Online Education: Assessment of Implementation Prospects

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ABSTRACT

The paper considers the problems of transformation of the institute of education, outlines the main trends in social development that affect the strengthening of the weight of online education in the educational environment. The main problems and challenges facing modern education are considered. The data of the research of the attitude of the students of SUM to the transition to the online educational platform are presented.

Keywords

On-line education, educational environment, social development, education model.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education, as we all know, is one of the basic social institutions, with the transfer of knowledge to succeeding generations as one of its most important functions. In the post-industrial society, knowledge (information) becomes a leading factor of production, the role of physical labor is reduced, and the role of intellectual labor, on the contrary, is increased, as a result of which the functional significance of education also increases. In addition, training in mental activity requires more time and information in order to carry out correct analysis and make the most effective decision. Today, we are talking more and more about knowledge economy and not just economics, «the number of middle managers in the world is decreasing dramatically, many times - in our understanding - site managers, foremen, shift engineers, etc. Firms are focused on the independence of each employee, his self-employment, work in small self-managed teams. Independence in decisions becomes one of the main requirements for a specialist. Moreover, under these circumstances, people with a higher level of education, including those working on the conveyor belt, are preferred. [6].

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

As can be seen from the above, the new requirements of the environment dictate the need to modernize the institute of education, bringing it into line with the dynamics of social development. The availability of global online educational platforms, such as Uniweb, TedX and Coursera, established at Stanford University and focused on the mass audience, may lead to the displacement of Russian universities from the educational market due to the explosive interest of Russian youth in Western education. A lot of domestic projects appeared, such as the Universiade, Eduson. Foreign platforms are oriented to the world audience; domestic ones are more niche, oriented to the domestic market of Russia and CIS countries. When creating domestic platforms, most of them relied on the placement of paid content, while there are global platforms promoted by enthusiasts on a pro bono basis. Thus, the creation and promotion of such platforms is our reality, the question of how to embed these systems into the global educational system of Russia.

3. DETAILS

The main trends in social development affecting the modernization of the education institute are as follows [2]:

- The emergence and continuous strengthening of such a factor of production as information.
- Continuous increase in the amount of current knowledge.
- Complication of "navigation" in the information field.
- Possibility of access to almost any information (without significant material and time costs), including low quality, unchecked.
- The emergence of additional educational sites, primarily virtual ones.
- Ability to build an individual educational trajectory using a variety of formats of information presentation, including interactive ones.
- Ability to get quick feedback from a large number of users.
- High probability of "superficial" consumption of information, so-called "Internet surfing".
- Appearance of dependence on virtual educational space.
- Modification role of the teacher: from the role of a knowledge-bearer (sometimes the only possible one) to the role of a consultant, a "pilot" in the information field, as well as, to a certain extent, the creator of this information field.
- Non-critical perception of information disseminated via the Internet.
- Mechanical, routine processing of information, often reducible to a simple compilation of data, as opposed to creative processing of information according to specific objectives.
- Possibility of "data leakage", which threatens, among other things, copyright.
- Continuity of the education process due to the need for continuous updating of knowledge. As a result, the age range of learners and teachers is widened, as well as teachers are also obliged to continuously improve their knowledge.
- Insufficient development of ethical norms of behavior on the Internet.
- Expansion of access to the educational environment for the widest possible range of users, including those with low mobility.
- Difficulty of providing methodical support of educational material as a result of rapid introduction of this material into the network.
- Insufficient level of computer training of both students and teachers, affecting the quality of education received.

Let's look at some of the listed trends in detail. Firstly, the tendency to greater access to an educational environment. The most important condition for the effective functioning of an inclusive education model is the development of a distance education system using online platforms. Modern educational online platforms are becoming more and more accessible and in demand by different categories of students,

which leads, on the one hand, to an increase in the availability of different educational systems for all comers (which, in turn, increases the individual's chances for vertical ascending mobility), and on the other hand, to an increase in the responsibility and independence of students. After all, the wider the choice of programs, the more responsibility for the correctness of the choice made regarding the trajectory of individual development. Consequently, individuals who do not have the skills to work effectively with a huge amount of information will be less competitive. Unfortunately, in our opinion, this stratification will occur at the early stages of training, as not all educational institutions are ready to respond to these challenges of the digital environment. Second, the changing role of the teacher. As it was mentioned above, the teacher becomes a creator of the information field and a "pilot" in the information space. But some researchers assign the teacher an even more technical role, saying about him that "it is rather a laboratory technician, who makes it easier for the student to assimilate the material as much as possible, almost completely eliminated as an individual from the educational process and reduces its role to recommendations of methodical materials and demonstration of video clips, tables, graphs, etc.". [1] Third, the possibility of building an individual educational trajectory complicates the process of checking the obtained knowledge and issuing supporting documents, not to mention the inevitable modification of the legal support of the educational process. For example, Deputy Minister of Education of the Russian Federation Alexander Klimov notes: "The opportunity to choose in modern education is very important. A student of any state or non-state institution of higher education can take any course and present it to his university management as accredit to the curriculum. The Ministry of Education and Science considers it mandatory for Russian universities. Now we are finalizing the development of regulatory documents". [3]. Fourth, the problem of insufficient computer training of participants. Mikhail Fominykh, a senior lecturer at Molde University College in Norway, notes: "If we compare virtual reality with web technologies and electronic resources used in education, that is, both positive and negative sides. Problems can arise in learning how to use virtual reality technologies" [4].The presence of these trends will inevitably lead to the transformation of the classical educational model. At present, there is an active discussion in the university environment regarding the reform of higher education in Russia. In particular, a transition to online education is proposed among the innovations. According to Yaroslav Kuzminov, the rector of the National Research University Higher School of Economics, "Russia has very good chances to quickly develop the system of online courses. The point is not even in the organizational framework, but in the fact that we are a country with a great need for higher education and insufficient resources to meet this need. As a result, we have a lot of so-called pseudo-education and weak education... At the same time, no one doubts that full-time education at the university is irreplaceable" [3]. Mikhail Morozov, candidate of technical sciences, Professor of the Department of Informatics and System Programming at Mari State Technical University, echoes it: "The future of education is linked to both online platforms and virtual reality - this is the next step in the development of educational content. The first developments involving virtual reality in education appeared in 1990-2000. Virtual reality is used quite seriously in the field of business education, where it plays two roles. The first is an imitation of the usual educational process - lectures, practical classes. The second is coordination and simulation of certain actions" [4].

Thus, online education implies, among other things, the simulation of certain actions, i.e., the replacement of reality with the virtual world. This is a rather useful opportunity, because not all knowledge and not always possible to work in practice, in real organization or in real activity. These limitations arise, for example, due to the lack of sufficient experience among students and the high cost of error. Thus, virtual experience helps to form the necessary practical skill at minimization of risks. On the other hand, there may be "inconsistency", no further correlation between the real and virtual world. For example, Sergey Matveev, General Director of Eligo Vision, Candidate of Physics and Mathematics, notes: "...when we were doing a project in Germany related to the space module of the Mir station, people lost their orientation and we had to put them in chairs so that they would not fall down" [4].

As stated above, there is an active discussion about the transition to online education in the university environment. The Department of Sociology and Psychology of the SUM conducted an online survey of students of the University in order to determine their attitude to this proposal. The survey was attended by 389 respondents, the average age of which was 19 years .Comparing the two systems of education, classical and using the online educational platform, students prefer classical education to a greater extent. Thus, for example, only 10% of respondents are "ready" or "rather ready" to pay the same amount for online education as for classical education, while 76% of respondents are "not ready" or "rather not ready" to pay for online education in the same way as classical education. Among the advantages of classical education, respondents identify such as: "Possibility of direct contact with the teacher" - 37.8%; "Possibility of communication within the student group" - 26.7%; "Flexible forms of conducting classes in the form of trainings, business games, etc." - 20%. Respondents consider the advantages of using the online educational platform to be the following "Possibility to choose a convenient time for classes" - 31.4%;"Possibility of repeated listening to educational material" - 27.2%; "Possibility to get education from any geographical point" - 22.1%.The level of knowledge obtained in the classical form of education will also be higher, according to respondents, than in online learning. This is evidenced by the distribution of answers to this question: "high level" - 10.5% of respondents for the classical form and 6.9%for online education; "rather high level" - 33.4% vs. 27.8%, respectively; "average level" -48.6% vs. 39.3%, respectively; "below average" - 5.9% vs. 21.1% respectively and "low" - 1.5% and 4.9%, respectively. At the same time, respondents are quite loyal to the possibility of combining the two models of education: 52.4% of respondents are ready to combine both types of education under the same price conditions; in the same situation, 37.3% of respondents would prefer the classical form of education, and 10.3% of respondents would prefer online education. While online education implies joining the international online platform, 82.3% of respondents for "a reasonable combination of international and Russian experience». Thus, today, in our opinion, the student community is ambiguously assessing the transition to the online education model. It should be noted that a mixed assessment of the online education model is also characteristic of the rector community. According to the rectors of leading Moscow universities (Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, Moscow State University, Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, etc.) [5]:
• It is still early to say that online learning is an independent environment, as it includes not only the transfer of knowledge, but also interaction with the student, the

availability of «feedback", as a result of which it is possible to assess the degree of understanding of the material.

• There are technical requirements for online education - the electronic device embedded in the training should have artificial intelligence.

• The most optimal solution is a combination of classical educational model and online education model. E-courses should be combined with localization: "With the expansion of electronic content, local environments should emerge where people communicate and adapt the global context to life in a given area. All of this also applies to the mission of universities: the university is the one that supports these lively projects on the ground. A number of universities will use e-learning courses with localization. For example, lectures by leading professors of leading universities are presented in electronic form, and discussions, feedback, and evaluation of achievements are already taking place locally at the university itself ... the future of such hybrid systems in the next 20 years.

• We can talk about the formation of a new type of pedagogy - digital, the didactics of which has not yet been developed: "Until we understand the new didactics of digital pedagogy (and we can understand it only when we obtain comparative data on the effectiveness of offline and online learning), we will not be able to talk about what approaches are effective and what are not, where to use online learning, and where - prematurely.

• The online education system necessarily implies tutoring support and feedback. Thus, in the opinion of the rector community, online education should be harmoniously combined with the classical educational model. Summing up, it is necessary to note that the majority of subjects of the educational process: teachers, students, ministry employees do not deny the inevitability and necessity of introducing online education, but in combination with elements of the classical (traditional) model of education.

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