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DISTANCE EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATIONS AND THE CASE OF RUSSIA

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DISTANCE EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATIONS AND THE CASE OF RUSSIA

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ABSTRACT

Distance education implementations are going importance day by day which weren't accepted until recently. Distance education programs being used like in medical education besides social sciences and the attention of the industry. Distance education ensures to reach people who cant use of education facilities is because of reasons like time, place, geography etc. has become working area for all countries.

Russian Federation is trying to adapt to the developments in the world and interest with distance education implementation since 1996. The congress which organized in 1996 in Moscow by UNESCO setted forth that wouldn't be a development in education systems of the world countries without distance education.

Russia is trying to improve technology and methodologies in this area by understanding the importance of distance education.

Keywords: Distance Education, Technology, Russian Federation

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to present the change of distance education implementations in Russia from 1996, the beginning time to the recently. Also, this study aims to identify methodologies and types of use of distance education facilities and call attention to good practices which can be example for Turkey.

This study has qualitative characteristics and realized by examining literature in Turkish, English and Russian languages.

The concept of distance education has been defined firstly detailed by "The Concept of Establishment and Development of Distance Education in Russian Federation" in 31 May 1995. According to this concept, distance education consists from comprehensive education services which are provided by specialist information and training environment. This environment based on transformation of information in distance within the country or abroad by TV, radio, internet, satellite etc. (Memoid.ru).

Distance education consists of the Technologies which provide to students necessary materials and give them possibilities to study. These Technologies supply interactivity with teacher to the students and have a capability to evaluate students skills and recovery which they achieved by distance education (Cherkova, oas.timacad.ru).

Distance education takes shape from the synthesis of classical education understanding and technology based on modern education understanding. This synthesis actualized within a certain period. Examining the historical process of distance education and the effects of this process on Russian Federation will be useful.

THE HISTORICAL PROCESS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AND RUSSIA

The historical process of distance education began with the stenography training activities by Isaac Pitman in 1840. Gustaf Langenscheidt published a book with the name "Teaching Letters" to teach adults foreign language in 1850. Anna Eliot Ticknor improved a system toward female education with the name "Ticknor's Society" in USA in 1873. Illinois State University started the education process by mail in 1874 (ipap.ru). Pennsylvania State College initiated to broadcast over the radio in 1922. Iowa State University counted radio lessons in credit system in 1934. Also, ISU started TV lessons after a period of ten years (bakersguide.com). The Center of Distance Education in France which has been established by government in 1939 became one of the important centers of Europe (Ipap.ru). Open University founded in 1969 in England and affected the Technologies of distance education. Open University has lots of students from different fields like entrepreneurship, art, humanities and engineering sciences and information Technologies etc.

Furthermore, distance education implementations began in Russia with "Literacy Committees" which had been established between 1840-1860. The process of distance education is improved by opening "Sunday Schools" and "Agriculture Schools" in the following years. According to Soviet Encyclopedia, 27,500 Agriculture Schools had been established till 1911. In addition, the institutions like Society for the Advancement of Technical Sciences and Society of Community Colleges etc. used letter method in distance education (Richter and Kourotchkina, 2012).

Communist Party demanded financial support from government for self education and self-development of workers and peasants by manifesto after the October Revolution. Three years later, a government committee for the advancement of self education was founded in 1922 which was responsible for distance education system nationwide. Besides, workers over 16 ages were prepared to higher education by opening Workers Faculties (Rabochie Fakulteti) (Richter and Korotchkina, 2012; Rosen Gardner & Keppel, 1965, p.4).

The concept and techniques of distance education also were used in Russia by Maritime School (1907) and Moscow Public University (1908). The distance education process started to develop from 1917. In these years, there are organized courses in different levels and types. During the Soviet times, a system was developed like "correspondence schools". There were 11 institutes in 1960 working with this system. Similar models started to implement after Second World War in Central and Eastern Europe countries. Also, England started to use similar system in their country (Ipap.ru).

In 1924, some universities especially have been established for workers and peasants. These universities realized broadcast lectures (Science of education, social sciences, engineering, radio Technologies, agricultural sciences) via radio between 20-30 hours.

Students, following lectures from radio, had to go university for exams and graduation process. These universities couldn't catch standards of regular universities and officially weren't accredited to education system (Richter and Kaurotchkina, 2012).

The Moscow State University for Economics, Statistics and Informatics (MESI) has been established in 1932 and began to serve 110.000 distance education students since 2010.

MESI became one of the important institutions in distance education sphere in Russia. Furthermore, still continues joint distance education programs with Italy, France and Netherlands within the framework of memberships like European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) and European Foundation for Quality in E-Learning (Richter and Kourotkina, 2012).

Russian Federation gave a permission to Open University to open a branch Office in Russia in 1992 (Kariera.idi.ru).

The road map for distance education in Russia was defined by "The Federal Program for the Advancement of Education Concept" in 1995 (de.unicor.ru).

Russian Ministry of Education allowed to distance education implementations by a regulation (Code 1050) in 1997 (Kariera.idr.ru).

Russian Government encourages using e-Learning, information and communication Technologies in universities and schools. With this reason, government began a new program named "The Federal Program for the Advancement of Education 2011-2015.

This program aims to give teachers capability of using information and communication Technologies effectively and efficiently in classes. Consequently, Federal Center for Educational Resources have been established which has approximately 100.000 electronic resources (Richter and Kourotchina, 2012). The rates of internet using of Russia increases hope of that distance education implementations will be successful.

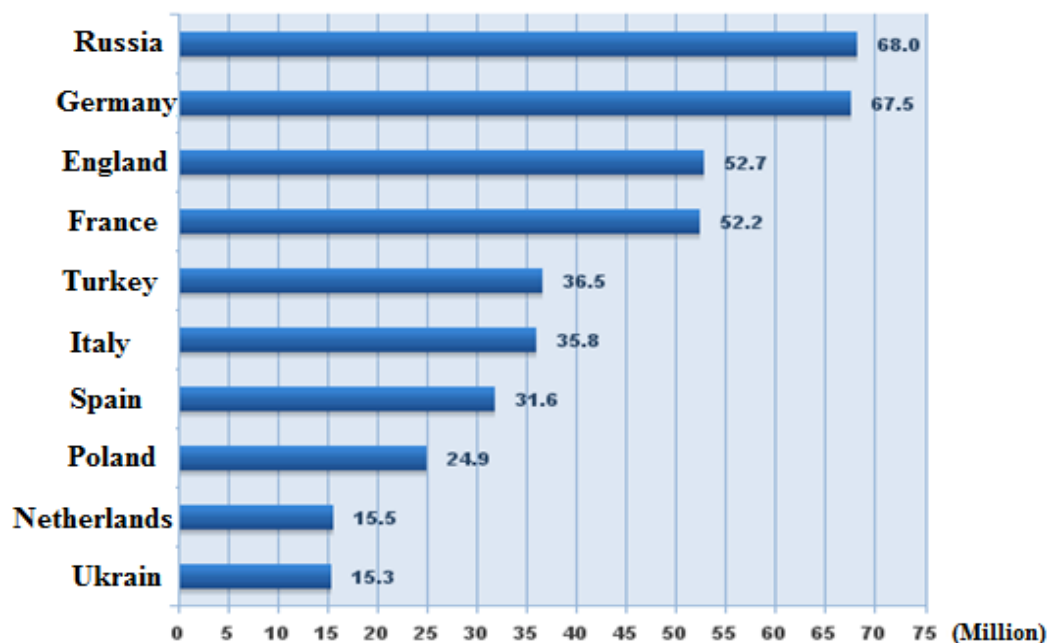


Figure 1.
10 Countries according to using internet in Europe
 Source: Internet World Stats, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats4.htm#europe>

According to the data for the year 2012, distance education Technologies very attractive for usage for Russia by being the country which has the most internet users in Europe.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN RUSSIA

The Federal Program for the Advancement of Education in Russia which published in 1995 determined the characteristics of distance education these characteristics of distance education.

These characteristics are depth, modularity, economical effectiveness, the new role of teacher, control of the quality by education experts, usage of specialized tools and Technologies, the type of presenting the knowledge to students and the tools of distance education.

All these elements can be explained as follows (de.unicor.ru):

- **Depth:** Participants of distance education don't attend to lectures regularly. They follow lessons in available time, place and frequency. During the registration of students nothing be requested as a qualification from them. Every student can follow courses as much as they want.
- **Modularity:** There is a modularity principle at the base of distance education. Every course can be about different fields. Where by, each course can be head for different person or group.
- **Economical effectiveness:** According to average values of the world education program, DE is fifty percent cheaper then classical education understanding. Being cheaper, helps to focus on DE sphere.
- **The new role of teacher:** Teacher have new roles in distance education process like coordination in education process verification of given lessons, consulting during the preparation of individual education plan, directorate during realizing educational projects etc. Teacher should help students to recognize themselves as a Professional.
- **Control of quality by education experts:** As a used control methods in distance education, there are exams from distance, interviews, lesson and Project works, and exam systems based on computer. It will be more useful, if government control distance education process by central examination.
- **Usage of specialized tools and techniques in education:** Distance education Technologies consist of methodology, types and tools which help to students learn by themselves, to be in the interaction and to control of learning necessary defined knowledge.
- **The type of presenting the knowledge:** Published materials, electronic materials (tools for education by computer, data, e-books etc.), voice records (audio), video productions and TV programs are some examples from the type of presenting in distance education implementations.
- **Elements for transferring knowledge:** Books, discs, cassettes for voice and video.
- **The tools of distance education:** Computer, television, telephone, tape-recorder, tools for video recording, and special media Technologies are example for distance education tools.

In addition to these characteristics, some features also expected to be in distance education like access, trust, comprehensiveness, expansion practicality, adaptability, control, activeness, existence of tools for content preparation, Support for SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model) and fitness for usage (Fedorova, oodle.herzen.spb.ru).

DISTANCE EDUCATION INTEREST AREA IN RUSSIA

Distance education, is a helping element to solve problems which are Russia faced is because of hard climate and geography circumstances. Attractiveness of distance education increasing by reasons like there is a less cost and condition needed for expansion of distance education nation-wide (nytimes.com). Distance education in Russia aims to reach in general the following mass (de.unicor.ru):

- The youth people which has no possibilities to use classical education system, geographically far from the university or have to choose work instead of education,
- Officers and their families in Armed Forces,
- Soldiers and officers working for Ministry of the Interior,
- Specialists which work for military industry,
- Heads of regional management organs,
- People, living in far regions of the country,
- People, who have no chance to use usual education process is because of their work,
- People, who can't use usual education possibilities, is because of health problems,
- Company managers, working in different departments,
- People, sentenced to live in prison,
- People, living in Russian speaker's countries or countries where Russians live,
- People, who live in Commonwealth of Independent States.

Besides, this person or groups, Russian Federation guides people to distance education Technologies and institutions by closing the present educational institutions is because of problems depend on budget, buildings, staff and number of student in school. They decided to use distance education Technologies in 43 management areas (rayon) from 11 districts (oblast). As a reason for this decision were explained arguments like budget saving and number of students so low in these regions (newizv.ru). By this decision planned that approximately 15.000 students will use distance education (vmdaily.ru).

Furthermore, lots of Russian companies use distance education services like Uralsib, Vypelkom, MPS, Sibneft, Severstal, Norilskiy Nikel, Sberbank, AvtoVaz etc. These companies became the pioneers in distance education area after Soviet Period in Russia (memoid.ru). Also, Russian Railways, State Duma and Central Bank of Russia is the public institutions which interested in distance education (Smirnova, 2011). Likewise, Russian Higher Education institutions work on distance education sphere. There were 128.000 distance education students between 1940-1941 then this number escalated to 2.500.000 in 2009-2010. The change between the numbers of distance education students in higher education showed in following figure like this:

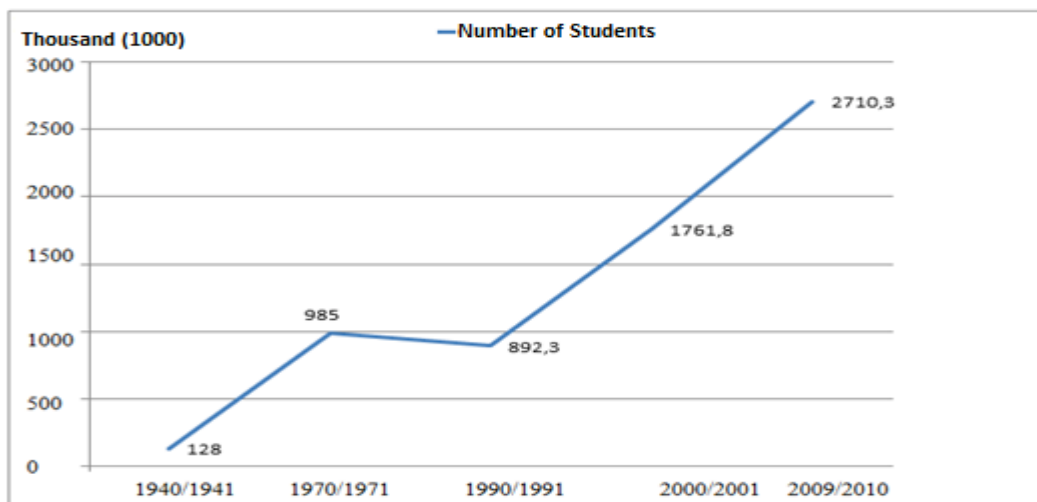


Figure 2.

Students registered for distance education program in Russian Higher Education

Source: Smirnova, I., Distance Learning in Russia: Lessons Learned and Questions Raised, <https://edutechdebate.org/open-and-distance-learning/distance-learning-in-russia-lessons-learned-and-questions-raised>, 2012.

DISTANCE EDUCATION TECHNOLOGIES USED IN RUSSIA

Distance Education Institutions in Russia use programs in different characteristics. Some of these programs can be signified as follows: Dotsent (ДОЦЕНТ), Blackboard, Learning Space 5.0 (Lotus/IBM), WEBCT, OROKS, Prometey (Прометей), eLearning Server 3000, WebTutor, RedClass, Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment), Sakai, Learn eXact, Stellus, Competentum ShareKnowledge, Oracle, IBM Lotus Workplace Collaborativ Learning (LWCL), Naumen Learning, LMS eLearning Server, ATutor, Caroline, Dokeos, LAMS, OLAT, OpenACS etc. (Fedorova, moodle.herzen.spb.ru; Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru).

IBM Lotus Workplace Collaborative Learning (LWCL)

IBM Lotus Workplace Collaborative Learning (LWCL) is a universal system which helps to manage classical and electronically education by being reliable and largescale. This system can be used in companies and educational institutions. LWCL, based on J2EE (Java Enterprise Edition) technology.

Herewith, the installation of this program can be made in different platforms. Furthermore, having WebSphere server helps to be reliable and to perform large-scale performance. LWCL supports standards like Sherable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM), Aviation Industry CBT Committee (AICC) etc. (Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru).

The program has possibilities like managing to Access for users in different groups; formation of lesson programs and manage; definition of education time; preparations of education materials, sending and managing, providing atmosphere of discuss and sending message; organizing education process for personnel who works from distant etc. Russian Institutions use this program (Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru).

Oracle Learning Management (OLM)

Oracle Learning Management is one of the programs which used for large-scale distance education implementations. OLM has a structure including classical and online educational types.

This program provides infrastructure for needed Technologies of planning lessons, preparation and presentation. Russian higher education institutions don't prefer this program (Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru).

OLM has ability to gather students and teachers. Also, provides possibilities to people improve themselves on internet; measure affects of given lectures; collecting data about education and supply an atmosphere for studying and learning together. OLM helps to cut expenses for education %35 and time for education %25 (r-style.com).

Web Tutor

Web Tutor is one of the distance education systems. This program provides possibilities like forming lessons, making practice; testing, leading users, opening forums, uploading and protecting the data etc.

Russian universities like Financial University under the Government of Russian Federation use this program (Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru).

Web Tutor has features like teamwork, definition of class time, forming texts, preparation for mixed education program, give lessons in virtual classes in real time (websoft.ru).

Prometey

Prometey is one of the chosen programs in distance education area and has a modular structure the system has features like definition participant students, limiting to access for data, consulting services etc. Lots of Russian universities use Prometey like Moscow State University for Economics, Statistics and Informatics (MESI), Bauman Moscow State Technical University, Omsk State Technical University, Moscow Aviation Institute (MAI) etc. in distance education process (Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru).

Also, this system used in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Commonwealth of Independent States (prometeus.ru).

Nauman Learning

Nauman Learning program is one of the distance education systems in Russia. This system helps in higher education institutions, consulting companies, and several different institutions for distance education services.

Nauman Learning is very easy to use in every location and provides possibility like personalizing education programs, web communication services, and giving lectures for multiple groups. Lots of Russian faculties and institutes prefer this program in distance education activities (Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru).

Dotsent

Dotsent is developed by Uniar Company and provides to realize individual exams and tests to work like a virtual educational center by functions as teachers and audience. Dotsent program helps in distance education by providing services like preparing educational process, it's realizing and examination. Russian Chemical Technology University, Moscow Institute of Engineering Physics, University of Ivanovskiy Chemical Technology and several universities are using this program (Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru).

LMS eLearning Server

LMS program supports credit system and convenient for Bologna Process. This program was advised by Russian Ministry of Education and Science. Besides, Distance Education Council of Ukraine certified LMS eLearning Server. Also, defined as the best program for higher education institutions and took following awards: "Best academic eLearning implementation" and "Russian eLearning Award". Approximately 32 higher education institutions use this program including the most prestigious institution "Moscow State Institute of International Relations" (MGIMO) (Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru). LMS comes forward with features like delay reduction, increasing the number of participants, motivation of personel and increasing level of being ready for institutional change (hypermethod.ru).

Red Class

Red Class provides services to Russian State University of Petrol and Gas, and several Russian higher education institutions. Red Class has test systems, virtual labs, rich multimedia resources, and other several distance education possibilities. Also, certified by distance education standards SCORM 1.2 (Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru).

Competentum Magister

Competentum Magister has a suitable structure for other information systems. Russian Ministry of Education and Science, National Foundation of Russian Education, Russian International Management Institute etc. include this program to their implementations (Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru).

Learn eXact

Learn eXact is developed by Italian Giunti Interactive Labs for institutions working in distance education area. **Learn eXact** includes lots of education possibilities plus offline education.

Besides, program has a partner which is the one of the best examples of distance education implementations in Russia: MESI (Zhuchkov and others, edu.of.ru).

In addition to the distance education programs which are mentioned before, there are another programs like ATutor, Claroline, Dokeos, LAMs, Moodle, OLAT, OpenACS, Sakai etc. UNESCO and information and communication companies make big contribution in development of distance education implementations. This institutions help to distance education institutions more than 55. This program gave trainings more than 6000 students and arranged competitions for students in 2008. Lots of companies like SAP, 1C, Intel, MFTI (Mikto protsessornie tehnologii) and IBM Academic Initiative work on adoption and usage of information and communication Technologies (Malinin, federalbook.ru).

Besides these distance education systems, there are other distance education techniques as following (Cherkova, oas.timacad.ru):

Technology	Usage in distance education technologies	Extent of technology	Large-Scale Application Challenge and Cost
E-mail	Yes	Common	Low
Teleconference via e-mail	Yes	Common	Low
Mail Server	Yes	Common	Low
Teleconference during the work	No	Low	Modarate
Electronical Library	Just catalogues	Low	High
Access to data by e-mail	Yes	Special examples	Low
Access to data during the work	Yes	Special examples	Modarate
Voice mail	No	Not exist	Modarate
Video Cassetts	Yes	Modarate	Modarate
E-books	Yes	Common	Modarate
Laser Discs	No	Low	High
Lessons via TV	Yes	Special examples	Modarate
TV Video conferences	Yes	Special examples	Modarate

CONCLUSION

As a result, the investment made by Russia in distance education Technologies helps to end up missing in education sphere. Russia increased the success of distance education process by cooperating with institutions like Microsoft and UNESCO before and after the distance education implementations. Microsoft allocated budget 5 million dollars for education expenses for 2010-2013 years. Russia plans to provide education possibilities to 1 million Russian citizens with this budget (memoid.ru).

Candidate students should be trained about computer literacy issue before the distance education process. Also, trainers and teachers have to be ready for distance education and information and communication technologies. Besides, there is a necessary situation like empowering the infrastructure of internet, TV, radio and satellite technologies for working of distance education technologies right.

Implementations of distance education can give useful results in geographical regions which haven't enough like students, schools and teachers. This process will keep people from negative effects of circumstances of geography and climate.

There will be a possibility take lessons from different education institutions of the world, and knowledge will be globalized thanks to distance education. Our universities should cooperate with Russian higher education institutions in the cycle of double diploma, language training, etc. in the distance education process. Distance education implementations needs to some correction of infrastructure of information and communication, satellite technologies, laws and pedagogical concept. Successful distance education depends on it.

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