

Challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic to the Process of Distance Learning: Comparison of Experience of the World and Lithuanian High Education Institutions

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Abstract

The worldwide high education system of the 21st century experiences a series of different challenges, the assurance of a quality distance learning process probably being the major of them all. An application of distance learning technologies into the traditional process of education that usually takes several years (and is subject to constant improvement) in the beginning of 2020 in many high education institutions across the world had to be implemented in just a few weeks. This necessity was conditioned by the extreme situation that affected not only the high education system, but probably every branch of industry worldwide – the COVID-19 pandemic. The necessity to organize the distance learning calls for the huge resources of information technologies, sufficient permeability of communication channels, rises problems of cyber security due to the application of the software (usually uncertified) of different manufacturers. The implementation of distance learning practices is not a novelty to all the high education institutions in Lithuania; however, the latest still experience a lot of challenges related to its organization. The evidence discovered in scientific articles and official analytical reports declare that basically all high education institutions around the world experience the same problems. The main aim of this article is to identify the problems related to the implementation of distance learning practices in high education institutions around the world and compare them with those revealed in the case of Lithuania, to determine the most common problems and to identify the best practice solutions that would be applicable to Lithuanian high education institutions to ensure the quality of the distance learning process.

Keywords: distance learning, high education, COVID-19 pandemic, Lithuania, quality of studies