instituted to bolster student confidence in the validity of individual effort and trust in public institutions as a means to build personal and social welfare. Higher wages for teachers and administrators and independence from over-regulation and arbitrary supervision (but not from public accountability), impartial monitoring and transparency, and reliable prosecution for abuses would help to reinvigorate integrity and, in turn, bolster the perception and reality of democracy in Ukrainian education.

Democratization of Education – Theory and Practice

Michel Foucault asserted that «every educational system is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriateness of discourses with the knowledge and power they bring with them» (Ball, 1990, p. 3). Denial of democratic community in the school is an anti-intellectual act which presupposes the inability of students to think on their own and make decisions (Lambert, 2006). To the contrary, education is a democratizing catalyst that enables a person to have more choices, enhanced personal welfare, and improved productivity (Liqing, Berci, & He, 2011).

However, education as an intellectual act and education as a social and political institution have often been at cross-purposes. Many social educators argue that as schools have developed, they have become increasingly locked into bureaucratic strictures with top-down administrative and instructional paradigms that leave education so homogenized it has little meaning to the individual (Lambert, 2006). Educational access and equity (including gender and class equity) have become fundamental issues of political and social change in modern culture, especially in regions of the world most affected by pressures of urbanization and growing demands of democracy on government and society (Liqing, Berci, & He, 2011).

Democratic education emphasizes open access and equal opportunity (Liqing, Berci, & He, 2011), «with

freedom of choice and a fair chance of success» (Kanwar, 2012). Democratization of education has led to «explosive demands…for open admission to institutions of higher education» (Heydenrich, Higgs, & Van Niekerk, 2004, p. 91). Such democratization has also resulted in new styles of education management and governance, with shifts in ideology and values. As the costs of traditional education increase and open-access alternatives proliferate, there has been a remarkable boom in online provision of programs and resources (ICEF Monitor, 2012; Kanwar, 2012; Kolowich, 2014).

It is not enough to simply make educational opportunities more accessible. Accessibility must be combined with high quality materials, rigorous expectations and accountability for engagement, in order to cultivate autonomous, reflective thinkers and decision-makers (Liqing, Berci, & He, 2011). However, new technologies «can play a critical role in dramatically improving education quality» and «catalyze economic growth» through the democratization of knowledge (Starr, 2013). However, quality incentive-based content, student engagement, and the support of well-trained facilitators are critical to success, as is content personalization to meet individual users' needs and interests (Dorman & Fraser, 2009; Starr, 2013; Acemoglu, Laibson& List, 2014). Over the long term, web-based technologies can further democratize education by making the work of highly skilled lecturers and curriculum developers broadly available, improving the quality of courses with instructors who have less skill, experience, or access to resources, increasing the economic value of their work.

The use of technology empowers students to direct their own learning, democratizing teacher-student and student-student learning relationships (Mentz, 2014). The teacher becomes a facilitator guiding students to more effectively define and solve their own learning challenges rather than passively absorb the knowledge of others. Students working individually and in collaboration in a virtual learning environment are able to work without the physical limitations of time and space, teaching themselves and each other as well as seeking the guidance of qualified experts as facilitators.

VSPU Initiatives in Applied Democracy

Since 2009, VSPU has undertaken many initiatives to establish and foster a commitment to democratize education. Many of these originated in compliance with the national commitment to align higher education with the Bologna Process (VSPU, 2011-2014, Protocols of the Scientific Council of VSPU regarding integrating to the Bologna Process). Programs were reorganized with European credit requirements and the addition of Specialist and Master's qualifications, making Ukrainian degrees compatible with those of universities outside the former Soviet sphere. A standardized credit module system was implemented with a redesigned grading and assessment process using a grade designation of A/B/C/D/E/F based on a 100-point scale instead of the somewhat arbitrary assignment of a 1-5 point course grade. A commitment to merit-based grading with transparent standards and content rigor compatible with the European system has served to not only update Ukrainian higher education, but to also «level the playing field» and reduce opportunities for favoritism.

At the same time, VSPU also began actively pursuing international collaboration both as an institutional priority and as a result of significant faculty initiatives (VSPU, 2010-2014, Protocols of the Scientific Council of the Department of Foreign Languages.). This has provided a tremendous boost to democratic collaboration between administrators, faculty, and students with international partners around the world. Such collaboration has also opened many doors to enable the inclusion of technological and pedagogical expertise of skilled lecturers and veteran practitioners of distance learning, increasing the quality and range of course content and activities available to VSPU students.

In 2009-2010, a VSPU senior instructor from the VSPU Institute of Foreign Languages received a Fulbright grant as Scholar in Residence at Southeast Missouri State University in the United States. This opened the door for a long-term collaboration with annual visits of VSPU senior administration to negotiate a formal partnership agreement with Southeast. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the President and Provost of Southeast in 2010, followed by a formal articulation agreement in the fall semester of 2013, approving the transfer of up to 18 credit hours from VSPU toward a Master's qualification in Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESOL) at Southeast. Since 2010, three to four VSPU students have been enrolled at Southeast every semester. The first VSPU student to graduate from Southeast received a degree in TESOL in May, 2014. Two graduate students from 2013-2014 are continuing their studies at Southeast with grants as graduate assistants.

The first Fulbright faculty exchange was followed by several exchange experiences involving professors from the Institute of Foreign Languages over the next five years. In fall 2011, VSPU hosted its own visiting Fulbright Scholar in Residence from Bradley University (located in the U.S. State of Illinois). In2012 and 2013, four VSPU professors enrolled via distance education as non-editing guest instructors in online teacher education classes at Southeast. In 2013 and 2014, several additional Ukrainian and international partnerships were established by other VSPU departments with universities in Poland, Germany, and Russia. In spring 2013, VSPU hosted another faculty exchange with a teacher education professor from Southeast for a two-week visiting lecture appointment. This visiting lecture tour included presentations and meetings with VSPU administration, faculty, and students, visits to local primary and secondary schools and a meeting with the Vinnytsia Teachers of English Union.

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In fall 2012, a pilot web-blended course, «Teacher Candidate Preparation in U.S. Universities» was jointly taught asynchronously and in real time with several American professors from Southeast and Bradley Universities. This represented one of the first experiments with asynchronous virtual space, opening opportunities to interact with faculty and each other outside of scheduled class time. There was even a face-to-face class held in real-time with U.S. and Ukrainian teacher education candidates via Skype. Results of research on student evaluations of the web-blended course were then presented at international conferences in Sakarya, Turkey, and St. Louis, Missouri (Powell, Kuzmina, et. al., 2013 and 2014). This course was offered a second time in spring 2014, with refinements derived from the pilot project, including another joint class via Skype, several lecturers from Southeast, and a new lecture by the Provost of Nagoya University in Japan.

Technology for Democratic Management of Data and Resources

The success of democracy in higher education depends in large part on a dramatic shift to less restrictive management and governance styles ((Heydenrich, Higgs, & Van Niekerk, 2004). Accountability, transparency, and appropriate regulation of data management are essential, not only to overcome chronic endemic corruption, but also to re-establish confidence in the fairness and equity of administrative processes (Mylovanov, 2014). VSPU has made a significant commitment toward the use of technology to establish a more transparent and accountable administration, exemplified by several initiatives undertaken in the past year (Shestopalyuk, 2014).

In September 2012, VSPU began using the «Dean's Office» automated record-keeping system to digitize student records with password protection and electronic security protocols. This not only makes the process of recording and accessing student records much more efficient, it also limits access by unauthorized persons and provides a time-stamped login trail to discourage attempts to make arbitrary changes. Increased transparency of student data records discourages tampering, especially regarding entrance exams for graduate school, and facilitates inspection for accountability audits. During 2013-2014, VSPU added a series of data management and statistical programs («PC-Student-Web,» «PC-Student Transcripts-Web», and «Academic Curriculum») for tracking student progress, ordering certificates, and attesting to student achievement.

The proliferation of data management demands have also led to the organization of a Web Department to set up and secure data management programs and protocols as well as recruit and train operators and programmers. This new administrative unit has been charged with the launch of «PC-Colloquial» which will use electronic monitoring of records to track student progress in real time to enable timely interventions if needed to improve student academic progress. To help manage data security, VSPU has recently adopted the «AC-VSPU-1» protocol to process information of limited access categories.

On May 15, 2014, The Information Processing Centre at VSPU was made a unit of the Office of Education and Methodology for Monitoring and Analysis of the Quality of Education. A pivotal task in implementing this status is the need to acquire software and integrate fragmented and compartmentalized data banks from various departments and institutes into a university-wide data management system.

Technology for Democratic Teaching and Learning

Technology has also been identified as an important lever to democratize teaching and learning through critical factors such as open access and equal opportunity (Liqing, Berci, & He, 2011), «freedom of choice» (Kanwar, 2012), content personalization (Dorman & Fraser, 2009; Starr, 2013; Acemoglu, Laibson& List, 2014)and empowerment of students to direct their own learning (Mentz, 2014). In the last three years, VSPU faculty members have become increasingly innovative in the use of learning technologies both in and out of the classroom.

A growing cadre of faculty have committed of their own volition to the use of technology to enrich lectures and incorporate digital audio-visual resources into class activities. Smartboard presentations and activities and live Internet access are regularly integrated into face-to-face classes. Several professors have also been experimenting with out-of-class applications such as blogging, communication via social networks such as VKontakte, and web-blended applications organized by the British Council.

The introduction of computerized tests has streamlined assessment and made the recording of scores not only more efficient, but – as noted previously – more secure. Electronic manuals and digital syllabi have simplified communication of expectations and increased student access to course materials. The university administration has also committed this year to initiate implementation of Ministry of Education recommendations to contract with the Microsoft IT Academy to provide teachers with licensed educational programs and resource materials, and to train the teachers in application of these resources.

Student response to the pilot web-blended class consistently highlighted the democratizatiing effects of technology use (Powell, Kuzmina, et. al., 2013). By a nearly two-to-one large margin, positive effects outweighed negative perceptions. In particular, students appreciated the ease of access (43 %), with «24/7» access to class work. They overwhelmingly cited the benefits of increased interaction (32 %) and engagement (28%), especially with American professors and students, but also the increased access to discussion, to speak up and be heard in class activities. Many students (27 %) reported that the course format was especially interesting, with many new and

interesting topics that would not have been available in a traditional format. Because this was an English-language class, many appreciated the realistic language practice with native speakers (23 %), both in oral conversation in face-to-face Skype sessions, but also in asynchronous discussion online. Finally, those who adapted well to the online format cited the positive value of independent time management (8 %) made available by the flexibility of online access; those who did not adapt well found the necessity for independent time management a drawback (12 %).

Recommendations. Ukraine has many challenges as a country, not the least of which are endemic corruption, lack of funds, lack of infrastructure, and lack of trust in government and administrative systems. Challenges to democratization are many. Higher education has been singled out repeatedly as one of the most corrupt segments of this overloaded and autocratic bureaucracy. Despite prevailing odds, VSPU has made remarkable progress «swimming against the tide.» In large part this is due to the commitment of a forward-looking administration that is determined to push VSPU toward technological proficiency, transparency in management, and international partnerships in order to access up-to-date resources and expertise.

Many significant initiatives have been undertaken, largely piecemeal by innovative individuals. Each success has yielded a greater determination to continue to explore possibilities, building a synergy of positive results that is about to generate a critical mass of commitment and systemic adoption. The integration of data management into a secure university-wide system is critical to establishing and stabilizing the gains made by changes in administrative procedures. The establishment of a dedicated administrative department charged with developing and maintaining technology infrastructure will be essential to support any concerted movement toward systemic adoption of technology-assisted teaching and learning. Broadly available programs of training in technology-assisted pedagogies will be crucial to maximize the gains made by independent experimenters and early adopters. Continuing institutional support, especially financial support will, of course, be critical.

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ELEKTRONICZNY DZIENNIK W POLSKIEJ SZKOLE- MOŻLIWOŚCI I OGRANICZENIA

Komputer i Internet pełnią coraz większą rolę w różnych obszarach życia człowieka. Szkoła jako instytucja wysoce sformalizowana, w której istotne jest operowanie wszelkiego rodzaju informacjami to wskazane miejsce do wdrażania innowacyjnych rozwiązań technologicznych.

Do technologii informacyjno-komunikacyjnych, które w ostatnich latach stopniowo zostają wprowadzane do praktyki życia szkolnego należy zaliczyć dziennik elektroniczny. Obecnie według danych szacunkowych MEN, tylko 0,3 % szkół w Polsce korzysta z tego narzędzia, a w wielu toczy się dyskusja nad jego wdrożeniem. Biorąc pod uwagę statystyki warszawskich jednostek (w skład których wchodzą publiczne przedszkola, szkoły i placówki dokumentacji przebiegu nauczania, działalności wychowawczej i opiekuńczej), można mówić o prowadzeniu przez te instytucje dwojakiego rodzaju dokumentacji. Obok jednostek prowadzących wyłącznie dziennik elektroniczny są też i takie, które stosują dzienniki elektroniczne jednocześnie z dziennikami w formie papierowej. Jak wynika ze statystyk prowadzonych przez Biuro Edukacji (stan do 31stycznia 2016 roku), 322 jednostki na terenie Warszawy wprowadziły dziennik elektroniczny, z tego 149 prowadzi zarówno dokumentację elektroniczną jak i papierową, a 173 korzysta wyłącznie z dzienników elektronicznych[1].

Istotne jest również spostrzeżenie, iż statystyki wykazują tendencję wzrostową w zakresie prowadzenia przez jednostki wyłącznie dzienników w postaci elektronicznej, bowiem wśród 173 placówek , aż 61 z nich prowadzi je od bieżącego roku szkolnego.

1. Co to jest dziennik elektroniczny?

Dziennik elektroniczny może występować w formie programu komputerowego bądź jako aplikacja internetowa.

Na rynku działa coraz więcej firm informatycznych, które wyspecjalizowały się w e-dziennikach, proponowanych do zakupu szkole. Obok tych płatnych wersji e-dzienników, funkcjonują w Internecie darmowe aplikacje zawierające elektroniczną wersję dziennika. Należy jednak nadmienić, że ich oferta jest mniej rozbudowana w porównaniu do tych, które proponują profesjonalne firmy.

Jako przykładowe dzienniki elektroniczne dostępne na polskim rynku można wskazać na następujące: - «System kontroli frekwencji i wyników w nauce» firmy

Librus, - «Dziennik Optivum» firmy Wulcan, - «Dziennik DDJ» firmy ProgMan,- «Internetowy dziennik lekcyjny Prymus.info» firmy Progress1,- «Dziennik elektroniczny MobiReg» firmy Dreamtec. Natomiast jako bezpłatne programy aplikacji internetowej można podać: - E-dziennik.org, http://www.e-dziennik.org/,- «Dziennik internetowy», http://dziennikinternetowy.cba.pl/,-Wywiadówka.com -Profesjonalny internetowy dziennik elektroniczny dla szkół, http://www.wywiadowka.com/ - Elektroniczny Dziennik Edukatora, http://www.edukator.org.pl/dziennik.php

Możliwość korzystania z elektronicznych dzienników zajęć bez wymogu jednoczesnego prowadzenia takiej samej dokumentacji w formie papierowej usankcjonowana została rozporządzeniem Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 16 lipca 2009 roku[1]. W dokumencie tym zawarto wymagania określone przez MEN, na jakie instytucja powinna zwrócić uwagę zanim wprowadzi dziennik elektroniczny do obiegu. Przede wszystkim wymagana jest zgoda organu prowadzącego szkołę. Sformułowano również warunki dotyczące dostępu do zawartych informacji i ich ochrony. Oprogramowanie musi jednoznacznie zidentyfikować osoby uprawnione do wprowadzania danych. Jako istotne, wymieniono również odpowiednie zabezpieczenie danych osobowych przed dostępem osób niepowołanych. System powinien również zachowywać historię wszystkich zmian wraz z informacją, kto jest autorem danej korekty. Ponadto zapisy zawarte w dzienniku elektronicznym powinny być odpowiednio zabezpieczone przed ich utratą. Musi też istnieć możliwość eksportu danych do formatu XML i zapisu na nośniku informatycznym w terminie 10 dni od zakończenia roku szkolnego (lub 10 dni od dnia zakończenia semestru w przypadku szkół policealnych i szkół dla osób dorosłych), a także sporządzania kopii w wersji papierowej.

Kolejnym aktem prawnym regulującym stosowanie dzienników elektronicznych jest Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z 29 sierpnia 2014 roku.

Zgodnie z przepisami zawartymi w Rozporządzeniu Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 29 sierpnia 2014 roku w sprawie sposobu prowadzenia przez publiczne przedszkola, szkoły i placówki dokumentacji przebiegu nauczania, działalności wychowawczej i opiekuńczej oraz

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