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EVALUATING AN INTERACTIVE UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM DELIVERED DURING RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE

The purpose of this article is the evaluation of earlier work by Sikra (2022), which supplied preliminary data about the author's rationale for designing and delivering online university education. The current evaluation was achieved by collecting psychology students' views via different sources with the use of trivial questions that corresponded to the Six core values (Sikra, 2022). In total, 22 students' responses were evaluated (17 females, 5 males, Mean Age 20.09). These responses were thematically analysed to support the author's evaluation of the interactive curriculum after its completion. The results of the thematic analysis evidence that the author delivered the online education in accordance with the Six core values. A short discussion of the findings' implications in connection to previous research is supplied. The conclusion brings the material to a finish and contextualises this approach within the global crises of COVID-19 and the War in Ukraine.

Keywords: mental health, military psychology, PTSD, university students, online learning, war in Ukraine.

Background. On 24 February 2022 Russia fully invaded Ukraine (Alyukov, 2022). Online learning for university students remains under-studied during the Russian invasion. The author approached university students of psychology at Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University (TSKNU) and collaboratively designed a curriculum (Sikra, 2022).

Purpose of the article. The current article evaluates psychology students' online learning after it was completed, which it positions within the context of cutting-edge research on distance learning during COVID-19 and the War in Ukraine.

Analysis of recent peer-reviewed sources. Research on distance education during COVID-19 recommended the creation of electronic materials devoted to distance learning, the creation of an electronic library and developing distance education as a separate concept (Nenko, Kybalna & Snisarenko, 2020). Additionally, online learning during COVID-19 revealed problems of technical maintenance, lack of educators' training, varied commitment of educators, task overload and lack of digital infrastructure as obstacles to effectiveness (Grynyuk et al., 2022). The relationships between management and teaching staff also predicted the effectiveness of distance learning during COVID-19. Semenets-Orlova et al. (2022) found that educational managers have transitioned from an authoritative policy-focused style to a person-centred style, which was less effective during the pandemic. Instead, according to Semenets-Orlova et al. (2022) management should balance the latter with a task-oriented focus.

COVID-19 was not the only obstacle to learning for Ukrainian students in recent years. A study evaluating the mental health of adolescents since Russia's localised invasion in 2014 examined adolescents' experiences of war (N=2766, Age Range=11-17): 60.2% witnessed armed attacks, 13.9% were victims of violence and 27.9% were displaced from the Donetsk region because of Russia's aggression (Osokina et al., 2022).

This literature survey uncovered few studies on university students during Russia's invasion. Some findings indicate that medical students who experienced PTSD because of Russia's invasion engaged in self-blame, disengagement, and avoidance behaviours. However, social networks were suggested as protective (Gupta & Shourie, 2022). These findings were echoed by Srichawla et al. (2022) whilst highlighting survival guilt in students fleeing Ukraine from Russia's aggression.

Research perspective. This article employs qualitative analysis as a way of extracting meaning from students'

quotes, which were gathered via multiple evaluations of satisfaction over time. In addition, the current work also supplies descriptive quantitative information about the evaluators as well as their gender split and mean age.

Methods. In line with Sikra's (2022) proposed Six core values, the author proceeded to survey these via a trivial open-ended questions set-up collecting information from students' responses that they consented to being published as part of the courses' evaluation in some form. The sources were the Google form that collected views for Sikra's (2022) publication (N=12), students' views that were collected for a public report for the TSKNU website (N=5) and a custom form to evaluate the current approach (N=5), where 'N' is the number of responses.

Results. Of the 93 students enrolled in the course, 43 students completed their study with a personalised certification. The remaining 50 students predominantly either never engaged with assessments or dropped out in the first weeks of the course. Included within this study are a total of 22 respondents (17 females, 5 males, Mean Age 20.09), which were analysed. The results are themed and demonstrated with the use of students' thematic quotes linked to the Six core values (Sikra, 2022). A visual depiction is supplied in the form of Tab. 1.

Discussion. Recent research on distance learning in Ukraine focused on the adaptation to education because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The current approach linked in with former findings (Nenko, Kybalna & Snisarenko, 2020) by developing a Google Drive learning platform that could serve also as a library of recorded lectures and offered a space for flexible learning and assessments during the War in Ukraine. Next, technical maintenance was easily achieved thanks to housing the platform on Google's servers, hence the difficulties described by Grynyuk et al. (2022) were effectively mitigated. The overall ethos of the author, as evidenced by the thematic analysis in Tab. 1. can be summed up as *person-centred task orientation*, thereby complying with the recommendations of prior research by Semenets-Orlova et al. (2022).

In addition, during the delivery of this online education, the author did find significant psychological traumatisations among his student population consistent with prior findings on traumatised students in Ukraine (Osokina et al., 2022; Srichawla et al., 2022). Consistent with prior findings was also the students' positive appraisal of social connectedness during the course (Gupta & Shourie, 2022).

Table 1

| Analysis of Six core values, themes and thematic quotes | | |
|--|--|---|
| Six core values | Theme | Thematic quote from student |
| Empowerment (Timulak & Elliott, 2003) | The repeated theme that emerged was that people benefitted from the author's presence and use of encouragement either via personalised feedback to assessments, or outside of classes namely through the student-led Telegram channel. | "The fact that he always gave us the opportunity to decide (for example, due to heavy shelling, offered to vote whether we want the lecture to take place) gave a sense of control over the situation and peace of mind." "The lecturer supported us from the very first day of the course and in many ways his support proved to be very valuable, during the days of the shelling of Ukraine, Juraj wrote to us faster than relatives to find out if everything was in order." |
| Honesty (Kolden et al., 2018) | The repeated theme that emerged was that people valued the author's self-disclosure. The author was honest about the fact that whilst he experienced adversity, students would have had similar experiences in addition to going through war. | "He was absolutely honest. Experiences and stories from life, he shared with us, seemed to be truly sincere and personal." "Regarding educational interaction, I would definitely find sharing a lecturer's own precious life experience to be the most beneficial. Sharing is caring." |
| Equality (Fitzgibbon & Winter, 2021) | The repeated theme that emerged was that people valued a sense of community although this phrase was not used specifically by any of the respondents. | "When we talk about these difficult topics for everyone, our team becomes more united and stronger, as everyone wants to help each other, albeit minimally." "The lecturer encouraged all students to participate in online discussions during the classes and in the chat. He also always made sure to give every student an opportunity to express their opinions and/or ask questions if they were willing to do so." |
| Inclusivity (Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011) | The repeated theme that emerged was that people valued being treated as individuals, which is something they experienced most pertinently via the taking into account of extenuating circumstances and flexible adaptation to students' needs in response to military attacks. | "The lecturer's openness and willingness to understand was the most beneficial. For example, the lecturer opened the assessment for people who could not finish it on time." "I would refer to the whole course environment as supportive and beneficial. In regards to social interaction, I would consider the sincere concerns of our lecturer about the individual situation of every student to be the most supportive." |
| Boundaries (Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003) | There was a lack of theme. It could be due to the author extending his communication significantly outside of the classroom to support students hence the boundaries were flexible and diluted. | "I can't remember a single problem brought up by this." "(...) He was generally very ethical and considerate." |
| Human-centred technology (Schmidt & Huang, 2022) | The theme that emerged was that students were comfortable with interacting with the Google Drive platform and valued that they could access materials during any time. | "(Lecturer)...adapted the course program regularly to let it meet the students' needs and possibilities." "Yes, everything was online and lecturer did everything to increase effective studying and used comfortable for students resources." |

Conclusion. Sikra's (2022) approach delivered on its aims by supplying Ukrainian students affected by war an online education in accordance with the Six core values, which was an original application of established Western practices to war-affected students. The War in Ukraine is the second global crisis following the COVID-19 pandemic, which required an adaptation of the traditional learning methods towards a flexible online learning approach. The future of university education during all forms of adversity must tap into this approach to be effective during war, natural disaster, pandemics, or poverty. It seems that the Golden Age of the care-free university years has now come to an end and not just in Ukraine.

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ОЦІНЮВАННЯ ІНТЕРАКТИВНОЇ НАВЧАЛЬНОЇ ПРОГРАМИ УНІВЕРСИТЕТУ ПІД ЧАС ВТОРГЕННЯ РОСІЇ В УКРАЇНУ

Мета статті – оцінювання попередніх робіт Сікри (2022), які надали попередні дані про авторське обґрунтування розробки й надання онлайн-університетської освіти під час війни в Україні. Вона починається з огляду літератури, яка позиціонує поточну роботу в межах сучасних українських досліджень дистанційного навчання під час пандемії COVID-19. Пандемія стала важливим джерелом розуміння потреб студентів, а також проблем онлайн-інфраструктури, характерних для України. Далі дослідження літератури надало висновки про вплив російського вторгнення на студентів, які навчаються в Україні, зосереджуючись на впливі посттравматичного стресового розладу (ПТСР), а також на захисні механізми, такі як соціальні зв'язки. Подається методичне оцінювання роботи, проведене Сікром (2022), у якому використовувались Шість основних цінностей як спосіб допомоги в тематичному аналізі відповідей студентів щодо змісту курсу. Загалом були оцінені відповіді 22 студентів (17 жінок, 5 чоловіків, середній вік яких 20,09). Результати аналітичної процедури засвідчили, що автор проводить онлайн-навчання відповідно до Шести основних цінностей. Результатом підходу автора став високий рівень задоволеності серед його студентів, а також високий рівень випуску (загалом 43 студенти). Потім автор пов'язав своє оцінювання з попередніми, переважно українськими, дослідженнями з оглядом літератури, щоб капіталізувати вплив поточної роботи, як фрагмента мозаїки в контексті соціальної роботи у країні. Основні посилання автора на попередню роботу наголошують на особистісно-орієнтованому підході до онлайн-освіти в поєднанні з важливістю соціальних зв'язків між студентами в онлайн-доміні. На завершення, автор підкреслює, що золотий вік безтурботних студентських років закінчиться і не лише в Україні. Отже, важливо розробити засоби навчання людей, які проходять через усі форми лиха від війни до пандемії, стихійних лих і бідності.

Ключові слова: психічне здоров'я, військова психологія, ПТСР, студенти ЗВО, онлайн-навчання, війна в Україні.