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CREATING AN ONLINE PLATFORM FOR MANAGING JOINT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH FOREIGN PARTNERS

СТВОРЕННЯ ОНЛАЙН-ПЛАТФОРМИ ДЛЯ УПРАВЛІННЯ СПІЛЬНИМИ ПРОГРАМАМИ НАВЧАННЯ З ІНОЗЕМНИМИ ПАРТНЕРАМИ

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Abstract. Distance education is the ideal solution for professionals who want to continue their careers. This makes it possible to obtain an additional qualification and save the current job. Distance learning programs can be the key to the career and promotion through a flexible schedule and resources that are available on the Internet. During globalization and the rapid technology development, the functioning of the university as a full-fledged player of the international market cannot be imagined without the use of distance learning methods. The modern online platform “WeStudy” has been developed for the Ukrainian market of educational services. The issues of using modern information and communication technologies are examined in order to improve the quality of educational services in the implementation of joint Ukrainian-Chinese projects. The programs between the Admiral Makarov National University of Shipbuilding and its two partners – Zhejiang University International College and Jiangsu University of Science and Technology are taken as a pilot.

Keywords: education project management; distance education; principal approaches to project management; international educational program; educational platform.

Аннотация. Дистанционное образование является идеальным решением для профессионалов, желающих продолжить свою карьеру. Это дает возможность дополнительной квалификации при сохранении текущей работы. С помощью гибкого графика и ресурсов, доступных в интернете, программы дистанционного обучения могут быть ключом для карьеры и продвижения по службе. В эпоху глобализации и стремительного развития технологий, функционирование университета – полноценного игрока международного рынка – невозможно представить без применения дистанционных методов обучения. Для украинского рынка предоставления образовательных услуг была разработана современная онлайн-платформа «WeStudy» для решения вопроса использования современных информационно-коммуникационных технологий, улучшения качества образовательных услуг при реализации совместных украинского-китайских проектов. Как пилотные было взято программы между Национальным университетом кораблестроения имени адмирала Макарова и двумя его партнерами – Международным морским колледжем Чжэцзян и Университетом науки и технологии Цзянсу.

Ключевые слова: управление проектом образования; дистанционное образование; принципиальные подходы управления проектами; международная образовательная программа; образовательная платформа.

Анотація. Дистанційна освіта є ідеальним рішенням для професіоналів, які прагнуть продовжити свою кар'єру. Це дає можливість додаткової кваліфікації при збереженні поточної роботи. За допомогою гнучкого графіку та ресурсів, доступних в інтернеті, програми дистанційного навчання можуть бути ключем для кар'єри та просування по службі. У час глобалізації та стрімкого розвитку технологій, функціонування університету – повноцінного гравця міжнародного ринку – неможливо уявити без застосування дистанційних методів навчання. Для українського ринку надання освітніх послуг було розроблено сучасну онлайн-платформу «WeStudy» для вирішення питання використання сучасних інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій, покращення якості

освітніх послуг під час реалізації спільних українсько-китайських проєктів. Як пілотні було взято програми між Національним університетом кораблебудування імені адмірала Макарова та двома його партнерами – Міжнародним морським коледжем Чжецзян та Університетом науки та технології Цзянсу.

Ключові слова: управління проєктом освіти; дистанційна освіта; принципові підходи управління проєктами; міжнародна освітня програма; освітня платформа.

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Problem statement. Distance education is the ideal solution for professionals who want to continue their careers. It allows obtaining an additional qualification and save the current job. Distance learning programs can be the key to the career and promotion through a flexible schedule and resources that are available on the Internet.

Online training also saves money because the student does not need to spend it on the move or expensive daily life in another country.

Distance learning is a learning mode that allows students to study most or all of the courses without attending an educational institution. Programs often include a computer-based training system and tools for creating a virtual classroom.

According to the world portal of distance learning “Distance Learning Portal” [1], the top five countries by the number of recognized international programs as of August 2017 are the following:

- 1 — United States (4155 programs);
- 2 — UK (2411 programs);
- 3 — Australia (2065 programs);
- 4 — Canada (276 programs);
- 5 — Netherlands (162 programs).

Complete data is shown in Fig.1. For comparison: France ranks 9th (86 programs), Germany — 13th (56 programs), India — 17th (38 programs), Lithuania —

20th (27 programs), Russia — 24th (17 programs), and Poland — 30th (6 programs). In turn, Ukraine does not take any position at all.

Latest research and publications analysis. Higher education in the modern world requires solving numerous tasks to improve the teaching process and attract the latest technologies. The main problems of our time are the unfavorable demography, problematic quality management, lack of qualified resources, aging of the population, and a mismatch of curricula with modern challenges.

The system of higher education is constantly evolving. Despite the fact that mainly local or partial changes have been made to modern requirements in some countries, there are still no promising global solutions.

An innovative educational platform based on the practice of joint learning can transform a traditionally rigid educational system into more flexible network structures. A teacher can bring information to more students at a lower expenditure of time using the elements of information and communication technology. At the same time, once prepared online courses can be used many times both in the initial form and with modifications [2].

The requirements for both students and teachers are changing in the current conditions of providing educa-

Browse Distance Learning Programmes Worldwide		
		Sort by: <input type="text" value="number of programmes"/> ↓
United States (4 155)	Lithuania (27)	Estonia (2)
United Kingdom (2 411)	Austria (27)	Monaco (2)
Australia (2 065)	United Arab Emirates (26)	United States Virgin Islands (2)
Canada (276)	Finland (20)	Turkey (2)
Netherlands (162)	Russia (17)	Slovakia (2)
Italy (120)	Belgium (13)	Iran (2)
New Zealand (105)	Norway (11)	China (2)
Spain (90)	Denmark (10)	Singapore (1)
France (86)	Portugal (9)	South Korea (1)
Ireland (81)	Bulgaria (8)	Djibouti (1)
Cyprus (74)	Poland (6)	Brazil (1)
Greece (64)	Kenya (4)	Taiwan (1)
Germany (56)	Barbados (3)	Colombia (1)
Sweden (42)	Israel (3)	Grenada (1)
South Africa (41)	Hong Kong (SAR) (3)	Rwanda (1)
Switzerland (40)	Slovenia (2)	Guatemala (1)
India (38)	Czech Republic (2)	Luxembourg (1)
Vietnam (36)	Macedonia (FYROM) (2)	Guam (1)
Malaysia (36)	Malta (2)	

Fig. 1. List of countries by the number of international distance learning programs

tional services [3]. Teachers need to prepare their lectures at the most effective level and in the shortest time possible. Meanwhile, students should be encouraged to self-study. On the other hand, educational institutions strive to provide the maximum level of education with a minimum level of investment [4].

Worldwide, there have been widely used online platforms on the basis of the modular object-oriented dynamic educational environment called Moodle [5]. Moodle is an open source e-learning platform [6]. It introduces the LMS (Learning Management Systems), a software package designed to help educators create high-quality Internet courses [7]. Currently, Moodle is used by 6,300 sites from 136 countries. The distance learning platform works like a conventional asynchronous e-learning service, but more synchronous e-learning services will be added in the future [8].

The analysis of the market of distance educational services provided by Ukrainian universities revealed their one common feature: “non-centralized distance learning”. Usually every Ukrainian university has its own view on this issue, starting from sending an e-mail lecture course and ending with the teacher’s individual work with the student through Skype, etc. Still, it does not eliminate the need for a student to come to Ukraine every session for passing exams. It is difficult to call this type of training “distant learning”.

The authors have conducted a research experiment: as potential customers of distance educational products, they carried out the Internet search. It showed that one can without any problems enroll to Western universities, especially in the ones in the UK and US. Distance education services are also offered by universities and associations from Russia. To the contrary, the level of presentation and accessibility of Ukrainian distance educational services does not stand up to any criticism.

At the time of globalization and rapid technology development, the functioning of a university as a full-fledged player of the international market cannot be imagined without the use of distance learning methods.

THE ARTICLE AIM is to develop a modern online platform to examine the issues of using current information and communication technologies in order to improve the quality of educational services in the implementation of joint projects with foreign partners.

The following tasks have been performed to achieve the goal:

1. A modern online platform www.westudy.in.ua was developed.
2. Joint educational shipbuilding programs “4+0” and “3+X” were taken as pilot integration programs in the WeStudy online platform.
3. The platform was tested in terms of joint implementation of educational programs with Chinese partners.

Basic material. Creation of a specialized online learning platform WeStudy. The fourth Chinese conference “Cooperation with the Participating Countries in the Project “One Belt, One Way” in Education” was launched on June 9, 2017 in Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province. The conference was attended by more than 400 representatives from China, Poland, Estonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Serbia, Malaysia, Thailand, Ukraine, South Korea, etc.

The issue of using modern information and communication technologies in order to improve the provision of educational services in the implementation of joint projects with partners from different countries was extensively discussed at the conference.

The result of the conference for Ukrainian-Chinese cooperation was the creation of the “Ukrainian-Chinese Silk Road Center” (Fig. 2). Its objective is to unite the initiatives of the Chinese and Ukrainian sides and promote fruitful and successful cooperation in a multitude of education, science and tourism areas. The coordinator from the Chinese side is the president of the Zhejiang University International College, Professor Wang Thie. The head of the ESCIC of the NUOS, associate professor Alexander Ryzhkov, was appointed as the director of the center from the Ukrainian side.



Fig. 2. Signing an agreement on the establishment of the “Ukrainian-Chinese Silk Road Center”

The first task for the newly created “Ukrainian-Chinese Silk Road Center” was the development of a modern online platform “WeStudy” [9]. Its purpose was to address the issue of using modern information and communication technologies in order to improve the quality of educational services in the implementation of joint projects. The programs between the Admiral Makarov National University of Shipbuilding and its two partners, Zhejiang University International College and Jiangsu

University of Science and Technology, were taken as a pilot.

The starting page of the developed WeStudy platform is shown in Fig. 3. A simple interface covers a complex educational online platform with almost limitless possibilities of implementing both a full distance cycle and an auxiliary service for classical training.

A patch panel with the following quick access icons is located on the left side of the site to facilitate its use:

- Dashboard;
- Site home;
- Calendar;
- Private files;
- My courses.

Optionally, the patch panel can be hidden.

Links to the main training courses are placed on the start page for ease of use. Filling out the form, you can sign up to the platform with the subsequent entry to the course. Hosting and ancillary services of the site were selected taking into account the specificity of the Internet within the People’s Republic of China.

The Dashboard page is designed as a personal page of the user (Fig. 4), by which you can monitor the current state of training on the courses, see the schedule of activities and tasks for execution, download / use personal files, edit the calendar and much more.

The platform supports an online messaging system between the “WeStudy” participants. It allows you to communicate with any registered user. For convenience, the system notifies about new messages via user’s e-mail.

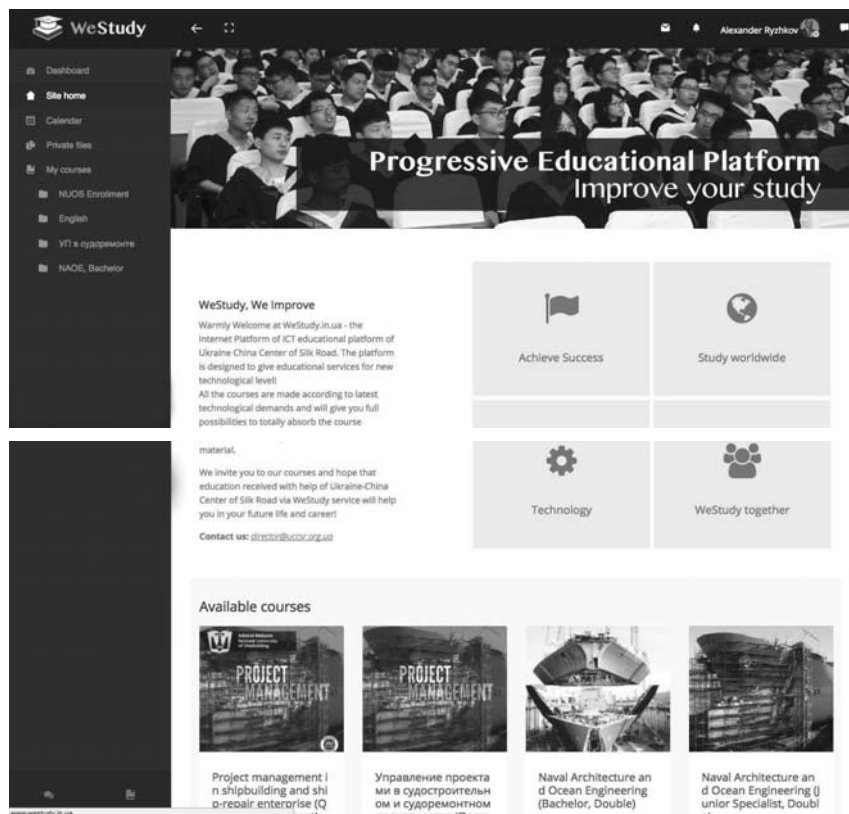


Fig. 3. Homepage of the online educational platform www.westudy.in.ua

The “Site blog” service is also available on the portal. It is the opportunity for each user to keep their own / collective blog. This is aimed at enhancing the interaction of the “teacher-student” pair. According to studies of the students’ social behavior in cyberspace [10, 11], the student’s interaction with the teacher is effective and useful through commenting on open posts on forums and specialized blogs or platforms. It is easier for a modern student to find a common language with a teacher through online services.

In the conditions of joint implementation of educational programs “4+0”, “3+X”, and the like, these functions separately and the platform “WeStudy” as a whole are indispensable in the management of human resources: students and teachers, as well as managers and administrators of these programs.

Platform resources are equally used for both distance and in-class education. The basic control element is online testing (Fig. 5). The feature can be used as a remote element of the student’s homework and an interactive element of classroom testing with teacher control. Limited time and automatic shuffling of questions minimize the possibility of unfair testing.

In addition to the basic element of testing control, the platform has almost unlimited possibilities for monitoring the student’s level of knowledge. Exams can contain

complex tasks, starting from preparation of individual answers to test questions and ending with uploading of the course project files or calculations / tasks completed in the computer programs that students study in the system.

A basic scheme of the educational process functioning on the online platform (Fig. 6) has been developed during the creation of the site www.westudy.in.ua commissioned by the Chinese partners. It includes a modular system for teaching the basic educational material with the obligatory passage of unit tests. At the end of the course, the teacher conducts the final examination, after which the system automatically calculates the progress of the student’s training and displays the total score. All the data is analyzed by the teacher, and, if there are any questions or inconsistent results, the teacher makes the final decision.

The maximum interaction of the “teacher-student” pair, with the conditionally zero intervention of the project’s administration, is a distinctive feature of the implementation of the educational process according to the developed scheme. At the same time, the element of quality control of the educational service is significantly strengthened, which is a logical addition to the developed IVE methodology.

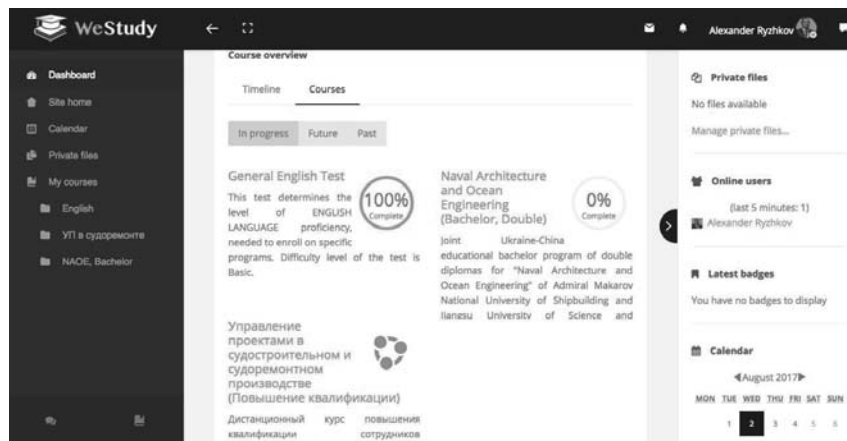


Fig. 4. User’s dashboard

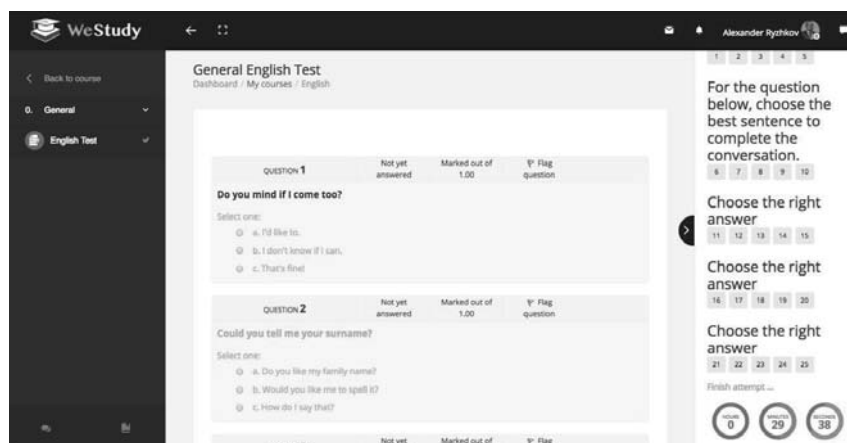


Fig. 5. Example of testing on the “WeStudy” platform

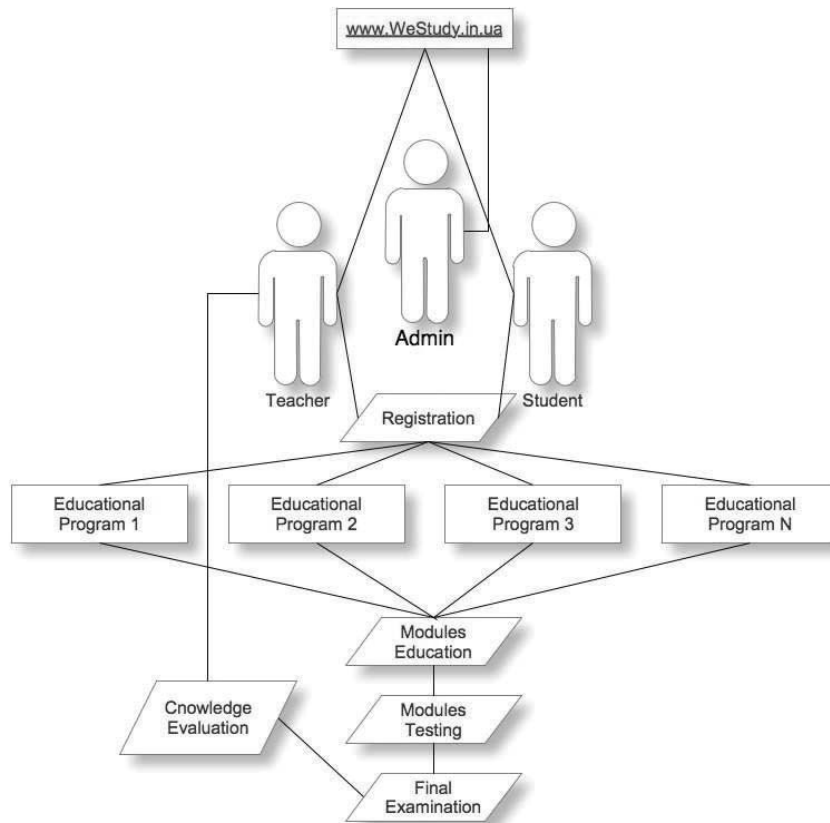


Fig. 6. Basic scheme of functioning of an educational process on the “WeStudy” platform

CONCLUSIONS. 1. The modern online platform www.westudy.in.ua has been developed to examine the issues of using modern information and communication technologies in order to improve the quality of educational services in the implementation of joint projects commissioned by the Jiangsu University of Science and Technology and the Zhejiang University International College.

2. The joint educational shipbuilding programs “4+0” and “3+X” between the Admiral Makarov Na-

tional University of Shipbuilding and its two partners, Zhejiang University International College and Jiangsu University of Science and Technology, were taken to the online platform WeStudy as pilot integration programs.

3. The use of the WeStudy platform has proven its high efficiency in terms of joint implementation of educational programs “4+0”, “3+X” and the like with regard to the management of human resources (students and teachers, as well as managers and administrators of these programs).

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Назначение — морская и смешанная (река-море) перевозка наливом сырой нефти и нефтепродуктов, в том числе бензина, без ограничения по температуре вспышки, с обеспечением перевозки груза с поддержанием температуры 60°C, а также растительных масел. Обеспечивается одновременная перевозка двух сортов груза.



Фотографии Павла Емельянова, Сергея Сахновского, Сергея Морозова, Сергея Казанцева