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# PRACTICE OF USING MICROSOFT TEAMS PLATFORM IN ORGANIZING THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS FOR FUTURE DOCTORS

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# ПРАКТИКА ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ПЛАТФОРМИ MICROSOFT TEAMS В ОРГАНІЗАЦІЇ ОСВІТНЬОГО ПРОЦЕСУ ДЛЯ ПІДГОТОВКИ МАЙБУТНІХ ЛІКАРІВ

**Abstract.** The article deals with the issues of using the online platform Microsoft Teams for organizing the educational process at the Department of Foreign Languages of I. Ya. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine under wartime conditions.With the beginning of the war in Ukraine, digital platforms have become not a potential opportunity, but the primary option for organizing synchronous interaction among participants of the educational process during various types of educational activities, creating and delivering various types of content. During distance and mixed learning, the teacher must conduct online classes in synchronous process, according to the approved schedule, and organize various types of educational activities using appropriate tools for video conferences' organization, etc.The Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) service is among such tools that allow to schedule meeting, conduct classes online, and provide access to various types of educational content as well as to activate students' speaking abilities and develop skills in using computer technology.MS Teams provides an effective online environment for distance or mixed learning using a set of information tools, i.e. forming teams and channels with their own content, organizing video meetings within a team or channel, distributing students into group rooms, chat, screen sharing, whiteboard, raising hand, recording meetings, the ability to plan, create, and performa variety of written and oral assignments, etc.The application of various digital technologies of the Microsoft Teams platform at classes helps students to master foreign terminological vocabulary, grammatical and syntactic constructions, speech and communicative skills necessary for professional communication. Mastering modern technologies of the Microsoft Teams platform by teachers and students and their integration into the educational process creates prerequisites for successful learning and studying of foreign languages using a distance format.Using the Microsoft Teams platform under wartime conditions at professionally targeted classes of English and Latin has been found to develop speaking skills and abilities that provide an opportunity to express an opinion, develop thinking, as well as to have high motivational characteristics, taking into account the realities of today.

**Key words:** distance learning, professional English, Latin Language, Microsoft Teams platform.

**Анотація.** Статтю присвячено обґрунтуванню особливостей використання онлайнплатформи Microsoft Teams для організації освітнього процесу на кафедрі іноземних мов ТНМУ імені І.Я. Горбачевського МОЗ України в умовах війни. Із початком війни в Україні цифрові платформи стали не потенційною можливістю, а основним варіантом для організації синхронної взаємодії учасників освітнього процесу під час різних видів навчальної діяльності, створення та доставки різнотипного контенту. Під час дистанційного та змішаного навчання викладачу необхідно проводити онлайн-заняття в синхронному режимі відповідно до затвердженого розкладу, організовувати різні види навчальної діяльності, використовуючи відповідні інструменти для проведення відеоконференцій, тощо. До таких інструментів, які дають змогу запланувати зустріч, провести заняття онлайн, а також надати доступ для опрацювання різнотип-

ного навчального контенту, відносять сервіс Microsoft Teams (MS Teams), який дає змогу активізувати мовленнєву діяльність студентів, розвивати вміння використання комп'ютерної техніки. MS Teams забезпечує ефективне онлайн-середовище для дистанційного чи змішаного навчання за допомогою набору інформаційних інструментів, а саме: формування команд та каналів із власним контентом, організація відеонарад у межах команди чи каналу, розподіл студентів на групові кімнати, чат, демонстрація екрану, дошка, підняття руки, запис нарад, можливість планувати, створювати та виконувати різноманітні письмові та усні завдання тощо. Застосування різноманітних цифрових технологій платформи Microsoft Teams на заняттях допомагає студентам оволодіти іншомовною термінологічною лексикою, граматично-синтаксичними конструкціями, мовленнєвими моделями та комунікативними вміннями, необхідними для фахового спілкування. Опанування викладачами та студентами сучасних технологій платформи Microsoft Teams та їх упровадження у навчальний процес створюють передумови для успішного навчання та вивчення іноземних мов у дистанційному форматі. З'ясовано, що використання платформи Microsoft Teams в умовах воєнного стану на заняттях англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням та латинської мови розвиває мовленнєві навички та вміння, які надають можливість висловлювати думку, розвивати мислення, а також мають високі мотиваційні характеристики, ураховуючи сучасні реалії.

**Ключові слова:** дистанційне навчання, англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням, латинська мова, платформа Microsoft Teams.

**Introduction**. Distance learning has long been considered a promising alternative for organizing the educational process, with researchers analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of this form of learning. The quarantine due to the COVID-19 virus required the rapid implementation of distance learning, which became a severe and unexpected challenge for educational institutions in Ukraine and worldwide. Distance education replaced the usual in-person format for a prolonged period, which society had become accustomed to.

Distance learning is a technology based on the principles of open education; it extensively uses various types of computer learning programs and, through modern telecommunications, creates an informational, educational environment for studying course material and communication. In quarantine conditions, distance learning became not just a potential option but a necessity, presenting educators with a new challenge: to ensure students' proper learning of the material. Many teachers encountered new formats of information and communication technologies that had to be mastered in the shortest time possible. One such format includes various online platforms. The use of these platforms for distance learning stems from the need to improve the educational process's quality, expand the educational environment's possibilities, and enhance student learning efficiency.

Due to the onset of war in Ukraine, some higher education institutions were again forced to switch to distance learning. However, distance learning in wartime conditions differs from the format used during the quarantine period. This includes the destruction of educational institutions, displaced students and teachers learning and working across Ukraine and abroad, and the inability of particular students or entire groups to join the educational process due to air raid alarms, combat actions, mass power outages, and other reasons directly linked to the war.

Over recent decades, numerous scholarly works have been published analyzing the specifics of distance learning, revealing its unique characteristics and prospects for implementation (D. Burymska, V. Demkyn, I. Ilyina, M. Koval, I. Lisetska, V. Manyakhina, E. Novikova, I. Kharlamenko, O. Khmel, N. Khudoley, V. Shvyrka). There is increasing interest in distance education among researchers focused on foreign language instruction for higher education students (A. Bezrukova, H. Vavilova, L. Vasylchenko, R. Hurevych, O. Davydenko, A. Zhulkivska, V. Kukharenko, L. Leshchenko, K. Korsak, M. Mykhalchenko, V. Oliinyk, O. Tretiak, P. Talanchuk). Scholars describe the functional capabilities of specific information and communication technologies and platforms in foreign language distance learning. Yet, the practical use of these platforms in medical universities, especially for theoretical courses, requires further investigation.

The aim. This research describes the main features of using Microsoft Teams in teaching professional English and Latin courses at I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University.

Theoretical framework. According to the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine from April 25, 2013, No. 466 "On Approval of the Regulation on Distance Learning", "the purpose of distance education is to provide educational services through the use of modern information and communication technologies at specific educational or qualification levels, following state educational standards" [6]. Distance learning is a technology based on the principles of open education, extensively using various computer learning programs and creating an information-rich environment for studying and communication via telecommunications. Distance learning environments allow students to be physically and often temporally distant from instructors while being able to communicate at any time using telecommunications.

The implementation of distance education at I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University was well-organized in response to the onset of the war in Ukraine. Experience gained by university instructors over the past years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabled quick

adaptation to new educational conditions and ensured that students continued receiving high-quality and in-depth knowledge.

The university's educational activities transitioned to distance learning and were organized primarily using the Microsoft Teams platform. MS Teams tools allowed for the complete realization of all educational process components and the adoption of innovative pedagogical approaches and methodologies. During the first year of the war, education across the country was conducted remotely, and later, traditional in-person learning resumed in many Ukrainian cities. Currently, TNMU operates in a blended learning format [3]. Although most departments now conduct in-person classes, some continue with remote learning due to the absence of shelters that students and instructors can use during air raid alerts. At the Department of Foreign Languages, education and communication with students continue through MS Teams, as mentioned for the above reason.

According to many educators who use the MS Teams platform in their teaching practice, this tool effectively supports and easily facilitates critical functions related to organizing the educational process [10]. Implementing the MS Teams service enables a unified access point to departmental educational digital resources and provides interactive student-teacher engagement and monitoring of learning activities [5]. MS Teams has also successfully organized interdisciplinary group projects during professionally oriented courses, contributing to developing integrated competencies among future specialists [11]. The online platform MS Teams creates a unified digital space for communication, content, assignments, and applications in the educational sector, enabling educators to create a dynamic learning environment [2].

The instructors at the Foreign Languages Department work with first- and second-year students from the Medical, Dental, and Pharmaceutical faculties and first-year students from the Nursing Institute. The department's courses aim to develop students' communicative competence in foreign languages and terminology, facilitating direct and indirect intercultural communication and fostering essential professional skills. Through the Microsoft Teams platform, the teaching of Latin and English can be fully implemented remotely. Specifically, the courses "Latin Language and Medical Terminology" and "Latin Language" at medical universities in Ukraine are designed to develop students' terminology competence in medicine. These courses cover Latin and Ancient Greek phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary, which are crucial for understanding and correctly using international medical terminology in professional communication.

Practical classes in Latin aim to offer "immediate practical application of theoretical knowledge, followed by discussions with the instructor and clarifications through specific examples" [7, p. 196].

In teaching theoretical philological subjects online, Microsoft Teams offers a variety of options to ensure interactive engagement among participants, including video conferencing, messaging, screen sharing, various document formats, an interactive virtual whiteboard, a shared access panel for presentation uploads, a virtual notebook for notes and collaboration, file sharing in chat, and more [7]. Using these features, instructors can effectively organize and conduct different online educational activities while students can actively participate, exchange ideas, and collaborate in real-time.

First-year students begin studying Latin from a foundational level, starting with Latin phonetics and the alphabet, writing diphthongs and unique Latin letter combinations, and recording learned lexemes in Latin. This can be facilitated through the Whiteboard feature in Teams, allowing the instructor to demonstrate Latin letter formation, highlight letters in different colors, erase previous writings, upload PDF files and images, and control tool access among participants. Instructors can simultaneously illustrate printed letters in a text and allow students to replicate them in writing, monitor their progress on the board, and correct their work. With the Whiteboard in Teams, students practice and reinforce skills such as translating anatomical and histological terms between Ukrainian and Latin, analyzing the structure of complex clinical terms and the meanings of term elements, accurately formulating diagnoses in various medical fields, and writing prescriptions [1].

During synchronous activities, instructors can assess student responses, understand their needs, answer questions, adapt the pace of material presentation, and monitor student engagement in the learning process [4].

To better facilitate the acquisition of grammar, instructors can use visual aids such as diagrams and tables, which can be displayed via PowerPoint in MS Teams. PowerPoint within Microsoft Teams allows instructors not only to present visuals but also to work with them actively. This includes forming grammatical structures, incorporating lexemes into phrases and sentences, constructing questions, affirmative and negative sentences, and creating dialogues. Video presentations are often appropriate when teaching topics from the "Professional English" course. These videos are shown through screen sharing in Teams, with links to online resources.

MS Teams also enables collaboration among all participants through chat, calls, meetings, or live events. Students can either watch events live or access recordings at a later time. Instructors can upload

learning materials and slides a few days in advance in the "Posts" section, allowing students to download and view the content anytime. MS Teams also offers an automatic recording feature for meetings, so recordings of practical classes can be sent to students for review. Additionally, announcements, notifications, and supplementary resources can be shared in real-time. During synchronous interactions, instructors can evaluate students using embedded assignments or tests [4].

Practical sessions in Latin and Professional English are conducted according to schedule in video meetings. Groups are created in MS Teams based on the academic schedule. While these groups are typically closed, external users, such as administrators or students from other groups, can be invited by the instructor for one-time visits. This approach positions students as active participants in the learning process, with sessions starting with oral questioning and topic discussion to gauge entry-level knowledge. The department-specific materials (presentations, educational films, helpful educational resources, and other methodological materials) are freely available during virtual lessons on specific topics, allowing ongoing assessment and real-time discussions on crucial questions as students work through the material. This format closely aligns with in-person instruction, and MS Teams provides a high-quality, efficient online classroom experience. The teacher can conduct the final assessment of student's knowledge through oral questioning or assigning tasks and tests within MS Teams. Alternatively, it can be performed via distance learning technologies on the Moodle platform, which is currently well-established and effective, where students complete testing. The grade for practical classes, calculated as an average of completed tasks, is recorded in the electronic journal of our university's automated management system. Students can retake assessments to improve low grades or makeup missed practical classes remotely, according to the schedule outlined by instructors, which is posted on the Moodle LMS.

MS Teams has proven to be an effective tool for various educational processes, meeting the needs of all participants, fostering individual student engagement, supporting a personalized approach in language teaching, and enhancing interest in remote learning [8].

MS Teams is used not only for student classes but also for communicating in chat, clarifying topics with individual students, and conducting university staff webinars, meetings, discussions, and commission gatherings.

From this overview, we can conclude that remote learning on MS Teams offers many advantages and helps organize the learning process. However, it also has some drawbacks. Technical issues – such as power outages affecting internet access – may hinder student participation or prevent access, reducing productivity. This requires instructors to have a set of backup resources to minimize the impact of technical obstacles. In addition to technical challenges, other difficulties are associated with online classes. One primary issue is information perception, which is affected by the technical parameters of electronic devices and the remote communication format, which lacks direct contact with instructors and peers. This can lead to decreased motivation to learn new vocabulary and reduced retention. While the first issue is purely technical, the second depends on the instructor's methodological skills. It can be mitigated with thoughtful distribution of material, appropriate task selection, and variety in learning activities [9].

Abuse by students in distance learning is a pressing issue. Some students justify their absence from classes or refuse to respond by claiming technical difficulties, and during testing, they may use internet resources and other sources for cheating. The inability to provide objective control fosters academic dishonesty, as students can open multiple windows on their screen, allowing them to view answers to test questions quickly. As a result, some students receive undeservedly high grades, which gives them a false sense of their knowledge level and can lead to conflicts due to misunderstanding their achievements. This problem is further exacerbated in other written tasks, such as translations or creative assignments, as students often copy texts or use online translators, reducing educational effectiveness.

Despite these challenges, using information and communication technologies on the MS Teams platform for online classes in Professional English and Latin expands opportunities for mastering the material and a creative approach to learning. Teachers can use various resources, including external internet sources, online services, and electronic exercises, contributing to more effective learning.

**Conclusions and Research Prospects**

At I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University, distance learning is organized at several departments via the Microsoft Teams platform, facilitating communication and collaboration. The platform enables video conferencing, file sharing, and collaborative document work. Synchronous classes are held in real-time with screen-sharing capabilities, video viewing, and an electronic whiteboard, allowing for an interactive educational process. Short quizzes are also conducted during classes in Teams for knowledge control, and classes can be recorded for later review. Students can access video lessons, notes, presentations, and additional resources through shared access folders, making the learning process rich and dynamic.

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