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## The Role of Distance Learning in the Development of Student's Independent Activities

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### Abstract

In this article, main emphasis is given to improvement of the quality of teaching at educational institutions with huge priority and to increase the efficiency in non-philological departments. Besides, the attention is also paid to formation of students' independent activities and to develop creativity in them. The article contains the facilities of distance learning and the ways of using them in education. Today, the above mentioned factors can stimulate the students' interests in science and their performances also.

**Keywords:** independent education, distance learning, expert, tutor, moderator, information technology.

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### Introduction

Nowadays, independent education has its significant role in improving the quality of the educational process. The pedagogue may often get positive results by being thoroughly prepared rather than gaining ready source with no understanding. The responsibility of the training staff has a great role in the process of mastering the subjects by students and growing their professional skills.

Both sides, a student and the teacher must understand the importance of independent learning and that it is an enormous advantage for them. It is crucial for the student to know the necessity of his/her independent actions that they are key factors for their perspective future and not for the person who trains them. And the mentoring side takes into account that independent education is meant not only for the students but to make easier his/her job and to communicate and work collaboratively with the ones having their own opinion. Moreover, cooperation between



students and teachers in the education process, generation of their trust in the learning process, efficient usage of new technological resources may give a lot of positive results. It is hard to imagine students' productive learning without promoting independent education.

Modern life involves processing large amount of information in order to fulfil the tasks of making decisions and being well prepared. At the present time, the requirement of preparing well qualified professionals involves deep reformations in the education process which means reduction of the class hours by prioritizing students' independent works. Main idea of this issue is to pay more attention to their independent performance rather than traditional teaching methods. It means that students educated by this method must not be self-willed and their performance must be controlled regularly. Each pedagogue should not consider his subject the main one, he must bear in mind that the time allotted for independent work is not for only his subject but for all others in the curriculum as well, otherwise overloading the students with the tasks may lead to negative consequences. Following criteria can be the main goals of independent education:

- Implementing new learning methods, analyzing the processes independently;
- Studying the material;
- Strengthening, deepening and enhancing the knowledge gained in the classes, and also bringing them to order;
- Getting more knowledge, developing the qualities, such as initiative based on creativity, activeness, responsibility and planning skills;
- Using the knowledge gained in practice;
- Thinking independently and self-development;
- Select the necessary information from enormous database;
- Formation and development of the ability of making scientific researches.

Significance of independent education is that it helps develop students' skills of making researches independently and have more interests in creative approach to teaching. They must be able to make analysis and conclusions on the problems which may arise during the time of preparation of yearly projects, graduation works and master's theses. Following Russian scientists led various researches on the problems of organization of students' independent performance: O.S.Gazman, Y.A.Dubrovskaya, G.B.Korneov, N.B.Krilova, N.N.Mikhaylova, A.V.Mudrik, S.G.Rudkova, I. A.Slavina, L.G.Tarina, S.N.Chistyakova.

Proper arrangement of independent learning and giving the knowledge have huge significance. Main function of the trainer is to help the students to find their own place in life and to encourage them during the classes. Nowadays, in most higher educational institutions in Europe and other developed countries, students spend their time in the libraries on their independent works. It is possible to reach it by developing independent education as in the institutions of higher education of developed countries and elaborate effective methods of its fulfilment.



Following aspects must be emphasised while assigning the tasks:

- Setting certain goals;
- Offer the sequence of actions;
- Offering the literature;
- Appoint the type of activity and period of time for it;
- The advice given on organization of the activity;
- Defining the norms of evaluation.

Students usually get knowledge in the classes but they should also strengthen them by doing the independent works which are reasonable in this regard. Therefore the teacher or the trainer is the one who functions as a consultant, an expert, a moderator and a tutor<sup>1</sup>, by which he/she supports and encourages the student. The pedagogue advises the student both from technological and psychological points of view. Some trainees cannot perform on their own and the teacher fulfil the function of a moderator for those kinds of students. The pedagogue, coping with the above given tasks, can grow an expert, the qualities of which meet high requirements of the specialty chosen.

Expert derives from a Latin word “*expertus*”, and means well-qualified competent in a certain field.

Tutor is an English word which means the person who teaches and helps students act independently.

Moderator is an English word which means the person who leads and guides. It is pointed on realizing the students’ hidden talents and opportunities, and his/her most difficult task is to make the students be more active and to define their problems.[1] In the organization of independent work of students, great attention should be paid to the volume, content and relevance of educational materials for independent study, as well as to the methodological support. Methodology is not just a database, it should guide the student to creative activities. Today, it is difficult to imagine the formation of independent activity of students without information technology and the Internet. While information technology is developing rapidly, the development of independent activities among students and constant contact with them, the implementation of various tasks via the Internet are becoming the most effective methods of modern teaching. Information technology provides a wide range of opportunities for quality organization of the educational process, such as working directly with students through the Internet, sending students tasks and exercises related to science, receiving their answers, open communication. All this is done remotely and effective results are observed. Distance learning has led to dramatic changes in education as well as success, which has introduced a distance learning approach to the education system.

Russian candidate of pedagogical sciences E.B.Novikova in her dissertation "Organization of independent work of students on the basis of distance learning and project methods" on the use of computer technology in education and increasing the effectiveness of teaching and quality organization of lessons said, "Computer networks maintain the opportunities of access to the the



information system of informational resources, training courses, database, searching for information, besides, they stimulate searching for effective didactic methods of teaching". It is said also as, "If distance learning and its design are based on students' independent learning and the use of modern technology as a teaching tool, it will have an impact on the quality of education." [2].

It should be noted that in the distance learning method, the student takes control of the activity and begins to demonstrate skills such as independent thinking in the classroom, and the learner automatically becomes the center of attention. Methodists around the world describe the shift in teaching as follows: "Rather than being "the sage on the stage" the instructor becomes "the guide on the side"\* [3], which means the teacher must be a coordinator and a consultant, he must be able to direct the whole process.

The tasks completed individually discover remotely the unique individual characteristics of students, form a rich worldview and intellectual potential, creativity. Distance education helps students overcome shyness and the fear of being underestimated in public. Because distance communication with the educator usually takes place between them, the results of the completed tasks only fall into the student's own personal cabinet unless there are teacher's thoughts and comments inform the student himself, and this way they work more on their improvements.

The exercises and tasks on the science module platform are categorized according to the students' knowledge, and if the exercises are updated from time to time, the students' assessment is also done automatically, which motivates the student for science. The educator can include each student individually or in groups, and if students are placed in a group, they will be able to communicate with each other, share news and information on a given topic, or work together. This, of course, creates a very favorable environment for passive students to learn the subject with their peers.

There are many Russian scientists who have conducted theoretical research on the design of the educational process through the use of distance technologies in education, for example, E.V. Burmistrova, V.V.Egorov, T.N.Zyuzina, V.L.Kapilevich, E.G.Skibitsky, V.G.Khrapchenkov and others have made a huge contribution to the development of the Russian education system. And from western countries are B.S.Bloom, I.B.J.Seinen, S.D.Sorden, O.Koutsov and others. However, the design of the learning process through distance learning remains a problem that has not yet been sufficiently explored in higher education both theoretically and methodologically. As a result of continuous study of these problems, the main contradiction between the study of the theory and practice of problem solving was identified in her dissertation "Equipping the process of teaching in a higher educational institution with the means of distance learning", S.P.Yeremeeva:

-The high relevance and importance of the design of the educational process by means of distance technologies and the insufficient development in pedagogical science of theoretical ideas about the nature and specificity of this phenomenon and methodological foundations;

\* D.L.Rogers (2000, Spring-Summer), Educational Technology Review, 19-27



- The needs in the development of the dynamics of the quality of the educational process based on distance technologies and the lack of a scientifically based criteria-assessment paradigm.[4]

In order to design the remote implementation of the educational process with students in higher education, it is necessary to use methodological foundations that provide the essence of pedagogical science and theoretically fully developed because today such hard problems exist. They may create obstacles in remote organization the educational process.

All the research have revealed that preparation of proper organization of independent learners who can effectively use the information technology certainly creates different challenges for the educator, and properly organizing these three activities simultaneously through distance learning, makes it possible not only to develop students' independent learning and cognitive skills by strengthening their knowledges on the science, but also facilitates the wide usage of information technology among teachers as well.

As a conclusion, it can be said that well-qualified pedagogues will contribute to upbringing the youth as high leveled professionals in whose hands is the future of our Republic.

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