

Problems and Challenges of Implementing Distance Learning against the Background of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract : The COVID-19 pandemic presents a serious challenge to all sectors of the country. Particularly difficult and important was the rapid mobilization of educational institutions to ensure the continuous flow of the educational process and effective fulfillment of the transaction. Developed countries managed to overcome this challenge quickly because, before the pandemic, part of universities had implemented blended learning (a mixture of online and face-to-face learning). The article aims to evaluate the use of electronic platforms by non-Georgian-speaking students and their involvement in the e-learning process at Ilia State University. Based on the phenomenological research design, a comparative analysis has been conducted - what was the use of electronic systems by non-Georgian-speaking students before 2019, and what was it like during the COVID-19 pandemic? Concretely, the phenomenological design was used in the research to evaluate the efficiency of distance learning with non-Georgian speaking students at Ilia State University. Focus groups were created within the phenomenological design. In the focus groups, students answered a pre-designed semi-structured questionnaire. Based on the analysis of the questionnaires, it was revealed that online learning and access to electronic portals were not a particular difficulty for ethnic minorities. The following positive and negative aspects of e-learning were identified in the research. Students named as positive aspects: Enables joining online classes directly from home before the start of the lecture, It saves time and money on travel and accommodation (for some students). It was named as negative aspects: Learning a language online is more difficult than in face-to-face classrooms, lack of teamwork activity, lack of strong and stable internet connections, and audio problems. Based on the results of the research, it was shown that in the post-pandemic period, the involvement of non-Georgian speaking students has significantly increased; therefore, the use of electronic systems by non-Georgian speaking students.

Keywords : electronic system, distance learning, COVID-19, students

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