

CHALLENGES OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS UNDER MARTIAL LAW

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Conducting the educational process under martial law in Ukraine is the most urgent problem for the scientific and pedagogical community, since the general education and professional formation of future generations of Ukrainians should be continuous, qualitative and effective, despite the risks and threats of the current socio-political situation. Many issues arising from the war need to be addressed effectively, as time wasted today will result in gaps in the professional training of future specialists. Therefore, all participants in the educational process, primarily teachers and researchers, must make the necessary efforts to overcome any challenges to ensure that education and science function fully.

The transition to distance learning since the beginning of the pandemic has posed a number of challenges for educators related to the scientific, methodological, and psychological features of this form of education. During this period, methods have been developed, teaching and learning materials have been developed, all technical capabilities and various tools provided by online platforms have been mastered. A number of scientific, methodological, educational and practical articles have been published, in which the authors share their achievements and challenges, and raise topical issues and questions of distance learning for improvement.

However, since 2022, the educational process in Ukraine has been subjected to an even more severe and tragic test: the destructive power of war has radically changed all spheres of life in Ukraine. The authors of the information and analytical collection “Education of Ukraine under martial law” rightly emphasise that “the transition to martial law has posed serious challenges to the quality of Ukrainian education” [3, 264].

Teachers bear the brunt of the burden and responsibility for the quality of education. While previously the teacher was the coordinator of online learning, in the current environment, he or she plays a much more important role. Not only does the teacher organise, monitor, and evaluate classes, but today the teacher must respond quickly and effectively to any psychological, organisational, or technical problems.

The solution to organisational and technical problems does not always depend on the participants in the educational process, because during blackouts, rocket attacks, and constant sirens, there is no way to make a phone call or send a message. In times of calm, teachers quickly make up for lost time, hold consultations, give assignments, etc.

In addition to purely organisational issues, the psychological aspect of working with students is of great concern. During the war, the emotional state of a person is deeply affected, and it can provoke confusion, apathy, nervousness, depression, panic, aggressiveness, and emotional breakdowns. Today, many psychologists speak of a syndrome of delayed life.

According to Tetiana Koltunovych, “professional burnout can be interpreted as a process of gradual loss of emotional, mental, somatic and physical energy and vitality by a subject under the influence of prolonged stress in the professional sphere, which manifests itself in symptoms of emotional exhaustion, depressed mood, chronic fatigue, cynicism, complete loss of interest in work, communication and lack of satisfaction from them, insomnia, substance use, and sometimes suicide” [2]. The risk of rapid professional burnout increases, as the professional activity of both teachers and students is carried out under conditions of prolonged stress due to military operations, with an extreme emotional burden, which causes apathy, loss of interest in life and, accordingly, affects the effectiveness of work. The burden is even greater for first-year students, who are undergoing a period of adaptation to the system and requirements of higher education in wartime.

In this regard, the role of the teacher as a psychologist becomes one of the leading ones in his professional activity, although he is subject to the same psychological pressure. On the one hand, encouragement, support, a joke, an interesting example, helps to stabilise the emotional background of the class, keep students' attention, mitigating the severity of modern military realities.

On the other hand, a teacher's psychological flexibility and sensitivity to the emotional state of students is also necessary for organising the learning process. Today, independent work of students is of the utmost importance, due to a number of factors, including: the peculiarities of online learning, the inability to hold full-time classes due to air raids, power outages, and poor internet performance.

The success and quality of independent work depends, first of all, on the teacher, who, taking into account the constant stressful state of students, must establish this type of work. This requires:

- complete and technically accessible teaching and learning support;
- strict adherence to the schedule of the educational process, quick response to any changes or interruptions in the learning process;
- constant feedback from students;

– clarity of requirements, sometimes their repeated explanation in view of confusion and emotional instability;

– systematic and transparent control of students' knowledge and skills.

The problems of the complexity of organising an online process in wartime are increasingly discussed by the Ukrainian community. It is emphasised that the level of education is declining, the number of students and students who repeat their studies is growing, there is a shortage of teaching staff, and aggression and violence among students is increasing. Today, the situation is worsening due to the tragic military events. Also, among the factors that negatively affect students' learning outcomes in distance learning under martial law, teachers named the following: lack of “live communication” between teacher and student (61%); inability to learn independently (52%); reduced motivation to learn (47%); indifference, apathy (37%); inability to concentrate on the learning material (27%); lack of feedback from teachers (13%) [3, 269]. All of these factors certainly have a negative impact on students' learning.

Foreigners who were studying at higher education institutions before the outbreak of hostilities were forced to evacuate for their safety. The war deprived some of them of the opportunity to study at all. Another part of foreign students continued their education in a distance form, which limited their full-fledged studies. Some of them have been forced to return to their country, where hostilities are ongoing.

Some students and schoolchildren were forced to change their place of residence, and some were even forced to go abroad. At the same time, the question of continuing their education in foreign educational institutions arises, especially since many educational institutions themselves offer a simplified admission system. Of course, our citizens need to learn a foreign language and adapt to their way of life in order to continue their studies abroad. On the other hand, they can receive moral support abroad and plan their future life. [1]

For our country, this may mean the loss of valuable personnel in the future. However, if such citizens eventually decide to return to Ukraine, the country will receive foreign-educated professionals with a different worldview and European standards of behaviour. And this could be an advantage for possible future European integration.

In summary, we can say that the war has made adjustments to education in our country. We will see the result only after the end of hostilities and will be able to compare how much the educational process changed during and after the war. Now we can say that Ukrainians continue to live their lives in the conditions they have, despite the terrible events, they study to the best of their ability and hope for a quick end to the war.

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SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT DURING EDUCATION PROCESS AT MODERN UNIVERSITIES

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Graduate employability has emerged as a significant concern for researchers, educators, employers, and various stakeholders who are invested in the preparedness of students by higher education institutions (HEIs) for the job market. Students typically engage in several years of higher education with the expectation that their studies will yield positive outcomes, enabling them to secure employment or become self-employed (Adolphs, S., Clark, L., Dörnyei, Z., Glover, T., Henry, A., Muir, C., & Valstar, M., 2021).

However, the reality is often different; graduates worldwide frequently enter the workforce lacking the relevant skills necessary for success. Higher education institutions have faced criticism regarding their methodologies in equipping students with essential skills. For a university graduate to thrive, it is imperative that they possess a robust combination of both soft and technical skills. While there is a general inadequacy of both skill types among graduates, empirical studies indicate a more pronounced deficiency in soft skills compared to technical skills. HEIs tend to emphasize hard skills in their curricula, often neglecting the integration of soft skills (Abelha, M., Fernandes, S., Mesquita, D., Seabra, F., & Ferreira-Oliveira, A., 2020).