PECULIARITIES OF TRANSFORMATION OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN UKRAINE IN THE CONDITIONS OF A PANDEMIC

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The relevance of this topic is due to the burning issues and challenges of today, namely, a detailed review of the organization and functioning of out-of-school educational institutions during quarantine. Given the fact that currently the entire system of education is undergoing a period of fast adaptation to work in the newly created information educational environment, the system of out-of-school education does not stand aside and quickly progresses its developments in this direction.

The article presents the results of the analysis of organization of institutions of out-of-school education during the transition to the provision of educational services using remote technologies in Ukraine under severe quarantine restrictions. The stages passed by all participants of the educational process are clarified and considered in detail, including the mechanisms used by pedagogical workers in establishing communication with pupils, parental community and administration.

A number of normative documents was identified as critical for the sphere under consideration, for they regulated the work of out-of-school educational institutions during the period of mass transition to the distance form of providing educational services. The mechanism of realization of the newly introduced legislative documents by out-of-school educational institutions is reviewed.

The main digital resources used by out-of-school teachers for the organization of distance learning are highlighted.

The issue of organizing the work of the administration for the transition to a remote form of educational services provision is described in detail. The mechanism that provides generalization of information about students’ feedback is analyzed. The work of the psychological service regarding the possible consequences and negative impact of digitalization of learning on the major categories of participants (teachers, students, parents, state officers) is considered and analyzed.

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The author points out and highlights the positive and negative aspects of the impact of the introduction of distance learning in selectives and creativity clubs on its members and personnel.

The current state of readiness of out-of-school educational institutions for work in near-to-critical or crisis-based conditions is generalized and described. A number of identified issues requires further investigation into the possibility of providing educational services by corresponding educational institutions with the help of distance learning technologies and ICTs.

**Key words:** out-of-school education, selectives and creativity clubs, distance learning, education process, learning in the conditions of Covid-19 pandemic, mixed learning, out-of-school innovative learning.
than expected and it became clear that even in the absence of children and teachers in educational institutions, it is necessary to continue and maintain the educational process. Same issue has also affected the institutions of out-of-school education. Covid-19 crisis has also shown that the key element in modern education is flexibility, prompt response to various demands of society and the ability to adapt to the new working conditions even in critical and/or near-critical situations in order to provide quality educational services.

Despite the fact that for almost a year the educational community has been working on the possibility of providing educational services by out-of-school educational institutions in a pandemic, this issue remains relevant and insufficiently investigated, thus it requires detailed study in terms of out-of-school education.

**Aim of research** is to consider the peculiarities of the organization of the educational process in out-of-school educational institutions (OOSEI) of different directions in the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Current state of the issue.** According to the world-wide anti-pandemic measures and restrictions, all educational institutions of Ukraine as well as the corresponding facilities in other countries must be closed for the period of quarantine, moreover out-of-school educational institutions are also included. The pandemic has shown its impact on the lifestyles of students and their families, teachers and the functioning of educational institutions in whole. The participants of the educational process have faced the issue of organizing lifelong learning according to the new demands and conditions. The whole education system found itself in a crisis situation the only way out of which was the excessive exploitation of ITCs and other means of provision of distance learning services, the most of which are based on the newest technological achievements, including corresponding hardware and software.

Prior to this period, distance learning was not common in educational institutions with only few exceptions that were mostly experimental technologies used mostly to assist students and educators with special educational needs in higher education institutions and exploited as the means of organizing private educational courses. V. Bykov explored the concept of the essence of the distance educational process in his works [1]. V. Kaliuzhnyi considered the mechanism of formation of the distance education system in Ukraine [2]. Scientific research on the practice and theory of distance learning was conducted by P. Dmytrenko, V. Kukharenko, V. Oliinyk, Yu. Pasichnyk and other. Psychological and pedagogical aspects of the introduction of distance education were studied by H. Kozlakova, V. Krasnopol'skii.

Despite the fact that the legal framework clarified the major features and mechanisms of distance learning for all educational institutions in 2013 [3], the issue of providing educational services in out-of-school education before the period of long-term quarantine restrictions was considered only in fragments. Most of the teachers during the quarantine period were engaged in organizational and methodological work, in some cases worked with students individually preparing them for various events. Possibilities of distance learning in research activities are considered in the work of N. Polikhun. According to the researcher, the site of the Junior Academy of Sciences of Ukraine functions quite successfully in Ukraine as a modern educational environment including its virtual platforms: museum portal, experimental research laboratory “JAOSOUlab”, virtual evening schools of various scientific fields, where children can study during their free time [4]. Other areas of extracurricular education did not consider the distance format of
classes, focusing on practical face-to-face interaction.

**Results and discussion.** According to legal documents, the purpose of out-of-school education is to build and develop the children’s and youth’s competence in science, culture, sports, technical and other creativity, acquiring professional skills and abilities necessary for socialization, self-realization and future career. The main functions of OOSEI include: cognition (education), creativity and leisure. Children attend classes at will in their free time. During practical classes the group leader has the opportunity to supervise and adjust the performance of practical tasks, provide assistance in conducting technological operation, as well as teach children to work properly with various tools and use modern machinery for producing individual parts.

However, with the introduction of quarantine restrictions in March 2020, the pace of life has changed. If we consider the transformation of the work of out-of-school education institutions, we can distinguish the following main stages of this process: the waiting period, the period of uncertainty and search, the period of breakthrough and the period of stabilization of the educational process. Let’s analyze the identified stages.

Let’s analyze the first stage. On the basis of legislative acts of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (letter dated 11.03.2020), the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers (dated 11.03.2020), decisions of local authorities, administrations of out-of-school educational institutions issued orders to impose quarantine. According to the previous quarantine measures after the expiration of short-term restrictions, during which teachers were involved in organizational, pedagogical and methodological work without necessity to interact with pupils face-to-face, out-of-school education institutions resumed the standard educational procedures.

During this period educators had the opportunity to improve their skills by reviewing courses or participating in webinars, as well as they could design new methodological materials or make samples for further work with students.

At the second stage when the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of 16.03.20 [5], which recommended the introduction of remote work in educational institutions, was issued, a period of uncertainty and search for better forms of introducing the distance learning has began. Out-of-school and extracurricular education institutions faced such a challenge for the first time and were not ready to continue the educational process. A number of questions were outlined, yet the most of them concerned the issues of how to properly organize the systemic educational process using distance technologies without the access to the conventional means of interaction between the students and the educators. At this stage the level of development of ICTs-based competences in teachers played an important role, for it indicated the possibility of use of corresponding hardware and software, which was necessary for introduction of distance learning. Therefore, the information competence became one of the most important in the work of teachers.

Thus, shortly after the prolongation of the quarantine restrictions, administrations, methodological and psychological services developed an algorithm for organizing educational services using distance learning technologies without interrupting the educational process according to needs and opportunities of the participants of the educational process, which was based on regulations and recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

The OOSEI administrations in close cooperation with the teachers adjusted the curricula, which allowed to quickly
restructure the educational process and adapt the work of the academic groups to the conditions of distance learning procedures. Alterations introduced to the plans were based on the programs of the selectives. If the subject was difficult enough to master at home, the educators had to simplify it.

The problem of lack of working tools and essential machinery as well as inaccessibility of corresponding workshops and production facilities for students of sports and technical selectives became urgent, therefore making it next to impossible to master the coerces at home. In addition, during the performance of certain technological operations, it was necessary to organize the child’s workplace in order to make it safe, more efficient and comfortable (for example, when carving wood or working with metal). All these issues were solved by the leaders of the academic groups with the children and their parents individually.

Some students who had the opportunity and skills to work at home on their own were given corresponding tools and materials. Students whose work required the performance of technological operations on special equipment were given molds and/or prompts with the most demanding procedures already completed, which allowed the children to perform the rest of the operations and finish the project(s). Individual plans for remote work were composed taking into account the technical capabilities of each family and the resources of the head of the particular selective, which were categorized and sent in electronic form for approval by curators (methodologists, heads of departments, deputy directors) and the director. Intensive self-educational work of teachers on mastering digital education tools was a mandatory requirement before adjusting the plans and curriculum.

Before the start of the system of distance learning, the amount of time a child can spend with the gadget was discussed with the students and their parents. Each leader of the academic group created his/her own educational and information environment in which the teacher interacted with students and parents. Educators analyzed the availability of gadgets and their capabilities within the student teams, and thus determined the different forms of distance learning in each academic group. The choice of the form of organization of training with the help of distance learning technologies was carried out by teachers in accordance with the defined aim of the lesson and the desired result, as well as from the curriculum. Given the specifics of the institution, special attention was paid to the quality of presentation of theoretical information and designed practical tasks. In general, during this period the work of out-of-school educational institutions took place in accordance with the organizational and methodological recommendations provided by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine [6].

Moreover, during this period most of the teachers began to actively use the official websites of OOSEIs, where they quickly posted tasks for distance learning (practical tasks, instructions for individual work, project topics, etc.). Individual instructions were given in written and/or oral form online or via phone (if the Internet connection was/or remained unstable – the majority of students claimed that they experienced difficulties while accessing services of distance learning due to poor hardware and/or software supplement), which allowed to assess the educational achievements of students and identify issues of the educational process.

The third stage presupposes stabilization and improved decision making, which outlined a clear plan of action for the whole team, issued orders for the transition to distance learning by the subjects of OOSE, as well as fulfilled
the mandatory condition of teachers reporting about the work progress. At the legislative level, this process was set out in detail in a letter from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (dated: April 30, 2020). Each out-of-school educational institution had its own approaches to this issue. In some cases, the educators reported work progress daily by forming a digital letter according to the context of each lesson and the set of objectives, which was consequently sent to the inbox of the corresponding OOSEI; other specialists reported once a week. The reports itself indicated the topic of the lesson, the resource with which the educational process was organized and the availability of feedback. Some educational institutions encouraged teachers to connect members of the administration to their study groups in messengers in order to easily provide feedback.

The administration organized a blitz-training of teachers on the use of Gmail e-mail services, rules for organizing and conducting webinars. During this period there was an active educational interaction between educators. Group and club leaders who have mastered a certain electronic resource for working with students online demonstrated its capabilities to other teachers, shared gained experience, displayed advantages and disadvantages of particular methods of distance learning and its free/premium features (number of participants who can connect simultaneously, availability of cloud/local recording, chat, etc.). The work was carried out both individually (for teachers who have not mastered specialized software by using a regular video call in the Viber service) and for a group of participants (exploiting specialized services and applications for conferences: Zoom, Google-meet, Microsoft Teams, etc.). In addition, teachers' workplace and corresponding hardware (video cameras, audio systems) were tested and adjusted, as well as changes were applied to the institution's sites, where sections for posting distance learning tasks were added.

Digital messengers became one of the main forms of interaction between the administration and the educators thanks to their convenience, usability, speed of data delivery and relative stability (Viber, Telegram); electronic correspondence with teachers was also carried out via posting relevant information on the inter/intranet sites, online meeting on Zoom and Skype platforms.

According to the generalized reports on distance work, it can be stated that the groups of PE, sports and academic subjects ("Young Mathematician", "Economics", "Young Biologists", etc.) preferred group online classes, which were also available in the cloud record; scientific research, ecological-naturalistic, scientific-technical selectives used various messengers, in which they sent specialized technological maps, scans of tasks with a plan of execution, rendered short videos as the explanatory materials to the projects. Selectives of CS and ITC profiles ("Exciting Computer Science", "Young PC user", "Programming" etc.) prefer using Google Classroom platform for distance learning.

Educational institutions with preestablished and well-refined app-based communication lines with students and parental groups (on the basis of Telegram, Viber, Skype or any other compactible software) had a significant advantage in the rapid restructuring of the educational process, which occurred due to the introduction of quarantine restrictions. Community feedback concerning March 2020 COVID-19 situation indicated the need to exploit additional means and opportunities of interacting with students and parents without endangering their health, thus new options were implemented at the beginning of 2020-2021 academic year, which included digitalized multi-user
chat rooms, conferences, possibility to apply a potential student to a desired selective via e-mail, etc.

A successful experience of organizing the out-of-school educational process was the creation of video lessons by the educators, which were subsequently posted on social network sites, YouTube or shared within the corresponding e-communities. Massive amount of promotional and organizational work aimed at improving and developing distance OOSE was carried out by the International Association of Extracurricular Education (IAEE), thus a Facebook page was created, where many extracurricular projects were implemented, the most relevant of those was the "Organization of out-of-school distance learning", which was created with the involvement of OOSEI representatives from Ukraine, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Poland, Lithuania. Within its framework the participants presented their successes experiences and achievements based on the distance work in the system of out-of-school education. The leaders of the groups had the opportunity to get acquainted with the materials and, if necessary, could use ready-made video lessons in their professional activity. In addition, a number of thematic webinars were held for club leaders and out-of-school administration.

At the same time, a lot of work in the above-mentioned field was done by the National Ecological and Naturalistic Center for OOSEI. The site of the institution regularly covered up-to-date information, developed useful guidelines, held explanatory meetings and webinars.

The psychological service, which aimed at assisting educators, students and other participants of the educational process as well as providing psychological diagnostic and maintaining educational process itself has also found itself under particularly hard burden of undergoing mandatory transformation in order to function properly in the condition of the world-wide pandemic, which has severely affected children in difficult socio-economic conditions simultaneously rising a number of burning issues, one of which covered exacerbating economic hardships due to parents being unable to work or losing their job/closing own businesses.

In order to ensure the implementation of the main tasks of the psychological service and its continuous proper work an active cooperation with club leaders and students through online mailings and online consultations was introduced.

At the third stage, having studied the inquiries about the prospects of distance learning in the corresponding institution and their readiness for its introduction and maintenance, practicing psychologists provided basic recommendations on effective interaction of participants in the digital educational environment and preservation of mental resources during quarantine, as well as tips on how to amplify productivity; thematic educational e-correspondence groups were formed and tested among students who provided their contacts, namely telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Cooperation with the parents of the pupils was also established through online communication. Viber and Skype messengers have become the most relevant tools for online meetings and consultations. The leaders of the groups, together with parents and pupils, independently chose the most convenient forms of checking and assessing the educational achievements and degree of mastering the obligatory theoretical material and practical skills formation.

Thus, analysis of the statistical data on the use of electronic means of communication and digital ways of data exchange showed the following results: messengers Viber – 98%, Telegram – 19%, WhatsApp – 7%; social networks (sites and apps) – Facebook – 50%,
Instagram (17%); video hosting YouTube – 15%; specialized apps for video meetings/conferences: Zoom – 36%, Google Meet – 12%, Skype – 6%, Microsoft Teams – 4%; email clients – 12%. Many educators used several services simultaneously due to some exclusive features some of the software solutions offer. Zoom platform has become quite popular for remote work and distance learning, it can be used by both students and teachers and can provide digital environment for group online meetings and conferences for an audience of up to 100 people (the basic “free” profiles have some certain limitations applied – time and audience limitation, inability to record meeting directly to the cloud, etc.). The greatest advantage of the service is that the broadcast can be recorded by the administrator (the one who organizes the meeting) or the guests (if the corresponding permission is given by the administrator) for further viewing at a convenient time or subjected to further use at work.

It should be noted that the educational process was carried out according to the schedule. However, due to the introduction of the All-Ukrainian project “School Online”, some of the students who studied in the clubs in the first shift were unable to visit all the events and/or online lessons according to the schedule, therefore shift switch was applied to the qualified clubs in order to fix the issue.

According to the age characteristics of the children, each teacher planned his/her time and duration of the lesson.

Supervision over the organization and quality of the educational process in the conditions of distance learning was carried out as follows: the leaders of the groups kept records of the work in journals, which indicated the number of students who took part in the distance learning, including its topic and basic details. Data on the contingent of students covered by remote work was submitted to the curators, who summarized the information and transferred it to the corresponding deputy directors, whose responsibility was to monitor the reports and summed up the statistical attendance details. Such systematic work makes it possible to analyze the effectiveness of training with the help of distance technologies and to determine the relevance of the chosen e-class models, the level of interest and involvement of children, the quality of work of the heads of the groups. At the beginning of the week, the generalized information was received by the director and carefully analyzed. The summing up and definition of the task for the next week took place at an online meeting using Zoom or Google Meet platforms.

Quarantine restrictions did not interfere with the work of out-of-school educational institutions, so the most of the activities took place according to the plan of the institution, but in a new form. The experience of activity organization gained in the first semester of 2019-2020 academic year encouraged the search for new forms and methods of work, taking into account the specifics of distance learning technologies and strict quarantine conditions that continued to function properly [7; 8].

Mixed learning was the prevailing form of the educational process in the beginning of 2020-2021 academic year took [9]. Institutions designed and/or exploited digital applications for admission to clubs, posting and/or updating information. In addition, before the beginning of the 1st semester, each institution has developed its own regulations for quarantine restrictions. This document included compliance with sanitary and epidemiological norms during the face-to-face educational process during the quarantine [10] and it took into account the recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine [11] as well as the division of the territory...
into epidemiological zones with different color-marked (green, yellow, orange and red) levels of quarantine and corresponding limitations.

**Conclusions and research perspectives.** Thus, due to a number of factors, which include the world-wide pandemic and its consequences, children do not have the opportunity to attend classes conventionally and exploit face-to-face learning; therefore, teachers are rapidly mastering distance learning technologies while out-of-school educational institutions have undergone a rapid process of adaptation to the new current crisis conditions. This period was and is a challenge, but also a good impetus for professional growth and development of all participants within the educational process, for the key aspects of the transformation of out-of-school education during quarantine restrictions include the following:

1. Fully functioning e-communities of parents and children which reside in social networks;
2. The adjustment of mechanism of interaction of administration of OOSEI with pedagogical staff in the online environment;
3. Possibility to quickly plan pedagogical councils, workshops, methodical associations, methodical councils via digital deployment on Zoom and Google Meet platforms, as well as the easy and user-friendly student groups management via initially purchased hardware/software solutions;
4. Quick adjustment of learning topics to distance work and its digital management;
5. Possibility for pupils of the institution to take part in various competitions and contests at different levels (both international and national), and existence of intra-group, which takes place in a remote form of synchronous and asynchronous modes of learning;
6. Possibility for leaders of distance learning groups to not only undergo regular training, but also choose such webinars and practical classes that are relevant to their specifics of distance learning models;
7. Active use of e-documents management by the administration: e-mails; application for admission which can be filled out in the Google form online; documents for collaboration which are placed on Google-disk and have different levels of user access;
8. Regular updates of all the necessary information about the life and events of the institution on the corresponding website(s);
9. Availability of additional learning options, such as on-demand transfer of a student to a remote form of work if necessary (can be filed by parents and/or student if parents agreed).

Among the positive achievements of the distance educational process in out-of-school educational institutions a number of unresolved issues can be singled out, namely: lack of live communication, non-compliance with the schedule, inability to read some topics remotely, unavailability of necessary hardware and/or software, reduced motivation of students to learn. Research and solution of these issues is important for further pedagogical research in the provision of quality educational services by OOSEI with the help of distance learning technologies.

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