

DISTANCE LEARNING IN UKRAINE: EXPERIENCE AND CHALLENGES

Svitlana NAUMENKO,

Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences (Ph.D.), Senior Researcher,
Senior Researcher of the Department of Monitoring and Assessment of the Quality of General
Secondary Education,
Institute of Pedagogy of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine,
Kyiv, Ukraine

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8279-4427>

Svitlana HOLOVKO,

Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences (Ph.D.), Senior Researcher, Associate Professor,
Senior Researcher of the Department of Monitoring and Assessment of the Quality of General
Secondary Education,
Institute of Pedagogy of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine,
Kyiv, Ukraine

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0795-7166>

Abstract. *The article highlights the experience of Ukrainian teachers as to the organization and assessment of students' learning outcomes under the conditions of distance learning. The reasons for the transition of schools to distance and mixed forms of education are named; the peculiarities of evaluating the results of student learning are highlighted. In particular, information is provided as regards the frequency and forms of current and thematic assessments in the conditions of distance learning, just as about the means and tools used during these assessments. The main difficulties the teachers are facing during the organization of assessment of students' learning results in the conditions of distance learning are highlighted.*

Key words: *assessment; student learning outcomes; remote form of education; schools; Ukraine.*

Since March 2020, during the period of quarantine caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, in preschool, general secondary, out-of-school, professional, professional pre-higher, higher and post-graduate education institutions of Ukraine, the implementation of educational programs was ensured through the use of distance learning technologies, which does not involve visiting educational institutions by its applicants [3].

According to the norms of Ukrainian legislation, distance education is defined as one of the forms that involves the organization of an individualized educational process, which takes place through the mediated interaction of remote participants of the educational process in a specialized environment and is functioning on the basis of modern psycho pedagogical and information and communication technologies.

Features of the implementation of distance education in institutions of general secondary education are determined by the "Regulations on the distance form of getting complete general secondary education" (2020) [4]. It established a normative definition of such categories as: distance learning, subjects of distance learning, information and communication technologies of distance learning, synchronous and asynchronous modes of interaction of subjects of the educational process, electronic educational environment, electronic educational resources on

educational subjects (integrated courses) etc. [4]. This provision provides for such important norms as: the ability of educational institutions to create their own electronic educational resources to provide distance learning, the use of other electronic educational resources after verification of compliance with state standards, typical educational and model curricula, language of education; the possibility of introducing an electronic journal, subject to the availability of appropriate technical support and compliance with the requirements of the law on information protection.

Thus, throughout 2020-2021, the organizational and pedagogical prerequisites for effective distance learning were generally formed in the educational system of Ukraine, which ensured access to education at various levels for its students in the conditions of quarantine restrictions.

This made it possible to quickly resume the educational process, which was suspended in February 2022 due to Russia's armed aggression. Starting from March, distance learning was carried out in educational institutions of various levels, and in May, the academic year was completed on time and successfully.

In the new 2021/22 academic year, the educational process began on September 1 throughout the country in remote or mixed form (depending on the security situation in a specific region, the availability of shelters in educational institutions, etc.). The forced displacement of students, parents, and teachers within the country (from war zones and occupied territories to safer regions) and abroad, as well as the psychological state of participants in the educational process, has a significant impact on the organization of education under martial law. Some Ukrainian students abroad study offline in local schools and online (remotely) in Ukrainian ones.

One of the important aspects of distance learning that needs special attention is the assessment of its results. According to the recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, assessment can be carried out in a synchronous (in real time) or asynchronous mode [2, p. 3].

During the synchronous mode, students can: 1) perform tests on Googleclassroom, Naurok, Moodle, etc. platforms; 2) perform written work, including dictation, using Skype, Zoom, etc. video tools; 3) participate in oral forms of control (oral narration, recitation of poems and prose texts, presentation and defense of projects, etc.) using video tools like Skype, Zoom individually or in groups; 4) participate in online seminars and online forums using video tools Skype, Zoom or in chats, on distance learning platforms (for example, Moodle) or in closed Facebook groups, etc.; 5) perform other tasks suggested by the teacher.

Asynchronous mode assumes that students can: 1) perform tasks on one of the platforms (Googleclassroom, Naurok, Moodle, etc.); 2) perform written works in text editors (Word, etc.) or in notebooks and then send files with completed tasks to the teacher by e-mail, in one of the messengers (Viber, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.) or by other means of mail communication (in the absence of technical means of education or access to the Internet); 3) write dictations using audio or video recordings created and sent by the teacher; 4) make a video or record audio of your oral answers and send the files to the teacher via electronic means; 5) perform other tasks suggested by the teacher.

At the same time, synchronous assessment is considered a more objective tool, although it requires appropriate technical support for the distance educational process with prompt and high-quality feedback, which enables the teacher to apply an individual approach to each student with the possibility of repeating tasks, etc.

The results of the survey, which was conducted by researchers of the Department of Monitoring and Assessment of the Quality of General Secondary Education of the Institute of

Pedagogy of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine in August 2022 where more than 35 thousand teachers of Ukrainian schools took part, showed that only 2.8% of teachers did not carry out current assessment of results of student learning (Fig. 1).

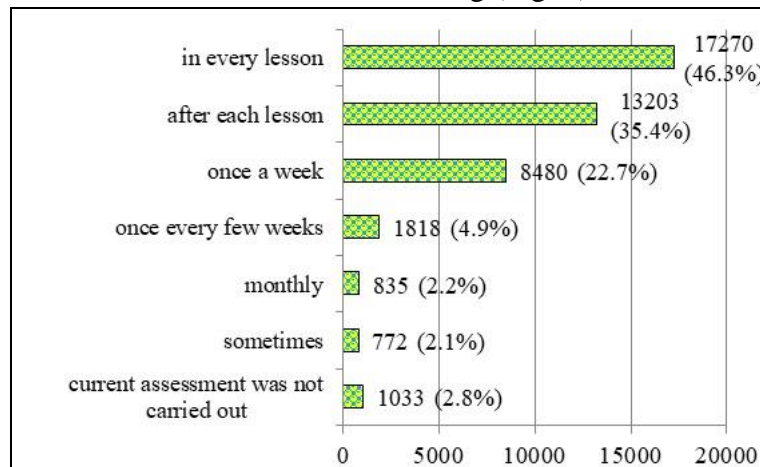


Figura 1. *Distribution of teachers' answers to questions of the questionnaire regarding the periodicity of ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes in distance learning conditions*

At the same time, almost half of the teachers (46.3%) carried out current assessment at each lesson, and more than a third (35.4%) – after each lesson (see Fig. 1).

During the current and thematic assessment, the majority of teachers: communicated online with students (70.8% and 52.9%, respectively), sent tasks and/or tests or photos (scans) of tasks and/or tests to students via Viber and/ or e-mail, and the student sent a photo of the completed work in response (51.2% and 50.4%, respectively), students were sent links to tasks and/or tests created by other teachers, scientists, etc. and posted on the educational online platform, and the students completed them within the allotted time (47.3% and 43.5%, respectively), independently created tasks, including tests, and posted them on the online educational platform, and the students completed them within of the allotted time (46.0% and 44.7%, respectively).

The majority of teachers independently created tasks for current (67.9%) and thematic (67.7%) assessment, in particular, tests by 52.0% and 54.4% of teachers, respectively. Also, more than 50% of teachers widely used tasks and tests posted on educational online platforms. Tasks and tests from the textbook were used by almost 50% of teachers (for current assessment) and only a third (for thematic assessment).

The most popular means of communication for organizing the current and thematic assessment turned out to be Viber (72.7% and 65.9%, respectively), Google Classroom (46.1% and 43.9%, respectively), Naurok (52.9% and 44.8%, respectively), ZOOM (46.7% and 40.5%, respectively), GoogleMeet (45.5% and 40.0% respectively), Vseosvita (40.9% and 33.6%, respectively).

Note that during the introduction of distance learning in the educational process, the asynchronous mode of assessment prevailed (in particular, with the help of Viber). As a rule, teachers sent students tasks and tests, or their photos (scans), which students completed and returned in the form of photos of the completed work. In 2022, the synchronous assessment mode via ZOOM, GoogleMeet, etc. began to be used more widely.

The study showed that the main difficulties faced by teachers while organizing the assessment of students' learning results in distance learning conditions are: absence of high-speed Internet

(69.3%); absence or imperfection of technical equipment (62.6%); insufficient level of skills both the teacher and the students to use digital technology (16.6%) (Fig. 2).

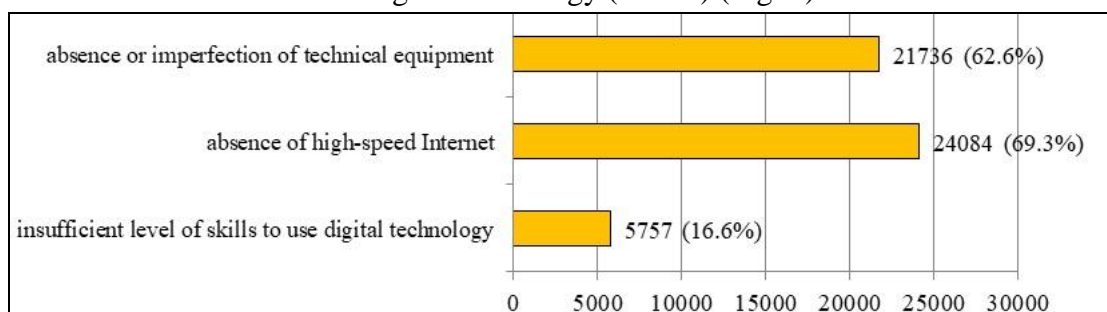


Figure 2. Distribution of teachers' answers to questions of the questionnaire regarding the main difficulties in the organization of assessment of distance learning results

The vast majority of teachers used a stationary computer or laptop (91.0%), and 68.1% also used a mobile phone to organize the assessment of students' learning results in distance learning conditions.

The results of our study actualized the problem of decreasing the level of educational achievements of students in the conditions of distance learning. The negative dynamics (compared to traditional education in general) were confirmed by 77% of the interviewed teachers (Fig. 3). On the other hand, 56% noted its strengthening in martial law conditions (compared to distance learning during quarantine restrictions) (see Fig. 3).

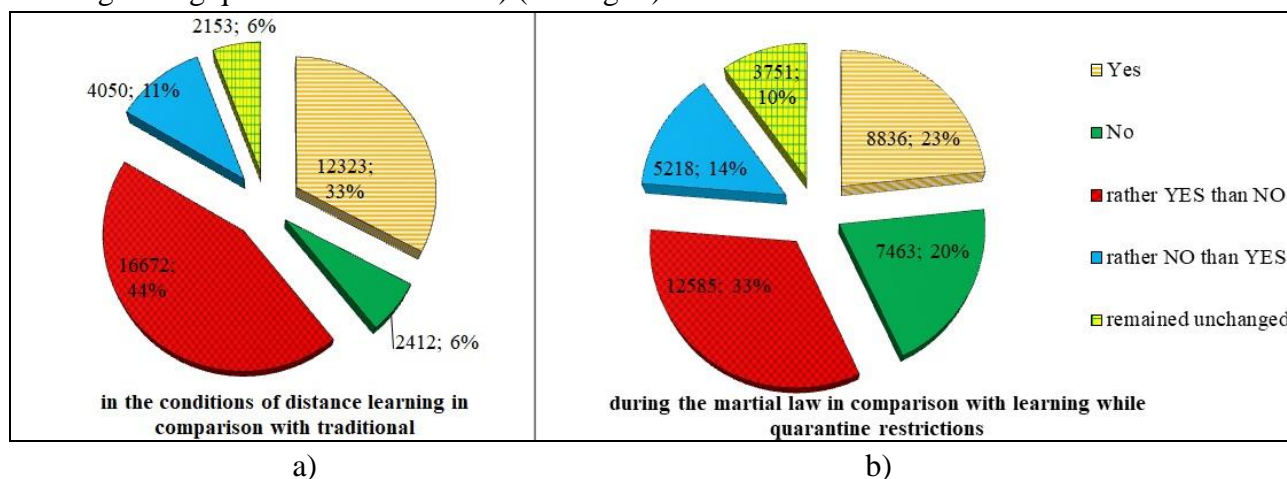


Figure 3. The distribution of teachers' answers to the questions of the questionnaire, whether, in their opinion, the level of educational achievements of students has changed in the conditions of distance learning in comparison with traditional (a) and during martial law in comparison with distance learning during quarantine restrictions (b)

According to teachers, almost 80% of students were helped by their parents or relatives during distance learning. Therefore, most teachers believe that distance learning grades are overestimated.

It was the decrease in the level of educational achievements of students that became one of the factors that initiated the transfer of educational institutions (taking into account safety conditions) from September 1, 2022 to face-to-face education. Teachers are also recommended to conduct a diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the 2022/2023 academic year in order to identify the level of students' mastery of the educational material for the past academic year and to introduce (if necessary) "corrective training" [1, p. 8].

Therefore, distance learning, which has been implemented over the past three years, has become an extremely important tool in ensuring equal access to quality education. At the same time, we must state that, despite all its advantages, there are significant difficulties, in particular, regarding the assessment of students' learning results, which must be overcome in the near future.

In view of the problems in the organization of distance learning in the conditions of martial law, it is urgent to conduct a nationwide study after its completion, the purpose of which is to find out whether the students have mastered all the material that they should have mastered during the last three years in the conditions of distance learning. This will make it possible to obtain thorough information about the real impact of distance learning on the level of educational achievements of students and to make adequate decisions in order to adapt educational programs, eliminate gaps and adjust the learning results of students.

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