ONLINE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN TRANSCARPATHIA (2020-2022)

Aid for studying the discipline "Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching" for English major BA students

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Berehove 2023

This aid is a summary of research findings and crucial lessons learned from experiencing and realizing online language teaching in Transcarpathia between 12/03/2020 and 31/08/2022. It is aimed at BA students majoring in English language and literature and German language and literature. It is recommended for 3rd year students studying the discipline 'Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching'.

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Дистанційне навчання, хоч і не було новою концепцією, означало абсолютно незнайому практику для вчителів під час карантину через COVID-19, оскільки вони повинні були отримати абсолютно нові цифрові навички, щоб мати можливість викладати якісно. Усвідомлено, що ситуація з викладанням іноземних мов у дистанційному режимі є критичною, тому необхідні дані емпіричних досліджень, щоб глибше зрозуміти стан, у якому опинилися учасники освітнього процесу. З огляду на те це в травні 2020 року ми розпочали дослідницький проєкт, щоб отримати актуальні й достовірні дані про онлайн-викладання мов на Закарпатті. Мета – запропонувати педагогічні методи для покращення процесу онлайн-навчання. Опубліковано кілька статей, в яких подано результати опитувань та інтерв'ю. Представлено найбільш релевантні результати, пов'язані з чотирма цільовими дослідницькими групами. Охарактеризовано найважливіші наукові роботи, у яких ідеться про актуальні проблеми навчання мов онлайн на Закарпатті. В останньому розділі підсумовано результати дослідження, зроблено релевантні висновки та запропоновано педагогічні методи на основі емпіричних даних.

Посібник призначений для студентів мовних спеціальностей вищих навчальних закладів, які вивчають актуальну тему дистанційної освіти в рамках навчальної дисципліни «Методика викладання іноземних мов». Рекомендуємо всім, хто цікавиться темою онлайн-викладання.

Contents

Introduction

A tiny virus has forced the world's education to change enormously. Issues and processes that needed years and decades to complete, were realized with rapid speed after the outbereak of the terrible pandemic in 2020. The daily professional routines of teachers altered worldwide as the educational environment had to be changed and moved from in-person to online mode, thus stopping the spread of the fatal disease.

The world was not prepared for the sudden change, nor were the language teachers in Ukraine and Transcarpathia. Distance learning, though not a new concept, meant a totally unfamiliar practice for teachers in that they had to acquire completely new digital skills in order to be able to provide quality teaching during the time of COVID lockdown (Huszti, 2022). They had to familiarize themselves with numerous digital applications before applying them in their daily work. In this respect, schoolchildren and college or university students had some advantage over their teachers and tutors, since they are 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001) and are able to use various gadgets and digital apps without difficultuies. However, the transition from offline to online learning caused them problems, too, though evidently of different nature.

We realized that the situation concerning the teaching of foreign languages in the distance mode was critical and we needed empirical research data to have a deeper insight into the state we found ourselves in. Therefore, in May, 2020 we launched our longitudinal research project to obtain relevant and valid data on online language teaching in Transcarpathia with the main objective of proposing pedagogical implications on enhancing the online teaching process[1].

Our research focusing on online language teaching in Transcarpathia was composed of two phases. In the first phase in May and June, 2020, we conducted a large-scale questionnaire survey among four target groups of respondents: Group 1 – 63 secondary school learners aged 15 to 17, Group 2 – 65 secondary school English, German, Ukrainian and Hungarian teachers aged 20 to 50+ Group 3 – 95 language major college students aged 17 – to 49, and Group 4 – 18 language major college tutors teaching English, German, Ukrainian, and Hungarian. In the second phase in July and August, 2021, we interviewed 34 language major college tutors inquiring about their experiences of online teaching and the challenges they and their students had to face when transitioning to the online model of instruction, what their experiences were compared to the previous quarantine period in 2020, or how different the two were.

Several articles have been published reporting the results of our survey questionnaires and the interviews. In addition, we have presented our results at more than ten significant international conferences and webinars (in Ukraine: Berehove/Beregszász, Cherkasssy, Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Uman; in Europe: Budapest, Ljubljana, Magdeburg, Miskolc, and Winchester; in Asia: Dushanbe, and Seoul; overseas: New York). In what follows, we are presenting the most relevant findings related to the four target research groups in four chapters. We have selected the most crucial research papers that discuss the current issues of online language teaching in Transcarpathia. The final chapter in the present aid summarizes the overall results, draws the most relevant conclusions and offers pedagogical implications based on the empirical data. At the end of the volume, readers can find a bibliography list of selected academic articles describing

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[1] In this methodological aid, we use various terms interchangeably to mean the same phenomena: a) in-person/in-class/face-to-face education or teaching, an educational model where the teacher and students are physically in the same classroom, and b) distance/remote/online education/instruction or teaching/learning, an educational model where students and instructors connect via technology and classes, assignments and materials are delivered online.

research conducted in Ukraine on the impacts of online language teaching on students and teachers during the period of time under consideration. It is believed that the list can contribute to the successful studying of the topic in focus.

The aid is aimed at language major college and university students studying the timely theme of distance education within the framework of the academic discipline 'The Mehodology of Teaching Foreign Languages'. It is also recommended to all those who are interested in the topic of online teaching.

On 5 June, 2023 in Berehove

The Authors

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Chapter I Secondary school children

The school breakdown in spring 2020 made both teachers and learners all over the world face new challenges: how to cope with distance learning (DL). It was not simple even in the well-developed countries. In Ukraine teachers tried to find different solutions. This period was a sudden but huge step towards implementing ICT into the learning process. The aim of the present study was to get an insight into the way learners see distance learning, to hear their opinion and see their attitude to this form of education, the difficulties and challenges they encountered in this period in the learning process in general and in foreign language (FL) learning. The focus was on the learning habits, motivation, assessment, applications used, time spent on learning and stress students might have felt. An online questionnaire containing closed-ended and open-ended questions was compiled and filled in by learners of the upper grades of different schools. The data analysis was interpretive and statistical. The material was sent mainly in the form of written text or video links and recordings via Messenger, email or Google Classroom, very few online lessons were held. Most learners had difficulties; the most problematic area in FL learning was grammar. Feedback and assessment were mainly in written form. The attitude to learning was quite serious, learners developed their digital skills but some became demotivated. It was more time-consuming, more difficult but less stressful and also less effective than face-to-face learning. Despite all the difficulties faced learners developed learner autonomy, digital skills and gained experience in a new form of learning that can be useful for them in their future studies as in the digital age DL is gaining ground worldwide.

Keywords: distance learning, online learning, learning FL, motivation, stress, autonomous learning

Introduction (problem statement) The digital age has opened and is still opening new opportunities in the field of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, it was the coronavirus lockdown that made both teachers and learners all over the world face a new challenge: how to cope with the difficulties of distance teaching and learning. Neither teachers nor learners were prepared for this form of education, also called remote learning, and they tried to find different solutions in this period. Learning foreign languages requires a lot of interactions and face-to-face communication, so the task of language teachers and learners was far from being easy in such an unusual situation.

The purpose of this study is to investigate some aspects of teaching and learning in the period of the first lockdown between March and May 2020 with special attention to foreign languages and to collect some information about the way learners studied and felt in this period. An online questionnaire was compiled with the purpose to get an insight into the learning habits, motivation, strategies, assessment procedures and difficulties of the learners in this period as well as applications used in DL. It contained four open-ended and 21 closed-ended (with single and multiple answer multiple choice and Likert scale) questions. The languages examined were

English and German as in most schools English is taught as a FL but in some schools German is learnt either as a FL or a second FL. The following hypotheses were formulated:

1. learners take distance learning easy, their attitude is unserious because they feel that the period of quarantine (lockdown) is just for relaxing and not for serious studying;
2. learners can become demotivated easily for different reasons; for example, because they do not feel the demand of the teachers in the same way they do in face-to-face education;
3. the learning strategies of the students are limited as they apply mainly their digital skills;
4. online teaching is more time-consuming than face-to-face teaching;
5. online teaching is more stressful than face-to-face teaching;
6. distance learning has a positive effect on some leaners.

The questionnaire was filled in by 63 learners of Grades 10 and 11 in different schools of Transcarpathia in district Berehove in June 2020. Sixty-five per cent of the respondents were females and 35% were males aged 15 (38%), 16 (38%) and 17 (24%).

The analysis of recent research and publications. Distance learning (DL), in which the main elements include physical separation of teachers and learners, has changed greatly since its appearance in the 1800s. DL, which is synonymous with distance education (DE), according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2005, p.442) is 'a system of education in which people study at home with the help of special internet sites and television and radio programmes, and send or email work to their teachers'. Murray states that recently internet is becoming a dominant medium for distance education delivery and the terms 'distance' and 'online' are often used interchangeably (Murray, 2013). However, differences can be found between the two forms of education. Though they both require online learning tools, the first difference can be in the location. In online learning the teacher and the students can be in the classroom working through digital lessons or the assessment can be through an online platform while in distance learning the location is different. The other difference is in the interaction between the teacher and the learners. In online learning there is in-person interaction while distance learning does not require it. Other terms connected to distance learning are: e-learning (eLearning) or the electronic model which is another word for online learning, b-learning or blended learning which is a mixed face-to-face and distance learning and m-learning or learning with mobile devices (Sobral, 2020). A distinction should also be made between online learning and online őőlearning resources under which we understand any digital material used for supporting learning. Szűcs and Zarka consider distance learning in today's world to be an essential component of education (Szűcs & Zarka, 2006).

Children have an innate desire and natural ability to learn. Nevertheless, they have to be motivated by people around them as their motivation may weaken and the role of teachers in supporting their learners' motivation cannot and should not be underestimated. Among the new challenges teachers face in DL is supporting and encouraging students to learn, i.e. in enhancing learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Johnson (2017) summarises results of recent research about the role of teachers in motivating students and enlists the ways they can increase students' motivation to learn. Firstly, he states, teachers can do this by supporting learner autonomy and self-regulated learning, by supporting learners' freedom of choices and interests, by increasing students' responsibility and participation in their own learning through letting them create their own goals and objectives. Secondly, teachers can motivate by connecting learning to the personal world of the students by making learning tasks more relevant through relating instructions to learners' experiences. Thirdly, providing learners with positive feedback and recognizing learners' efforts to accomplish the task enhances motivation. Praising the

learners, recognizing fewer errors, recognizing their strength and focusing on what is positive about their work are strategies that can make learners more motivated. When teachers provide feedback, they enable students to take control over their own learning and make them believe in their own abilities as well as make them feel that hard work can lead to achieving tasks. Furthermore, being enthusiastic and energetic, displaying interest and positive feelings about the subject taught can be another way to increase motivation. Finally, Johnson points out that building positive, caring and trusting relationship with their students influences them to learn. Good relationship and trust teachers can build by being open-minded, by sharing own experiences about struggles, failures and achievements. Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek (2000) also consider a positive attitude towards the educator as a factor contributing to the success of students in face-to-face as well as in DL. Holmberg (1986) highlights the importance of strong student motivation facilitating learning as one of the most important teaching principles of DE. Other principles mentioned by him are the joy of learning as it triggers motivation, participation in decision-making about the learning process as being positive for student motivation and friendly, personal tone along with easy access to the topic as contributors to enjoyable learning. Enhancing motivation in DL is even more crucial than in face-to-face learning. Students motivated intrinsically are keener and perform better on a task (Dörnyei, 2001, Johnson, 2017).

Motivation can be closely connected with assessment for the reason that assessment can also motivate and encourage students. Assessment can be considered as one of the most problematic areas in DL. On the one hand, the digital age has made assessment easier as the results of a test taken online can be seen immediately; on the other hand, in distance education the old forms of assessment have to be reconsidered and extended. McKay underlines that 'assessment has the power to change children's lives; the effect of assessment may be positive or negative depending on a number of factors' (McKay 2006, p.25). He points out that teachers can 'structure assessment procedures to encourage children by showing them what they have learned and to give positive feedback, motivating them to succeed' (McKay 2006, p.23) by making sure that the tasks are appropriate, motivating and give some indication of success, however small. Assessment, thus, can become part of a learning journey. Jaczkovits (2020, p. 2) considers that in digital education, formative evaluation plays a role rather than summative evaluation. The author emphasizes that one form of assessing students' knowledge '… is live, real-time reporting, which can be accomplished using video conferencing or telephone applications. Another form is time-delayed, remote reporting (worksheets, tests, questionnaires, homework, presentation, mind maps, etc.)'. Another method of assessment that can be used both in distance and traditional teaching is gamification, or the incorporation of game elements into non-game settings (Barbarics, 2015). In DE the methods of assessment should be more creative and it is advisable to use formative assessment.

The results of the study. The answers show that during the DL in spring 2020 the most frequently used applications were Messenger (used by 79,4% of the respondents), e-mail (66,7%) and Google Classroom (57%). Redmint and Google Drive were also applied but their usage was less widespread and only two pupils used Zoom and Facebook Live. None of the respondents used Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Chromebooks, Brightspace or other applications (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Use of applications during DL in spring 2020

Tools	Messenger	email	Google Classroom	Redmint	Goolge Drive	Zoom	Facebook Live	Google Meet	Microsoft Teams	Chrome-books	Brightspace
% of use	79,4%	66,7%	57%	23,8%	12,7%	3%	3%	0	0	0	0

The material was sent to the learners in different forms in the languages examined. The explanation of the new material and the tasks were sent in the form of a text in the vast majority of cases (52%). In both languages video links have been sent to some of the learners: in English 14 learners (22%) and in German one learner received links of videos. Some teachers made video recordings in order to send the explanations of the new material to their learners. Two learners of English and three learners of German have been sent the explanations in this form. In both subjects audio material has also been sent. However, the number of language lessons held online proved to be inconsiderable. In English the respondents had three online classes while in German only one lesson was given online.

The material sent by the teachers was read and watched completely only by 63% of the learners, 35% of the respondents partially read and watched the material and one learner admitted not having read or watched it at all; 60.3% of the respondents admitted that their attitude to learning and completing the tasks was different previously in face-to-face learning; the attitude of the other 39.7% did not change.

Time spent on studying in general, i.e. on all the school subjects varied. Fifty-two per cent of the learners studied between one and three hours a day, 25% spent between three and six hours with learning, 5% of the respondents studied for more than six hours, 3% for less than one hour and 14.5 % did not study regularly. From this time in general nobody spent more than three hours on learning languages, 19% spent between one and three hours, 9% less than an hour, 17% did not learn languages regularly.

One of the possibilities to cover the material during the breakdown was the media, both mass and online media. Material on the Internet was used for learning purposes by 87% while mass media, i.e. the special educational programs on television were followed only by 23% of the respondents.

Learners often encounter difficulties and need help to overcome them. In a traditional classroom they can turn to the teacher in case they face them, ask for help or clarify if something is not clear. The teacher can see from the reaction and expression of the learners if there was something they were not able to grasp and can explain it again. During the breakdown it was more complicated to cope with the difficulties arising. Only 22% of the learners were able to cope with the material individually, 78% admitted that they needed help. The highest number of respondents (62%) asked their classmates to help, 38% asked either parents or friends, 13% were helped by private tutors, 3% by relatives and the same number (3%) turned to the internet for help. The main difficulties faced in learning the languages online were connected to grammar, vocabulary and the two receptive skills: reading and listening comprehension. The most problematic area was grammar: understanding and practising grammar structures was complicated for 48% of the respondents. Understanding and memorizing the meaning and pronunciation of the new vocabulary items was marked as difficult for 19% of the learners.

Eighteen per cent had reading and listening comprehension difficulties and 8% of the students struggled with using the audio material. No hardship in language learning was experienced by 27% of the respondents.

Feedback from the teachers was given mainly in written form (84%). Some teachers provided feedback in both written and oral forms but the number of such cases was quite low. In two cases students received no feedback at all. Assessment also was predominantly in a written from (82.5%). In both written and oral form two learners of English and two learners of German were evaluated. No assessment at all was tracked in 5 cases (8%).

Eighty six per cent of the respondents had the necessary technical equipment for DL. The majority of respondents (36%) had a PC tablet, a laptop or a computer and 18% had smartphones. The rest are supposed to have shared technical equipment either with each other or with their parents or siblings.

In the last two sets of questions participants had to mark on a five-point Likert scale to what degree they agree or disagree with some statements. The descriptive statistics has been summarised in Tables 1.2 and 1.3.

Table 1.2 Attitude to learning during the school breakdown

	Mean	Standard Deviation
I took distance learning seriously as it provides a lot of opportunities for studying.	3.19	0,78
I lost my motivation during DL because I did not find this form of education serious.	3.06	1.02
I lost my motivation during DL because I did not feel directly the rigour of the teacher.	2.90	1.18
My learning strategies were limited, I used mainly my digital skills.	2.98	0.94
I was more successful in online learning as I followed my own pace.	3.42	1.17
I would like to participate in online learning in the future.	2.58	1.30

The first statement aimed at finding out the attitude of the respondents to online learning. The mean standing next to it (3.19) shows that the attitude to learning was predominantly honest. We can observe that 38% of the students agree with the statement that online learning provides many opportunities for studying. Five per cent completely agrees, so 43% of the respondents allege that they recognised in this form of teaching the potential and the opportunity to study a lot while others (25%) did not recognize it and quite a high number (32%) could not decide. Thus, the first hypothesis was refuted.

The next two questions touched upon the learners' motivation. Two possible reasons for losing motivation were examined. It was supposed that in online teaching students can become demotivated for the reason they do not feel the direct demand and rigor of the teacher. The other reason might be the learners' unserious attitude to this form of education. In both statements the mean values – 3.06 and 2.90 – indicate that most learners have become demotivated in this period. Thus, the second hypothesis was proven. The number of those who lost motivation for the reason they could not be controlled in the same way as in face-to-face teaching outscores those who lost it as a result of their unserious attitude. However, if we take into account the answers of those who completely disagree (21%) and disagree (22%) with the first reason

examined, altogether 43% of the students state they did not become demotivated due to the lack of rigour while 38% became unmotivated and 19% was hesitant. The numbers are, again, quite close, but what can definitely be stated is that though the hypothesis was proven, for a considerable number of students not feeling the same strictness of the teachers as in offline teaching was not demotivating.

The learning strategies were supposed to be restricted in the period of the breakdown because learners had to use mainly their digital skill. For this statement the mean is 2.98, so the statistics show that the third hypothesis was also proven. A high percentage (40%) agrees with the statement, 33% disagrees and 27% is hesitant.

In a traditional mixed classroom learners study at different pace. Fifty-two per cent of the respondents feel to have been more successful during DL for the reason that they could learn at their own pace with 29% from them completely agreeing with this statement. 26% is of the opposite opinion – they are more successful in face-to-face learning and 22% could not decide. In this statement the mean is 3.42 and the highest number of respondents marked the completely agree' answer. So, most learners consider the possibility to study at their own pace as one of the keys to successful learning.

The next statement to be analysed is whether the respondents would like to take part in online learning in the future or not. The mean is 2.58 and the 'completely disagree' answer was marked by 49% of the respondents: almost half of the respondents were not ready for this form of learning, 32% is willing to study online in the future and 19% could not decide.

The second set of questions where the answers had to be given on a five-point rating scale included four statements concerning language learning and one statement was about the learners' digital skills.

Table 1.3 Attitude to language learning during the school breakdown

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Online language learning is more time-consuming for me than face-to-face learning.	3.26	1.22
Online language learning is more stressful for me than face-to-face learning.	2.50	1.04
My digital skills have considerably improved in the period of the quarantine as I had to acquire the use of technology quickly during DL	3.39	0.96
Online langue learning is better and more effective for me than face-to-face learning.	2.57	1.15
Online langue learning is more difficult for me than face-to-face learning.	3.01	0.90

The first two statements touched upon the questions of time and stress in language learning and the statistics shows that the hypothesis connected with the first statement was proven: 55.5% of the learners find online teaching to be more time-consuming than traditional teaching (20.6% completely agrees, 34.9% agrees), 38% disagrees or completely disagrees and 6% cannot decide. The highest number of the respondents agrees with this statement and study longer hours. What concerns feeling more stressed in distance language learning, the mean is 2.50. For 28.4% of the respondents it proved to be more stressful (25.4% agrees 3% completely

agrees) 12.8 % cannot decide while 57.6% (22.2 % completely disagrees, 35.4% disagrees) found it less stressful than traditional teaching. The highest number of the respondents does not agree with the statement, so most learners feel more relaxed with this form of language learning. The hypothesis that DL is more time-consuming than face-to-face learning was proven but the results do not confirm that it was more stressful.

The period of the quarantine was found to be useful for developing digital competencies of the learners, as the mean (3.39) show. Fifty one per cent of the respondents considers that their digital skills have considerably improved, 19% do not think so and 30% could not decide.

Definite disagreement can be traced with the statement that online language learning is better and more effective. Only 19% think they can be better at language learning at home than in a traditional classroom, 27% could not decide and 54% disagree with this statement.

Whether online language learning is more difficult or not was the hardest to decide for most learners, as the highest number of the respondents (32%) marked the "cannot decide" answer. Altogether, 38% completely agree or agree that it is more difficult, 30% did not agree with the statement. The mean, however, is 3.01, so, learning languages online for most of the respondents proved to be more difficult.

The questionnaire ended with four open-ended questions. The first question attempted to find out if the respondents were eager to study online and what they liked or disliked about learning the languages this way. This question was left unanswered by some respondents. The answers formulated by the learners have been divided into three groups (see Table 1.4). In the first group the reasons of those students have been enlisted and summarised who were eager to study the languages online. The second group contains the answers of those who did not feel like learning languages in this form. The answers of those who were not sure are in the third column. The following reasons have been formulated by the respondents:

Table 1.4 Pros and cons of DL: opinions of the learners[2]

Reasons for	Reasons against	Unsure
- more comfortable, flexible and easier - all the teachers tried to help in everything I needed and this made it motivating and interesting; - every teacher had a different approach and this made it interesting and motivating - there were interesting videos - it was more exciting	- I had no motivation - it is not interesting to study online - it was more difficult - it was difficult to understand on my own - online teaching is more difficult and less efficient but I was obliged to study - the explanation of the teacher is interesting and one has more desire to study face-to-face - to successfully acquire knowledge explanation is necessary - I could not understand the material to such an extent than at school	- in the beginning yes, but later, towards the end I had no desire - in the beginning I thought it would be easier to keep pace but later it became clear it was harder - yes and no, partially it seemed interesting and it was good to use the technology, but I missed the

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[2] Here and hence, the excerpts from the student questionnaires are presented in the authors' translation.

- I think I had more opportunities to a acquire the language online - I was curious how things change in distance learning - it was easier to learn at my own pace - I had more free time as I was able to schedule my time - one feels like doing something in case one enjoys it and knows it will be necessary once in life - I could read the material several times and I was able to understand it better this way - it was new and I wanted to try it - beside the textbooks I could learn from videos, films and other sources - I wanted to develop - I need the languages - it was my duty	- it is easier to understand the material when the teacher explains it personally - there was always something I was more interested in - my attention was distracted - I knew I would not be able to concentrate for 100% - I could not pay as much attention as at school - it was strange and sometimes I felt I lost track - I do not see much rationale - I had no desire, it's easier to study face-to-face, it is more productive - I had no desire, there were a lot of things I could not understand and had good marks only because I found the answers on the internet - I felt indifferent when I sat down to study because some teachers simply 'threw' the material to us - the demands were too high, too much material was sent and I did not pay attention to which tasks I completed and which were the ones not completed	explanation of the teacher and it discouraged (demotivated) me -yes and no, sometimes yes as I killed the time by studying, sometimes I found it useless - what I learned myself was interesting but the homework was either too difficult or pointless - I did not know what to expect

The aim of the second open-ended question was to get an insight into the way the teachers motivated their students in distance learning. Among the responses given both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be found. According to the answers it is intrinsic motivation that prevailed: praising, sending interesting tasks the learners liked doing and language games connected to the topic, sending audio-material and videos the learners watched with interest, giving creative tasks, encouraging, telling students to try this way of learning because it is interesting, giving advice and a helping hand when it was necessary have been mentioned by the respondents. Several learners underlined that they could always turn to their teacher in case they needed help and it made them feel very grateful. Being tolerant, sending accurate and well-explained material simplified in order to make it easier to understand, not giving much homework and trying to do their best to help learners have been mentioned as qualities of the teachers that were motivating. One respondent wrote that the great deal of time and effort teachers put into distance teaching motivated him/her to do the tasks honestly. Another fact mentioned as encouraging was that the teachers corrected the tasks in time and seeing the results

the learner had more enthusiasm to study. Enhancing extrinsic motivation can also be traced in the respondents' answers. Teachers drew learners' attention to the importance of concentrating on reaching their goals and learning the material anyway, to the importance of learning the same way as in face-to-face teaching or even better as they will need the skills and the knowledge in the future. They also encouraged by telling learners to look at distance learning as an opportunity to try something new, by explaining that learners have to develop for their own sake, by asking to hold on and think about their future. In addition, teachers encouraged to learn the material individually thus strengthening learner autonomy. Empathizing with their learners, being considerate to them but at the same time trying to make them understand how important it is to learn the material has been pointed out as a way of motivating. Grades have also been mentioned to be motivating. One learner considers that "no motivation is necessary for DL" (Learner 24). Another respondent believes "the most important thing is to have a strong will to study" (Learner 17). Some short and simple answers were given like "the same way as in face-to-face learning" or "well". In ten cases (6.3%) the respondents allege not having been motivated at all. Material and homework was sent every fortnight but "we were not praised only the expectations were higher and higher" (Learner 41). "I will fail in case I do not fulfil the tasks and do not study" was written by Learner 33. In a few cases no feedback has been sent. Taking all the responses into account, it can be concluded that except for a few cases teachers motivated their learners both intrinsically and extrinsically.

The respondents have been asked if they would like to continue learning distantly or not, to give reasons in case of a positive answer and to point out the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning if their answer is negative. First, the reasons of those who gave a negative answer will be summarised. The most frequent argument for traditional teaching is connected to the live explanation of the teachers: it is easier to understand the material if a teacher explains and clarifies the details in case something is not understandable, especially in grammar or when clarifying the meaning of words. Apart from the lack of live explanations learners suffered from, the second most frequently mentioned reason was that there were no online lessons and learners were simply expected to send in the tasks. The other reasons mentioned were: "It was not useful, it was not effective and caused a lot of stress" (Learner 12), "It was more difficult, we could not master the material properly" (Learner 43), "I did not have enough motivation, I became lazy, my attention was often distracted" (Learner 30), "Though my grades became better my knowledge did not improve" (Learner 39), "I simply found the answers on the internet" (Learner 15). Furthermore, some learners found that there were too many tasks with short deadlines and they also consider it was not possible to really assess what they have mastered. They state that it is more exciting and more motivating to study in the classroom and DL was more complicated, less useful and in general it was not well-organised. Finally, the importance of the community, friends and personal meetings has been mentioned. Those who could not decide claim that both forms of learning have advantages and disadvantages at the same time. The advantage of DL is that one can schedule one's time, the disadvantage is that it is more difficult to understand without face-to-face explanation. It was also added that from some subjects it is good while from others it is more difficult. Those who would like to study online state that DL was easier and less stressful for them; they could learn more and had more time to do the tasks. One respondent states that in the beginning it was strange to have so much time and he/she was not able to handle it but soon he/she got into the new routine, had more time for herself and for others, there was no stress and pressure in his/her life and he/she did not have to listen to the vexation of the classmates every day, there was less pressure (Learner 18). He/she admits, though, that

she needed help of a private tutor in mathematics. Another respondent feels that it is more convenient to study from home with gadgets and one does not have to bother about travelling or care about the weather (Learner 22). Respondents also state that they were able to learn everything in time, there was no lagging behind. One learner could concentrate better because he/she could study at his/her pace while another one considers that in DL he/she would be more successful and would have more time. Two respondents think that for a certain period of time it is good but not for long.

In the last open-ended question the respondents were also asked to write about any other experiences and difficulties they had during DL. Thirteen respondents had no difficulties while others mention the huge amount of material that had to be covered, preparing the tasks in time, not being able to understand the material completely from the sources sent without face-to-face explanation ('I still don't understand a lot' Learner 58), falling behind in the subjects they are not good at and becoming demotivated as they had difficulties. Technical problems have also been mentioned like slow internet or long videos that could not be downloaded to the end at once. Learning at an educational establishment is considered to be more effective by one respondent especially in case of languages, mathematics and other difficult subjects. Some answers given are close in content to the answers for the previous question: the demands were too high as teachers demanded twice as much as usually; it required a lot of time and energy; it was hard to make a lot of notes, work out the material and study individually. Two learners admitted neglecting doing the tasks regularly which piled up while others, on the contrary, point out the possibility to schedule their time and study without worrying about homework for the next day as an advantage. The positive experiences and feelings the respondents shared were connected with the abilities they developed during DL and they view this period as a step to becoming autonomous learners, it became much easier for them to find important information. Some respondents learnt to appreciate school and expressed a strong desire to go to school again: 'when next time we will have the possibility to go to school we should rethink how good it is to study there' (Learner 31). The same thought can be found in a short, simple sentence: "I want to go to school" (Learner 7). Finally, turning to each other for help was mentioned as a positive experience that welded the classmates and schoolmates.

Discussion and interpretation of the results. Having analysed the answers given in the questionnaires we can examine and discuss several areas of DL.

The prevailing applications were Messenger, e-mail and Google Classroom. The number of online lessons was not high but attempts have been made in both languages so, the asynchronous form of teaching prevailed. The explanation of the new material was done mainly in written form, in the form of video recordings prepared by the teachers as well as online learning resources (audio materials and video links) sent to the learners which they found to be very useful and motivating. The material sent by the teachers in written, audio or video forms was completely read or watched by the majority of learners; however, a considerable number of students did not work profoundly on it. Thus, on the one hand, the main drawback of presenting the new material in the above mentioned asynchronous ways can be the careless, negligent attitude of certain learners; on the other hand, these forms of presentation can serve as useful material available any time for revising for those whose attitude is serious. Teachers have expanded their teaching resources, learnt how to make video recordings for teaching purposes and how to use different applications in teaching. Nevertheless, this area still has to be improved, especially in the field of delivering online lessons and choosing applications that can be the most suitable for online teaching.

The learning habits of the respondents in Grades 10 and 11 have remarkably changed during the breakdown. Modern techniques, online resources and online applications have been involved in the learning process and were used along with the traditional ones. The roles of internet resources and of the media have considerably increased and internet resources were preferred to special lessons given on television. DL was found to be more time-consuming than face-to-face learning by the majority of the respondents. However, only part of the learners devoted much time to learning; in a considerable number of cases no regularity was traced. The worrying tendency is that certain respondents admitted not having studied on a regular basis or spent less than an hour a day on learning. As a result, they would fall behind their more diligent mates.

The attitude to DL was ambiguous. It was taken seriously by a considerable number of the respondents who noticed an opportunity in this form of education. A high percentage could not decide about the usefulness of this form and a large number of the respondents did not take it seriously enough. This attitude implies us that teachers should draw their learners' attention to the opportunities lying in this form of education, should raise the learners' awareness and motivate them. As to stressfulness, the majority of the respondents felt less stress in this period while a small percentage found it more stressful than traditional teaching. The number of those for whom it was more difficult prevails over those who were able to cope with it quite easily. One of the advantages of this form of learning proved to be that students can study at their own pace and those who learnt to schedule their time well found distance learning effective. Thus, the hypothesis about the positive effect of distance learning on some students was proved. Highly motivated students with high learner autonomy who can schedule their time preferred this form to face-to-face learning. Thus, they can be the winners of DL.

The difficulties emerging in that period in language learning were in the field of grammar structures, new vocabulary as well as understanding written texts and audio materials. Classmates, family members, friends and private tutors helped the learners facing hardship to overcome them. The high percentage and the answers given prove that distance language learning is more difficult online than face-to-face. However, it was found better and more effective by a certain number of the respondents. The reasons enlisted in the open ended part of the questionnaire are connected with the novelty in the way of learning, new and motivating learning resources as well as more time they can spend on studying. The learners were curious about this new, digital way of learning and wanted to try it, found it exciting. Both external (extrinsic) and internal (intrinsic) motivations have been mentioned: "It was my duty" (Learner 4), "I need the language, I found it necessary' (Learner 14), "I wanted to develop, I found more opportunities" (Learner 37), and "I enjoyed it" (Learner 8). The attention of the teachers and their willingness and attempt to help was mentioned to be motivating. From the learning resources interesting videos, films and sources other than the textbook have been mentioned. Being able to schedule the time, read the material as many times as it was necessary, study at an own pace and be flexible were the reasons enlisted that made them enthusiastic to learn. The arguments of those learners who were not delighted with online language learning underlined the necessity of interesting explanations in order to fully understand the material and successfully acquire knowledge, the role of personal, live explanations as they make understanding easier and the hardships they encountered in concentrating on the material. In addition, the high demands and the huge amount of material sent by the teachers were mentioned. What concerns language learning in general, the answers given prove that it is of paramount importance for most respondents.

Assessment is an essential component of the learning process. In the examined period it took place mainly in written form. In a few cases no assessment was tracked. This area deserves a special attention as in DL the methods of assessment should change and they can be either live, real-time reporting with the help of applications or time-delayed, remote reporting like e.g. project work.

Having found online learning more time-consuming, more difficult and less productive most respondents would not like to study this way. In spite of the attempts of most teachers to motivate learners, a lot of students became demotivated in this period. Some of the learners are not against this form of teaching and would like to continue to study this way,

Conclusions and pedagogical implications. Distance learning has advantages and disadvantages at the same time, but all in all, the experience gained in this period can contribute to the learning and teaching process in the future. It can be a considerable step towards implementing ICT into traditional teaching as both teachers and learners have improved their digital skills to a certain extent. Involving digital and video technology into teaching in general and into language learning motivates learners, as the respondents claim. Video recordings made by teachers themselves or carefully selected online resources can be used any time later even in traditional teaching.

As to motivation, we can state that DL was both motivating and demotivating at the same time. On the one hand, involving digital technology, video resources and films made learning more exciting and motivated learners intrinsically. The positive attitude of teachers and their attempt to help learners in this situation was also motivating for the learners. On the other hand, the lack of live explanations and of regular face-to-face control, the huge amount of material that had to be coped with along with the difficulties the learners faced proved to be demotivating. Teachers should pay a lot of attention to developing learner autonomy, motivating learners, should find more efficient ways of assessment and have to find ways to increase the number of online lessons.

During the period of the first school breakdown learners faced a lot of difficulties and experienced a new form of learning for which they were not prepared. Those learners, whose attitude was serious enough and were able to manage their time well have coped with these difficulties and gained experience in a new form of learning that can be useful for them in their future studies as in the digital age online learning is becoming more and more popular and widespread.

In the second phase of the research we are going to compare the first, sudden school breakdown with another period that schools might face and are seeking answers for the questions arising from the first phrase of the research as well as for any changes taken.

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Chapter II Secondary school language teachers

The new reality created by the COVID-19 caused a lot of changes in the educational sphere. The transition from face-to-face to distance learning was not smooth in Ukraine because distance learning was not a common practice in the country before and teachers were unprepared for teaching online. This unusual situation prompted us to start our qualitative research primarily to get insights into the altered daily routines of teachers and educators. In particular, we were interested in how they assessed their students' performance online. This article focuses on secondary school language teachers (n=65) and language tutors at the tertiary level (n=18). The research findings have revealed that teachers gave feedback through different digital applications like Google Classroom. Oral performance was evaluated either synchronously or asynchronously. The most crucial implication is that teachers should improve and further develop their digital skills and distance teaching and assessing skills in order to provide quality education in the modern form.

Keywords: distance learning, assessment, Transcarpathian Hungarian schools, secondary and tertiary education, language teachers and educators

Introduction

The year 2020 is crucial for humanity and will be memorable for a long time, as the rapid spread of COVID-19 has fundamentally changed life across the globe. While we were still optimistic about the epidemic in January and hardly believed it would reach us from such the distant China, a national quarantine was announced in Ukraine on 12 March 2020 to prevent the spread of the epidemic, or at least slow it down. The full closure of the country was initially only for one month and then extended weekly until June 2020, depending on the current situation.

However, during this time, education did not stop, it was just transformed. Although educational institutions were closed, the educational process itself continued in cyberspace. This was the case at the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education. The college is located in Transcarpathia, a western county in Ukraine, in a small town, Berehove, with a population of about 23,000 (Number, 2020; Tátrai *et al.,* 2018). The region of Transcarpathia is multi-ethnic, with national minorities like Hungarians living here. The college is a relatively new higher educational establishment, only 24 years old. The Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association and the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association founded it in 1996 on behalf of the local Hungarian minority with the aim of supporting and maintaining Hungarian higher education in Transcarpathia and providing well-trained, competent teachers for the 100 Hungarian primary and secondary schools in Transcarpathia. Besides other majors, we train language teachers (English, Hungarian, and Ukrainian) at the bachelor's and master's levels at the college.

The educational process also continued for the 100 Transcarpathian schools with Hungarian language of instruction. In the spring of 2020, we had to move from face-to-face learning to distance learning (Bender, Wood, & Vredevoogd, 2004; Kovács, 1996; Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2000) in Ukraine at record speed. As distance learning was not

widespread in the country before, many educators, teachers, students and pupils were only able to catch up and keep up with the educational process with difficulty. It was this situation that prompted our research team to conduct a survey among the four target groups on how they could cope with the challenges of distance learning. We wanted to gain insight into their changed daily routines due to online education and get answers to urgent questions such as how to motivate pupils or students to learn a language through distance learning and how to most effectively assess and evaluate their knowledge or performance.

Theoretical background to the research

The current situation has brought a huge change: the transition from face-to-face education to distance learning has taken place through online platforms. Teachers did everything possible (and impossible) to keep students learning. Educators have done a tremendous job around the world in transitioning to distance learning and are still working diligently today to meet the needs of their students (Herrmann, 2020). Also, a huge amount of research has been carried out throughout the world on the impact of the pandemic on the educational process (*cf.* Day *at al.,* 2021; Flores & Gago, 2020; Purushotham & Swathi, 2020; Said Pace, 2020; Toquero, 2020).

Szűcs and Zarka in 2006 declared that "distance learning in today's world is an essential component of education" (Szűcs & Zarka, 2006, p. 15), but they could not even imagine how true this statement would prove in 2020. Distance learning is a form of education in which the teacher and the student are not physically located in the same space (Kovács, 1996). For most of the training time, students study independently, autonomously; for a smaller part they consult their teachers in person.

Bereczki *et al.* (2020) provide useful advice for educators working in higher education:
● Focus on learning goals, outcomes and link selected interfaces and solutions.
● Define the priorities both in the content of the course and in connection with the technical background / framework.
● Be flexible and open, try to take into account the needs and possibilities of students as much as possible.

The authors hope that solutions will be introduced in higher education "that will serve quality higher education well in the long run, even after the situation due to the epidemic threat has passed" (p. 3).

The role of assessment is central in both the traditional and non-traditional modes of teaching (Ogange *et al.,* 2018; Said Pace, 2020). Due to the limited physical connection between the teacher and the student, assessment and feedback are particularly important factors in distance learning.

In distance learning, the significance of the practice Davidson (2013) called "assessment for learning" (AfL) can be appreciated, distinguishing it from "assessment of learning". Assessment of learning is done for the purpose of grading, evaluating student outcomes, using existing well-established procedures and methods, while assessment for learning requires different priorities, new procedures and new commitment for learning.

The main features of "assessment" in AfL are: 1. assessment is embedded in teaching and learning; 2. learning objectives are shared with students and students are taught how to recognize desired norms; 3. students engage in continuous peer and self-assessment; 4. constructive qualitative feedback helps students identify the next steps needed for learning; 5.

assessment data is regularly reviewed and considered by teachers, parents and students; 6. it is assumed that all students are able to improve (Davidson, 2013, p. 264).

In AfL, assessment has two key roles: to inform and shape decisions about what to do next, helping teachers decide what to teach further, and more importantly, for the student to understand what they have learned and what more they need to learn in the future (Black, 2001; Black et al., 2003). The emphasis is on why students do not learn well and how they can be helped to improve, and not just focus on teachers using assessment to determine what knowledge students have acquired (Davidson, 2013, p. 267).

A key concept for evaluation is exactly what we evaluate. Do we assess students' knowledge? Or, perhaps the use of taught vocabulary and language structures? Or both at the same time? In traditional face-to-face teaching, of course, this was also measured by language teachers using paper-based module tests. However, during online education, the method of measurement has changed, although its purpose has remained the same. The measurement methods also had to adapt to the new reality, so e.g. paper-based tests have been replaced by online ones.

Jaczkovits (2020, p. 2) emphasizes that one form of assessing students' knowledge "…is live, real-time reporting, which can be accomplished using video conferencing, telephone applications (taking into account students' equipment). Another form is time-delayed, remote reporting (worksheets, tests, questionnaires, homework, presentation, mind maps, etc.)". The author believes that in digital education, formative (developing, shaping, supporting) evaluation plays a role rather than summative evaluation, which may be based on the electronic portfolio collected online in the digital agenda (Cambridge, 2010). It can collect student work, notes, online consultations, instructor feedback, etc. However, it is advisable to use formative assessment in distance education.

Research Design and Methods

In this paper, we will focus on the results of our research that we have obtained from questionnaires from two target populations, secondary school English, German, Hungarian and Ukrainian teachers and college tutors teaching all the four of these languages.

Participants

Our research participants belonged to two target groups: secondary school teachers (n=65, Group 1) and college tutors (n=18, Group 2, making up 50% of the total of full-time language instructors). All of them taught languages (English and German as foreign languages, Ukrainian as a second language, and Hungarian as the mother tongue of schoolchildren and college students). (See Table 2.1)

Table 2.1 Teacher and tutor participants' personal data (age and gender, F=female, M=male)
Note: teacher data are presented in italic, while tutor data are underlined.

	English		German		Ukrainian		Hungarian		Number of Ts
Age	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
20-25	*2*	*2*						*1*	*5*
26-30	*2*	<u>1</u>			*1*				*3* <u>1</u>
31-35	*10* <u>1</u>		*1* <u>1</u>		*3* <u>1</u>		*8*	<u>1</u>	*22* <u>4</u>
36-40	*7* <u>1</u>	*1*		<u>1</u>			*4* <u>1</u>		*12* <u>3</u>

41-45	*6*	1		*2*				*2*		*1*	1	*1*	1	*8*	7
46-50	*1*	1					*2*	1	*2*			1	*6*	2
50+	*1*	1		*2*					*6*			*9*	1
TOTAL	*29*	5	*3*	3	*3*	2		*6*	3	1	*21*	2	2	3	*65*	18

The teaching experience of teachers ranged between one year and more than 30 years. Table 2.2 presents the data on the participants' years spent in the sphere of education as teachers. Out of the eighteen college tutors seven had been working in higher education for 1-5 years. One teacher had been a college instructor for 6-10 years and another one for 11-15 years. Five had been working in teacher education for 16-20 years and four for 21-25 years (see Table 2.2 for summary of teaching experience of the research participants).

Table 2.2 Teaching experience of participants (Group 1 – data in italics, Group 2 – data underlined) in years

Years	1-5		6-10		11-15		16-20		21-25		26-30	30+	TOTAL	
Number of teachers / tutors	*10*	7	*16*	1	*10*	1	*9*	5	*8*	4	*6*	*6*	*65*	18

The teachers who participated in our research taught secondary school children aged 15-17. Only five teachers have tried teaching online before the 2020 spring quarantine, while sixty teachers have not. Out of the 65 teachers 62 have never been trained how to teach online. Only three teachers mentioned they had done some training course on distance learning. Most of them (59) used some kind of online applications or platforms (see Table 3). However, fourteen teachers did not apply any of these.

Before the spring of 2020, only two teachers had tried teaching distantly earlier, sixteen had not. Also, only three had participated in training courses on distance learning in the past and fifteen had not. Similarly to the case of secondary school teachers, this also proves the novelty of the situation, to which we had to adapt in a very short time (about two weeks) because in Ukraine, on 12 March 2020, the quarantine for one month was officially introduced, and the educational institutions had to close. Table 2.3 presents the data on which online applications the teachers and the tutors applied during their teaching.

Table 2.3 Online programs most commonly used by teachers (data in italics) and college tutors (data underlined)

Applications / programs	Number of teachers / tutors who used it	
Google Classroom	*30*	18
ZOOM	*13*	17
Messenger	*59*	17
E-mail	*39*	17
Google Drive	*18*	9
Skype	*7*	8
Google Meet	*2*	3

Viber	*6*	
Redmenta	*5*	*1*
Facebook Live	*8*	*1*
Liveworksheets	*1*	
Wordwall	*1*	
Edubase	*1*	
Screencapture	*1*	
Classmarker	*1*	
Quizizz	*1*	
Edmodo	*1*	
На урок [Na urok = For the lesson]	*1*	

Table 2.3 shows that all college tutors used the Google Classroom program, as five teachers responded that the educational institution required it to be used, while 13 teachers stated that the educational institution suggested which program to use, but the teacher was given a free hand, how to solve the issue. This was also true for the use of ZOOM, which was applied by almost everyone, and the use of Messenger and email, which were applied by at least seventeen people. Less preferred were Google Drive (nine teachers), Skype (eight teachers), or Google Meet (three teachers). One instructor even used Redmenta and Facebook Live. However, MS Teams and Chromebooks were not used by any instructor.

The school teachers decided to use these applications for various reasons, as indicated in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Reasons why teachers used different digital applications

Reason	Number of teachers
The school made a suggestion which application to use but the teacher could decide individually	42
The school staff made a common decision	13
The school insisted on using the given platform	4
My own experience	1
I knew these programs	1
I worked with what I had done before	1
My own decision	1
I tested them all	1
On what interface the student was available	1

Instruments

Both groups of participants were asked to fill in questionnaires online. There were two different instruments developed for the two groups. Their structure was similar; however, their content was slightly different taking into account the peculiarities of the teaching context.

The first part in both questionnaires enquired about the teachers' and tutors' personal data, like age, gender, what language they taught, number of years of teaching experience, experiences with distance learning, and the reasons why they decided on using this or that digital platform during online teaching.

In the second part of the questionnaires, we asked teachers to express their views with us concerning the daily routine of online teaching, the difficulties of motivating children and students when teaching remotely, as well as issues related to effective assessment of their knowledge and performance during distance learning. Teachers and tutors were expected to indicate to what extent they agreed with statements on online teaching on a five-point Likert-scale.

In Part 3 of the questionnaires, our respondents had the possibility to share their experiences with motivating students and assessing their knowledge and performance freely answering open-ended questions.

All the questionnaires were filled in online in June, 2020.

Results and Discussion

Assessment in the secondary school and at college

Twenty secondary school teachers (31%) claimed they only held synchronous lessons with differing frequency ranging from every day to once a week. Twenty-nine teachers (45%) instead of online lessons posted the learning material and tasks to learners on various platforms weekly. Eleven teachers (17%) applied a hybrid form of teaching: they had synchronous lessons as well as posted tasks for the learners to solve. The type of teaching depended on the character of the topic. For example, School Teacher 37 said: "Depending on the type of topic, I either held an online lesson or uploaded the teaching material. In each case, I used practice tasks." Five teachers (7%) prepared asynchronous video lessons for their learners on a weekly basis.

On the initiative of their institution, all the college tutors applied Google Classroom as the basic platform for their distance teaching where they posted the learning material and tasks and exercises to solve for the students.

In the following, we are going to analyse the data obtained about the focus of our paper, assessment of students' and learners' knowledge and performance.

A majority of teachers (54 – 83%) applied various programs to assess and evaluate student performance online. Four teachers (4 – 6%) did not do it at all, they made use of the mobile form to inform students about their evaluation, while seven teachers (7 – 11%) could not decide what to answer exactly to this question.

There were more teachers admitting that they were not able to assess the children's knowledge online (29 – 45%) than those who were satisfied with their ability to evaluate children's performance online (22 – 34%). A rather high ratio of teachers was hesitant to decide this question. In many cases, teachers explained that they did not trust that the student worked alone, so their assessment may not be realistic.

We obtained 55 replies from our teacher respondents concerning the ways they performed the assessment in their classes. These explanations are included in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Ways of effective online assessment of learners' knowledge and performance

Assessment	Number of teachers
In writing (tests, homework, essays, submitted assignments)	23
Tasks and projects requiring creativity	5
Orally	5
Orally and in a written form	9
With the help of an online program	7
Cannot evaluate realistically / effectively online	6

Examples:

It depends on the situation. If a poem was submitted, live-online, with the eyes closed, I could actually give a realistic grade right away, and it worked pretty well. But if the student submitted a well-prepared worksheet in which I recognized someone else's style, I can evaluate it effectively, but not realistically - so I still can't evaluate the student's knowledge effectively. (Schoolteacher 7)

Google Classroom offers many opportunities for this. Another question is whether the child's real knowledge is really reflected back in solving the tasks, or perhaps the parent's. (Schoolteacher 23)

I don't think online education has been able to assess students' knowledge effectively and objectively enough. For younger students, the tasks simply asked for return also adequately reflected how well the student managed to master the curriculum. In the older age group, this method did not work, they are already able to trick the various testing platforms quite skilfully and they can talk about the answers. I tried to send out tests with them in as many versions as possible so that I could minimize this to some extent. (Schoolteacher 44)

With the help of a program I used, I also had the evaluation. Google Classroom offers many opportunities for this. (Schoolteacher 61)

Some college tutors explained how they assessed their students during distance learning. We have summarized the answers in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 Ways of assessing students' performance by college tutors

Methods of assessment	Number of tutors
Based on the returned tasks in writing	18
Setting a deadline and scheduling the assignment in Google Classroom	15
Based on the evaluation of each task separately, quick average calculations can be performed with the help of Google Classroom.	11
With tasks that encourage self-employment	10
By written assignments	9

If one looks at Table 6, one can see that all the tutors assessed their students mainly assigning them written tasks, most frequently via Google Classroom as this was the directive of the management of their workplace. However, some tutors were not satisfied with the way of assessment:

I cannot effectively evaluate students' knowledge because in several cases I have found that they have not completed the tasks alone, used some outside help, or handed over the completed tasks to each other. (Tutor 5)

I can't be sure that online evaluation is really effective, or reliable. I just assume knowing students from an older age. (Tutor 17)

All these findings are in line with what Flores and Gago (2020) found in Portugal, in that the transition from face-to-face to online teaching meant real pedagogical challenges for teachers and educators concerning the use of assessment strategies and tools.

Giving feedback in secondary school and at college

First, we asked teachers about how many hours a day they spent marking the tasks returned to the teachers online. Ten teachers (15%) spent one or two hours daily on this duty, ten teachers (15%) spent two or three hours, and another ten teachers (15%) spent three or four hours on doing this. Thirteen teachers (20%) claimed they spent more than four hours marking the learners' submitted works, while six teachers (9%) admitted this amount of time was changeable for them. However, sixteen teachers (26%) gave no exact answers using phrases like "many hours", "a few hours", etc.

The majority of schoolteachers gave feedback to learners in a written form (either in emails, or text messages, or messages via Messenger, or private comments in Google Classroom – 33 / 51%). Twelve teachers (18%) preferred to give feedback to learners on their performance in the form of a mark accompanied by a comment, while nine teachers (14%) preferred to give only a mark. There were four teachers (6%) who practised giving feedback both orally and in written form, whereas two teachers (3%) gave feedback only orally. The replies of five teachers (8%) were vague in this respect, e.g. "online" (Schoolteacher 52).

Table 2.7 summarises the length of time college tutors spent daily on marking their students' written assignments during distance learning. Tutors who spent three or more times on marking the students' tasks claimed they needed that much time because there were more than 15 students in their groups, so they needed more time to assess students.

Table 2.7 Time tutors spent daily on marking students' written assignments

Hours	Number of tutors
1 or 2	7
3	6
4	4
5	1

College tutors made use of various forms of giving feedback to students. All of them (18 – 100%) provided written feedback to their students. Most of them sent private messages to students in Google Classroom. There were two tutors who sent emails with personalized feedback to students. Another educator explained that "I indicated the correction on the submitted works, evaluated it with a score, and also described my personal comments in messages. And when we held a class with the help of Messenger or Meet, I also told the students my remarks and suggestions orally" (Tutor 7). There was a tutor who mentioned that "When I felt it important, I phoned the student and gave feedback over the mobile phone" (Tutor 2).

The biggest challenge for language teachers in distance learning assessment

Our participants indicated certain difficulties that they found really challenging when assessing their learners' performance and knowledge during distance learning. The most serious

difficulty was caused by the fact that about a third of the teachers did not trust their learners concerning who was the homework done by (23 – 35%). Twenty teachers (20 – 31%) doubted whether their assessment was real and objective. Related to this was the main concern of five teachers (5 – 8%) who considered it problematic that weak learners achieved better results and got better marks than they did during face-to-face education. The lack of real contact between the teachers and the learners meant difficulties for ten teachers (10 – 15%). For ten teachers (10 – 15%) assessing the learners' language skills caused some inconveniences, especially testing speaking skills and listening comprehension of children. Two teachers (2 – 3%) referred to some technical problems (e.g., the photos or video material returned to the teachers by the learners were of poor quality). One teacher (1 – 2%) emphasized that they felt unpleasant because they had to evaluate disadvantaged students in the same way (e.g. there was no smartphone in the family, the child did not participate in the educational process through no fault of their own, etc.). One teacher (1 – 2%) mentioned that they could hardly find an appropriate platform for learners' assessment. Another teacher (1 – 2%) admitted they had to reconceptualise their own evaluation system, and introduce new categories into it. However, we found fifteen respondents (15 – 23%) who did not indicate problems concerning assessing learners' knowledge and performance, but rather general problems of teaching online:

Leaners were not motivated enough to learn the language distantly. (Schoolteacher 11)

I had to spend too much time in front of my computer screen. (Schoolteacher 47)

It was extremely time-consuming to prepare the tasks for my learners. (Schoolteacher 49)

College tutors indicated that assessing student performance in general was the biggest challenge for them in online teaching, as they could not be sure whose performance was being assessed for a particular task: whether that student's or someone else's (e.g., a classmate's or friend's if they had just helped with solution of the task). It was also a problem for several instructors that marking and evaluating module papers written online was extremely time consuming. For some tutors the lack of personal contact caused inconveniences; for example, Tutor 8 complained that "I did not see the students" reaction during the assessment". Another educator spoke pessimistically, saying that "Many times I felt cheated, unable to decide if the student had done the tasks based on their own knowledge or with the help of others. I couldn't trust them" (Tutor 13). Only a few respondents self-declared that they were able to effectively evaluate their students' performance in distance learning. This fact points to a serious shortcoming that needs to be addressed urgently (e.g. by improving the knowledge of college teachers in this area).

Conclusions

The results suggest that the biggest and most common problem in both secondary and higher education was assessment and evaluation. Similarities were found in the responses of both target groups, as both school teachers and college teachers complained that it was difficult to decide from time to time whether students solved a task on their own or whether they made use of external help (in the case of schoolchildren, parents or private teachers, in the case of college students, friends, groupmates, or the Internet). From this result the pedagogical implication can be deduced that teachers should strive to build relationships based on trust with their students. This, of course, is much easier to accomplish in face-to-face education, where teacher and student meet in person daily, with physical presence and real-time conversations. Building trust in distance learning is a bigger challenge for teachers because it is not easy to converse with students in person, it is definitely necessary to use some kind of intermediate tool,

e.g. telephone, or the internet. In any case, building mutual trust between teachers and their students is paramount in order to end the mistrust that a teacher and student often experience, as teachers themselves admit. If the student trusts his / her teacher, they will not feel the need to "cheat" him / her during testing, and if the teacher also trusts his / her student, he / she will not doubt his / her honesty.

Members of both target groups of our research mentioned that it was time-consuming to prepare teaching materials for online learning and then mark the students' or learners' written assignments and give feedback on them. In addition, a great majority of school teachers and college tutors complained about the difficulties in assessing speaking and listening skills in distance learning. There can be one possible solution to this urgent problem: teachers and tutors must acquire the skills of effective online assessment that in our new COVID reality can also be done online by participating in special MOOCs that focus on the issues in question.

In the next phase of our research, we want to compare and contrast the opinions of secondary school and college students with the views of their teachers to get more objective images of our central issue, distance learning, from four different perspectives.

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Chapter III Tertiary students

Distance learning (DL) has not been a common practice in Ukraine before the COVID lockdown in March, 2020, so it meant real challenges for participants of education. This new reality triggered us to get insights into our students' attitudes to DL. An online questionnaire was designed that was completed by 95 English, Hungarian and Ukrainian major BA and MA college students concerning the issue of DL. Results seem to prove that it has both positive and negative effects. From the empirical evidence it derives that introverted students can be winners of online education and they can continue their education in digital mode in the future with ease.

Keywords: COVID-19, quarantine periods, quaranteaching, distance learning (DL), emergency remote teaching (ERT), higher education, student perspectives on DL, student attitudes to DL, Transcarpathia

Introduction

Two years after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is common evidence now what impacts it has had on education worldwide. There have been several quarantine periods during which knowledge delivery was realised in an online mode via distance learning (DL). New terms have been coined to better describe the ongoing processes. Thus, quaranteaching is, in fact, online teaching in times of quarantine. Another recent term is emergency remote teaching (ERT) (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020), referring to the transition from the in-person teaching mode to online teaching due to some emergency situation, which in 2020 was the swift spread of COVID (this will be further explained below). This influenced all levels of education, from primary to secondary and tertiary. However, little has been found in the academic literature how higher education students in Transcarpathia reacted to the new normal of DL, what their perspectives on and attitudes to DL were.

In 2006, Szűcs and Zarka stated that 'distance learning in today's world is an essential component of education' (Szűcs & Zarka, p. 15), but they could not have the slightest idea back then about the truth of this statement in 2020. The construct of distance learning can be defined as learning when students are separated from teachers and peers meaning that students learn remotely and do not have face-to-face learning with instructors or other students (Rasheed, 2020). To put it simply, distance learning is the process when students are separated from teachers and peers and try to learn the new material in an academic discipline. Educators worldwide have made huge efforts to make the transitioning to distance learning as smooth as possible and are still working diligently today to meet the needs of their students (Hermann, 2020). This shift from in-person to online learning has called the attention to certain questions around the quality of online learning experiences (Newcomb, 2020), to the fact how prepared teachers worldwide are to deliver online learning effectively and to the impact that school lockdowns have on both student and teacher wellbeing (Francis, 2020; Prothero, 2020). Schrenk, Alves, Van Dam, & Schrenk (2021, p. 488) considered that 'the change to online learning required that faculty members abruptly change their own mindsets and instructional approaches to prepare effective and engaging online lessons and develop new teaching strategies'. Binanzer,

Cristante, & Wecker (2022) conducted a survey in Germany with 166 German as a second language teachers and found that during the COVID lockdown teachers applied communicatively oriented methods less frequently, primarily the learners' written skills were developed, and teachers believed their students' competencies in most language skills were unchanged or even reduced.

A great many of studies were carried out to measure student satisfaction with the introduction of online teaching (Beatty, 2021; Chen, Sandford, LaGrone, Charbonneau, Kong, & Ragavaloo, 2022; El-Sakran, Salman, & Alzaatreh, 2022; Gürler, Uslu, & Daştan, 2020; Hussein, Daoud, Alrabaiah, & Badawi, 2020; Juárez-Díaz, & Perales, 2021; Kamal, Zubanova, Isaeva, & Movchun, 2021; Klimova, Pikhart, Cierniak-Emerych, & Dziuba, 2021; Pusey, & Nanni, 2022; Pylypenko, & Kozub, 2021; Stukalo, & Simakhova, 2020; Tanasijević, & Janković, 2021). This was also the main objective of Melnychenko & Zheliaskova's (2021) study conducted among Ukrainian university students. They came to the conclusion that their research participants demonstrated positive attitudes to distance learning, which predicted that it should remain after the restrictions in the country due to the pandemic were over.

With reference to what was said above, Hodges et al. (2020) used a new term to more precisely define the situation that arose in 2020 due to the pandemic caused by the coronavirus: 'emergency remote teaching' (ERT). In their opinion, this is an alternative method of education that must be switched to due to the emergence of a crisis situation. The purpose of the ERT is to provide temporary access to education that is reliably available in an emergency or crisis situation. After the emergency subsides or ceases, education will return to its original form.

Another widely spread term in faculty circles is the hybrid model of education that mixes the traditional face-to-face and distance models. It is also called blended learning which involves face-to-face and online modes of education. Hybrid education is a mix of online and face-to-face options. Online can include multiple lectures, all of which can be recorded and played back at the students' convenience, while face-to-face can provide more interaction (Baruth, Gabbay, Cohen, Bronshtein, & Ezra, 2021). Dziuban, Graham, Moskal,., Norberg, & Sicilia (2018) highlight that blended/hybrid and online education has been (and continues to be) one of the great revolutions of contemporary higher education, which has significant potential to solve many challenges facing the higher education sector. We have learned about several characteristics of online education in the last two school years. Most of the time, the teacher leads the class in a traditional way, if he gives lectures, asks questions either to the whole group or to individual students by name and waits for the answers in this way. The revolutionary innovation, on the other hand, consists in the fact that the teacher does all this online, so-called creates breakout rooms for pair and group assignments, uses online resources, and sends assignments to students by e-mail (Baruth et al., 2021).

Liebermann (2020) lists the essentials in hybrid education. According to him, the teacher should do the following:
• provide the same resources and tasks for students in classroom or distance education,
• emphasize the personalized learning schedule of students,
• put in place concrete strategies to achieve a smooth transition between distance and face-to-face education,
• pay increased attention to the most vulnerable students, and encourage autonomous learning and self-regulation.

However, the central topic of the present article among higher education students in Ukraine is under-researched. Therefore, we have decided to conduct investigation with the

purpose of getting valuable insights into how students experienced distance learning and what their attitudes towards it were like.

Problem statement. The main objective of our research was to collect empirical evidence, get insights into and more deeply understand how students experienced the fact of quaranteaching, what their attitude to DL was and what impacts it had on them.

Research methodology

Participants

Altogether 95 students (12 males – 12.6% and 83 females – 84.4%) participated in the research. Their age ranged between 17 and 35+ years. The age group with the highest number of participants was the 17-21 years group, respondents aged 22-27 were eighteen, there were six students in the 28-34 age group, and two participants were older than 35 years. Forty-seven participants majored in English language and literature, 26 students were Hungarian language and literature majors, while 22 respondents majored in Ukrainian language and literature. The distribution of students according to year of study was the following: BA I: 21 (22.1%), II: 21 (22.1%), III: 19 (20%), IV: 12 (12.6%), MA I: 13 (13.7%), II: 9 (9,5%). A vast majority of students had not done any distance learning at all (80 – 84.2%), while only 15 students (15.8%) admitted they had done some form of online learning before.

Research tool

An online questionnaire was created in Hungarian (mother tongue of most participants) with the help of Google Forms consisting of three major parts. The first one contained personal questions such as age, gender, major subject, year of study at the college, etc. The second part included questions about the students' attitude to distance learning. There were altogether fourteen statements and students had to indicate on a five-point Likert-scale how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements. In the third part of the questionnaire students were requested to answer open-ended questions about their experience with distance learning during the three months long quarantine in spring, 2020. This part also included the question whether the students would like to continue online learning in the future or not.

Procedure of the research

The questionnaire was filled in online by 95 daytime students (approximately 50% of the whole daytime language major student population) of the Philology Department of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education majoring in English, Hungarian and Ukrainian. The research tool was prepared in Hungarian, the mother tongue of most of the students. However, they were free to complete it in any language they felt comfortable with. Thus, two questionnaires were in Ukrainian, three in English, and 90 in Hungarian. The research instrument was filled in during a month between 20/05/20 and 20/06/20.

Results

What was the students' attitude toward distance learning?

As can be seen in Table 3.1, the results reflect the self-declared opinions of the students on how they looked at themselves when learning digitally. More than half of the students (53 – 56%) took distance learning seriously because they felt it gave them a lot of learning opportunities. On the other hand, 26 (27%) students believed that it was not possible to learn properly online in

the way they desired to. The remaining percentage of students could not decide whether online learning had a positive or a negative impact on them.

Table 3.1 Students' attitudes – how much they agreed with the statements

No	Statements	Disagree	Cannot decide	Agree
1	I took distance learning seriously because it gave me a lot of learning opportunities.	20	22	53
2	I was frivolous about digital education because I believe that it is not possible to learn properly online.	50	19	26
3	I lost my motivation in distance learning because I did not find this form of learning serious.	37	23	35
4	I lost my motivation during distance learning because I did not feel the rigour of the teacher directly.	56	13	26
5	I was more successful in learning online because I could follow my own pace.	36	25	34
6	I will be happy to take part in distance learning in the future.	49	22	24

About the same number of students claimed that they had lost their motivation in DL (35 – 37%), and that they did not become demotivated during DL (37 – 39%). Again, the remaining percentage of students (24%) could not decide this question. The reason for becoming demotivated for 26 (27%) students was the fact that they were not aware of and did not directly feel their tutor's rigour. This finding seems to imply that the teacher's character might play a decisive role in motivating students to learn.

Approximately the same number of students agreed (34 – 36%) and disagreed (36 – 38%) with the statement claiming that students were more successful in learning online because they could study in their own pace. For those students who agreed, DL was a real help. However, when asked if they happily took part in DL in the future, only 24 (25%) students replied positively.

When asked directly whether they wanted to continue online learning instead of face-to-face education, there was a great contrast in the students' answers. Table 3.2 shows that 76% of students (72) were consciously against continuing DL, while 15 (16%) students would willingly continue DL. The low number of students who could not decide if they would like to continue DL or not (8 – 8%) is evidence of the seriousness and crucial nature of the question demonstrating that almost all the students have their firm beliefs on it.

Table 3.2 Students' willingness and desire to continue DL

Answers	YES	NOT CERTAIN	NO
Number of students	15	8	72

Reasons for willing to continue DL

In what follows below, some opinions are quoted from the questionnaires concerning the question whether students would like to continue DL or not. For the purpose of identifying participants, they were assigned numbers that can be found in parentheses at the end of quotes.

'One of the biggest benefits of distance learning for me was that I was less stressed before a test or exam. Therefore, if it turned out that way, I would be happy to continue distance learning.' (Student 31)

'Yes, I would. Because the schedule is more flexible, I allocate the time myself. In addition to my homework, I had more time outside of the curriculum to study and read. Plus it is possible to work alongside it and it helps a lot in my finances.' (Student 37)

'Yes, because it would not be a problem how to commute, and I could allocate my time to myself.' (Student 57)

'I would like to. It's much easier to schedule my own time, to move at my own pace. It is also more stress-free, yet the curriculum can be learned.' (Student 74)

'Yes, because it was good to be home, I allocated the time to myself.' (Student 86)

'The advantage is that I did not have to travel, I enjoyed studying in a more comfortable home environment, I did not have to go to physical education classes, either.' (Student 93)

Uncertain opinions of students about willingness to continue learning online

This subsection presents some quotes from the student questionnaires showing some uncertainty concerning the students' willingness to continue DL or not.

'In part, it is advantageous, because in this way we did not lag behind the curriculum, but the live education is of better quality and the acquired material is better preserved.' (Student 3)

'I can move on with the material at my own pace. I can better schedule my time. I can help more in the household as well. However, the usual college environment, friends, teachers are missing. Many times, a teacher's explanation would help with learning because it easier to understand the learning material when the teacher has explained it.' (Student 58)

Student 58's example clearly reflects the student's embarrassment in that on the one hand, they are totally satisfied with the convenience of DL in terms of processing the material to be learnt. On the other hand, however, they miss the feeling of being a member of a community, which is the real lack of DL.

Reasons why students do not want to study online in the future

A great many of students (72 out of 95) declared they were categorically against DL. They also expressed their firm beliefs about it in a number of ways. Below, the citations are taken from the questionnaires. After each, their source is presented in parentheses. These quotations have been selected because they are believed to reveal crucial information about the central issue.

'I don't think distance teaching is effective.' (Student 4)

'Personal interactions are more efficient.' (Student 8)

'Distance learning is time-consuming.' (Student 9)

'No, it is difficult because not everyone has internet access at home, and the teacher' explanation in person is more easily understood, because he also presents the meaning in practice.' (Student 16)

'We do the home assignments all the time but there is no time for the new material. What's more, we don't have normal contact with teachers, by which I mean the lack of live classes where we would have the opportunity to listen to the proper explanation of the material or ask our questions.' (Student 17)

'The student cannot acquire the material properly in distance teaching.' (Student 19)

'It seemed feasible at first, but I don't think it's effective at all in the long run. I think every student needs the teacher to explain the material orally live.' (Student 24)

'I believe teaching requires a teacher, and all this is lost online, plus the material has to be processed by the student alone and it is sometimes unimaginably stressful because we are not surrounded by social life, which could ease the situation at school, at home, everyone is self-reliant and has to pass the semester requirements alone.' (Student 34)

'No, I think it's better to be in a social setting. Many electronic devices exhaust the human body, and severely damaging the eyes.' (Student 38)

'I don't want to continue at all. I ran into a lot of problems. I was more frivolous to distance teaching because I was able to solve the tasks more easily with the help of Wikipedia.' (Student 41)

'For me, distance learning caused several difficulties, I noticed that I lost my motivation in terms of learning, I thought I discovered more negatives than positives features, such as the fact that my brother and I had a laptop and many times our tests coincided, so we couldn't agree correctly, so one of us always sent in the test late. The other is the stagnation of the internet, but it can also be electricity. A lot of things distracted me from learning, things at home, things to do.' (Student 43)

'By no means do I want to continue it. Face-to-face classes are much more likable, they can be filled with more meaningful things. Distance learning is terribly impersonal in nature and in no way replaces classroom-based education.' (Student 46)

'This couple of months has been trying everyone's nervous system. There were more tasks than during regular education. It is harder to learn without lessons. Motivation also decreases over time and as learning takes place at home, there are often other things to do in the meantime. During my online education, I had problems with both English and German, as the material had to be understood / learned with less or no explanation.' (Student 51)

'The most negative reply: 1. I didn't like anything 2. I didn't understand anything 3. I had to solve everything alone 4. I forgot everything what I had known 5. Poor sound quality 6. Unsteady internet access 7. Missing the teachers and class 8. Took more time than face-to-face learning.' (Student 57)

'I think we take learning in this online form easy, or it can wear out both the students and the teachers.' (Student 60)

'These weeks were awful. Even though I allocated my time myself, I had to learn a lot more. I didn't feel there was any weight to me getting ready, there were some of my teachers who never scored assignments and I didn't get any feedback from them. It's only partially related to distance teaching, but I could fall into lethargy because of the lack of company.' (Student 66)

'I don't want to continue. I find the process of learning distantly is much more difficult because learners do not have as much motivation as within the framework of face-to-face education. Also, distance learning is a function of many things, e.g. internet, the proper functioning of technical tools, the lack of which is also an obstacle to effective distance learning.' (Student 67)

'It can be harder to focus on learning, mainly because of the work at home. However, the biggest drawback is that there is no teacher explanation, which made learning difficult.' (Student 74)

What impact did distance learning during the quarantine in spring, 2020 have on the students?

The most significant positive impact of DL on students was that their digital skills multiplied during the quarantine because they had to master the application of the technology in online lessons in a short time and very quickly (claimed by 53 students – 56%), denied by 29 students (30%) though. Thirteen students (14%) were indecisive. (See Table 3.3)

Table 3.3 DL impact on students

No	Statements	Disagree	Cannot decide	Agree
1	Online language learning is much more time consuming than face-to-face learning.	21	18	56
2	Online language learning is much more stressful for me than face-to face learning.	30	11	54
3	My digital skills multiplied during the quarantine because I had to master the application of the technology in online lessons in a short time and very quickly.	29	13	53
4	Online language learning is much better and more effective for me than face-to-face learning.	60	19	16

A negative outcome of DL was its being more time-consuming (56 students – 59%) than face-to-face education because students had to spend much more time online in front of their digital devices than usual. On the contrary, 21 students (22%) did not consider DL as being time-consuming for them, while 18 students (19%) hesitated about the question. Another harmful effect was the stress caused in the students by DL: 54 students (57%) claimed that they found DL stressful, while only 30 students (31%) admitted they had no problems of such kind with DL. Eleven students (12%) were not certain whether DL was stressful for them or not. (See Table 3)

Nevertheless, a vast majority of students (60 – 63%) disagreed with the statement that online language learning was much better and more effective for them than face-to-face learning. Only 16 students (17%) agreed with it, while 19 students (20%) hesitated about it. This means that most of the language major students at the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education prefer face-to-face learning and teaching to DL or online learning. (See Table 3.3)

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research, the following conclusions and pedagogical implications have been drawn.

1. More students were persuaded about their own professional development during DL than not.

2. Approximately an equal number of students claimed they had or had not lost their motivation to learn languages during DL.

3. The reason for becoming demotivated related to the personal or professional character of the teacher.

4. A great majority of students firmly declared they were against continuing DL as an option in the future, the main explanations being: DL is time-consuming, impersonal, ineffective, awful, stressful, difficult, and demotivating.

5. The students' digital skills considerably improved during DL as they had to use various platforms and applications in their online learning.

6. Most students preferred classroom-based learning to DL. Nonetheless, like it or not, the present situation with the COVID-19 in Ukraine is such that our students have again been learning online.

Perspectives of further exploration in this field include the investigation of DL influence on the students' physical and mental well-being. In this respect, it is also crucial to survey how quaranteaching in wartime Ukraine impacts students. Another further research direction could be the investigation of student achievement and performance during DL.

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Chapter IV Tertiary language teachers

In March 2020, the transition to distance learning caused tremendous frustration for educators. They were forced to develop their digital skills faster than ever. Taking the opportunity, our research team decided to explore the difficulties distance learning had caused for tutors, how they have adapted to the new situation, what advantages and disadvantages they have experienced, as the situation was unusual for everyone and the skills needed for distance teaching had to be acquired swiftly. We examined how the daily professional routine of language teachers at tertiary level was altered, how they could motivate their students in the new circumstances, what new teaching strategies they had to use to adapt to online teaching, how they could continue to provide effective evaluation of student performance. The empirical evidence obtained from the research indicates that teachers should be trained officially to be able to provide qualitative online education at the highest level.

Key words: distance learning, tertiary education, motivating students in online education, assessment of student performance in distance education

Background to the research and research questions

Our College is a relatively new educational establishment at the tertiary level. It is located in Transcarpathia, a western county in Ukraine, in Berehovo, a small town of 20,000 inhabitants. The Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association and the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association representing the local Hungarian minority founded it with the aim of supporting and maintaining Hungarian higher education in Transcarpathia and providing well-trained, competent teachers for the 100 Hungarian primary and secondary schools in Transcarpathia. Among other majors, we train language teachers (English, Hungarian, and Ukrainian) at the bachelor's and master's levels at the college. Our bachelor training lasts for two years, while the master's training is two years long.

The pandemic altered the reality for us at the college because we had to transition to the distance mode of education on 12 March, 2020. We have decided to explore the effects of online teaching on college tutors: by asking our language major colleagues to fill in an online questionnaire, we attempted to get insights into the changed daily routines of the tutors at the College.

In the course of our research, we sought answers to questions like:

1) How did teachers motivate their students to learn successfully in the online environment?

2) What was the biggest challenge for teachers when assessing student performance during distance learning?

3) How did distance learning affect students?

Review of the literature

The current situation has brought a huge change: the transition from face-to-face education to distance learning has taken place through online platforms. Teachers did everything possible (and impossible) to keep students learning. Educators have done a tremendous job around the world in transitioning to distance learning and are still working diligently today to meet the needs of their students (Herrmann, 2020). Therefore in this part of our study we are addressing topics as they are dealt with in the academic literature, such as distance learning, motivating students in distance learning, and evaluating students' knowledge and performance in distance learning.

About distance learning

András Szűcs and Dénes Zarka in 2006 declared that "distance learning in today's world is an essential component of education" (Szűcs & Zarka, 2020, p. 15), but they could not even imagine how true this statement would prove in 2020. Distance learning is a form of education in which the teacher and the student are not physically located in the same space (Kovács, 1996). For most of the training time, students study independently, autonomously; for a smaller part they consult their teachers in person.

It is now a proven fact (see e.g. Gaud, 1999) that distance learning is more time-consuming than traditional classroom education, as educators and teachers spend more hours per week preparing materials and classes for online teaching than in traditional teaching. Bender, Wood, and Vredevoogd (2004) also came to the same conclusion in their empirical research when comparing face-to-face and distance forms of education. However, it was also noted that if technology can be used to effectively improve the quality of education, distance education will be seen in a more favourable light.

Schwartz (2020) reports about stories told by teachers related to distance learning in spring 2020, which was introduced in the US. The stories show that teachers complained about how time-consuming and exhausting distance learning for them was. The main reason was that working time was not tied to fixed times as in classroom teaching, e.g. from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Working hours merged with leisure time, and while in the normal mode of education both students and their parents sought out teachers during their working hours, asked them for advice, during distance learning this habit changed completely, as did students' sleeping habits. They, too, 'switched to night work,' and it often happened that the assignments were sent to the teacher by the students at 1 or 2 a.m. In most cases, there was a need for teachers to respond immediately to the materials submitted, an expectation that teachers sought to meet. As a result, teachers often found the practice of online teaching exhaustive. The management of a school in Bridgeport, Connecticut, made a relatively reassuring decision to solve the problem: emails that arrived after 5 p.m. were enough for teachers to respond the next day.

Bereczki et al. (2020) provide useful advice for educators working in higher education:

● Focus on learning goals, outcomes and link selected interfaces and solutions.

● Define the priorities both in the content of the course and in connection with the technical background / framework.

● Be flexible and open, try to take into account the needs and possibilities of students as much as possible.

Motivating students to learn in distance education

According to Holmberg (1985), the most important teaching principles of distance education are based on the following motivation assumptions:

• The joy of learning triggers students' motivation.

• Participation in decision-making about the learning process is positive for student motivation.

• Strong student motivation facilitates learning.

• Friendly, personal tone and easy access to the topic contribute to enjoyable learning, support student motivation, and thus facilitate learning.

Motivation is crucial. Intrinsically (internally) motivated students (Dörnyei, 2001) and those with high expectations towards their grades tend to have higher success rates. A positive attitude towards the educator is another factor that contributes to the success of students in distance learning (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2000).

Thornbury (2020) considers that the secret to motivating students is to give them what they want. Once one has the motive, one also has the motivation. This means that it must first be clarified for what purpose the student needs e.g. to learn the foreign language. If this is successfully decided, the main motivation from then on is to achieve the set goal.

Finally, the 'Ten Commandments' for motivating students (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998) can be referred to by teachers and tutors any time, as they are relevant for both face-to-face and online teaching of foreign languages.

Assessing students' knowledge and performance in distance learning

The role of assessment is central in both the traditional and non-traditional modes of teaching (Said Pace, 2020). Due to the limited physical connection between the teacher and the student, assessment and feedback are particularly important factors in distance learning.

In distance learning, the significance of the practice Davidson (2013) called "assessment for learning" (AfL) can be appreciated, distinguishing it from "assessment of learning". Assessment of learning is done for the purpose of grading, evaluating student outcomes, using existing well-established procedures and methods, while assessment for learning requires different priorities, new procedures and new commitment for learning.

The main features of "assessment" in AfL are: 1. assessment is embedded in teaching and learning; 2. learning objectives are shared with students and students are taught how to recognize desired norms; 3. students engage in continuous peer and self-assessment; 4. constructive qualitative feedback helps students identify the next steps needed for learning; 5. assessment data is regularly reviewed and considered by teachers, parents and students; 6. it is assumed that all students are able to improve (Davidson, 2013, p. 264).

In AfL, assessment has two key roles: to inform and shape decisions about what to do next, helping teachers decide what to teach further, and more importantly, for the student to understand what they have learned and what more they need to learn in the future. The emphasis is on why students do not learn well and how they can be helped to improve, and not just focus on teachers using assessment to determine what knowledge students have acquired (Davidson, 2013, p. 267).

Methodology of the research

Participants

The participants of our research were all language teachers at the Department of Philology of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education. A

total of 18 (50% of full-time teachers) completed our questionnaire: 12 women and six men. The age of the tutors is shown in Figure 4.1.
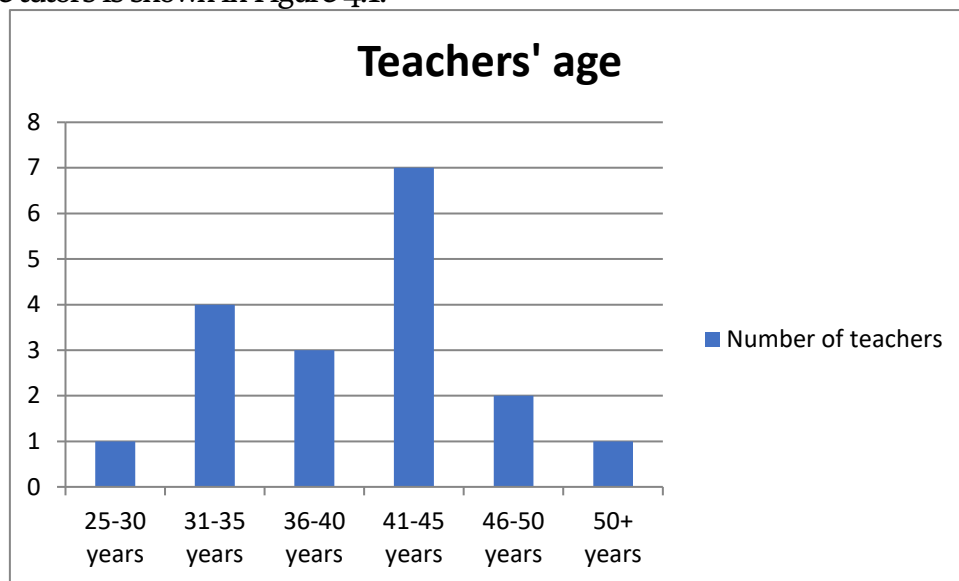
Teachers' age

Figure 4.1 Number of participating instructors by age

All the eighteen participants taught language: there were eight English teachers, two German teachers, three Ukrainian teachers and five Hungarian teachers. Seven of the respondents had been working in higher education for 1-5 years. One teacher had been a college instructor for 6-10 years and another one for 11-15 years. Five had been working in teacher education for 16-20 years and four for 21-25 years.

The research instrument – the questionnaire for tutors

In our survey, we used an anonymous, online questionnaire. It began with a short cover letter in which we explained the purpose of our research and assured participants of their anonymity. In the first part of the questionnaire, we asked for some personal details, while in the second part, we requested educators to indicate on a five-point Likert scale how much they agreed with the statements that were directly or indirectly related to distance learning. In the third part of the questionnaire, we asked open-ended questions about the practical realisation of distance learning: how much time they spent on preparing for the classes, evaluating the completed assignments submitted by the students, or in what form they gave students feedback.

Procedure of the research

After the school year ended in such an unusual way due to the well-known conditions, we asked our language teacher colleagues to share their views with us about the past semester. All of this was done by filling in our questionnaire online in June 2020.
The responses received from language teachers were subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Research findings
What was the students' attitude to distance learning and how did it affect them?

We made 12 statements about distance learning, about which we asked the opinions of the instructors. They could indicate on a five-point Likert scale how much they agreed with each statement. Five instructors disagreed, eight agreed, while five could not decide whether or not

they agreed. In contrast, 12 respondents disagreed that students were frivolous about digital education, while five agreed and there was only one instructor who could not decide the issue. Eight teachers believed students easily lost motivation during distance learning because they did not feel the need for more serious learning. Seven teachers were of the opinion that students easily lost their motivation during distance learning because they did not feel the rigor of the teacher directly. Nine instructors believed that students' learning strategies were limited as they only used their digital skills in online education.

We asked educators how they thought distance learning affected introverted students or students with learning difficulties. More than half (11) of the educators believed that they were positively affected by distance learning because they could learn at their own pace.

Ten teachers assumed that differentiated education was also feasible during distance learning. According to them, differentiated education was easier to implement online because different applications could be used to form small groups of students with similar abilities.

How did teachers motivate their students to succeed in online learning?

Figure 4.2 shows how educators motivated their students in the online environment during digital education. Four teachers tried to encourage their students to learn with interesting tasks, three of them uploaded links to short videos on the given topic in addition to the compulsory tasks, which were interesting, fun and educational, another three always wrote positive, encouraging comments to the tasks submitted by the students in writing. One teacher tried to motivate his students by deducting points from their grades in case they did not complete the assigned task on time. An instructor tried to solve the issue of motivation by discussing the situation together with the student:

> "I always told frankly to my students what I really thought: it's all our common task, it's not easy, but we have to solve it together. No matter how difficult this period is, let's get out of it as much as we can together." (Teacher No. 4)

One teacher tried to teach and motivate by behaving similarly to classroom instruction. Another teacher motivated his students with personalized answers and advice. Someone tried to motivate his students through verbal communication (via cell phone). Someone motivated by constant praise. One instructor mentioned that the most effective way for them to be motivated was to provide their students with personalized answers and advice, and to be in regular contact with them so that their students felt they were always available, whatever help they needed. On the other hand, two teachers declared they did not motivate their students at all because they just discussed the subject requirements with them and insisted on them.
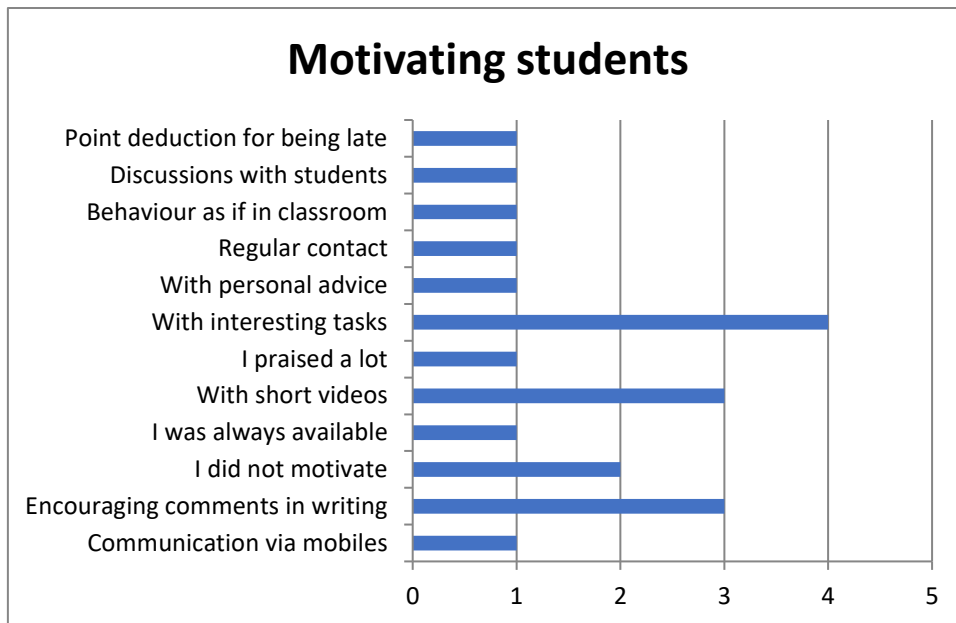
Figure 4.2 Motivational activity of teachers and the number of teachers who used a certain activity

A question interrogated instructors on what teaching strategies they used in distance learning. The answers listed in Table 4.1 were given by the tutors. We also included a frequency indicator that proves how many teachers mentioned the strategy in question in their responses.

Table 4.1 List of strategies most commonly used in distance teaching

Strategies	Frequency indicator (number of tutors who used the strategy)
Preparation of notes for the students	12
Posting audio materials in Google Classroom	9
Preparation of online practice exercises	9
Student-centred strategies (presentations, essay writing)	7
Computer-assisted teaching-learning, teacher-centred strategies	6
Direct teaching method: explanation, practice, assessment	6
I rather sent playful, indirect methods just for practice.	5
Indirect learning management, goal-oriented strategies	5
Teacher explanation, practising, individualization	4
Group work, playful activities	4
Written communication, presentations	4
Less theory, more practice	3
Cooperative learning	2

We asked the teachers to explain what a real challenge was for them in distance learning. We were able to identify the following trends, which indicate the most problematic areas: the assessment of student performance ('It was very confusing that I did not see the reaction of my students during the assessment', Teacher No. 1); whether the students solved the tasks independently or with external help ("The extent to which it is really difficult to decide to what extent a piece of work was done independently, even if the students were mostly given creative tasks", Teacher No. 12); the use of technical tools ("Problems with the rapid acquisition and application of the use of digital tools.", Teacher No. 9); personal encounters ("Lack of personal contact," Teacher No. 13); the schedule ("How do I allocate my time rationally, efficiently," Teacher No. 15).

Most teachers (5) responded that the most confusing issue for them was that they did not see the students' reaction during the assessment. Two other teachers pointed out that oral assessment was a problem for them. Three highlighted that they were sometimes frustrated by the widespread use of the digital tools. Two complained of a lack of direct personal contact and two complained of scheduling. One teacher highlighted that online marking of test papers has become lengthy, while another said that "Many times I felt cheated, I couldn't decide if the student had done the tasks alone or with the help of others. I couldn't trust them. " (Teacher No. 8)

The suspicion in Teacher No. 8's voice may certainly indicate a lack of the important trust between teacher and student, a lack of which can indeed cause serious problems not only in distance but also in face-to-face education.
Two tutors claimed they did not experience any problems.

Discussion and interpretation of findings

In the following, we will analyse and evaluate our results obtained for each research question.

How did teachers motivate their students to succeed in online learning?

It is an important issue in distance learning how educators motivate students to learn. We received varied answers, but everyone agreed that the classes should be interesting and fun so that students do not lose their motivation. In order to make the educational process interesting, the teachers tried to do their best, e.g. they applied the principle of cooperative learning, they gave students playful tasks, they tried to follow the principle of less theory - more practice, they made brief notes on the material to be studied for their students, and so on. They sought to maintain positive relationships with students. After all, as Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, and Zvacek (2000) have found, a good teacher-student relationship is also an important factor in motivating a student to learn.

What was the biggest challenge for teachers in assessing their students during distance learning?

For most educators, clearly assessing student performance was the biggest challenge, as they could not be sure whose performance was being assessed for a particular task: whether that student's or someone else's (e.g., a classmate's or friend's if they had just helped with solution of the task). It was also a problem for several instructors that marking and evaluating module

papers written online was extremely time consuming. However, it is also gratifying that two teachers did not experience any problems when assessing students during distance learning.

Only a few respondents self-declared that they were able to effectively evaluate their students' performance in distance learning. This fact points to a serious shortcoming that needs to be addressed urgently (e.g. by improving the knowledge of college teachers in this area).

How has distance learning affected students?

More than half of the educators believed that distance learning had a positive effect on introverted students or students with learning difficulties. We obtained a similar result for the last question of the questionnaire, which in a slightly different wording sought essentially the same answer. Based on this, it can be concluded that the educators believed that distance learning had a positive effect on introverted students.

The views of instructors on the feasibility of differentiated education online were also divided. Several teachers were of the opinion that it is possible to teach in a differentiated way with the help of different online applications, namely by creating small groups of students with different levels of knowledge and editing tasks purposefully for them. It follows from all this that differentiated education can be easily implemented in higher education through various online applications in such a way that the educators give or ask the differentiated learning material in groups according to knowledge levels.

Summary and pedagogical implications

Distance learning was new to all the instructors participating in our survey. The transition from face-to-face to distance education took place so abruptly in March 2020 that teachers did not even have time to "be surprised" by the difficulties caused by the new situation. They needed clear and direct guidance. They were greatly helped to do their job more effectively by being given a concrete proposal on which digital platform to use in distance learning. However, it can be concluded that there is clearly a huge need for further training of college instructors in the methodology of distance education. The first pedagogical implication, based on the obtained research results, is that educators must develop their digital knowledge and skills to be applied in distance learning.

Teachers highlighted motivation, assessment, involvement of students with learning difficulties in the learning process, and fraud/copying as particularly problematic issues in distance learning. Regarding personal well-being, teachers highlighted that they thought students could easily get tired, while they themselves complained that the preparation time for classes was much longer in distance learning. On several occasions, the quality of the Internet connection was found to be poor, resulting in unequal access for students (e.g., one Internet service provider had better network quality than another. Thus, students who had a lower quality Internet connection, were disadvantaged because they received the information late or were unable to meet the requirements on time and that frustrated them.); and the difficulty for teachers in such cases was how they communicated and interacted with their students. Addressing problems related to internet access (e.g. poor quality service, slow internet, and possible blackouts) is outside the pedagogy; however, it is again clear that teachers need to address self-improvement in terms of their methodological knowledge of distance learning. Based on this, our second implication is closely related to the first, as we believe it is worthwhile, for example, to participate in MOOCs on teaching students in higher education, which are

available online for free. They should address the issues that have caused more or less problems for educators, and their knowledge is essential during distance learning:
• remote motivation
• student evaluation
• developing student autonomy
• protecting the physical and mental condition of teachers and students.

The results demonstrate that distance education has a positive effect on introverted students or students with learning difficulties. Hence the pedagogical implication that introverted students can be winners of online education and it should be considered that they could continue their education in digital mode in the future if required.

Some teachers were suspicious of their students whether they carried out the tasks assigned to them on their own or with external help. This mistrust led us to formulate another implication, namely that educators should strive to build mutual trust with students in order to realise an effective educational process.

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Conclusions and pedagogical implications

In this final section of our methodological aid, we are attempting to draw conclusions about online teaching in Transcarpathia in the period between 12/03/2020 and 31/08/2022 and suggest some pedagogical implications based on empirical research data. Considerations concerning secondary education are presented first, followed by conclusions and implications for tertiary education.

Secondary education
1. Summarising the advantages or benefits of online teaching, we can state the following:
2. Involving digital and video technology into language teaching and learning motivates learners. Video recordings made by teachers themselves or carefully selected online resources can be used any time later even in offline teaching.
3. The positive attitude of teachers and their attempt to help learners in online instruction is motivating for the learners.
4. Learners with serious attitude to language learning are able to manage their time well and cope with emerging difficulties during online learning. They gain experience in a new form of learning that can be useful for them in their future studies.
5. Students take more responsibility during online education, since they often choose the curriculum they want to learn with, and it is also important that they can work and study at their own pace.
6. Concerning the time schedule, the strict deadlines of Google Classroom or the teaching materials that are only available for a limited time can be mentioned as positive examples. The advantage of these is that the learners develop learning accuracy, learn to move within given time frames, monitor their own learning activities and complete their homework on time. In addition, they can use the calendar and reminder functions on their smart devices for learning purposes.

Tertiary education
Based on our findings, we have learned the following lessons on online teaching:

1. Teaching takes more time online than offline.
2. Reading, listening and writing skills are taught effectively also online, however, speaking skills are better taught face-to-face.
3. The interpersonal relations with students can be damaged if teaching is solely done online.
4. Teachers are aware of the need of more training to teach online.
5. In a virtual classroom, it is necessary to eliminate the feeling of isolation by promoting feedback as one of the most crucial elements to make communication between students and teachers flow.
6. The digital competence of both educational actors must be improved. In this way, virtual classrooms will become a powerful didactic tool able to guarantee a higher quality teaching-learning process.
7. Several groups of problems were identified: problems of a technological nature associated with the improper digital infrastructures of Ukraine's higher education institutions, unequal access of teachers and students to electronic devices and Internet connection; problems of a

methodological nature associated with a lack of methodological support and special training programs for teachers to carry out distance instruction; problems of a psychological nature associated with the development of motivation, teachers' commitment, and establishing new communication patterns.

Pedagogical implications for both secondary and tertiary education

- Teachers and tutors should pay a lot of attention to developing learner/student autonomy, motivating learners/students, should find more efficient ways of assessment and have to find ways to increase the number of online lessons or classes.
- Teacher training courses on distance learning are of utmost importance for instructors. These could serve as part of their professional development.
- It is advisable and more useful to have synchronous online classes with students on a regular basis in distance learning. However, if learners of students encounter problems with internet access, or they experience bad internet connection, asynchronous classes are more helpful.
- Tertiary instructors should pay more attention to and put more effort into motivating freshmen and sophomores, as they are the age group who need this and expect it from the tutors.
- Instructors should provide written feedback on learner/student performance as well as give oral evaluation while offering an opportunity to ask teachers about problematic issues when being assessed during online learning as the written+oral variant of assessing students proved to be most effective in this respect.
- Teachers should strive to build relationships based on trust with their learners/students.
- The more interactive online teaching is, the better.

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Notes

This aid is a summary of research findings and crucial lessons learned from experiencing and realizing online language teaching in Transcarpathia between 12/03/2020 and 31/08/2022. It is aimed at BA students majoring in English language and literature and German language and literature. It is recommended for 3rd year students studying the discipline 'Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching'.

Видання розраховане на студентів ІІІ курсу бакалаврату спеціальності «Середня освіта. Мова і література (англійська)» та «Середня освіта. Мова і література (німецька)», які вивчають дисципліну «Методика викладання іноземних мов».