

The issue of distance education in the Slovak Republic

Viera Tomková¹, Gabriel Báñez², Danka Lukáčová³

Abstract

The article is dealing with characteristics of distance education with the aim to show basic principles of preparing educational texts for university students. Department of Technology and Information Technology FE UCP in Nitra is working on project KEGA, focused on the practice of engagement simple and complex pneumatic and hydraulic connections. The learning will be realized by distance form of education, we were curious, if students are familiar with forms of distance education. In the article are presented results of entry research on sample of university students.

Keywords:

distance education
self-study
study material

Schlüsselwörter:

Fernstudium
Selbststudium
Studienmaterial

1 Introduction

In all areas of education, distance learning elements are currently applied. The most used of them - systems for managing e-learning - are accepted throughout the company. Their implementation in education is realized in order to ensure the effective course of education and its management. Despite the massive use of digital technology in distance education, they remain a topic of discussion in circles of pedagogical, didactics and psychology professionals. The employees of the Department of Technology and Information Technologies of the PF UKF in Nitra solves the research project KEGA 011UKF-4/2017 Remote Laboratories in Distance Forms of Education. The aim of the project is to create a course for distance learning of students for the training of simple and complex pneumatic and hydraulic systems by means of building supervision and verification of effectiveness of the given form of education compared to the results of students educated at the faculty.

2 Distance education as a form of learning

Distance learning is a learning method that introduces the so-called "Direct contact". According to J. Průcha (2006), distance learning is very perspective in terms of further adult education. Its essence lies in a separate study of participants. This means that education is realized without the participation of pupils / students in the traditional form of the teaching unit. A similar view is taken by S. Juszczak (2003, p.14), according to which distance learning is comparable to the various forms of external education, where communication with a teacher often takes place through consultation (direct contact) and interaction with the Internet. However, it must be remembered that distance learning in all its forms must also include the presence of teaching.

When talking about distance education in general, it is a form of media mediated study (in the past telephone, radio, television, more and more computer, especially Internet and electronic mail) (Průcha, 2009). The issue of distance education in technical education in the Czech Republic is dealt with by M. Klement, M. Chráska, J. Dostál, H. Marešová (2012), who state that distance learning with the use of older media such as correspondence, newspapers, television, radio, is overtaken because it does not provide students or teachers with the necessary

¹Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Education Tr. A. Hlinku 1, Slovakia

²Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Education Tr. A. Hlinku 1, Slovakia

³Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Education Tr. A. Hlinku 1, Slovakia

comfort or efficiency of the study. At secondary schools, distance learning is a separate study conducted largely or wholly by means of information technology, possibly linked to individual consultations.

At universities, it is a separate study of the principals, usually without any contact of the students with the teacher. Teaching is provided by specially prepared learning materials (study aids), computer programs and other methods allowing individual access (comments and support of lecturers, tutors and consultants) (Průcha, J., & Walterová, E. & Mareš, J., 2009). We cannot agree with this characteristic of distance education at university. In the Slovak Republic, full-time education is also used for distance education. Forms of distance learning are applied as complementary study materials designed to expand and deepen the knowledge of students, to test them, presentations of different production technologies, experiments, etc., for which there is no space for the classical education.

Distance education is followed by four basic principles:

1. the principle of self-training,
2. the principle of individualisation,
3. The principle of interactivity,
4. The principle of the use of multimedia (Rohlíková, L. & Vejvodová, J., 2012).

The principle of self-education allows you to make use of your own choice of the learner, what, when, and where to be educated. Emphasis is placed on the autonomy of the student and didactically well-trained curriculum. The principle of individualisation includes an individual study plan, individual pace, tutor communication, psychological help, motivation and remotivation. The principle of interactivity is a small amount of curriculum, the possibility of quick feedback, control questions and tests with immediate evaluation. The principle of using multimedia means using different ways and means of presenting the lesson, engaging in learning senses and mediating effective communication. The problems of defining the principles of distance learning are also addressed by J. Průcha et al. (2009). Despite the fact that they are variously named and divided, it can be said that they are essentially the same. These principles aim to make the learner's education more effective. Of particular importance is the quality of pedagogical work, which is manifested in distance education especially in the creation of study texts, didactic materials and specific work of the tutor. When creating text for distance learning, it is advisable to follow the following recommendations: the written text should provide the learner with all the necessary content so that it does not need to be explained during the lesson, the text should contain many formal and content elements that will help replace the present interpretation completely and allow the learner to understand knowledge and memorize them, the study text should be supplemented with study aids such as video cassettes, audio cassettes, or interactive CD programs.

The issue of the creation of study text for distance learning was also dealt with by J. Průcha et al. (2009), which include among the basic elements of the study text for self-study:

- clarity of text,
- its division into shorter study units,
- frequent activation and motivation elements,
- sufficient number of specific examples and practical demonstrations of content,
- rich application of feedback elements for the learner (control questions, tests, homework sent to the tutor for evaluation, joint projects with other participants in the study).

Part of the quality textbooks for distance learning are also called " study guides that tell the learner how to proceed with the study, how to work with the study aids to which parts of the study text should pay increased attention, how to prepare written assignments or how to prepare for the exam (Tomková, V., 2016).

3 Survey on the sample of university students in the Slovak Republic

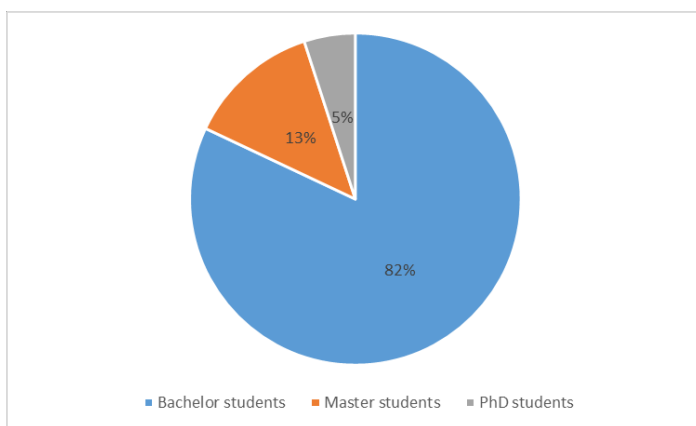
The first mention of distance learning occurs 150 years ago. Historically, the first institution for distance education was the correspondent school in England in 1840. In the sixties of the last century, the era of multimedia education began through computer programs and networks, telecommunication satellites, audiovisual textbooks, and so on. At the university level, distance education began to be applied in 1969, when the English Open University was established. At present, e-learning is the most used, i. electronic learning related to computers and the Internet (more in J. Průcha, 2006).

In view of the above, we have decided to find out whether students studying at university know what forms of education we can add to distance learning. We have decided to carry out a sample survey of students studying at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra (UKF) (Tomková, V., 2016), who are educated

in various distance learning forms. The University has a blurb called Information Systems on its website, which includes the Education Portal (EDU). The basic research method of research was a questionnaire for college students consisting of 15 items. For the purpose of this post, we only evaluated item number 5, which has a direct relation to the problem solved in the contribution. The questionnaire was filled in by the respondents in printed form or online via the GoogleDocs form.

4 Characteristics of the research sample

The survey was attended by 39 randomly invited students studying at the UKF in Nitra. Data collection was conducted in April and May 2018. The research sample was made up of 32 (82 %) of Bachelors, 5 (13 %) of Masters and 2 students (5 %) said they were PhD students. The distribution of respondents can be seen in Chart 1.



Graph 1 Composition of respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate from the options offered, which we can all add to forms of distance learning. When compiling the options, we used the forms that are mentioned in the publications by the authors listed in the literature. Respondents had the following forms of distance learning: on-line education, telematics, tele-education, e-learning, correspondence training through traditional mail, educational radio, audio-conferencing and videoconferencing. Respondents should identify all the options they think are part of distance education. They have been warned to the fact that they can choose more answers or all. The offer included older forms of distance learning that are no longer commonly used in pedagogical practice but could be met during primary or secondary school education. We assumed that most respondents would achieve at least a 75 % success rate, i.e., mark at least six options. Chart 2 shows the evaluation of respondents' answers. Most respondents identified online education (90 %) and e-learning (82 %). Videoconferencing was rated by 72 % of students interviewed. The smallest respondents identified the possibility of correspondence education by traditional post (5 %) and teleworking (8 %).

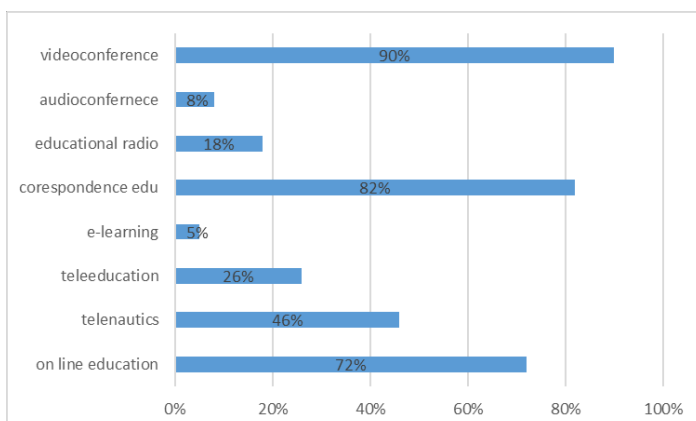
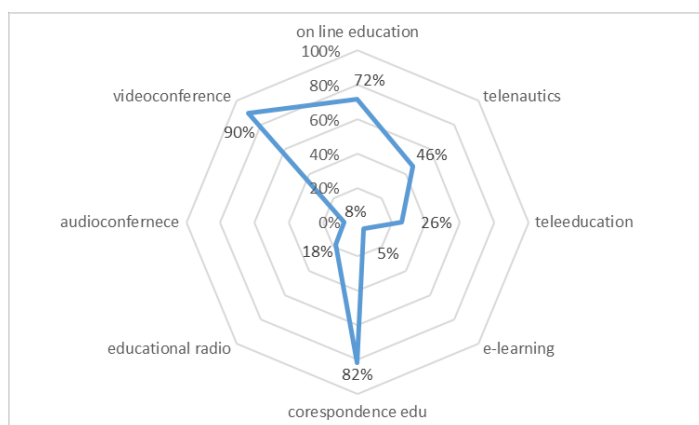
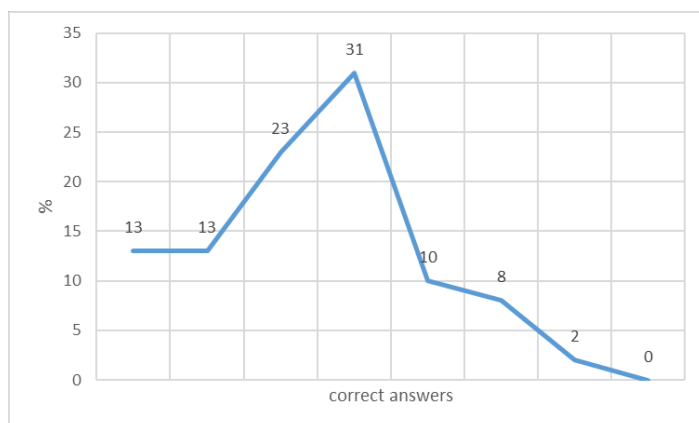


Chart 2 Respondents' answers



Graph 3 Evaluation of radar chart responses

For the sake of clarity, we also evaluated the results using a radar chart (Chart 3). The replies of the respondents are clearly visible on the Chart. We can claim that distance learning respondents understand online education, e-learning or video conferencing.



Graph 4 Frequency of correct

We were also interested in evaluating the frequency of responses (Chart 4). From the chart, most respondents (31 %) indicated 4 options. No respondent indicated all options. One respondent (2 %) indicated seven options and three respondents (8 %) indicated six forms of distance learning.

The evaluation reveals that under the term distance learning, students understand modern forms of e-learning mediated through computer, Internet, and multimedia. On the other hand, historically older forms of distance learning are unknown.

5 Conclusion

Distance education is currently one of the basic forms of lifelong learning and is used for the preparation of students at universities. The basic principles of distance learning, which is defined as self-directed management, are self-reliance and guidance. Today's university students are those forms of education, and students studying teaching programs will apply several CV forms to their future practice. Therefore, it is important to be able to define distance learning and to recognize its different forms. Survey found that students do not know exactly which forms of education we place in distance education. They most often marked options that are related to work on computers, the Internet, and multimedia. During the study, students get a lot of information through education systems such as Moodle, but not all of the courses available to them meet the criteria of quality study material that would lead them to independence in studying and motivating students. In the article, we pointed out the basic requirements for quality study material for distance education and introduced the basic rules of their creation.

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