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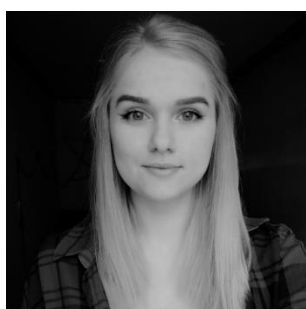
QUALITY OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST TRAINING IN ONLINE SPACE

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the definition of the basic provisions of training psychologists in the conditions of forced distance learning. The **purpose** of the study is to analyze the main qualities that a future psychologist should have, and to consider the impact of online learning (forced distance learning) on their quality and formation. The main objectives include: analyze theoretical framework of modern training of a psychologist; analyze the role of digital and online technologies in teaching future psychologists; analyze the answers given by student psychologists during a survey aimed at determining the role of online learning; propose recommendations for improving the learning process of future psychologists in a distance / blended learning.

Among the research **methods** used, the following methods of scientific research were defining: analysis and generalization of scientific and methodological sources, governmental documents on the topic of research for the theoretical substantiation of the research problem, modeling of the data obtained. The authors also conducted a survey.

The **results** of the study show that based on the analysis of the answers received from psychology-students, we can draw several main conclusions: most students would prefer classroom or blended learning; main difficulties faced by students: technical / internet problems, motivation (self-organization), difficulties in communicating with teachers; a significant part of students do not have practical skills and relevant information on working in the online space. Based on the analysis of the obtained results and own experience of work and study at the School of Psychology, recommendations are provided for first-year students and teachers in online learning.

In **conclusion**, in the context of improving the quality of training of future psychologists in distance and blended learning, we recommend implementing from the first semesters of study in university courses aimed at familiarizing students with the norms of behavior in the digital space.

KEYWORDS: *Forced Distance Learning, Blended Learning, Online Learning, Students, Psychologists, Educational Process.*

INTRODUCTION

The global difficulties that humanity faces in the context of the involving of quarantine restrictions in 2020/21 led to the transition of education in higher educational institutions and other educational institutions to compulsory distance learning. It has happened in a very short time and the level of adaptation of the participants in the educational process significantly affected the quality of education.

It should be noted, that many teachers of the older generation had to face the problem of mastering new digital technologies. This process continues to this day, which altered their teaching model and, as a consequence: interest in the quality of presentation of material, feedback from students and tracking their progress.

Considering this problem, it is necessary to focus on specific participants in the educational process in higher education (HEIs). For this we propose to pay attention to students who are studying to be psychologists.

It should be noted, that the process of training psychology students includes many disciplines that imply direct personal contact, sometimes physical, as well as visual interaction. In the process of professional development, it is extremely necessary and important for future psychologists to learn to notice, track and analyze the emotional states of the reactions of other people, which are often expressed in body language, facial expressions, intonation, and behavior.

As practice shows, being in the conditions of distance learning, students are not able to observe the above factors (reactions), but sometimes they do not even intend to turn on the camera on their digital device during classes, which significantly reduces the chances of setting up a contact by the teacher-student and reduces the quality of education of future psychologists.

Repeatedly, teachers who run the disciplines of the psychological training cycle noted, that they do not feel connection with students, from which they experience great stress, they experience the state of "I seem to be talking to myself".

This requires significant moral strength in the process of overcoming these situations. But one way or another, according to our observations and previous studies of leading scientists (Aliyyah et al, 2020; Council of Chairs of Training Councils, 2020; Dhawan, 2020; Pozdnyakova & Pozdnyakov, 2017), the involvement of students in the educational process in forced distance learning is at a very low level and, accordingly, the rate of assimilation of educational content decreases.

It should be noted, that the greatest stress and misunderstanding on the side of teachers in working with students in conditions of forced distance learning (Nalivaiko, Vakulenko, & Zemlin, 2020) causes students, who turn off the camera and do their own things, with only a formal presence in the classroom, which obviously affects the quality of training of future professional psychologists and, in general, raises questions of their future professional suitability.

General problems of organizing the learning process of psychologists have been studied by (Murphy, Levant, Hall & Glueckauf, 2007; Boggs & Douce, 2000; Chu, Emmons, Wong, Goldblum, Reiser, Barrera & Byrd-Olmstead, 2012; Rodolfa, Bent, Eisman, Nelson, Rehm & Ritchie, 2005; Rozensky, 2013). Online education for future psychologists has been studied by (McCord, Saenz, Armstrong & Elliott, 2015; Simpson, Guerrini, & Rochford, 2015). The combination of online and offline (traditional) classroom learning has been explored by such scholars (Bell, Self, Davis, Conway, Washburn & Crepeau-Hobson, 2020; Van Doorn, & Van Doorn, 2014).

The above analysis of sources shows, that the issues of training psychology students in online learning (HEIs) do not reflect the views of students as one of the main stakeholders on the issue of the quality of

education in the context of forced distance learning.

Purpose of the study to analyze the main qualities that a future psychologist should have and consider the impact of online learning (forced distance learning) on their quality and formation.

The main objectives of the research:

1. Consider the theoretical framework of modern training of a psychologist.
2. Analyze the role of digital and online technologies in teaching future psychologists.
3. Analyze the answers given by student psychologists during a survey aimed at determining the role of online learning.
4. Give recommendations for improving the learning process of future psychologists in a distance / blended learning.

METHODOLOGY

Among the research methods used, the following methods of scientific research were defining: analysis and generalization of scientific and methodological sources, governmental documents on the topic of research for the theoretical substantiation of the research problem, modeling of the data obtained. The authors also conducted a survey.

25 students of the first and 28 students of the fourth year of psychology departments of different universities of Kharkov region participated (52 participants of different genders). It is important to note, that first-year students do not have a clear idea of offline study at (universities) yet, 4-year students can more confidently compare the advantages and disadvantages of both forms of training organization.

The survey was conducted on a voluntary basis using Google Forms from 01.04 to 20.04.2021 based on the partial anonymity of

the participants (only the year of study was indicated).

All participants answered 13 questions, those were submitted in the Google Form. To summarize the results obtained. The distribution of students by year of study will be used in further research. This research is the first stage of a more global scientific search.

The survey included the following questions and answer options:

1. *Your study year?*
2. *Your gender?*
3. *Rate the quality of your online education, where 1 is terrible and 7 is perfect*
4. *Rate the quality of your offline classroom experience, where 1 is terrible and 7 is perfect.*
5. *Which of the statements best describes blended forms of education (online/offline in a classroom) for you?*
6. *What form of education would you prefer?*
7. *In what way do you feel online learning affects the quality of your education?*
8. *What disadvantages do you have personally with online learning?*
9. *What impact do you feel online education will have on your professional formation?*
10. *In a psychology faculty, what would provide the ideal conditions for your study?*
11. *Does the quality of education you are currently receiving meet your expectations?*
12. *What option best describes your view of offline (traditional) classroom learning?*
13. *What changes in the educational process do you expect in the near future?*

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The training of psychologists in modern realities requires significant attention to the

development of a complex of abilities that a student psychologist has.

This process must be built on the principles of systematicity and availability of knowledge and requirements for students. The most suitable approaches in this process can be called: competence-based and personality-oriented approaches in the organization of educational work with students.

It is important not to forget, that the work of psychologists is primarily aimed at interacting with people and therefore it is necessary to consider the training of future psychologists through the prism of the humanitarian paradigm of psychological education.

Professional psychological disciplines (Canadian Psychological Association (2006) should be one of the main criteria for increasing the effectiveness of training of future psychologists, and an important criteria should be an increase in the effectiveness of training students for the acquisition and development of appropriate professional psychological competencies, taking into account not only the requirements of modern educational standards, but also the needs of the labor market, and also the possibilities of creating a comfortable educational environment for the formation and development of the required knowledge and skills of trainees (Derkach, 2014; Fryer, D., & Fox, 2018).

In the context of the introduction of forced distance learning under quarantine conditions, it caused a huge wave of transformation of the educational process in HEIs and psychological education did not remain on the sidelines.

From the previously studies (Bell et al, 2020; Nalivaiko, Vakulenko, & Zemlin, 2020), we can draw out several important regularities that significantly affect the process of

obtaining education by students of higher educational institutions in the context of traditional and distance learning.

Let's consider some of them. Obtaining an online education is a very convenient process, as it significantly saves the time that students usually spend on getting to the educational institution and moving around its territory (campus).

On the side of the teachers, the process of preparing for classes is more resource-intensive and due to the short transition period to this type of training, not all teachers have time to adapt and create really high-quality classes, giving students enough workload, attention, communication and interaction opportunities.

We noticed that in most cases, the process of training specialists (psychologists) online significantly affects their academic performance not for the better. It is clear that students have an increased risk of being distracted, and their attention span falls greatly, since it is much more difficult to focus on a lecture in video format (Xu, D., & Xu, Y, 2019).

Online education in psychology has a future, but at this stage, the level of technology development does not allow training psychologists at the same level as offline due to the difficulties of adapting subjects that imply face-to-face interaction, practical exercises and a specific atmosphere.

Distance learning can be viewed as a necessary tool or "backup" form of education (introduction of quarantine restrictions, unforeseen circumstances, the presence of distance between the participants in the educational process, etc.). This form of education can definitely positively affect the ability of students to manage their own time, tasks that they have to perform, which subsequently contributes

to the formation of a higher sense of responsibility for their own work and allows them to apply this skill in real life conditions very effectively (work, personal interactions, and also digital customer service).

The feedback obtained as a result of this study along with a survey made it possible to single out a very significant factor in the decrease in student performance – this is being at home on a permanent basis (forced self-isolation or as a result of the introduction of quarantine).

In such conditions, students may feel discomfort from the presence of other people or pets with whom the student may be in the same room. It is also important to note that an unstable Internet connection, in some cases a manifestation of an abusive attitude towards a student within the family or people with whom they live, can serve as a frequent factor in the disruption of classes in online education.

A complex of such factors can have a negative impact on the mental health and well-being of a student, which in turn can affect his perception of educational material, its assimilation and as a result of educational activity.

RESULTS

The survey showed quite interesting results in the context of forced distance learning, which lasts from March 2020 to April 2021 and significantly affects the training of future psychologists. It is important to note that each of the students completed a 13-question survey, which shows the need for further research in this area with an emphasis on the experiences and opinions of students in the field of non-traditional (digital) approaches in organizing the learning process of future psychologists.

The first and second questions were aimed at determining the qualitative and gender distribution of the respondents. This data will be used in study in the future. The results obtained for this study helped to

understand that the majority of respondents are women, which is invested in the general trend of receiving psychological education around the world (Fig.1.) (Clay, 2017).

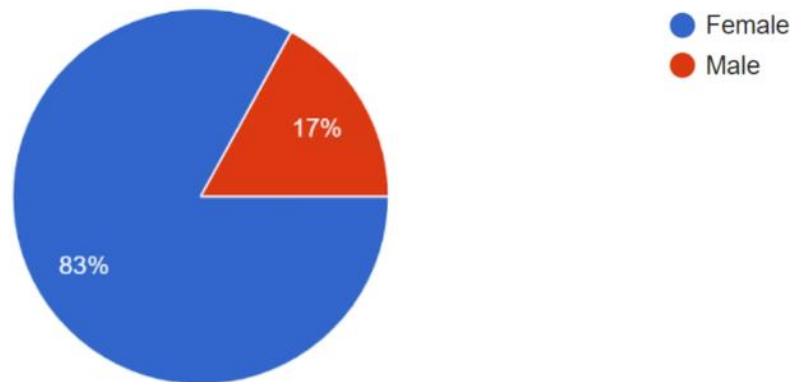


Figure 1. *Your gender*

As we can see in Fig. 2. the absolute majority of the respondents believe that the classroom education that they received or

receive in a blended form is beneficial in their opinion.

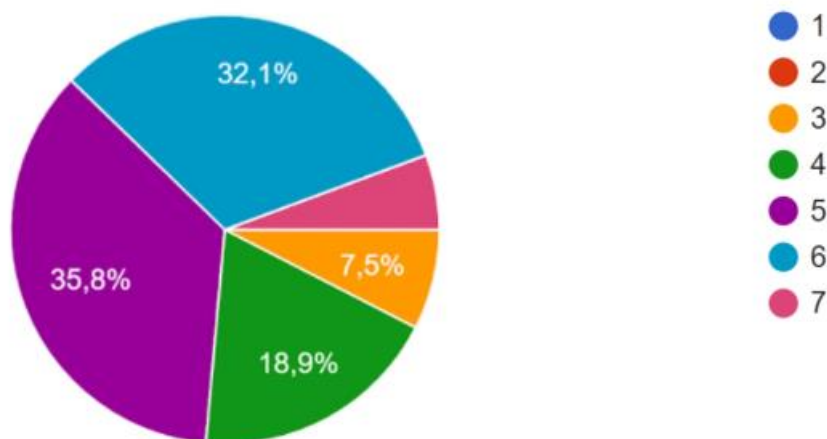


Figure 2. *Rate the quality of your online education, where 1 is terrible and 7 is perfect*

With distance education, everything is not so simple (it is necessary to emphasize that this forced distance learning is organized in a hurry and without preliminary preparation in most cases). We see that more than 45% of the

respondents have a negative attitude to distance education. This indicates that the process of organizing distance and online education requires significant improvements (Fig. 3.).

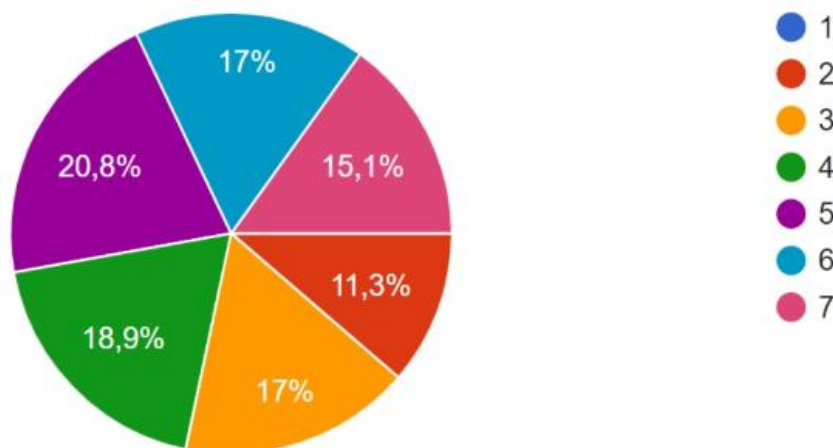


Figure 3. Rate the quality of your offline classroom experience, where 1 is terrible and 7 is perfect

Considering the results of question number 5, we see the opposite situation, where students who answered “normal” and more positively make up 68% of all respondents.

Although it should be noted that 32% of the dissatisfied is a significant indicator that requires a deeper study. The sixth question raises the topic of choosing the most

acceptable form of organization of training for future psychologists in the context of their professional development.

As we can see in Fig. 4 answers were divided by almost equal thirds. With a slight predominance of classroom and blended forms of training organization.

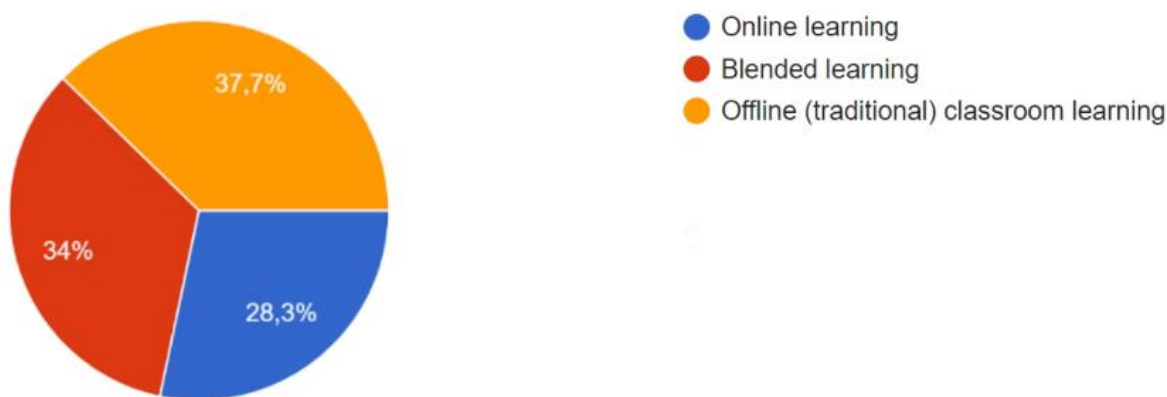


Figure 4. What form of education would you prefer?

In our opinion, the answers to the seventh question are valuable. We can clearly see the strong desire of students, despite the difficulties in dealing with the new conditions for obtaining the necessary

competencies and knowledge, which in turn indicates the presence of the potential for the introduction of digital technologies in education, but in an understandable and accessible form (Fig.5).

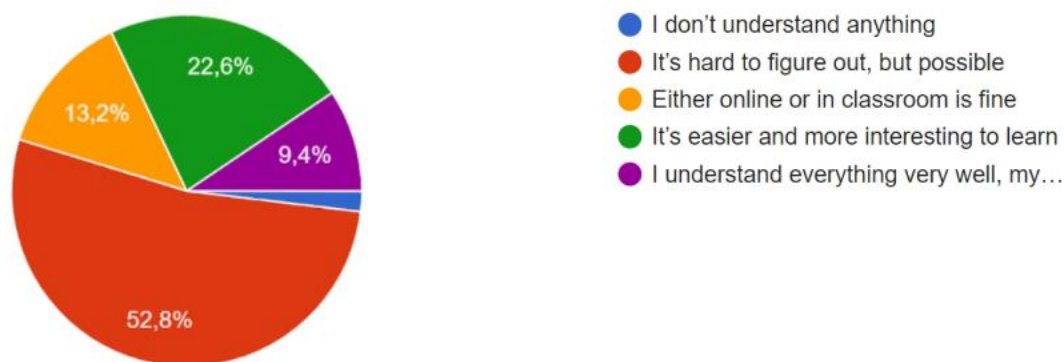


Figure 5. In what way do you feel online learning affects the quality of your education?

An analysis of the open answers received to the eighth question from the questionnaire showed some tendencies in the process of teaching future psychologists from their point of view (we confirm with the direct speech of the respondents):

1. Demotivating educational activities in the online space:

"Different technical capabilities of students, great fatigue from the constant sitting at the computer, problems with the Internet connection, the feeling of unreality of what is happening, I cannot listen to the teachers. Earlier, even if you listen to a lecture, but do your own thing in the auditorium, then the material is postponed, now it is empty, the impossibility of some practical lessons";

"Sometimes I lose concentration, but this is not a problem at all. This happens and it is hard to force yourself to pair up in person".

2. Lack of "live" contact with participants in the educational process (students, teachers):

"Lack of contact with teachers, classmates. Disorganization of the workplace at home";

"There is no live communication".

3. The inability of the available digital tools to fully meet the necessary conditions for training a psychologist according to existing programs:

"Practical things that need to be shown in the classroom, unfortunately, cannot be shown remotely (online)";

"Minimum amount of explanations of the material, mostly self-study".

4. Lack of digital culture at the early stages of the implementation of forced distance learning (uncertain norms of behavior in the digital space):

"It is inconvenient to hold seminars, especially those that are held in a discussion format, since everyone interrupts each other, the microphones are turned on at the same time, conflicts arise. In addition, there is a lack of direct contact with people. This is, in general, all tiresome";

"It is impossible to determine in what order students answer in class, often several people start speaking at the same time, some students lack the opportunity to earn points because of this".

5. Technical problems and unpreparedness of participants in the educational process for the realities of forced distance learning:

"Very often, classes are either canceled or are still held, but for show. Also, not everyone has the opportunity to always go to classes with cameras and a perfectly working

Internet. All programs freeze, after which the lesson is already ineffective”.

“Connection quality. Less knowledge requirements. You can, in principle, not learn. There is no lively discussion of any issue, you do not want to turn on the

microphone again to say something because everything will start to sound bad”.

According to students, they do not have a clear idea of how forced distance learning will affect their professional development and we can see in Fig. 6. in the context of an almost equal division of opinions.

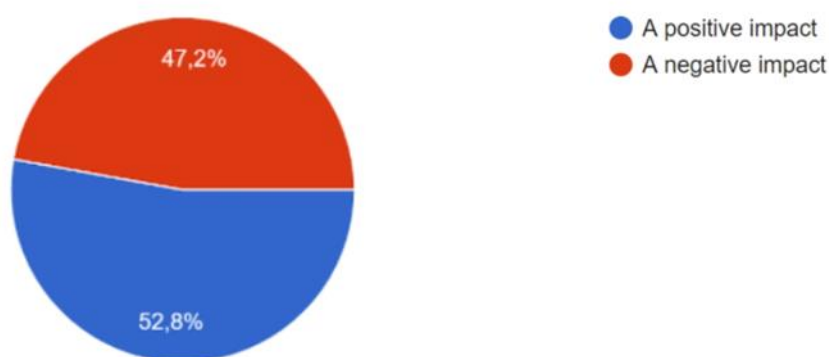


Figure 5. What impact do you feel online education will have on your professional formation?

The tenth question is devoted to the definition of the ideal learning conditions for students at the School of Psychology. Below we will present a number of the most typical answers to this difficult question (we confirm with the direct speech of the respondents):

1. *Blended learning, which allows you to learn practical skills live, and listen to lectures remotely, which is very convenient and therefore contributes to increasing the perception of information.*
2. *If teachers were respectful of students. If the seminars were aimed to develop practical skills, but not only to check homework ...*
3. *Professionalism of teachers, distance format, lectures in the form of video recordings, the ability not to interact with the mentor.*

Compilation of the respondents' answers made it possible to identify 4 areas of the

highest priority for students to the development of their professionalism:

1. More practical knowledge and skills, regardless of the form of training organization;
2. Blended form of education as the highest priority form of training future psychologists;
3. Applying of modern teaching technologies;
4. Improving the professional competence of teachers in the online / blended learning environment.

The eleventh and twelfth questions are devoted to the quality of education that students receive within the walls of their universities. Restrained neutral responses are observed. It can be concluded that the system of training future psychologists, especially in the distance format, needs transformations in accordance with the requirements of the time and the student-centered approach (Fig. 7-8.).

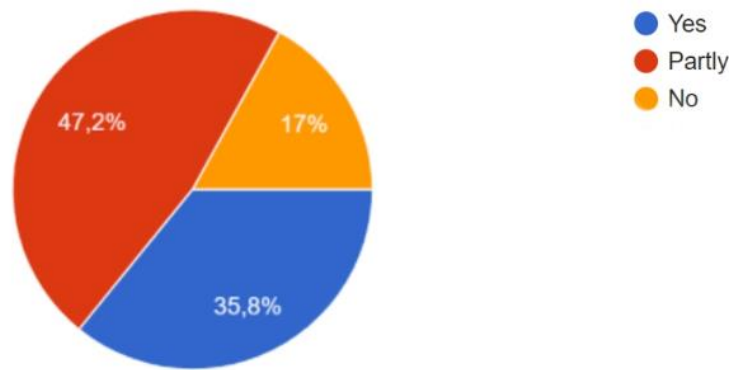


Figure 7. Does the quality of education you are currently receiving meet your expectations?



Figure 8. What option best describes your view of offline (traditional) classroom learning?

The final question, to which the respondents were asked to answer, was devoted to changes in educational activities in the near future. The following answers were the most revealing:

1. "Hopefully blended learning will prevail now".
2. "Changing the system, introducing more practice, young teachers".
3. "I hope that soon all teachers will get used to new technologies (which has already happened in most cases) and the learning process will be as comfortable as it was before (in the classroom)".
4. "Most likely, I am expecting the continuation of distance learning, since personally this form affects my self-development progressively".
5. "I hope that there will be an opportunity to choose distance learning or blended

learning, regardless of quarantine conditions".

6. "Hopefully no change. Distance learning is much more convenient, I am in control of myself, I spend more time studying and information is better absorbed.
7. "More classroom activities. I want to feel like a student, not a houseworm".

Thus, based on the analysis of the material received from psychology students, several main conclusions can be drawn:

- most students would prefer classroom or blended learning;
- main difficulties faced by students: technical / internet problems, motivation (self-organization), difficulties in communicating with teachers;
- a significant part of students lack practical skills in specialized disciplines,

relevant information, as well as modern teaching approaches from teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above results of the survey and its interpretation can serve as a good foundation for building an effective model of organizing the educational process of future psychologists.

We understand that changes will not be instantaneous, but improving educational programs is the main task for participants in the educational process. Only through joint efforts we can achieve positive result of improving the quality of psychological education at universities.

To do this, we want to present several recommendations for both students (1 year of study) and for teachers.

Recommendations for freshmen students:

1. It is important to establish communication channels with teachers. If it is not possible to do this directly, put forward your questions or wishes through the head of the group or the administration.
2. If it is important for you that everyone in the seminars receives points for their work – organize the order of speakers and who chooses which topic.
3. Before starting training in distance education - familiarize yourself with the rules and culture of behavior in the online space.
4. If you are unable to understand or complete some tasks due to the format of presentation - unite in groups. Understanding the material and completing the task together will be much more productive than by yourself.
5. If you feel a lack of practice, but would like to get it in the early years – ask questions of senior students or your teachers. It is quite possible that you will be prompted by programs outside the university, where you could get exactly practical skills as a future psychologist. Non-formal education is now becoming more and more popular.

6. Remember that writing research papers and publications is an important part of your training. This type of activity is aimed at systematizing your thinking and ability to find the necessary information. Also an important quality that helps to develop scientific activity is acquaintance and cooperation with other scientific psychologists. This approach will greatly expand your professional circle of contacts.

Recommendations for teachers:

1. If it is important for you to deliver high-quality material to students, learn to adapt to modern learning technologies, especially in digital format. Digital technologies in the near future 10-15 years will definitely not be able to replace live communication, but a qualified teacher of psychology must necessarily have the skills to organize the educational process based on modern information and communication technologies.
2. Asking students for help is not a shame! If you do not understand how certain programs work, ask students for help. It will definitely make your work and students work easier and more productive. It is important to note that joint development and joint activities in the digital space can improve the atmosphere of interaction and “break the ice” that arises when learning new things.
3. Provide students the opportunity to clearly see what and how many points they can get during the semester. A table with grades in a Moodle or a Google Table sent to the monitor will much better help students navigate the tasks

that they must complete and in their overall performance during the semester.

4. Interactive classes with preparation of students, presentations and constant interaction of students in pairs or students with a teacher will significantly increase student engagement and academic performance. Variety of applications and platforms can come to help teacher (Kahoot, Quizlet, Flipgrid, Actively Learn). The concentration and interest of students are the elements that we must maintain at the highest level.
5. In the context of online learning and the lack of direct contact between participants in the educational process, it is important to maintain communication. To do this, you can create a system of contacts and interaction between participants in the educational process, future psychologists are, first of all, humanists and their main task is to build the correct trajectory of interaction with future clients - become an example of openness and a facilitator of common activities.

To strengthen interaction within the educational team, conduct web quests and open consultations where each student can feel that his opinion is being heard.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, it can be concluded that the training of future psychologists in the online space, and especially in the conditions of forced distance learning, carries many risks and difficulties, both for the students themselves

and for the teachers. It is important to note that the study does not exhaust all aspects of training psychologists in the online space, this is especially important in the context of the transformation of the very foundations of training future professionals.

This process was caused by the crisis phenomena that were caused by the introduction of quarantine restrictions in the higher education system and a sharp transition to the online space. We can already conclude that education will never return to the pre-COVID system of organizing the educational process, therefore, all participants in the educational process need to adapt to new realities and psychological education is no exception.

In the context of improving the quality of training of future psychologists, we strongly recommend introducing from the first semesters of study at the university training courses aimed at introducing students to the norms of behavior in the digital space.

Formation of a digital culture is the basis for effective interaction in the learning process in new conditions. Also in these courses it is necessary to include the norms for the design of digital educational content as an important component of future success in the professional field.

In further studies, it is planned to study in more detail the foreign experience of training future psychologists using digital teaching tools.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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АНОТАЦІЯ / ABSTRACT [in Ukrainian]:

ЯКІСТЬ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ ПСИХОЛОГА В ОНЛАЙН ПРОСТОРИ

Стаття присвячена визначенню основних положень підготовки психологів в умовах вимушеного дистанційного навчання. **Мета** дослідження – проаналізувати основні якості, якими повинен володіти майбутній психолог та розглянути вплив онлайн-навчання (вимушеного дистанційного навчання) на їх формування. До основних завдань віднесено: аналіз теоретичних основ сучасної підготовки психолога, аналіз ролі цифрових та Інтернет-технологій у навчанні майбутніх психологів, аналіз відповідей студентів-психологів під час опитування, спрямованого на визначення ролі онлайн-навчання, надання рекомендацій щодо вдосконалення навчального процесу майбутніх психологів на дистанційному / змішаному навчанні.

Серед **методів** дослідження визначальними були такі: аналіз та узагальнення науково-методичних джерел, урядові документи з теми

дослідження для теоретичного обґрунтування проблеми дослідження, моделювання отриманих даних. Автори також провели опитування.

Результати дослідження показують, що на основі аналізу отриманих відповідей від студентів-психологів, можна зробити кілька основних висновків: більшість студентів віддають перевагу навчанню в аудиторії чи змішаному навчанню; основні труднощі, з якими стикаються студенти: технічні проблеми / проблеми в Інтернеті, мотивація (самоорганізація), труднощі у спілкуванні з викладачами; значна частина студентів не має практичних навичок та відповідної інформації щодо роботи у онлайн просторі. На основі аналізу отриманих результатів та власного досвіду роботи на факультеті психології надані рекомендації для студентів перших курсів та викладачів у роботі в онлайн просторі.

У **висновках** у контексті підвищення якості підготовки майбутніх психологів в умовах дистанційного та змішаного навчання ми рекомендуємо впроваджувати з перших семестрів навчання на курсах, спрямованих на ознайомлення студентів з нормами поведінки в цифровому просторі.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: вимушене дистанційне навчання, змішане навчання, онлайн навчання, студенти, психологи, освітній процес.

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