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## **PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE OF DISTANCE LEARNING ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE COURSE “ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND FINANCIAL LITERACY” OF THE PROJECT ENHANCEMENT OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN BELARUS**

The modern period of development of the life of society and the world economy is the establishment of an “innovative economy”, the concept of which in the literature is often identified with categories such as “knowledge economy”, “post-industrial economy”, “information society”, “high-tech civilization”, etc. ... The main factors of production in an innovative economy are complemented by priority resources such as knowledge and information. The transition of modern society to a technological structure allows us to solve several basic problems that hinder education and self-development.

Distance education is becoming an increasingly popular form of education today. This form is convenient for people who live in remote areas, as well as for those who, for some reason, cannot attend full-time education. Training is available 24 hours a day at a convenient time, at an optimal pace for the student. Nowadays, e-learning and mobile devices allow

learning everywhere: at home and on the road, at work and on the weekends, etc. This learning process is characterized not only by the high autonomy of students, but also by the ability to collectively solve problems and tasks “without leaving home”. Distance learning is popular among students who are just starting their careers and professionals who want to expand their competencies in a particular area. More and more organizations use online training in various professional areas, as it saves training costs and allows staff not to break away from the work process [1, 2].

Article 17 of the Education Code of the Republic of Belarus defines the distance form of education as: “a type of extramural education, when education is obtained mainly using modern communication and information technologies” [3, p. 18].

The Institute for Professional Skills Upgrading and Retraining of Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno is more and more actively implementing distance learning programs. Retraining of managers and specialists with higher education, professional development of specialists, internships are held by specialists employed in various sectors of the national economy. Distance learning allows the institute to organize more effective interaction of students with teachers in a convenient form at a convenient time. In addition, the distance form may be the only possible form in the implementation of educational programs for foreign citizens located outside the territory of the Republic of Belarus.

The research topic of the Department of Modern Technologies of Adult Education The Institute for Professional Skills Upgrading and Retraining has been associated with distance learning technologies in the context of additional adult education since 2014. [4] As participants in the international project “Enhancement of Lifelong Learning in Belarus” within the framework of the Erasmus + program, the teachers of the Institute had the opportunity to take part in educational events at leading European universities: Rezekne Academy of Technologies (Latvia), University of Cadiz (Spain), Linnaeus University (Sweden), The Open University (United Kingdom).

The generalization of foreign experiences of higher educational institutions in the use of distance technologies in the educational process

made it possible to improve the algorithm of the educational process in a distance form. Teachers of Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno took part in the development of educational programs based on modern distance technologies for courses: "English language", "Information security", "Legal literacy", "Entrepreneurship and financial literacy", "Energy and resource saving in everyday life".

The educational Internet platform of the project was filled with the developed electronic teaching materials for the courses, and since November 11, 2019, the courses have been implemented free of charge for everyone in the Republic of Belarus (Polotsk State University, Belarusian State Academy of Agriculture, Sukhoi State Technical University of Gomel, Brest State Technical University, Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, Vitebsk State University named after P.M. Masharov). The courses were implemented for 3–4 months, as a result of which the listeners were issued certificates of the international project.

This article presents in more detail the experience of the participation of teachers of the Institute for Professional Skills Upgrading and Retraining of Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, who took part in the development of the course "Entrepreneurship and financial literacy». The named course is very relevant in connection with the stimulation of entrepreneurial activity in the Republic of Belarus and is intended for everyone who wants to open their own business. The course includes 5 sections:

**Section 1.** Essence, types, organizational and legal forms of entrepreneurship. Algorithm for starting a business.

**Section 2.** Development of a business model.

**Section 3.** Financial resources and personal finance management.

**Section 4.** Business planning and risk management.

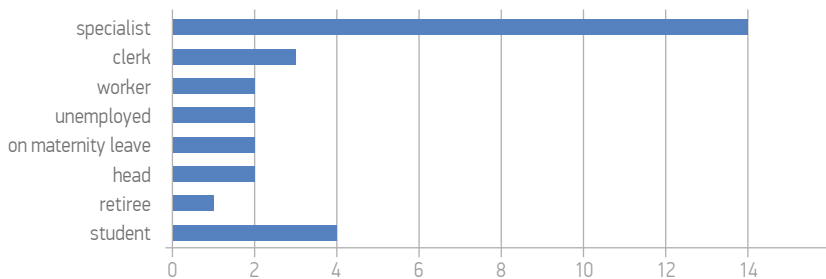
**Section 5.** Marketing and foreign economic activity.

Each section contains theoretical material, links to information in the public domain (official sites, videos on YouTube, etc.), practical exercises, tests, feedback. The recommended duration of studying each section is 3 weeks. At the end of the course, the student passes the final test, which includes tasks for all sections.

30 participants, including 20 women and 10 men, registered for this course at the Institute for Professional Skills Upgrading and Retraining of Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno. The duration of the whole training was 4 months. Figure 1 shows the categories of participants who signed up for the course: among them 3 people have a general secondary education, 2 people have a secondary specialized education, 26 — higher education. The age range was from 19 to 69 years old.

Various tools are used in the developed course in the Moodle distance learning system. Let's take a look at some of the tools used and their pros and cons.

Forums allow course participants (including teacher) to communicate in a manner similar to forums on Internet sites. The forum is a convenient way for you to ask questions and also to see what others have answered in the past. The forums also allow conducting thematic discussions within the framework of the training course: the teacher can ask a question, which will be asked to answer. You can also view the responses of other course participants (as opposed to individual assignments). In addition, the forum page displays its name, explanations, links to topics discussed. For each discussion, the list contains the topic, the number of replies, data about the authors and the dates of the first and last messages, which is very convenient for teacher-listener, listener-listener communication. When participating in a discussion on the forum, you must follow the rules of etiquette, as in any public speaking.



**Figure 1** — *Social status of course participants*

The "Lecture" tool is a sequence of pages of educational material alternated with control questions (usually at the end of each page of the lecture). To go to the required lecture, the student should click on its title. After studying the material of the next page of the lecture and answering the control questions, the student can move to the next page (or return to the current one, depending on the correct answer) using the navigation button. This element is always available throughout the training and the listener can always return to the material covered.

An important part of the e-learning course was the test control of the assimilation of the material, as well as the practical tasks required for implementation. The Moodle system contains a wide variety of forms of knowledge test control tools. Depending on the settings, a time limit can be set for passing the test (after a specified period, the test is automatically closed and student answers are sent for verification). The instructor can also limit the number of test attempts. Also, the test can always be available, or only in a clearly defined range of dates and times. The order of the questions in the test and the order in which the answer options for each question are given can automatically change each time you try to take the test.

Control tools in the Moodle system are very important for courses, since after confirming the completion of the test, the student goes to the test results page and can make reflection. On the results page displays information about the test, your score evaluations. Evaluation is expressed in percentage (percentage of the maximum possible points). An analysis of the test results can also be shown there, correct and incorrect answers are indicated, and prepared comments can be made.

The Glossary tool in Moodle is essentially an electronic dictionary of terms. The main feature of this tool is that it can be filled by students themselves independently during the course. Having discovered a new concept (or having received a special task to fill out a glossary), the student creates a dictionary entry that reveals the concept or term (for this, a built-in text editor is used, similar to the one in which answers to "tasks in the form of text" are entered). Other course participants can comment on the

article, offer their own definitions, which forms and strengthens feedback, allows not only the teacher, but also the student to participate [5].

The participation of teachers in an international project in the process of developing a distance course “Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy” gave important experience and additional pedagogical competencies. The following grounds were identified as the most significant and new.

First, in the process of developing each section of the training course, it is necessary to clearly define what types of activities the students will carry out during the study of each topic, as well as their percentage.

Secondly, the main task of training is not just to transfer a certain amount of knowledge to the student, but to directly acquire practical skills by them.

Thirdly, special attention should be paid to the content of theoretical material and practical tasks (not a very large volume, but at the same time sufficient to acquire practical skills that can be used in entrepreneurial activity) and the form of “presentation” of educational materials (to keep students interested in).

Fourthly, it is necessary to pay attention to the organization of feedback with students to obtain operational information about emerging problems and the possibility of an objective assessment of intermediate learning outcomes, operational adjustments of the educational process.

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