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ACTIVE DISTANCE LEARNING FOR TUTORS

Abstract. The COVID-19 pandemic made the most of universities' teaching staff involved in emergency distance learning. Yet, about 80% of the staff was unfamiliar with the distance technologies, especially with the process of distance learning. The previous experience of preparing teachers to distance learning has revealed the presence of significant psychological barriers to synchronous and asynchronous communication. At the same time, the system of refresher training almost does not help due to the excessive workload of teachers. The paper offers an option for training tutors, in which the university teachers are provided with access to general-purpose distance courses created by experts. Teachers register in the distance course "Practicum of the Tutor" where they master the theories and technologies of distance learning and gain practical skills during conducting classes with their students, who are registered in the above mentioned courses. Such training resembles the on-the-job training, which is very popular in Western countries. The "Practicum of the Tutor" course was delivered to 74 teachers. 11 teachers have successfully completed the course, among them 7 teachers have involved 132 students in expert-made distance courses. The research demonstrated the effectiveness of training tutors on the basis of high-quality expert-made distance courses with the participation of their developers and the simultaneous conduction of the learning process with students. The experience of on-the-job training is used to support teachers in the course "Practice of blended learning" during the semester. The results of the

student survey were discussed at a Round table at the Institute. The attention of teachers who develop and work with distance courses was focused on the problems indicated in the questionnaire, and the ways to further improve the educational web resources of the Institute were developed.

Keywords: open online course; distance course; personal learning environment; ADDIE; blended learning; tutor

Introduction. Given the COVID-19 pandemic caused by viralSARS-COV2 disease and the introduction of quarantine restrictions, the system of training faced new challenges related to the continuity of the educational process, the ability of higher educational establishments (HES) to ensure quality and sustainability of training in quarantine restrictions, and the necessity to develop the distance form of training. In order to adapt to a long-term pandemic, HES need flexible and reliable training models, which will allow them to continuously adapt to various conditions.

COVID-19 has accelerated and intensified the long-term pedagogical trends by creating a natural experiment in which numerous innovations are tested and evaluated (Bakhov, 2021; Koehler, 2021). The first evidence suggests that many of the innovations used during the pandemic will be useful for training after the crisis, as well.

The relevance of the study is grounded by the need to improve the system of training with respect to the possible negative impact of various external factors (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), as well as by the constant development of pedagogical technologies.

Distance form of education is a personalized process of education, which occurs mainly through the indirect interaction of distant participants in the learning process occurring in a specialized environment that operates on the basis of modern psychological, pedagogical, information and communication technologies (ICT).

Distance learning is known to consist of two components: a distance course that is to be created and a distance learning process that is organized by a teacher. The success of the educational process depends on the both components and on the qualification of the teacher as a tutor.

The main number of scientific publications on the training of tutors of foreign teachers were published before 2015 (Fitzmaurice, 2016), for Ukraine, these issues were considered in the work (Kukharenko, 2019). Until 2020, training of tutors took place in open distance courses, where participants had high pedagogical training and motivation. From the beginning of the covid period, all teachers with different levels of pedagogical skill and motivation were involved in distance learning. It has become more difficult to train tutors. We need new methods of training tutors who can conduct the educational process on distance courses created by other authors.

At the first stage of distance learning implementation in Ukraine the main attention was paid to the first component that is the development of a distance course. Over the past five years, 1,400 teachers from different schools of Ukraine have been registered in the open distance course "Technology of distance course development". Among them, 500 teachers have studied, and 200 have successfully completed the course. The experience of this course has shown that the period of relaxation of successful teachers (200) coincides with the duration of training in the course, while the other teachers consider the creation of the course just as mastery of technology.

To accelerate the development of the distance course, the content of an incomplete course (a course-resource) was specified, which allows conducting the distance learning process by an experienced teacher. The open four-week distance course "Fundamentals of distance learning" attracted attention of 1600 teachers of various educational establishments of Ukraine during the quarantine, among which 65 teachers successfully completed it that is mastered the technique of creating courses.

A tutor can be trained through practice on the ground of their personal distance course, while just theoretical training is ineffective. Hence, exactly this practical approach was used in the open distance course "Practicum of the Tutor". It was not as popular as the distance course for developers: over the last five years, 210 teachers from educational establishments of Ukraine have registered there, while just 24 teachers have successfully completed it. Importantly, most of the latter teachers already had their own distance course, and only few teachers managed to create a course from scratch and gain tutor skills. The pedagogical experience of traditional learning and the complete lack of understanding of the distance learning process created chaos in the emergency distance learning process in 2020-2021. First of all, the reasons were the lack of crisis management and unsystematic use of various tools to create a planless learning process.

During the quarantine, a large number of teachers joined the use of distance learning, who need to be helped to master these new technologies for them. Here are some statistics regarding changes in e-learning in schools and higher education (Moran, 2024).

– 64% of middle school students use digital learning tools every day.
– 43% of students find e-learning tools extremely useful for studying and completing homework.
– 81% of students reported that e-learning tools helped them improve their grades.
– About 50% of students participated in some form of e-learning in the past year.
– The retention rate of students on e-learning courses is 35-60%.
– Online courses are much less likely to drop out than face-to-face. In full-time courses, the student retention rate is about 10%. The average rate of retention in e-learning courses is almost 3 times higher.
– 46% of students reported that they would like to take some or all of their coursework online after the pandemic.
– 33% of higher education institutions indicate that they will continue to offer their courses partially or fully online after the pandemic.
– 22% of graduates take exclusively online courses.
– 41% of students reported that their e-learning courses were better than their in-person classes.

These statistics show significant changes in global education, which require corresponding changes: strategies, concepts (how to quickly create distance courses and speed up the educational process), teaching methods and techniques, information technologies (edtech).

Scaling learning becomes important. In the past, a performance scaling model has been used that has contributed to the growth and success of large institutions around the world corporations, governments, universities, non-governmental organizations, etc. (Hagel, 2019). This model focuses on how to perform complex tasks very efficiently and reliably at scale. The way to achieve this was to strictly define and strictly standardize all tasks. In a stable world, this has yielded significant efficiencies.

In a changing world, the ability to learn faster at scale will increasingly determine success.

The learning scaling model works in the form of creating new knowledge, in the conditions of new situations, using original approaches to create value. This form of learning requires the adoption of new practices in work groups to accelerate learning.

It should be noted that in the process of training reserve officers, the formation of soft skills is important. Soft skills should be developed over the course of the curriculum (in fact, a lifetime), not in one course (Bates, 2018).

The presented paper describes the search for ways out of the current situation. During the quarantine, seven distance courses were created for the general training of reserve officers and a group of teachers was invited to undergo practical tutor training for their students.

Research Hypothesis. Tutors are trained on the basis of high-quality expert-made general purpose distance courses. The courses were created by skilled developers and have passed certification. Theoretical and practical skills of tutors are gained in the open distance course "Practicum of the Tutor", which was accompanied by developers of the expert-made courses. In parallel with performing the activities planned in the Workshop preparation for the distance learning process, the tutors register their students in the expert-made courses and teach them there benefiting from the support of developers. Such training resembles the on-the-job training (Watson, 2018), which is very popular in Western countries.

As a result:

1. The developers of courses will receive the skills of maintenance and support of distance courses, will define ways of modernization of the courses.

2. The authors of the "Practicum of the Tutor" will gain the experience of training teachers with minimal ICT skills for tutoring, will be able to determine the topics of micro-lessons for on-the-job training.

3. The tutors will gain the skills of conducting distance learning process and understand the issues of introducing the elements of distance learning in blended learning.

Active method of integrated training of tutors (MITT). Each distance course created according to the standard of an educational institution is a proprietary product and has features that make it difficult for other teachers to use it without some changes. But such changes can worsen the quality of the course. Therefore, communication between the course developer and the tutor is required.

The method is used to prepare teachers who do not have experience in the distance learning process to teach a course created by another teacher

Purpose: to prepare the tutor to conduct a distance learning process using a course developed by another teacher while simultaneously teaching students with the support of the course developer.

Participants in the process: the tutor of the distance course for future tutors, a group of teachers who acquire tutor skills, developers of distance courses, groups of students

Organization of the educational process: in accordance with the tutor training program, course participants learn the theory and methods of distance learning, familiarize themselves with educational courses and enroll students in these courses and begin their educational process (Fig. 1). All this corresponds to the methodology of training at the workplace. On-the-job training (OPL) is a method of training employees through observation and performance of daily work tasks (Colman, 2022).
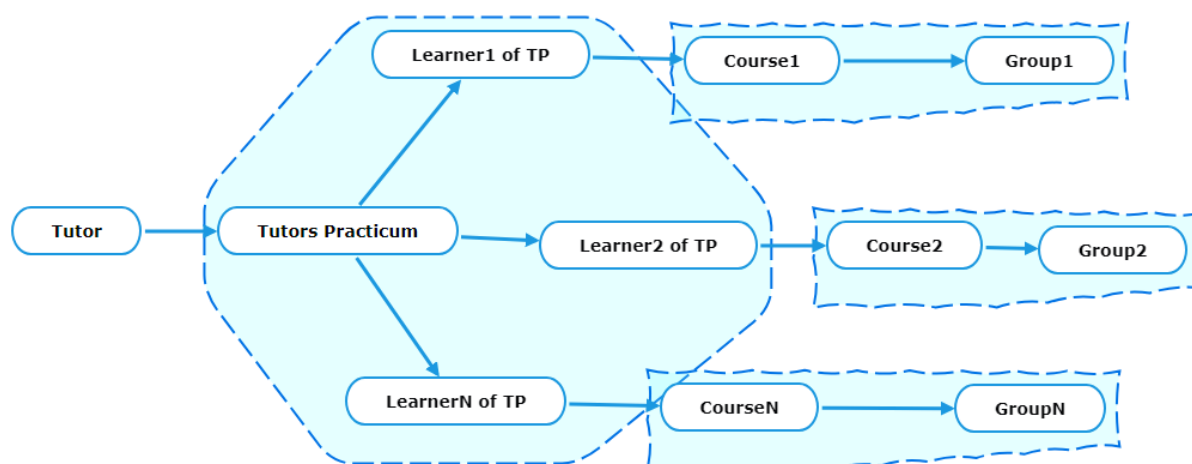

Fig. 1. Organization of the educational process

Course developers observe the educational process and, if necessary, consult teachers, they play the role of facilitators (mentors) (Liu, 2019). A feature of all courses is the availability of weekly question-and-answer forums and reflection questionnaires (Coulson, 2013; Chang, 2019), which all teachers have the opportunity to control.

As a result, developers of distance courses have the opportunity to improve their course, teachers-tutors will get the skills of distance learning process and administration of LMS Moodle.

Distance Course for Tutors. For the first time, the distance course "Practicum of the Tutor" was held in 2003 to prepare tutors for the Regional Institutes of National Academy for Public Administration under the President of Ukraine.

In 2010-2011, the Institute of Information Technologies and Teaching Aids of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine as the main organizer, the Problem Laboratory of Distance Learning of the National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute" and the Laboratory of Information and Communication Technologies of Vinnytsia Gymnasium #17 under the patronage of the Ministry of Education and Science initiated an experiment in distance learning for secondary school, which planned the training of teachers for distance learning. Teachers from Vinnytsia, Kharkiv, Kyiv and other cities created four-week distance courses and conducted distance learning with schoolboys and schoolgirls.

At the main stage of the experiment, the six-week distance course "Practicum of the Tutor" was conducted, which was studied by 26 teachers. Among them, 16 teachers completed it and created an own distance course. There were cooperation and creative atmosphere in the Workshop, the availability of the created courses to the students provoked discussions in the forum.

The analysis of the conducted distance courses shows that it is difficult for teachers to create their own distance courses. The most appropriate way therefore is creating public open distance courses by leading experts, into which the teachers would involve their students. In such courses it is obligatory to have the feedback from the teachers to obtain information about students' activity.

Formulation of the problem. At present, Research Laboratory of the Military Institute of Armored Forces of NTU "KhPI" together with a group of leading teachers of Ukrainian universities have developed distance courses in basic disciplines for the training of reserve officers: distance courses "Statutes of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and Foot drill" (SAFU), "Small arms and Fire training" (SAFT), "Military topography" (MT), "Tactical medicine" (TM), "Methods of dealing with personnel" (MDP), "Military history of Ukraine" (MHU), "Fundamentals of political and legal knowledge" (FPLK). The characteristics of these courses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Characteristics of the expert-made distance courses.

Discipline	Forums	Pages	Files	Hyperlinks	Books	Glossary	Lessons	Tasks	Tests	Questions
MDP	13	1	9	0	2	1	9	21	10	94
SAFT	13	3	0	0	2	1	35	0	12	499
FPLK	4	6	1	1	1	1	5	5	5	149
TM	4	5	7	0	1	1	10	7	5	42
SAFU	14	2	5	2	4	1	26	4	11	120
MHU	3	9	4	2	2	1	1	4	4	0
MT	12	3	8	0	3	1	11	2	11	204

The preparation of teachers for the distance learning process in the "Practicum of the Tutor" included acquaintance with the theoretical issues of distance learning and gaining skills of creating a course and organization of the learning process. Teachers had to perform the following tasks:

- analyze the distance course;
- create a memory map for the course;
- review literature sources;
- complete the syllabus for the distance course;
- create a plan of student activities in the course;
- create a rating system for assessing students' activity;
- develop instructions to the course for students;
- gain skills in registering students in the course;
- finalize the presentation of the course;
- finalize the content of the course;
- improve the ways of asking questions;
- improve the test tasks and divide them into categories by topics and complexity;
- develop the author's group task;
- develop a micro-lesson in the course;
- organize students' reflection during the studies;
- create a DIIGO account for making online bookmarks and comments in the text.

Participants of the learning process. There were 74 teachers of military universities and departments of military training of reserve officers who registered in the course "Practicum of the Tutor". 30 teachers signed up for expert-made distance courses for training of reserve officers. During the first two weeks, some teachers left the course (1st week – 15 teachers, 2nd week – 10 teachers). 27 teachers were present in the course for all 7 weeks.

33 listeners of the course completed the task and get at least one grade. 10 listeners have done only single task (the participation in an acquaintance forum).

Teachers, who chose expert-made distance courses, registered 7 groups in these courses, most of the students were enrolled in several ones. In total, 132 students were registered and started study in 7 distance courses under the guidance of the teachers, who were already trained on the workshop.

During training in the "Practice of the Tutor" course, teachers were asked to conduct pilot training of students in the courses with which they worked. In addition, all teachers who created distance courses were registered in the "Practice of the Tutor" course and had the task of providing consultations

Results of Training.

Results of teacher's work. In order to allow completing the tasks of the Workshop, webinars were held for teachers every Monday, which provided an overview of the theoretical material, instructions for the tasks, analysis of the tasks performed last week. There were 11 teachers who completed all the tasks, the corresponding data is presented in Table 2. To determine the duration of the work in the Workshop, the statistics of attendance were analyzed.

In addition, teachers gained skills of participation in the "seminar" course element, where they assessed the current tasks of their colleagues. At the end of the Workhop, they evaluated the completed projects through this element.

Based on the results of the training, 6 tutors have been trained for distance learning with expert-made courses. 5 more teachers have acquired tutor skills for teaching the disciplines using the self-created distance courses.

Table 2.
Results of teacher's work.

Name	Grade	Course name	Work in the course, hours	Work out of the course, hours	Total, hours
S. Serhiy	85,7	SAFT	24.05	55.5	74.55
K. Oleksiy	85,0	SAFU	24.8	46.5	71.3
P. Vasyl	80,3	MDP	29	34.5	63.5
S. Oleksandr	80,2	MT	27.68	42.5	70.18
Sh. Vladyslav	80,0	Tactics	16.65	65.5	81.15
T. Mykola	79,6	OC1	34.9	69.5	104.4
P. Lidiya	79,4	OC2	39	65	104
F. Vitaliy	68,6	OC3	16.25	26	42.25
K. Oleksandr	66,3	OC4	21.1	74.5	95.6
R. Ihor	64,3	TM, SAFU	19,4	53,2	72,6
D. Andriy	63,7	SAFU	17.8	47,6	65,4

All the tasks of the Workshop were done at a high level. The maximum number of points on a 100-point scale for completed tasks is 85.7

At the end, teachers responded to a reflection questionnaire (Chang, 2019). Some answers are given below.

1. Describe your goal in this course and what confirms that you have achieved it.
"My goal was to significantly improve the course of the Statutes. But I have not succeeded much. Yet I learned and understood a lot. I also understand that this is not a short way."

2. Which practical tasks were too difficult? Why?
"Practical tasks were difficult, but there is some growth in overcoming difficulties."

3. Which practical tasks were too easy and can be excluded from the course?
"I did not see any easy tasks. Everything is necessary and helps to achieve a normal end result. "

4. Your overall impression of the course.
"At first, the course was unclear. But in the end I felt its necessity and benefit for the teacher. The course gives you the opportunity to overcome your inertia and make a step forward. In general, I am delighted with the course."

5. Evaluate the course.
the course is average – 64%
the course is difficult and requires prior training – 36%

6. How much time each week did you spend working in the course?
Spent about 8 hours.
This estimate correlates with that given in Table 2.
Assessment of courses by listeners on a 10-point scale

- Theoretical material – 7.8
- Practical material – 8.2
- The work of the tutor – 8.6
- Would you recommend this course to your colleagues? – 9.4

Organization and analysis of results of pilot students' learning. The observed activity of students is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Distribution of students and tutors in courses.

Name of distance course	Students	Tutors	Active students
TM	60	8	13
MHU	28	5	20
OC5	47	3	28
MT	52	9	19
SAFU	64	4	26
MDP	57	5	26
SAFT	37	13	6
Total:	345	34	132

During the learning, students performed various activities: studied the recommended literature, took lessons, participated in webinars, discussed unclear issues in chats and forums, performed practical activities, solved test tasks about the passed material.

One of the activities in the courses was reflection tasks, in which students could share their thoughts and express their wishes about the quality and content of distance courses (Coulson, 2013). At the end of the learning, students were asked to answer the questions of a preliminary prepared anonymous survey about the problems, questions, and wishes that arose during the learning.

The survey of students in the courses of FPLK and MDP gives the following examples of feedback:

"There is very little factual data and definitions in the theoretical material, in comparison with more abstract opinions and conclusions to them. If these two things are balanced, the reader will, in my opinion, be more attentive and interested in the material provided."

The students liked:
- Learning the scientific basis of methods that have previously been used intuitively.
- Instruction with the active members of guard.
- Search for non-traditional methods of pedagogical work.

At the same time, students were not interested in a similar task in the forum of the SAFU course.

Summarized questionnaire results were as follows.

1. Did you have any troubles with using Institute's Moodle platform?

No – 64%

Yes – 36%

2. In your opinion, what is the best way to deliver theoretical material in distance learning?

Text – 67%

Video – 22%

Text and webinar for discussion – 9%

Webinar – 1%

3. Were the weekly tests useful?

Yes – 79%

No – 21%

4. Have you maintained the contact with your colleagues during learning?

Yes – 95%

No – 5%

5. Have you maintained the persistent contact with your tutor?

Yes – 38%

No – 15%

Sometimes – 47%

6. Which means have you used for communication with teacher and colleagues during learning?

Telegram – 74%

Viber – 8%

communication in course – 4%

tutor's e-mail – 2%

forums – 1%

Moodle chats – 1%

Skype – 1%

other – 7%

7. In which distance courses it was inconvenient for you to study, and why?

Convenient in all – 69%

MT – 17%

SAFU – 8%

SAFT – 3%

MHU – 1%

TM – 1%

The main reasons were: complex material, not all issues covered in the course, lack of practice (topography), large amount of material (statutes, topography), inability to repeat the lesson (most courses), complex tests, the problem of displaying course materials on mobile devices.

8. Which benefits do you recognize in distance learning?

Saving the time and costs on commuting – 39%

Ability to independently choose the learning schedule and the order of learning the materials – 21%

Convenience of usage and portability, accessibility 24/7 – 20%

Possibility to study during quarantine or when it is impossible to attend classes – 9%

More time is available for completing tasks – 9%

Information is structured and provided in a more interactive and handy way – 2%

9. Which shortcomings do you recognize in distance learning?

Lack of the direct contact with the teacher – 31%

Answers to the questions about learning are received late or even never – 16%

Information is being perceived hardly, sometimes something is not clear – 14%

Problems with self-discipline and motivation for study – 13%

It is impossible to gain practice skills at some courses – 11%

Worse perception of material in comparison with face-to-face classes – 7%

Dependency on the correct functioning of devices and Internet connection – 5%

Inability of working on errors to strengthen the knowledge – 3%

The results of the student survey were discussed at a Round table at the Institute. The attention of teachers who develop and work with distance courses was focused on the problems indicated in the questionnaire, and the ways to further improve the educational web resources of the Institute were developed.

Resume. The results of the study showed that the preparation of a tutor requires constant support from a distance course developer or pedagogical designer. After completing the tutor training course, it is necessary to provide methodological, technical and program support, which is desirable to do in the form of a course. In the educational establishment the distance course of support "Practice of blended learning" has been running for the semester.

It is necessary for any distance course for teachers to create micro-lessons for the organization of on-the-job training.

When preparing tutors, the main point is not to teach them pedagogical methods or the use of ICT, but to direct them to the learning outcomes, help them answer the question of how and why to teach, direct them to openness, flexibility, and readiness to adapt.

In the future, it is planned to improve the method of integrated training of tutors, namely, to activate the activities of course developers as facilitators, to create instructions for training at the workplace and additional micro-lessons, to create instructions for mentoring methods and a questionnaire for facilitators to evaluate the performance of course participants, to provide for the best facilitators badges and certificates, to provide a speech by developer teachers with an analysis of their course and the activities of the trained tutor at the graduation webinar.

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Анотація. Пандемія COVID-19 залучила до екстреного дистанційне навчання практично весь викладацький персонал університетів, який приблизно на 80% був незнайомий з дистанційними технологіями, особливо з проведенням навчального процесу. Минулий досвід підготовки викладачів до дистанційного навчання показав наявність суттєвих психологічних бар'єрів до синхронного та асинхронного спілкування. Система підвищення кваліфікації практично не працює через завищене навантаження викладачів. В роботі пропонується одним з варіантів підготовки тьюторів, в якому викладачам університетів надається доступ до створених фахівцями дистанційних курсів загального призначення. Викладачі реєструються у дистанційному курсі «Практикум тьютора», в якому опановують теорії та технології дистанційного навчання та отримують практичні навички під час проведення занять з своїми групами студентів, зареєстрованих у відповідних курсах. Таке навчання нагадує навчання на робочому місці, дуже популярне в західних країнах. У курсі «Практикум тьютора» навчалося 74 викладачів, успішно закінчили навчання у курсі 11 викладачів, 7 з них залучили до навчання у фахових дистанційних курсах 132 студента. Проведені дослідження продемонстрували ефективність підготовки тьюторів на базі високоякісних фахових дистанційних курсах з участю їх розробників та одночасного проведення навчального процесу студентів. Отриманий досвід навчання на робочому місці використовується для підтримки викладачів у курсі «Практика змішаного навчання» протягом семестру. Результати опитування студентів обговорено на Круглому столі в Інституті. На проблемах, зазначених в анкеті, було зосереджено увагу викладачів, які розробляють та працюють з дистанційними курсами, розроблено шляхи подальшого вдосконалення освітніх веб-ресурсів Інституту.

Ключові слова: відкритий онлайн курс; персональне навчальне середовище; змішане навчання; ADDIE; тьютор