Archil Karaulashvili[1]

APPLICATION OF MODERN TEACHING-LEARNING METHODS IN DISTANCE LEARNING (BASED ON AN EXAMPLE OF LECTURE COURSES ON GENERAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF POLITICAL AND LEGAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GEORGIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION)

Abstract

Covid pandemic, existing security risks, the need to save resources and time, and other circumstances made development of the distance learning important. **The purpose of this article is to discuss the possibilities of using modern teaching-learning methods for distance learning**. The issue is presented through the examples of courses on general and practical aspects of political and legal relations between Georgia and the European Union.

The use of the distance group learning method is shown on the example of working on a presentation regarding visa-free travel and movement of citizens between the EU and Georgia. The topic of role-playing teaching is discussed through the modeling of the work of the EU-Georgia Association Council, and the use of the case study method is presented on the example of one of the sectoral reforms envisaged by the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. The problem-based learning method is discussed by using the topic of strategic communication against anti-Western propaganda.

Special attention is paid to the possibilities of solving problems related with distance learning. In all topics, attention is paid to promoting the development of critical thinking and creativity. Increasing students' interest and participation in the learning process is considered as one of the approaches. Evaluation difficulties and practical experience of solving them are discussed as well.

The main conclusions of the article are: the use of modern methods in distance education is associated with more difficulties than the use of traditional methods in the same circumstances; The development of electronic technologies and a creative approach allow us to overcome almost all problems of distance learning; EU-integration related practical experience is useful for new teaching and learning methods, as it helps to properly plan and manage related communications.

Key words: distance learning; group learning; role-playing; case study; Problem-Based Learning.

Introduction

We are living in a time of fast changes and witnessing accelerated development of economy, technology, social relations and respectively of teaching-learning methods. The global Covid-19 pandemics on one hand and the war in Ukraine on the other hand, significantly changed the agenda of the countries, state institutions, businesses and also the educational institutions. The need to adapt to the new realities stimulates discussions for understanding the challenges and difficulties on this path.

The global processes had its impact on Georgia as well. The war in Ukraine and the heroic resistance of the Ukrainian people against the Russian aggression gave rise to a strong reaction of support for the Ukraine in Western countries. One of the directions of this support is acceleration of integration into the European Union. Alongside with Ukraine, other countries with an Association Agreement with the European Union, namely Moldova and Georgia, which are also suffering from Russian aggression, gain the opportunity to receive more support on the way to European integration. This means that our country will need more professionals working

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[1] Invited Lecturer at the Institute for European Studies of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Mobile: +37253800188, e-mail: akaraulashvili@mfa.gov.ge; akar_8@hotmail.com;

on the EU and the EU-Georgia cooperation related issues in a short period of time. Therefore, further refinement and development of teaching-learning methodology in this direction is important.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the development of teaching and learning methods. The need to limit the mobility of citizens and isolation of students and lecturers has disrupted the normal teaching process and schools have moved to distance learning practically in all countries. The pandemic is not completely defeated and there are risks of further escalation that stress the need for the development of distance learning methods. At the same time, there are other circumstances that emphasize the benefits for developing distance learning. These are, for instance: Security challenges (including the war in Ukraine); Overcrowded large cities where educational institutions are located, with their unfavorable ecological conditions and congested traffic; Better possibilities for inviting professors and teachers living in different cities or even countries; Less financial expenses, etc. Therefore, distance learning provides an opportunity to solve many challenges and it is of great importance to adapt modern progressive methods of teaching and learning to the limits of the distance learning.

In this article, we discuss the above-mentioned issues based on the course on "General Framework of the Political and Legal Relations between Georgia and the European Union" of the bachelor's program of European Studies and the course on "Practical Aspects of EU-Georgia Cooperation" of the master's program of European Studies.

The goals and the outcomes of the course on the General Framework of the Political and Legal Relations between Georgia and the European Union are fully consistent with the goals and outcomes of the TSU Bachelor's program in European studies. It will help students in deepening knowledge on: the history and current state of Georgia-EU relations with special emphases on the dynamics and main stages of the relations; on the political and economic driving forces and benefits deriving from these relations; the institutional and legislative foundations of the relations; challenges and threats to Georgia's rapprochement with the European Union; the Eastern Partnership initiative of the European Union where Georgia is a part of. Special attention will be paid to common European values, as well as to the hybrid threats and strategic communication with the public on the issues of Georgia's integration into the European Union. The course will focus on the development of primary analysis and critical thinking skills. After completing the course, the student should be able to independently evaluate his/her achievements according to the course benchmarks and further deepen his/her knowledge on the given topic using the available educational materials. Georgia's integration into the European Union will be used as an example for the critical analysis of the principles and challenges of European integration theories in general, which is also provided by the mentioned BA program. Certainly, the noted course will help students in exploring, studying and analyzing normative, political and other documents about important aspects of Georgia-EU relations envisaged by the undergraduate program.

The goals and results of the course on the Practical Aspects of EU-Georgia Cooperation are also aligned with those of the TSU Master's program in European studies aiming to prepare the highly qualified experts. The course provides a more in-depth knowledge of the economic, legal and institutional issues of cooperation between Georgia and the European Union. Emphasis is placed on the practical benefits and application of knowledge, including in opportunities related to mobility of citizen and the EU aid programs. As a result, the student will be able to analyze the challenges and benefits of the European integration of Georgia independently, taking into account modern political, economic and social aspects, as well as scientific thoughts and opinions. A critical analysis will provide opportunity for distinguishing the objective information on European integration and anti-Western propaganda. The student will develop the skills for further deepening and application of the knowledge. With the acquired knowledge and skills, students will be able to develop and implement research and practical projects in the fields of EU law, economy, politics, and history that are provided by the program according to high academic standards. They will be able to study/produce, analyze and explain the current processes in the European Union, as well as respective normative, political, economic and other documents in their daily practical activities.

Achieving these goals and results requires an effective use of modern teaching-learning methods. For discussing each teaching method via application of distance communication means, specific examples are presented on which the author has already accumulated certain practical experience. The use of the distance group learning method is demonstrated on the example of a presentation regarding visa-free travel and movement of citizens between the European Union and Georgia within the framework of the course on the Practical Aspects of EU-Georgia Cooperation. Also, within the mentioned course, the method of role-playing is

discussed, which will be applied through the simulation of the work of the EU-Georgia Association Council. The use of the elements of the case teaching method is presented in the framework of the course on the General Framework of the Political and Legal Relations between Georgia and the European Union for the undergraduate program of European studies on the example of one of the sectorial reforms specified by the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. Within the framework of the same course, the possibilities of using the problem-based learning (PBL) method are shown in the context of strategic communication against anti-Western propaganda.

Using elements of group and collaborative learning

We can consider the possibilities of using elements of group and collaborative learning through distance means when students are working on a presentation on visa-free travel and movement of citizens between the European Union and Georgia within course on Practical Aspects of EU-Georgia Cooperation. During the said training, students are given the task of making presentations jointly, by which: they must convey information about the prerequisites and requirements for visa-free travel between Georgia and the European Union, the progress of implementation, benefits and difficulties, as well as the current situation and problems related to the movement and employment of citizens; develop recommendations for their solution; explain the main points of Mobility Partnership between the European Union and Georgia, the need for ongoing cooperation and the so-called Advantages and disadvantages of Circular Migration. In order to ensure the effective participation of all students, the course is divided into groups of 4-5 people and each is given the task of making presentations related to the respective topic. It is important to clearly define the objectives related to the task and to participate in the preparation process in order to maximize the involvement of all participants. In this regard, it is useful to first ask the students themselves to determine the role of each of them in the preparation of the presentation, and at a later stage, as a result of appropriate reasoning, optimize these roles in order to evenly distribute the workload and adjust it to the skills.

In general, the use of group and collaborative elements in the learning process provides an opportunity for creative thinking, debate, discussion, sharing of activities, coordination, participation, communication and social relations skills. However, there are some difficulties in distance group learning. We are going to discuss several of them.

One of the difficulties is the need for several groups to work on one electronic platform synchronously but at the same time separately. Distance learning is not suitable for more than one person to speak at a time. Therefore, I think it is appropriate to provide each small group of students with its own discussion meeting format. At the same time, it is important for the lecturer to participate in at least some part of work on the presentation. This will allow lecturer to explain the details of the distribution of group work, describe the possibilities related with the development of work and presentation skills on that particular topic, and observe the student's activity and engagement for further evaluation. At the same time, I believe that it is not necessary, and on the contrary, it is would not be correct for the lecturer to participate in the entire process of developing of the presentation. Therefore, the lecturer can engage with each mini-group one by one and thus ensure that their activities are conducted properly.

Another difficulty is that students who might be knowledgeable but less active in terms of communication become even more passive due to the distance format. The distance format, to some extent, limits the emotional component of the interaction and therefore does not encourage engagement and activity. This is discussed in Hang Shu and Hiaoqin Gu's article comparing online and conventional learning, in particular it is stated that: "Compared with the informal environment of online learning, classroom dialogues are more open and required deep thinking" (2018, p.17). Therefore, in the case of a presentation, it is necessary to make sure that each student has his role. It is desirable that this role be consistent with his skills. It is also important to encourage students' creativity.

Difficulty may also arise from the less knowledgeable and less active student trying to make ends meet at the expense of someone else's work. For this purpose, they can refer to technical problems related to distance learning. On the one hand, this situation can be corrected through the evaluation system. For example, students should know in advance that not only the final product - the presentation is evaluated, but also their

participation, and different members of the subgroup may have different evaluations, and the responsibility for eliminating the technical problems is also individual. However, such approach could make it difficult to effectively use the elements of collaborative learning. Therefore, I think, in case of identification of the above-mentioned problem, the lecturer should devote more time and attention to the coordination of the activities of the relevant sub-group in order to ensure positive interdependence and balancing of individual and group responsibility. Thus, during the evaluation, the priority will be given to the achievement of the common goal. In the solution of the technical problem, joint efforts and mutual support of the whole group can be used.

It should be noted that some of the problems that appear when using elements of group and collaborative learning during face-to-face interaction are less relevant in distance learning. For example, time wasting and conversation on other, unrelated topics that usually occur in face-to-face relationships are less common in distance learning, where emotional and visual contacts are limited.

To summarize, it could be said that the elements of group and collaborative learning can be used in distance learning as well. However, due to the limitations of distance learning, the use of group and collaborative elements might not be as effective as during face-to-face learning. At the same time, problems arising during distance learning could be solved, and students themselves can contribute to this. In addition, there are some problems of group and collaborative learning that could be solved easier during distance learning.

Role-playing method

It is appropriate to discuss the issues of using the distance role-playing teaching method within the course on the Practical Aspects of EU-Georgia Cooperation. The role-playing is used through the simulation of the work of the EU-Georgia Association Council. The students are divided into two groups: one has to play the role of representatives of the European Union, and the other has to play the role of representatives of the Georgian government. Each party will have their responsibilities, tasks and goals defined both at the group and individual level. Each student plays the role of one high-level official. In addition, the functional responsibilities of the Association Council, as well as the approximation agenda and protocol issues of the Council are explained to the students. During the exercise it is important for students to discuss and distribute the respective roles themselves, as well as to carry out preparatory work for their involvement. The mentioned format provides a good opportunity to strengthen the connection between knowledge and experience, while facilitating creativity and developing critical thinking. As a result, we also have an opportunity to widely use the elements of the learning by doing method.

This kind of simulation generally provides an opportunity for active student participation, focusing on learning topics, drawing attention to problematic issues, etc., and so applying Perkins' teaching principles. At the same time, in the presented example, we face certain problems, for instance:

In distance learning through simulation, it is difficult to maintain the emotional component that is easily achievable during conventional learning process. Why some approaches could softer it, I think it is impossible to completely eliminate this difficulty. Uplifting the emotional background to a certain extent can be facilitated by discussing popular, important and urgent issues for all participants during the simulation, as well as providing certain visual content, for example, small flags, etc., at the extent of technical capabilities.

When dividing into two large groups, it is unlikely that all students will be equally active. This problem can be solved if the lecturer properly coordinates the task. For this purpose, already during the preparatory stage of the simulation it is desirable to discuss with the students the role of each of them, the rules of engagement and ensure that their skills are adapted to the assigned role. It is also correct to focus students' attention on popular current issues, which would allow for inspiring discussion and help develop critical thinking. The usefulness of distance simulation is briefed in article by Lovelas et al., which is about the assessment of the web-based simulations for the development of critical thinking skills, in particular authors mention the following: "We found that participation in the simulations was an effective way to develop critical thinking skills." (2016, p. 100). In addition, cross assessment can also be used to develop communication skills and demonstrate additional knowledge.

To summarize, role-playing learning provides good opportunities for connecting experience and knowledge, developing critical thinking, learning by doing, and thus using elements of Perkins' teaching. However, there

are some problems associated with the distance simulations, mostly related to the creation of an emotional background and active engagement. It is practically impossible to completely eliminate them; however, certain approaches in the teaching process could ensure their reduction.

Case Study Method

Within the frames of the course on 'General Framework of the Political and Legal Relations between Georgia and the European Union' which is part of the curriculum of the TSU bachelor's program in European Studies, it is possible to use a 'case study method' by distance learning, mainly on the example of the reforms undertaken as an obligation imposed by the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union. For example, the upgrade in the technical inspection standards of motor vehicles according to the EU norms can be selected as the reform pattern. It creates a certain dilemma for the authorities of the respective country, according to which, on one hand the mentioned standards are important for European integration, for ensuring the clean environment and the health of citizens, as well as for the safety of movement of the road transport. On the other hand, taking into account the low level of income of the population, the corresponding reform will significantly burden the owners of old vehicles. During the course, the above-mentioned problem is presented to the students, and in order to find a solution, they are given the opportunity to express their opinions and engage in a discussion. Their answers are compared to the solution found in the real situation. In addition, the cooperation between the Government of Georgia and the European Commission on this issue can be discussed.

As is known, the case study helps to develop the ability of critical analysis and thinking. The given case contains a problem, and it is also possible to use the problem-based learning approaches. Thus, students are also given an opportunity to develop their skills of problem analyses and generating creative ideas for finding a solution. In addition, according to the classification of Robert In, we can call the problem explanatory, because there is a clear cause-and-effect relationship between the problem, its causes, and the ways of solving it. This example is also good as the answer is selected taking into account value based parameters. Thus, the students will better understand and preserve respective values. An example that reflects a real situation and has a practical character also provides a good opportunity to demonstrate the application of theoretical knowledge in practice. I addition during the discussions social relations and communication skills are developed.

It should be noted that the using of case studies by distance learning can be practically as successful as by face-to-face contact. Modern technical means provide a wide range of opportunities, including presentation or insertion of video component, to ensure that the information is delivered in an appropriate and effective manner. This time, during the mentioned course, a presentation is used to explain the basic data, prerequisites, objectives, involved institutions and possible outcomes of the case.

In distance learning, certain difficulties can arise only in the part of the case discussion, when the visual and emotional factors are limited due to the lack of direct contact. In this case, it is more difficult to influence on students by the so-called "creative conquest". Also, some simple actions under normal conditions become difficult, for example quickly distinguishing the supporters of this or that opinion if the video image of all participants is not included and cannot be done for technical reasons. Not only during the survey, but also during the discussion as a whole, it is important that all students have their video eye turned on and their name written. Failure to resolve these simple technical issues may significantly reduce the effectiveness and positive results of using the case study method by distance learning.

In general, the mentioned small problems can be solved by the correct moderation of the teaching process by the lecturer, who should ensure the involvement of each student in the discussions, focus on the values related aspects of the topic, encourage analytical approaches in the discussions, and maintain high motivation in clarifying the respective subject. The Case study method allows teaching to become more fun, and distance learning should not be a reason to lose this advantage. I consider it quite possible to achieve the aims with the correct moderation of the lecturer. Under correct moderation is meant both thematic guidelines and the guidance of social mutual cooperation, as well as setting technical requirements and their strict observance. Some researchers even point to some/minor advantages of using distance online tools in case study, for example Chen et al. in their work on the effectiveness of case study in an online asynchronous environment (2006, p. 84), believe that - "learning how to organize thoughts and to write in a succinct way in order to communicate with other students is another important accomplishment. This may not be the case in a spontaneous F2F class environment."

Thus, within the course on "General Framework of the Political and Legal Relations between Georgia and the European Union" the method of case study can be used distantly as successfully as in contact teaching by providing the example of the reform envisaged by the Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia. No problems related to distance learning are expected in the description and explanation part of the study. Certain difficulties that may arise in the case discussion part and are related to visual and emotional limitations can be easily solved with proper moderation by the lecturer.

Problem-Based Learning

In the case study mentioned above elements of problem-based learning were already used, however, in that case, the goal was not to study the problematic issue itself, but to discuss and understand the institutional and economic component related to it and reforms in general. Therefore, it can be classified more as a case study method. In contrast to the above, now I would like to discuss the problem-based learning method, which in this case is focused on studying the content of the problematic issue itself.

Accordingly, this time we will consider the use of the problem-based learning method within the course on "General Framework of the Political and Legal Relations between Georgia and the European Union" (part of the curriculum of the TSU bachelor's program of European Studies) in the context of the strategic communication against anti-western propaganda. In particular, we are interested in the use of this method by distance learning.

In order to use the problem-based learning method, specific anti-Western and anti-EU propaganda messages will be presented to students and they will be asked to come up with their arguments against it. It is better if these messages are given to the students in advance so that they can find/process additional materials to form their opinion. A special time should be devoted to discussion/brainstorming of arguments against each propaganda message. Students will not be divided into groups and there will be a general discussion. It is important that all students will be given the opportunity to express their opinions. It should be allowed to evaluate other student's opinions and express counterarguments. It is also possible to vote which arguments the audience considers stronger. However, there are often no single and correct answers to the presented topic, and it is important to be able to reconcile the opinions expressed and draw conclusions. Later, it will be explained to the students what hybrid threats mean and how anti-Western propaganda is working, what its methods and goals are, what the practice of responding to them is, and what approach by Georgia in this regard is chosen.

I would like to emphasize the opportunity to highlight the value component during problem-based learning. Often the elements of propaganda are built against the so-called European values, such as democracy, rule of law, equality, protection of human rights, freedom of expression, etc. In other words: the values, which bind together the European community, as well as the EU member states. Therefore, in formulating arguments against propaganda, the student should grasp and try to deeply understand the benefits of these values. During the training, emphasis will be placed on such value-related propaganda topics. Besides, propaganda myths built on false or distorted information can also be distinguished, and it is important to answer them as well. For this kind of cases the students have to be suggested an opportunities to find and familiarize themselves with valid and objective information. The knowledge and experience gained by this method have a great practical purpose as students come across examples of anti-Western propaganda very often in real live. Thus, they will not only be able to distinguish and identify the mentioned propaganda, but also to defend objective opinions with arguments and help others to form an accurate social or political position.

Based on both my practical experience and different researches on this topic, it can be said that students' motivation and interest towards the discussed issues increases during problem-based learning that contributes to its comprehensive study. In addition to the above, students develop critical thinking, evidence based discussion, problem solving, group working and communication skills.

In the context of strategic communication against anti-Western propaganda, the use of the problem-based learning method in distance education has no fundamental differences compared to the face to face learning. The technical side allows the lecturer to conduct the teaching process practically without substantial deficiencies, ensure the good involvement of students, control the content of the topic and timing, as well as evaluate the students thoroughly. Some technical means, like the ability to send written questions, allow the

lecture time to be used more effectively. However, to support discussion and raise motivation, it is appropriate to conduct an oral discussion.

Given that problem-based learning requires extensive interaction between the lecturer and the student as well as the students themselves, conducting it distantly is certainly associated with some limitations. First of all, this refers to the limited opportunity to bring forward the emotional component related to the discussed issue, as well as the formation of a sense of teamwork on the part of students and the use of non-linguistic communication abilities. The task of ensuring high interest and activity on the part of all students is complicated, too.

In the case of problem-based learning, as well as in the case of case study, it is of great importance for the lecturer to properly manage and moderate the teaching process in order to overcome the mentioned limitations. It is key for every student to understand the teaching approaches and principles as well as the thematic task right from the beginning, as well as to have information about the discussed issue before the lecture and to work on finding and processing additional information. The lecturer, while moderating, should encourage discussion, try to increase students' interest by emphasizing the value and practical aspects of the issue, and ensure their maximum involvement in this discussions and debates. This time, it is also necessary to fully arrange such a simple technical aspect as turned on video eye and written name under the image for all participants.

To summaries, it is possible to say that within the framework of the course on "General Framework of the Political and Legal Relations between Georgia and the European Union" of the TSU bachelor's program of European Studies, the distance use of the problem-based teaching method in the context of the topic of strategic communication against anti-Western propaganda is successfully possible and is linked with only minimal difficulties. The need for high emotional background and active participation in discussions could be considered as such. However, these difficulties can be overcome to a significant extent under the conditions of proper planning of teaching process and active moderation. McLinden et al. From the University of Birmingham, in his article "Participation in Online Problem Based Learning: Insights from postgraduate teachers studying through open and distance education" states that: "… through the appropriate design and use of learning technologies, PBL can be adapted for use in the professional development of students studying through open and distance education." (2006, p. 348).

Difficulties of assessment

In general, assessment is quite a complex process and is associated with many challenges. Based on my own practical experience, I noted that objective and fair assessment becomes even more difficult in the conditions of distance learning. These difficulties are especially manifested in the conditions of the written exam during the summative assessment to determine the depths of knowledge, when it is quite difficult to control how honest are the students in its demonstration. Specifically, we are talking about the written exam, during which students are given the task of answering questions related to the learned material. Students are requested to leave the video eye turned on and refrain from using Internet sources during the exam. Unfortunately, in practice there are cases of abuse of distance exam restrictions. Plagiarism may occur on the part of the student by using relevant information found in the Internet. Students often are searching for the respective material in another language, then translate it with automatic online translation programs and copy the translated text. This significantly complicates the detection of plagiarism through using search engines during the checking of the papers.

In the above specific case, it is practically impossible to solve the problem by stricter control. In these circumstances, I think, it is necessary to change the approach and ask such questions, the answer to which requires not only the presentation of information, but also the manifestation of critical thinking and a creative approach to the issue. This is emphasized by Espinoza and Najera in their article "How to correct teaching methods that favor plagiarism: recommendations from teachers and students in a Spanish language distance education university", where it is recommended: "Require creative individualized work that cannot be plagiarized because it can only be created by the mind of the student." (2014, p. 1076). Along with the above, it is of great importance to explain to the students the significance of correct assessment. It is desirable for the students to understand that it is in their interest to receive objective information about their successes and difficulties in learning. After all, the assessment has many goals, among which is the proper planning of the further learning

process and the encouragement of acquiring additional knowledge. The mentioned goals should be explained in case of using the teaching methods mentioned in this article, too.

In accordance with the above mentioned:

- While working on a presentation about visa-free travel and movement of citizens between the EU and Georgia that includes group and collaborative elements of learning lecturer could use for evaluation: peer evaluation by students, evaluation of the ability to connect knowledge and practice, and active participation in the common work.
- For evaluation of students during the simulation of the Georgia-EU Association Council used for the role-playing, along with the knowledge it is possible to focus on the correct understanding of the role, openness and willingness to cooperate, and activity. This time it could be appropriate to ask students for peer evaluation, too.
- During distance learning on the example of the reform provided by the Association Agreement between the EU and Georgia, for lecturer evaluating the students it is important to take into account the student's activity, communication skills, analytical abilities and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge into practice. The same can be said about the evaluation of students when problem-based distance learning is used with the topic of strategic communication against anti-Western propaganda.

In distance learning with all the above-mentioned methods, it is possible and even desirable to use formative assessments in the form of comments along with the summative assessment. This will further encourage students' interest, independence, and self-confidence, consequently the quality of teaching will increase. Berika Shukakidze, the head of the National Center of Teacher Professional Development, notes that: "The format of distance learning has further triggered the issue of transition to a formative assessment model and canceling grades" (2020, Ether Gwineria's presentation on evaluation during the workshop of the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Projects EUStBA , slide 20). I agree with the first part of this opinion that distance learning is better suited to formative assessment, however, I believe that maintaining the practice of marking, or in our particular case, grading, is also important in order to maximize the positive outcomes coming from assessment.

In general, it should be mentioned that the use of different teaching and assessment methods referred to in this article is even more relevant in distance education, because compared to the traditional lecture-written exam scheme, these methods increase the objectivity and accuracy of assessment, facilitates individualism and the desire/interest towards education itself.

Conclusions

The present article analyzes the use of several modern methods of teaching-learning in the conditions of distance learning. In particular, the use of distance group and collaborative learning, role-playing, case study and problem-based learning methods is discussed.

The article compares the use of these methods in contact and distance education. Special attention is paid to the difficulties expected in distance learning and recommendations are offered on possible ways to overcome these difficulties.

The analysis presented in the article, is based on my own practical experience, together with indicated respective scientific works. My experience was accumulated as a result of teaching the topic of cooperation between Georgia and the European Union, as well as directly working on these topics for about 15 years in different positions in the public sector. Coming from the nature of the above-mentioned teaching methods that is connected with practical activities it is also true that the experience related to working on European integration issues significantly helps us to appropriately use these teaching methods. One of the reasons for this is that practical experience helps to properly plan and moderate communications related to these teaching methods.

As can be seen from the observation and analysis, the case study method, which is presented on the example of the reform from the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, and the problem-based learning method, which is presented on the example of strategic communication against anti-Western propaganda, can be used practically as successfully in distance learning as in contact learning. Using these methods remotely involves only minimal difficulties. Some of these difficulties that can arise in case study and problem-based learning are mainly related to visual and emotional limitations. However, these difficulties can be overcome to a significant

extent with the correct planning of the teaching process and in the conditions of encouraging and active moderation from the lecturer.

The use of role-playing by distantly modeling of certain institutional structures of Georgia-EU cooperation could be quite effective, although in this case there also might emerge some challenges such as ensuring the high activity of students and creating the preferred emotional background for the modeling. It is almost not possible to completely eliminate these difficulties, although with certain approaches it is possible to reduce them.

Among the methods discussed in this article for distance learning, it seems the most difficult is the use of elements of group and cooperative learning, which takes place when working in small groups of students on a presentation. Therefore, the use of this method in distance learning may not be as effective as in contact learning. At the same time, with significant efforts it is still possible to solve the problems that have arisen, and for this it is necessary to properly instruct students, define their responsibilities and ensure more engagement. Interestingly, when using elements of group and cooperative learning, there are also some issues such as reduction of a waste of time, for which distance learning makes it easier to solve the problem.

Based on all of the above, it can be said that the use of modern methods in distance education is associated with more difficulties than the use of traditional methods in the same distance education. At the same time, the development of electronic technologies and creative approaches allow us to overcome almost all distance learning related problems.

Along the same line, it can be noted that proper evaluation of student becomes challenging during distance learning. In particular, the summative assessment of knowledge in written exam conditions is associated with many difficulties. Therefore, the use of the teaching methods presented in this article facilitates increasing the objectivity of the assessment. Also, application of formative assessments via comments alongside with the summative assessment develops communication skills, facilitates individualism and enhances interest in education.

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