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Reasonability and efficacy of public network use in educational process

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Abstract. The article deals with the conditions and methods of public network use, substantiates prospects and at the same time problems of its wide use among students, analyzes their influence upon the formation of a student's individual educational medium from the position of a comprehensive combination with the distance learning process. The use of public networks in educational process has been analyzed, and at the same time it has been proved that they can not substitute distance learning system, but their synergy will increase the level of students' training substantially.

Keywords: public networks, distance learning, students

Problem statement and topicality of the study. Nowadays electron learning (e-learning) in the world develops rather intensively due to increased requirements on educational services, searching new methods of improvement of their availability and the level of development of information computer technologies (ICT). The USA and Canada have the biggest number of e-learning. Great Britain, Germany, Italy and France are the leaders among European countries [1]. UNESCO experts consider that e-learning should be introduced into the educational process in order to bring the qualification of specialists in correspondence with the level of information society. It will direct student toward a new style of education and promote the development of skills and abilities for further education during the whole life [2].

Internet, as a public network, has become widely spread in the world. Public network is a structure formed by individuals or organizations. It reflects relations between them through various social interrelations, realizes the needs of those who require communication with people having the same hobbies, professions, views etc. this term was first introduced in 1954 by J.A. Barnes. The American portal Classmates.com. was a pioneer among public networks in Internet. It was elaborated in 1995. The project appeared to be very successful provoking a dozen of analogical services in the following years. But an official beginning of public network boom was 2003-2004 when LinkedIn, MySpace and Facebook were launched. If LinkedIn was created with the aim to establish/support business contacts, the owners of MySpace and Facebook first of all relied on the satisfaction of human needs for self-expression [3]. It is self-expression that is the highest human need even passing ahead of recognition and communication. Public networks have become so to say Internet-shelter where everyone can find technical and social base to create the virtual "Me". Every user has received the opportunity not only communicate and create, but share the results of one's creativity with many-million audience of this or that public network [4].

Today the biggest public network in the world Facebook includes more than a billion of active users. According to the statistical data students working in the virtual medium demonstrate better progress than those working in traditional forms of education [5]. It is carelessly to ignore so much powerful modern instrument of communication as public networks. Public networks are recommended to be used in a comprehensive combination with the systems of distance learning and traditional forms.

Analysis of latest studies and publications. According to the results of learning scientific sources the possibility of using public networks in educational process is investigated by a number of home and foreign researchers, such as A.M. Anisimov, V.Yu. Bykov, N.V. Sharonova, O.S. Vo-

ronkin, M.I. Zhaldak, [6-10]. Their works deal with the possibility and experience of use of public networks in educational process. A comprehensive parallel use of public networks and systems of distance learning with traditional forms of giving educational services is not yet substantially validated and it is not supported by specific methods and models.

Objectives of the article are to find reasonability and efficacy of use of public networks in the combination with traditional methods of education.

Description of the main material. Public networks is a program software in Internet enabling users to create their own profiles and connect with other users in virtual space. Standard public networks enable the users to join people to their own network, to contact with other users through their acquaintance, to send messages, to place photos, texts and any other content. Usually you can place personal information about yourself on the site (date of birth, school, higher educational establishment, hobbies etc.) and other users can find his/her account. There are open and closed public networks. One of the usual features of public networks is the system of "friends" and "groups".

Thus, in the course of analysis of the data obtained we have distinguished two kinds of public networks performing educational function:

1. Free public networks including:
 - A. Non-specialized networks (occupational societies are not of the primary concern).
 - B. Merely occupational societies of practical workers - Community Practice.
2. Public networks in a corporate format.

There are the following advantages of using public networks:

- 1) it is fashionable and free, practically every student will be glad to use this site for education; 2) a student is at home in his usual surrounding which accelerates the adaptation process to peculiarities of education at higher educational establishment; 3) there is no pressure from other students and one can ask any even the most stupid question and not to be mocked at; 4) the possibility to learn the specificity concerning certain subjects and teachers, their requirements; 5) the possibility to create his own educational content both as a student and a teacher, which makes their interrelations more democratic; 6) learning in public network medium students are able to master modern skills, means and methods of communication with other people and analysis of information in the epoch of information society; 7) public networks allow the students to share their experience not only with the students of the same year but with the whole world; 8) in case a student missed a class he/she does not fall out of educational process, and can participate in educational work in on-line regime; 9) par-

ents also may be involved in educational process; 10) the number of students involved in public networks is bigger than in other web-resources, students appear in public networks several times a day.

In addition, pressing a button in public networks one is able to share impressions and achievements with a great number of members in the same network, which may be very useful from the point of view a university advertising and involving new learners. Thus, public networks may become a valid educational medium, where everyone can spend his/her time not only looking through the news and friends' sites, but receive a lot of knowledge in a convenient time and comfortable surrounding in an available form.

Considering the experience of using public networks in education, positive psychological, social and pedagogical arguments of this solution should be mentioned. At the same time, it is difficult to underestimate the systems of distance learning which are characterized by:

1) modularity of the structure of educational programs (educational material is divided into modules containing the objects of a various nature – text, graphic, image, audio, animation, video etc., as a rule, they are stored in data base and are available depending on the requirements of subjects involved in the process of learning, individualization of education is the result of such an approach – students receive only necessary information acquiring knowledge in a desired rate);

2) teacher's role: a teacher coordinates educational-cognitive process, corrects the course he teaches, guides educational projects, checks current tasks, give consultations in making individual educational plan, coordinates the work of educational groups of mutual support;

3) specialized forms to control the quality of educational achievements: traditional forms to control the quality of education and distance ones (interview, practical, course and projects, externship, work in the medium of computer intellectual testing systems);

4) expert on-line help: teachers or experts (instructors of the course) are available in the network to conduct consultations, give answers to questions, organize discussions;

5) possibilities for cooperation: by means of appropriate software there is an opportunity to organize on-line conferences, mutual work on the students' project.

Modern conditions of teaching at higher medical educational establishments require continuous work and abilities to combine classical forms of teaching with new approaches to education. With appearance of up-to-date information technologies and technical aid classical traditional forms of teaching should not be forgotten, which in its turn, will ensure to master a maximal level of educational material. In case the system includes only the use of electron technologies of education the following problems may occur:

1. Difficulty to make quick changes in case the education has already started.
2. Necessity to form additional motivation of learners which is conducted with the use of technologies of electron education as compared to other forms of education.
3. Necessity of high investments while organizing the medium of electron education.
4. High dependence on technical infrastructure. Disorders in the infrastructure can lead to decreased efficacy or complete disruption of education.
5. Absence of an adequate number of professionals in the sphere of electron education technologies.
6. High investments and making changes in educational content.

Conclusions

1. In contemporary conditions public networks are a powerful communication instrument, which use for professional training of medical students increases their information culture. 2. The use of public networks in educational process has been analyzed, and at the same time it has been proved that they can not substitute distance learning system, but their synergy will increase the level of students' training substantially. 3. Traditional forms of education remain an important foundation and base.

Prospects of further study

Further work is planned to be devoted to the search of specific models of synergic use of public networks, systems of distance and traditional learning.

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Целесообразность и эффективность использования социальных сетей в учебном процессе

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются условия и способы использования социальных сетей в учебном процессе, обосновываются перспективы и в то же время проблемы их широкого использования среди студентов, анализируется их влияние на формирование индивидуальной образовательной среды студента с позиций комплексного сочетания процесса обучения на расстоянии. Было проанализировано использование социальных сетей в учебном процессе, и в то же время доказано, что они не могут заменить системы дистанционного обучения, но их синергия позволит существенно повысить уровень подготовки студентов.

Ключевые слова: социальные сети, дистанционное обучение, студенты