



IETC 2014

Educational technologies for maturing democratic approaches to educational practices in Ukraine

David V. Powell^{a*}, Svitlana Kuzmina^b, Tamara Yamchynska^c, Oleksandr V. Shestopalyuk^d, Yevheniy Kuzmin^e

^a*Southeast Missouri State University, One University Plaza, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701., USA*

^b*Vinnitsa State Pedagogical University, Ostrozhske Street 32, 21100 Vinnitsa, Ukraine*

^c*Vinnitsa State Pedagogical University, Ostrozhske Street 32, 21100 Vinnitsa, Ukraine*

^d*Vinnitsa State Pedagogical University, Ostrozhske Street 32, 21100 Vinnitsa, Ukraine*

^e*Vinnitsa National Technical University, Prosp. Khmelnytske 95, 21021 Vinnitsa, Ukraine*

Abstract

Vinnitsa State Pedagogical University has taken significant steps in policy and practice toward democratization of education. However, many Ukrainian universities have failed to meet European standards required of the Bologna Process, intended to render Ukrainian higher education equal to leading European universities. Superficial changes have not eliminated corruption, poor educational quality, excessive administrative control, or a workload that leaves little room for research or creative work. This paper shares the VSPU experience integrating educational technologies to promote democratization of pedagogy, providing students and faculty with better opportunities for professional growth to become competitive in the educational market of our time.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).
Peer-review under responsibility of the Sakarya University.

Keywords: Democratization; Ukraine; Distance Learning; Technology; Web-Blended Learning; International Partnership

1. Introduction

* Corresponding author. Tel.: 1-573-651-2409; fax:.
E-mail address: dpowell@semo.edu

On May 19 2005 the Ukrainian Ministry of Education (MES) signed a letter of commitment to join the Bologna Process (Educational Portal 2013). At the time, the Bologna Process was viewed as a breath of fresh air, offering a ready-made, time-tested model of serving knowledge without corruption, and with a strong focus on the quality of educational practices to facilitate close cooperation between governments, universities, students, and faculty (Bologna Process, 2010).

Despite nearly 15 years of independence, attempts to modernize and democratize Ukrainian higher education away from the corrupt and highly bureaucratic system inherited from the Soviet Union had reached a stalemate. A university education was no longer free for all students, but educational costs continued to increase and the content of educational practices remained essentially unchanged, with the same pedagogies, governance structures and lack of technology, resulting in poor quality education. Consequently, Ukrainian diplomas were still not valid in any other country except the post-Soviet Union republics.

Joining the Bologna Process represented a serious attempt to break away from the approaches and practices propagated in the Soviet Union, which were rooted deeply in the minds and habits of teachers and administrators. Alignment with the goals of the European Higher Education Area promoted mobility and diversity, providing students and faculty from Ukraine with equal opportunities to grow deeper in professionalism through cross-cultural exchange, democratizing and enhancing the quality of education (Bologna Process, 2010).

2. Historical context

2.1. Official support for technology-based education in Ukraine

The Ukrainian government has struggled to integrate the technology necessary to upgrade and democratize education. In 2000, the Ukrainian President endorsed support for Internet access (Alekseychick, 2001) and the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) established the Ukrainian Distance Learning Center (Shunevych, 2002; EdNU, 2010). This initiative was expanded on April 17, 2002, by a Regulation of the President, creating a consortium of six universities to establish “a pedagogical experiment in distance learning.” On January 21, 2004, MES Order #40 established official policies and practices for technology-based distance education. When Ukraine joined the Bologna Process in 2005, a five-year plan was developed, “providing all Ukrainian schools and colleges with modern computer equipment ... establishing special regional centers of distance education and local internet networks in universities,” (Government Portal, 2005). However, there were few new developments in policy or practice as follow-up.

Renewed interest in technology-assisted distance education re-emerged in 2011, as a way to optimize work plans and reduce “obsolete forms of work and themes.” Training of teachers for informatics was identified as a priority (Government Portal, 2011), and in 2012 and 2013, there was a significant surge in official government support for distance learning (MES: October 17, 2012; January 18, 2013; April 19, 2013; April 23, 2013; June 12, 2013; June 17, 2013). On April 25, 2013, Order No. 466 “On approval of distance education,” updated and superseded the 2004 law with extensive definitional and logistical support.

Official state announcements and practices in the field can be difficult to reconcile. Even the MES acknowledged in a press release on June 17, 2013, “For many years in Ukraine there was not a clear idea of distance learning” and “different approaches to its organization in different schools” resulted in negative and low-grade examples adversely affecting public perception. Many Ukrainian Internet sites claiming research or practice in distance learning are outdated or without substance. Many courses that do exist appear little different from correspondence courses or remote lectures via television or Skype, however there are as many as eight to ten institutions of higher education in Ukraine that are significantly involved in distance education (Powell, Kuzmina, Yamchynska, Shestopalyuk, & Kuzmin, 2013). Critical barriers to technology-based education include lack of funding (especially for smaller districts and institutions), lack of faculty experience designing technology-based courses, psychological unpreparedness for interactions via technology, lack of computer literacy, and lack of computer or Internet access (Shunevych, 2002; Valiliev, Lavrik & Lyubchak, 2007; Klokar, Benderets & Borbit, 2011; MES, January 18, 2013).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1110862>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1110862>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)