

Efficiency and Prospects of Webinars as a Method of Interactive Communication in the Humanities

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Abstract. The improvement of the effectiveness of communicative interaction between the participants in the learning process is an important and necessary task of our time. The article classifies the methods that allow to optimize the forms of active interactive learning, offer models of technologies aimed at creation of so-called positive process of learning from the teacher's decision making to the process implementation.

The learning process inevitably involves a certain gap between the real professional and academic activities. The article analyzes the possibilities of the webinar as a method, allowing to some extent to remove this opposition. Authors develop principles of saturation the content of teaching with professional skills necessary for the future specialists.

Synthetic nature of psycho-pedagogical methods and tools of webinars involves the use of an integrated methodology, which includes elements of pedagogy, philosophy, psychology, ethics, physiology, applied research, etc. The Use of this technique causes the need for multidimensional measurement of the effectiveness of the educational process. The novelty of the method lies in the fact that such modeling method as geometric connotation study of the problem is used on the basis of philosophical, ethical and psychological tools.

For the first time article displays the chain to reveal the process of erroneous actions resulting from lack of competence, inability to present the material and also the influence of the environment.

The authors reveal the mechanisms of possible erroneous actions which can lead to negative moments of learning, analyse their causes and make recommendations for their elimination.

The practice of holding webinars has identified a number of specific difficulties of distance learning in on-line mode. The article analyzes specific problems arising in the course of webinars, practical recommendations to overcome them.

The article developed guidance on how to apply this form of learning in educational environment of the University and virtual mobility, improve the professional level of teachers and workers of other sectors at the regional level.

Keywords: Online-learning · Webinar · Communicative interaction · Features of training in the form of webinar · Learning efficiency

1 Introduction

The requirement of time is to increase the efficiency of communicative interaction of the teacher and the student. The successful acquisition of knowledge and development of sustainable skills of its usage greatly increases if in addition to traditional teaching methods we use information and computer technology. Online Training greatly expands the functions of traditional classes, creates new perspectives in the methodology of the educational process. Such online training method as webinar became especially popular. It is an important tool of the internationalization of education through the development of virtual mobility of students.

2 Materials and Methods

In 2012, Moscow Economics and Statistics University (MESI – MGUESI) conducted lots of webinars in the Humanities. There were mainly lectures and seminars. For example, there were delivered webinars on the rhetoric. KNRTU – KAI (Kazan) hosts webinars on philosophy and other social Sciences. Nowadays webinars are actively practiced in Kazan Federal University, both for humanitarian and technical disciplines. A huge experience in conducting webinars was accumulated in Kazan State University of Architecture and Engineering. Also there were examined studies on webinars and their use in improving access to education [1, 6]. Thus, the experience of webinars in several major Russian universities has allowed to reveal problems of their realization and to identify the ways of improvement of methods of their organization. Great attention during the research was focused on virtual mobility as a form of academic mobility.

3 Webinar as a Method of On-line Learning

The title of the webinar comes from the English words web and seminar. Despite the name, the software designed for organizing webinars can be used for other forms of educational process.

Aristotle pointed out that the impact of the speaker on the listener has a specific purpose, the formation of a certain ideal, aimed at the prosperity of the state, the development of personality. The learning process ultimately has the same goal.

Every teacher has a certain social order from the society - to educate students in accordance with the highest standards of education, to lay them as much knowledge and skills so they can benefit people and themselves.

Realization of this goal involves a certain pattern of technology adoption decisions by teacher (Fig. 1):



Fig. 1. A certain pattern of technology adoption decisions by teacher

As a teacher can be viewed in two ways: as a wise mentor and as a person with a wealth of experience and knowledge and transmitting information “by inheritance” to his disciples, this scheme is divided into two components.

The first component of the scheme (Fig. 2):

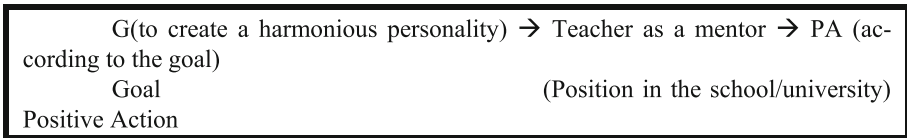


Fig. 2. Negative process of education

This phenomenon can be called a positive process of education.

The second component of the scheme (Fig. 3):

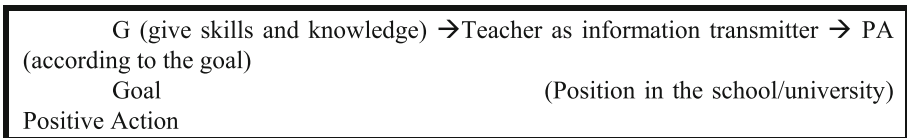


Fig. 3. Negative learning process

This phenomenon can be called positive learning process.

The technology of decision-making may vary depending on the teacher and his specific properties: knowledge of the subject taught, ability to present the material, his moral qualities, from exposure to third parties, e.g. parents, students, or employees of the institution. Then the process of pedagogical influence on the pupil or student is impaired. The cycle of decisions technology adoption consciously or subconsciously transformed, actions are inadequate to achieve the goals.

The first component of the scheme then takes the following form (Fig. 4):

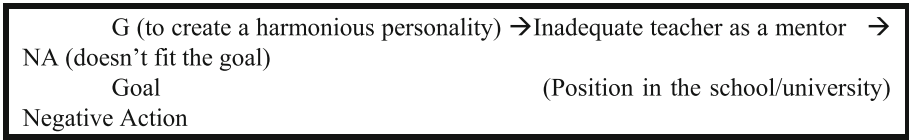


Fig. 4. Negative process of education

This phenomenon can be called a negative process of education.

The second component of the scheme (Fig. 5):

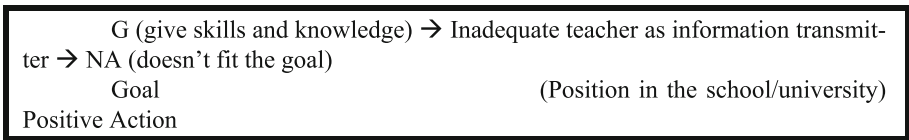


Fig. 5. Negative learning process

This phenomenon can be called negative learning process.

When the real goals are replaced by others that do not correspond to state interests, nor the interests of the students themselves, there is a phenomenon of the opposite effect: students do not have the necessary knowledge, proper education, and, ultimately, full inclusion in the society.

Unlike traditional forms of training, webinars help to avoid possible mistakes in case of wrong technology decisions.

Webinars can be a lecture, when the teacher opens a topic and the students watch the video lecture, and then make their comments. A webinar as an interactive training session may be another option: students can make their reports, ask each other and the teacher questions and debate. Then the webinar will present a workshop in a computer network.

Online resources are a form of remote interactive training, and computer and technology training is firmly established in high schools. Today's students value their time, have much more possibilities to find the right material for the discipline alone in comparison with students from previous years. Webinars can be a lecture courses, and in this case a teacher carries the main burden. A teacher has an opportunity to demonstrate the materials (slides, websites, text documents, the desktop of computer), draw and write formulas on a virtual "blackboard". Webinars are such a form of training that creates the opportunity to significantly increase the activity of students than a traditional lecture. Webinar participants can watch, listen and ask questions in a different form. Students are one-on-one with the teacher, but at the same time away from him, which causes more relaxed communication.

Creativity of this kind of communication, especially for students, is obvious. Webinars are almost always written, and thus it is possible to view the material at any time and even multiple times. Therefore, it is the most effective tool that helps to perceive the right material to reproduce and comprehend it. The webinar is also a great prospect in the organization state policy and the education of persons with disabilities.

There are different variants of the communication process between the lecturer and remote students. The first option for the lecturer is to have their own (live audience) and the virtual audience, the second option is the lecturer only has a virtual audience and have the opportunity to see it, a third option is the lecturer has a virtual audience that is not visible [9].

Organization of the webinar can face several difficulties:

1. Compared with the traditional lesson, the teacher finds hard to keep in sight of all students, to notice their reaction time to answer questions.
2. The success of the webinar will largely depend on how technically equipped with all the participants as they possess information and computer technologies.

The availability of webinars as an online method of communication is not in doubt. The success of webinars largely depends on how the teacher will be able to interest students. Therefore, online learning increases the demands on the teacher. The effectiveness of the webinar is determined by the following most important qualities of an instructor conducting webinar:

First, the teacher must possess a high theoretical level of training, deep knowledge of the subject.

Second, professional experience of conducting lectures is very important. The effectiveness of such training depends not only on methodological and scientific erudition of the teacher, not less important is the ability to arouse strong interest and activity of students during discussion of problems. Therefore, the teacher should have good attitude, be able to quickly change webinar tactics. It is important not only to articulate the law, clarify the term, but to notice the reaction of the students answer questions, etc.

Thirdly, for the success of the webinar the good mood of the teacher and a sense of confidence is very important. The teacher's speech must be well-delivered, because a good speaker always enjoyed great success among the audience. After the lesson, the lecturer may watch his performances, see himself and analyze his every word and gesture.

The Internet because of its unique features creates a comfortable environment that complements the interior and exterior of the individual. It can act as the personal space of the experiment. Participation in the webinar opens up new opportunities for students, but at the same time, imposes new requirements and raises the level of responsibility.

Many students express their desire to participate in scientific work, using various forms of the Internet environment. But one student and the other was his opportunity. They are used mainly to remember or to do work by analogy. But to think by themselves is difficult. Therefore, they can be offered a temporary consultations as a preparatory stage to participate in webinars. As a rule, students are eager for such advice. Students like to create something, they're committed to creativity. It is very important that the teacher develop in the students the ability to think independently. It

will be a good platform for their future scientific work. In recent years, webinars are becoming more common when creating a virtual scientific laboratories, inter-University creative groups, conducting on-line conferences, student research forums and other forms of scientific inter-University cooperation of students [5].

Both prior and subsequent work on the webinar requires serious preparation for teachers and students. But sure it will give positive results. In the light of the ideas of humanistic psychology and pedagogy, webinars open new possibilities of interaction between teacher and students. They help to build good relations of cooperation, in which open and friendly attitude to each other encourages openness, desire communication in the process of learning, independent thinking, reflection.

Direct “live” communication of the lecturer with the audience is hardly ever fading. But webinars in our opinion, will occupy an important place in a number of promising educational technologies in relation to their very simple, time saving and big opportunities of development of creative abilities of students [2, 3]. In the future, diverse forms of organization of webinars will further extend and improve. Webinars have a great development in network education as a form of functioning of network education platform [4, 10]. They improve access to educational services, promote the development of virtual mobility and flexible forms of employment [7].

Also, we conducted a survey in Kazan high schools such as KNRTU KAI, KFU and KSUAE. The results are shown on the Fig. 6.

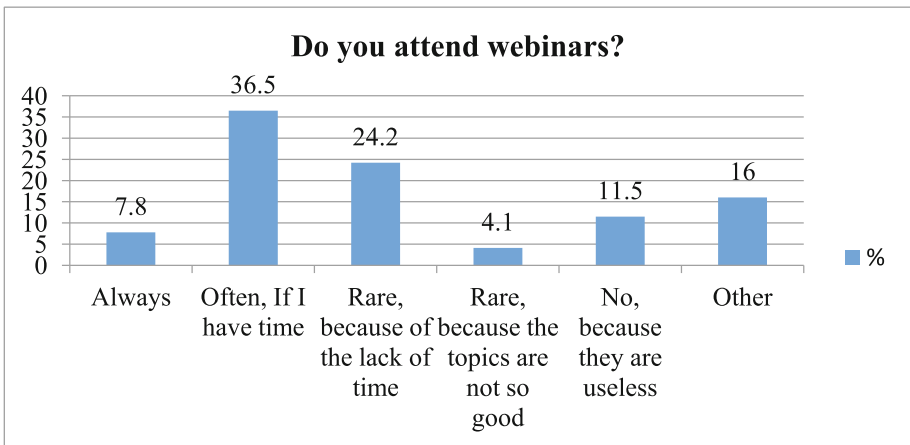


Fig. 6. Webinar survey

As can be seen from the presented data, the share of respondents always attending webinars is 7.8%. More than a third of students try not to miss the webinars, but it is not always possible at the time 36.5% and a quarter prefer to work with recordings of webinars 24.2%, which may be a consequence of inconvenient class schedules. Each sixth Respondent is not satisfied with the quality or content of the webinars (the total figure in the total sample, 15.6%).

4 Webinars as a Form of Virtual Mobility

Modern information and communication technologies, the provision of most university teachers and students by means of communications create conditions for the organization of virtual mobility. Bologna documents say that “virtual mobility is not a substitute for physical mobility” [1]. However, studies have shown that the greatest effect of participation in academic mobility is achieved by combining the use of physical mobility and elements of virtual learning.

Organization of Virtual Mobility includes the following tasks:

1. Formation of electronic educational resources in accordance with agreed standards.
2. Entry in the world market of educational services, the system of international telecommunication space.
3. Partnership in researches, implementation of joint projects.
4. Further training of teachers.
5. Improvement of the language training of both students and teachers.

The main advantages of virtual education are:

1. The individualization of education process.
2. Massiveness, there is no limit on the number of participants in training.
3. Absence of the need for physical movement, of binding to place and time.
4. High degree of students training flexibility: the opportunity to build individual educational trajectories, the total set of credits with a choice of courses of different universities.
5. The ability to pre-testing, testing of selected high school curriculum.
6. The ability to continue their education after completing the program of academic mobility.

The disadvantages of virtual mobility are in the impossibility of full immersion into the educational process of other universities, because the primary place of studying is student’s own university. Difficulties arise during the work on different information platforms that implement distance learning. Also, there are inconsistencies of organization models of educational process in participant-universities and difference in the estimation of the role of the teacher, tutor or curator of the educational process, the necessary degree of interactivity, etc.

Today we can speak about significant empirical experience in the use of remote technologies in the academic mobility [9].

Active use of these technologies is caused by the following factors:

- Information is available through a standard web browser;
- All the tools and interfaces as simple and understandable.

The necessity of installation of additional modules in some cases is performed automatically and does not require costs. Thus, it should be noted that there is a significant increase in the requirements for network speed and hardware audio and video streams.

The most interesting solutions in the virtual mobility are Adobe Acrobat Connect and Open meetings. Both technologies provide streaming video to the user's web browser and can be used for a wide range of problems related to distance learning (e-learning). IT systems provide the following areas of eLearning:

- Virtual Classrooms;
- On-line training;
- The performance improvement system based on LMS (Learning Management System).

Recognition of the possibility of virtual mobility is supported by various international projects, which are actively involved in the Russian high schools [6, 8]. Along with the classic e-learning tools there are some recent tools:

- Creation of special websites about the basic educational resources and mobility programs, the introduction in educational institutions of the special chat-rooms for the organizers of the mobility of students, teachers, etc., to discuss and exchange information;
- E-voting system, designed to create interactive lectures, increase the participation of students in the discussion of the proposed issue or point of view;
- Peer review system and technology of collective creation and editing (wiki);
- Asynchronous communication tools (forums and blogs);
- Social bookmarking and social networking;
- Podcasting and online lectures, video streaming etc.

All of these technologies are the components of an open virtual platform based on Web 2.0, that allow you to organize an effective online collective and individual work and integrate seamlessly into the virtual learning environment, providing the academic mobility of both students and teachers.

5 Conclusion

The webinar is the most effective method of teaching to the maximum students a particular topic, as it covers a lot of forms of influence on students. This is in contrast to traditional forms; audio tools: communicate in real-time and placement of various materials in the form of audio recordings; video tools: videos and other materials from the Internet. This is the presentation of the teacher, which he demonstrates in the Internet environment. It's messaging not only between teacher and students but also between students themselves and, of course, is the live chat as a means of exchanging messages with one click.

Webinar in many ways helps to replace direct communication between teacher and student, as absolutely to exclude the teacher from the educational process as a person is impossible. Method of webinar's work is indirectly-direct, as this online communication via the Internet may be seen as communication of close, free and personal. The teacher for the student is actually "here" and "face to face". Webinars offer the opportunity to see and hear each other, even at a quite large distance. A conducting of a webinar with a pre-filled audience with the second teacher there is also seems

perspective. He helps to maintain order and also participates in the webinar that is more costly for the University, but more useful for students. Two teachers is the ability for greater control and deeper reasoning and active discussions.

Webinars in virtual mobility of students are also important. They provide access to international educational resources at the minimum cost. The results of the study show the growing impact of virtual mobility to improve the quality and accessibility of educational services.

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