

FOSTERING RESILIENCE: CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF UKRAINE'S HIGHER EDUCATION AMIDST ADVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education serves as a bedrock for societies, not just shaping individuals but also steering the course of entire nations. Beyond the transmission of knowledge, universities act as hubs for innovation, nurturing creative thinkers and fostering scientific exploration. During pivotal moments in history, like armed conflicts, the role of higher education becomes even more critical. The ability of Ukraine's higher education system to withstand and adapt while preserving the quality of education during times of martial law carries profound implications. It will influence both the pace and the scale of the country's post-war recovery, as well as its subsequent integration into the global community.

Quality higher education equips individuals and the nation with a solid foundation to tackle a broad spectrum of challenges, from issues of military security to advancements in innovation. Therefore, maintaining the appeal of education within Ukrainian universities, even amidst the backdrop of warfare and heightened risks, stands as a paramount concern. However, this endeavor is fraught with complexities, not least of which is the task of upholding and enhancing the quality of education.

Furthermore, the adaptability of Ukraine's higher education institutions in the face of adversity serves as a testament to the nation's overall resilience. By continuing to invest efforts in research and education during challenging times, Ukraine can position itself as a knowledge-driven economy, ensuring that its workforce remains agile, skilled and competitive for the ever-evolving demands of the global job market while preserving the integrity of educational quality.

In essence, the role of higher education in Ukraine transcends traditional classroom boundaries. It acts as a catalyst for societal and economic progress, a pillar of national resilience, and a gateway to international collaboration and innovation. In the face of adversity, the preservation, enhancement, and assurance of the quality of the country's higher education system must stand as top priorities.

While the government and administration are dedicated to tackling these urgent challenges, it is imperative to acknowledge that substantial transformations frequently originate from modest beginnings. Educators, too, wield the authority and competence to make a meaningful contribution in this

context. By researching and applying the insights gained from both studies and practical experience, educators can contribute to three key areas: providing mental health and well-being support for students, adopting the organization of the learning process to the current challenges, and upholding academic integrity. These efforts, when combined with broader initiatives, can collectively drive positive change and enhance the quality of higher education in Ukraine, even in the face of adversity.

1. Addressing mental health and well-being

In the challenging context of war, the imperative to foster a safe and inclusive learning environment becomes increasingly vital, particularly in Ukraine grappling with such adversities. Within this dynamic, educators are entrusted with a profound responsibility to ensure that their classrooms transcend traditional boundaries, serving as sanctuaries where students can find solace, respect, and empowerment. This section underscores the paramount significance of the forthcoming strategies, each meticulously crafted to address the unique needs of students facing mental health challenges under the war circumstances.

By embracing these approaches, educators can not only nurture academic growth but also fortify the resilience and well-being of their students, thus advancing the cause of quality education in the midst of adversity.

A safe and inclusive learning environment. In the context of classroom management, creating an environment where students genuinely feel safe, respected, and valued is of utmost importance. Practitioners should encourage students to express themselves freely, ask questions, and voice their concerns without fear of judgment. By establishing an atmosphere where open dialogue is embraced, educators foster a sense of psychological safety¹. Furthermore, actively listening to students' thoughts and perspectives is essential in demonstrating respect for their individual experiences and backgrounds. This culture of respect not only enhances the learning atmosphere but also empowers students to engage fully in their education, knowing that their voices are heard and valued².

Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Techniques. The inclusion of mindfulness exercises and stress reduction techniques stands as a meaningful consideration³.

¹ How to reduce stress and support student well-being. *UNICEF*. URL: <https://www.unicef.org/learning-crisis/teacher-student-activities-support-well-being>

² Two Case Studies in Human Factors in Healthcare / R. Pak et al. *International Journal of Healthcare Delivery Reform Initiatives*. 2010. Vol. 2, № 4. P. 17–38. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-60960-177-5.ch012>

³ Tol W. A., Song S., Jordans M. J. D. Annual Research Review: Resilience and mental health in children and adolescents living in areas of armed conflict – a systematic review of findings in low- and middle-income countries. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. 2013. Vol. 54, № 4. P. 445–460. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12053>

Exploring the possibility of introducing concise mindfulness routines or relaxation practices at the beginning or end of class sessions presents an avenue for enhancing the learning experience. These practices can provide students with tools to center themselves, promoting focused engagement with course content while also addressing their well-being⁴.

Additionally, integrating instruction on simple breathing exercises and mindfulness practices as mechanisms for managing stress and alleviating anxiety holds substantial value. By incorporating these techniques into the educational framework, educators can equip students with practical life skills that extend beyond the classroom, bolstering their academic performance and overall mental resilience. These initiatives contribute to fostering a more conducive and supportive learning environment.

Workload and expectations. In the context of academic guidance and student support, it is prudent to take into consideration the diverse workloads and the occasionally rigorous expectations imposed upon students, especially when they encounter challenging and demanding situations. Within this framework, the thoughtful application of flexibility concerning deadlines and assignments proves invaluable, enabling educators to respond adeptly to the evolving needs and circumstances of their students⁵. Embracing such a discerning approach fosters an environment conducive to academic growth and responsive to the overall well-being of students, thereby nurturing an atmosphere of adaptability and understanding.

Social Support. Promoting peer support and cultivating a sense of community within the classroom offers numerous educational advantages.

Encouraging peer support through active participation in-group discussions creates an environment where students engage with both the subject matter and each other, fostering diverse perspectives and deeper understanding.

Additionally, facilitating activities that encourage student connections and mutual support⁶, whether through collaborative projects, team-building exercises, or problem-solving tasks, provides opportunities for students to build bonds and develop a strong sense of belonging. This sense of community

⁴ Resilience and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic / N. Verdolini et al. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. 2021. Vol. 283. P. 156–164. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2021.01.055>

⁵ Alibudbud R. On online learning and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: Perspectives from the Philippines. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*. 2021. P. 102867. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2021.102867>

⁶ How to reduce stress and support student well-being. *UNICEF*. URL: <https://www.unicef.org/learning-crisis/teacher-student-activities-support-well-being>

can positively influence students' motivation and their willingness to assist one another in achieving success⁷.

*Emotional Check-Ins*⁸. In the challenging landscape of war, regular emotional check-ins with students become paramount. These check-ins offer educators valuable insights into the emotional well-being of students who may be grappling with heightened stress and uncertainty.

Engaging in one-on-one conversations provides a personalized approach, allowing students to openly share their concerns and fears. This builds trust and enables educators to offer tailored support and referrals to relevant service.

Utilizing online tools such as mood tracking apps and anonymous surveys can efficiently gather emotional data from students, especially in larger classes. These tools aid in identifying students who may require additional support, ensuring a timely and sensitive response to their unique needs.

Exemplary Leadership and Help-Seeking Promotion. Within the context of higher education during war conditions, leading by example and normalizing seeking help are interlinked strategies crucial for the well-being of both educators and students⁹.

Educators can demonstrate the significance of self-care by consistently practicing it themselves. This might involve emphasizing the importance of work-life balance, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and dedicating time to personal well-being. By embodying these practices, educators convey that self-care is not just a concept but a tangible and essential aspect of daily life, thereby reducing the stigma associated with prioritizing mental health¹⁰.

Sharing personal stories of overcoming challenges and seeking help when needed can be profoundly impactful. These narratives humanize the educator-student relationship, demonstrating vulnerability and resilience. When students see that their educators have faced and surmounted difficulties, including seeking assistance when required, it can inspire confidence and destigmatize seeking help for their own challenges.

In addition to personal examples, educators can openly discuss the importance of seeking help for mental health issues and actively work to reduce associated stigma. This includes fostering an environment where students feel comfortable acknowledging their mental health needs. Providing

⁷ Avoid Zoom Fatigue, Be Present and Learn / E. Peper et al. *NeuroRegulation*. 2021. Vol. 8, № 1. P. 47–56. URL: <https://doi.org/10.15540/nr.8.1.47>

⁸ Two Case Studies in Human Factors in Healthcare / R. Pak et al. *International Journal of Healthcare Delivery Reform Initiatives*. 2010. Vol. 2, № 4. P. 17–38. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-60960-177-5.ch012>

⁹ How to reduce stress and support student well-being. *UNICEF*. URL: <https://www.unicef.org/learning-crisis/teacher-student-activities-support-well-being>

¹⁰ Social Support and Emotional Maturity to Reduce Students' Online Learning Anxiety During the Covid-19 Pandemic / A. Matulesy et al. *Preprints*. 2021. Vol. 1. 2021010013.

information about on-campus counseling and support services reinforces the message that seeking help is a proactive step towards well-being and academic success¹¹.

Together, these strategies create a culture that embraces mental health support, benefiting the entire higher education community in times of adversity.

Stress Management in the Curriculum. Incorporating stress management and resilience-building topics into the curriculum is a proactive approach to fostering the well-being of students. This educational initiative holds great potential:

The integration of stress management and resilience-building themes directly into the curriculum enriches the educational experience. Beyond theoretical knowledge, students gain practical skills that empower them to navigate the challenges they encounter during their academic journey and in their daily lives¹².

Furthermore, equipping students with practical coping strategies that are readily applicable in their daily routines empowers them to manage stressors effectively. These strategies encompass a wide spectrum, ranging from mindfulness exercises and time-management techniques to interpersonal communication skills and emotional regulation methods¹³. By imparting these skills, educators contribute to the development of well-rounded individuals who are better prepared to confront the demands of modern life, both within and beyond the classroom.

Academic Support. Extending academic support for students who may be facing academic difficulties due to stress or trauma is essential for creating a nurturing and adaptive learning environment:

The provision of additional tutoring or review sessions serves as a valuable resource for students in need. These sessions offer targeted assistance, enabling students to address specific academic challenges that may arise as a result of stress or trauma. Moreover, they create a supportive space where students can seek guidance and clarification, alleviating the academic pressures they may encounter¹⁴.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Chu Y.-H., Li Y.-C. The Impact of Online Learning on Physical and Mental Health in University Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2022. Vol. 19, № 5. P. 2966. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19052966>

¹³ Resilience and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic / N. Verdolini et al. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. 2021. Vol. 283. P. 156–164. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2021.01.055>

¹⁴ Online Classes during COVID-19 Pandemic: Anxiety, Stress & Depression among University Students. *Indian Journal of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology*. 2021. URL: <https://doi.org/10.37506/ijfmt.v15i1.13394>

Demonstrating flexibility in grading policies when appropriate acknowledges the diverse challenges that students may face. This flexibility ensures that students are not unduly penalized for circumstances beyond their control, reinforcing a sense of fairness within the academic framework¹⁵.

Additionally, offering students options to showcase their learning aligns with a student-centric approach. Allowing them to choose projects or assignments that resonate with their interests and strengths empowers them to take charge of their education. This approach enhances engagement and motivation, as students can pursue topics they are passionate about, contributing to a more enriching learning experience.

In essence, extending academic support, practicing flexibility in grading, and providing choice in assignments are all crucial elements in cultivating an educational environment that is responsive to the diverse needs of students and supportive of their well-being.

By implementing these practical strategies, educators can contribute significantly to the mental health and well-being of their students, creating a supportive and nurturing classroom environment, especially in the midst of challenging circumstances like war or conflict.

2. Organizing Excellence

Efficiently organizing the learning process is crucial for several reasons. First, it provides a well-structured framework that helps students grasp knowledge and creates a conducive environment for teaching and learning. Second, it sets clear educational goals, empowering students to define specific objectives for their academic journey. Third, it ensures a smooth flow of information, making it easier for both educators and students to navigate the academic landscape.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought a slew of unprecedented challenges to the world of education. At the initial outbreak, schools and universities worldwide were abruptly thrust into online learning mode, often without sufficient preparation or careful planning. This sudden shift required educators and students to quickly adapt to new ways of teaching and learning. While digital education had been on the rise, the pandemic exposed the readiness, or lack thereof, of educators and students for this digital transformation. Lacking well-prepared online learning plans, we frequently resorted to improvised teaching methods.¹⁶

¹⁵ North S. Addressing Students' Mental Health Needs via Telehealth. *North Carolina Medical Journal*. 2020. Vol. 81, № 2. P. 112–113. URL: <https://doi.org/10.18043/nmc.81.2.112>

¹⁶ Online University Teaching During and After the Covid-19 Crisis: Refocusing Teacher Presence and Learning Activity / C. Rapanta et al. *Postdigital Science and Education*. 2020. Vol. 2, № 3. P. 923–945. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-020-00155-y>

As the urgency of the pandemic subsided, we entered what we might call the “post-pandemic” or “post-COVID” classroom, a term coined by Curtin¹⁷. During this phase, educators had the freedom to choose effective solutions and seamlessly integrate them into carefully designed online teaching methods. They could also refine or discard teaching practices that proved less effective.

However, in 2022, Ukrainian education faced a new obstacle: warfare. While online learning was not entirely new to higher education after the pandemic, the conditions of armed conflict introduced fresh complexities. Airstrikes, power disruptions, and blackouts disrupted synchronous online classes, making it difficult for students to access education. Teachers once again had to find ways to teach effectively and prevent an educational breakdown. This meant reevaluating and adapting existing strategies, approaches, and methods for synchronous online classes to fit the new wartime circumstances.

A turning point came in the autumn of 2022 when educators gained hard but valuable experience with asynchronous instruction. This experience has since become a cornerstone of our preparedness. With this newfound proficiency, we are well-equipped to navigate the complex landscape of both synchronous and asynchronous instructional modes. While the pedagogical landscapes of online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic and wartime conditions in Ukraine during 2022–23 are different, there is a wealth of pedagogical insights and strategies from the former that we can thoughtfully apply to the latter context.

While there is no one-size-fits-all formula for the ideal online class, it is crucial to consider certain key principles to fully leverage the potential of this teaching modality while maintaining the quality of education.

After a thorough examination of recent research findings and the collective experiences of educators, we have formulated sets of fundamental prerequisites for orchestrating synchronous and asynchronous learning while upholding a high standard of quality, even in challenging circumstances.

Synchronous and asynchronous modes of online learning, while distinct in their approaches, present educators with similar challenges, requiring thoughtful solutions to ensure an effective educational experience. By addressing these challenges strategically, practitioners can create engaging, inclusive, and successful learning environments, whether in synchronous or asynchronous online settings.

Clear objectives. Clear objectives serve as a cornerstone in both synchronous and asynchronous learning modes, albeit with distinct characteristics. In synchronous learning, it’s imperative to establish specific

¹⁷ Neuwirth L. S., Jović S., Mukherji B. R. Reimagining higher education during and post-COVID-19: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*. 2020. P. 147797142094773. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477971420947738>

learning objectives for each session, aligning them meticulously with the broader course goals. This approach provides students and instructors with a precise roadmap for the session's content and desired outcomes. The proactive communication of these objectives to students before each session fosters active participation and engagement, enhancing the quality of synchronous learning¹⁸.

In asynchronous learning, clear objectives play a pivotal role in guiding students through self-paced modules or assignments. These objectives must align cohesively with the overall course objectives, facilitating independent learning. By providing specific, pre-established objectives, instructors empower students to take responsibility for their education and pace themselves effectively. Thus, whether in synchronous or asynchronous learning, clear objectives guide students and foster active engagement in their educational pursuits¹⁹.

Communication and feedback. Constructive feedback and effective communication are vital components of both synchronous and asynchronous learning. In synchronous sessions, instructors can provide immediate feedback during live discussions, quizzes, or polls, fostering real-time interaction. Clear and consistent communication ensures that students understand course expectations, deadlines, and updates.

In asynchronous learning, feedback remains crucial but is often delivered asynchronously, such as through written comments on assignments. Instructors should offer punctual, specific, and actionable feedback, aiding students in enhancing their performance. Effective communication channels, such as email or chat groups, are essential for clarifying doubts and maintaining engagement. The key difference lies in the timing of feedback and communication, with synchronous being immediate and asynchronous being more flexible²⁰.

Collaboration. Fostering collaboration is essential in both learning modes. In synchronous learning, live discussions and breakout groups enable real-time peer interaction. Collaborative activities encourage diverse perspectives and a deeper exploration of course concepts.

In asynchronous learning, collaboration may seem less intuitive but remains achievable. Instructors can promote collaboration through discussion

¹⁸ Ten strategies for a successful transition to remote learning: Lessons learned with a flipped course / A. E. Garcia-Vedrenne et al. *Ecology and Evolution*. 2020. Vol. 10, № 22. P. 12620–12634. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.6760>

¹⁹ Wang C., Reeves T. C. Synchronous Online Learning Experiences: The perspectives of international students from Taiwan. *Educational Media International*. 2007. Vol. 44, № 4. P. 339–356. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523980701680821>

²⁰ Moorhouse B. L., Kohnke L. Thriving or Surviving Emergency Remote Teaching Necessitated by COVID-19: University Teachers' Perspectives. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*. 2021. Vol. 30, № 3. P. 279–287. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-021-00567-9>

panels, group projects, or interactive activities. While interactions may not occur simultaneously, asynchronous discussions and collaborative projects provide flexibility and encourage peer learning²¹.

Time Management. Effective time management is crucial in both synchronous and asynchronous learning modes. In synchronous sessions, instructors must structure the session to balance content delivery, activities, and breaks, preventing learner fatigue. In asynchronous learning, students manage their time independently, making clear deadlines and well-structured modules essential for keeping students on track²².

Technical Proficiency. Technical proficiency is indispensable in both modes, with instructors and students needing a solid grasp of the tools and platforms used. Adequate training and support should be provided to ensure a seamless learning experience. In synchronous learning, this proficiency enables smooth real-time interaction, while in asynchronous learning, it empowers students to navigate online resources independently.

Backup Plans. Incorporating backup plans to address technical disruptions during both synchronous and asynchronous modes is a proactive strategy aimed at preserving the integrity of the educational process²³. Recognizing the potential for unforeseen technical glitches, instructors should meticulously prepare for contingencies. These backup plans encompass alternative communication channels and rescheduling options, serving as crucial components in ensuring uninterrupted learning experiences. Furthermore, instructors should educate students about these contingency measures at the beginning of the course, equipping them with the knowledge and resources needed to swiftly switch to the backup channel should the need arise .

Assessment and Feedback. Assessment and feedback are vital in both learning modes, albeit with variations in delivery. In synchronous learning, assessments can include real-time quizzes or discussions, aligning with session objectives. Timely feedback during or after sessions enhances student comprehension.

In asynchronous learning, assessments can be diverse, including assignments, presentations, or group projects. Feedback is typically delivered

²¹ New era of medical education: asynchronous and synchronous online teaching during and post COVID-19 / S. Mao et al. *Advances in Physiology Education*. 2023. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00144.2021>

²² Jeon J., Lee S. Teachers' use of motivational strategies in the synchronous online environment: A self-determination theory perspective. *Education and Information Technologies*. 2023. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-11656-1>

²³ Fabriz S., Mendzheritskaya J., Stehle S. Impact of Synchronous and Asynchronous Settings of Online Teaching and Learning in Higher Education on Students' Learning Experience During COVID-19. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2021. Vol. 12. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.733554>

asynchronously through written comments. Providing timely and constructive feedback remains crucial for promoting self-guided learning²⁴.

Course materials organization. In both synchronous and asynchronous learning modes, the organization of course materials is fundamental to a successful learning experience. For synchronous learning, instructors should ensure that materials are readily available and well-organized within the virtual environment used for sessions. This includes having a clear structure for slides, documents, or resources that will be shared during live sessions. Efficient organization ensures that students can follow along seamlessly and access necessary references without disruption.

In asynchronous learning, the emphasis shifts to providing students with easy access to a centralized repository of course materials. These materials should be logically categorized, with clear instructions on how to navigate through them. An organized structure enables students to work through content at their own pace, find resources when needed, and maintain a sense of continuity throughout the course.

Multimedia. The integration of multimedia elements can significantly enrich the learning experience in both synchronous and asynchronous modes²⁵. In synchronous learning, instructors can leverage multimedia during live sessions to illustrate complex concepts, engage students visually and aurally, and break up the monotony of extended lectures. Visual aids, videos, interactive simulations, and live demonstrations can capture students' attention and enhance their understanding of the material.

In asynchronous learning, multimedia elements become self-paced resources that students can access at their convenience. Instructors should ensure that these elements are well-embedded within course materials. Videos, for example, can provide detailed explanations, while audio recordings can offer alternative perspectives. Interactive exercises or simulations can facilitate active learning and problem-solving²⁶. Implementing multimedia elements allows students to engage with the content in diverse ways, catering to various learning styles and preferences.

However, it's essential to acknowledge that both modes also possess unique characteristics and demands. Asynchronous and synchronous learning each present distinct challenges and opportunities, necessitating a nuanced approach. The strategies outlined below provide a deeper understanding of

²⁴ Synchronous vs. Asynchronous vs. Blended Remote Delivery of Introduction to Biomechanics Course / N. L. Ramo et al. *Biomedical Engineering Education*. 2020. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43683-020-00009-w>

²⁵ Fernandez C. J., Ramesh R., Manivannan A. S. R. Synchronous learning and asynchronous learning during COVID-19 pandemic: a case study in India. *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal*. 2022. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1108/aaouj-02-2021-0027>

²⁶ Ibid.

how to organize these two modes properly, taking into account their individual attributes and requirements.

Active Moderation for synchronous mode. In the context of larger synchronous sessions, the need for active moderation becomes increasingly evident. With a growing number of participants, the dynamics of virtual classrooms can become intricate, necessitating skilled moderators to effectively manage discussions and maintain a respectful and inclusive learning environment.

Active moderation serves a crucial role in steering discussions towards productive and relevant topics while preventing tangential or disruptive threads from dominating the session. By proactively guiding the conversation, moderators ensure that the session remains focused on its objectives and learning outcomes.

Moreover, active moderators play a pivotal role in addressing questions promptly and comprehensively, particularly in sessions with a substantial volume of inquiries. They serve as a vital link between students and instructors, facilitating seamless communication and ensuring that queries are resolved in a timely manner²⁷.

Additionally, active moderation is instrumental in upholding a respectful and inclusive learning environment. It involves monitoring participant interactions and intervening when necessary to address any instances of incivility, thus fostering an atmosphere where diverse perspectives are respected and valued²⁸.

Therefore, active moderation in larger synchronous sessions is essential for effectively navigating the complexities of virtual classrooms, enabling focused discussions, timely question resolution, and the preservation of a harmonious and inclusive learning atmosphere.

Extra flexibility for asynchronous mode. Asynchronous learning stands out for its inherent flexibility, which is particularly valuable in accommodating diverse learning styles and addressing unique challenges, such as those arising from the current situation in Ukraine. Instructors have the opportunity to design courses that truly cater to the needs and circumstances of their students.

One key aspect of flexibility is allowing students the autonomy to access course materials at their convenience. In asynchronous courses, students may come from various backgrounds, time zones, or have varying personal and professional commitments. Empowering students to choose when they engage with the material allows them to manage their learning according to their

²⁷ New era of medical education: asynchronous and synchronous online teaching during and post COVID-19 / S. Mao et al. *Advances in Physiology Education*. 2023. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00144.2021>

²⁸ Synchronous vs. Asynchronous vs. Blended Remote Delivery of Introduction to Biomechanics Course / N. L. Ramo et al. *Biomedical Engineering Education*. 2020. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43683-020-00009-w>

schedules²⁹. This ensures that education remains accessible and inclusive for a wide range of learners, including those facing time constraints due to external factors.

Moreover, in the face of unexpected disruptions, such as the ongoing situation in Ukraine or personal emergencies, flexibility becomes indispensable. Instructors should be prepared to offer extensions or makeup assignments when required. This compassionate approach acknowledges the challenges that students may encounter and provides them with the support needed to continue their education despite unforeseen circumstances. It also reflects a commitment to the overall well-being of students, recognizing that their ability to learn effectively can be influenced by external factors³⁰.

Flexibility is a hallmark of asynchronous learning, allowing instructors to create courses that adapt to the diverse needs and circumstances of students³¹. This adaptability is particularly crucial during challenging times, as it ensures that education remains accessible and supportive, even in the face of unexpected disruptions.

The challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and wartime conditions in Ukraine underscore the need for adaptable and resilient teaching strategies. While there is no one-size-fits-all formula for the ideal online class, the principles outlined here offer valuable guidance.

3. Academic Integrity Spotlight

In the current context, the concept of academic integrity takes on paramount significance as the educational system strives to uphold its standards of quality and excellence. Academic integrity has always been an integral component of higher education, instilling in students the values of honesty, integrity, and intellectual rigor. However, within the current landscape of Ukrainian higher education, the importance of academic integrity is accentuated. As the virtual realm assumes a central role in education, it introduces distinctive challenges and temptations that could potentially undermine the principles of academic integrity. With the increased availability of digital resources and the risk of unethical behaviors like plagiarism and

²⁹ Fabriz S., Mendzheritskaya J., Stehle S. Impact of Synchronous and Asynchronous Settings of Online Teaching and Learning in Higher Education on Students' Learning Experience During COVID-19. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2021. Vol. 12. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.733554>

³⁰ Asynchronous learning: a general review of best practices for the 21st century / T. C. Varkey et al. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning*. 2022. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1108/jrit-06-2022-0036>

³¹ Moorhouse B. L., Kohnke L. Thriving or Surviving Emergency Remote Teaching Necessitated by COVID-19: University Teachers' Perspectives. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*. 2021. Vol. 30, № 3. P. 279–287. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-021-00567-9>

cheating, the emphasis on and address of academic integrity emerge as particularly pertinent and urgent concerns for Ukrainian students.

Upholding academic integrity within the online learning environment serves not only to safeguard the integrity of the educational process but also to provide students with the ethical foundation essential for their future professional pursuits. It forms a cornerstone for nurturing professionalism, instilling in them the values of ethical conduct, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, all of which are indispensable in their forthcoming roles³².

In the realm of education, the significance of academic integrity cannot be overstated when it comes to shaping the next generation of professionals. Upholding academic integrity equips them with the essential tools to navigate their respective fields ethically and effectively. It instills core values of honesty, integrity, and fairness, thereby building a reputation grounded in trustworthiness³³.

Fostering academic integrity also serves to cultivate critical thinking and problem-solving skills, fostering a profound respect for intellectual property. This process additionally nurtures qualities such as discipline, perseverance, and a relentless commitment to achieving excellence, all of which are vital for ensuring long-term success in their chosen fields³⁴.

Moreover, academic integrity plays an integral role in shaping ethical leadership capabilities, prepping aspiring students to assume roles marked by the highest ethical standards. Consequently, it stands as a foundational cornerstone in molding professionalism, instilling values of ethical conduct, integrity, and an unwavering dedication to excellence – a bedrock upon which they will rely heavily in their future professional endeavors.

The promotion of academic integrity in online education revolves around two primary approaches. The first focuses on nurturing academic honesty, emphasizing the importance of integrity in academic work and upholding ethical standards. The second centers on designing course assignments that inherently uphold academic integrity, fostering a culture of trust and individual responsibility. By seamlessly integrating these two approaches, online education can cultivate a new generation of professionals who possess not only knowledge but also a strong ethical foundation, enabling them to navigate professional environments with integrity and ethical commitment.

³² Chiang F., Zhu D., Yu W. A systematic review of academic dishonesty in online learning environments. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*. 2022. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12656>

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Burke D. D., Sanney K. J. Applying the Fraud Triangle to Higher Education: Ethical Implications. *Journal of Legal Studies Education*. 2018. Vol. 35, № 1. P. 5–43. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jlse.12068>

Clear Expectations. To promote academic integrity in online teaching, instructors can begin by setting clear expectations and consequences for academic honesty. By effectively communicating these standards to students, instructors discourage cheating and unethical practices, including proper citation practices, source usage, collaboration, and the submission of original work³⁵. This approach ensures that students gain a clear understanding of what constitutes acceptable conduct and are more likely to uphold the principles of integrity.

Consequences. Equally essential is educating students about the potential consequences of academic dishonesty. Instructors should clearly articulate the penalties for cheating, which may include a failing grade, academic probation, or disciplinary action³⁶. Detecting instances of cheating, following fair processes, and applying appropriate penalties when misconduct is confirmed is crucial. Consistency in addressing academic dishonesty sends a strong message that dishonest behavior will not be tolerated, emphasizing that academic integrity is an unwavering expectation³⁷.

Values. Highlighting the significance of academic integrity as an integral part of students' educational journey is critical. Instructors should emphasize the values of honesty, integrity, and the pursuit of knowledge, instilling in students a sense of pride and responsibility for their work and achievements³⁸. This can be achieved through reflective assignments and similar approaches.

Ethical Discussions. Promoting a culture of integrity in online teaching also involves encouraging academic honesty through discussions and the analysis of ethical cases. These discussions raise awareness about the negative consequences of dishonesty and stress the value of integrity not only in academia but also in business settings³⁹. Through such discussions, students gain a deeper understanding of the ethical implications of their actions and develop a sense of responsibility. Additionally, these discussions provide an opportunity for instructors to underscore the importance of taking pride in one's work, fostering a sense of ownership and personal investment in their

³⁵ Parnter C. Academic Misconduct in Higher Education: A Comprehensive Review. *Journal of Higher Education Policy And Leadership Studies*. 2020. Vol. 1, № 1. P. 25–45. URL: <https://doi.org/10.29252/johepal.1.1.25>.

³⁶ When Opportunity Knocks: College Students' Cheating Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic / B. D. Jenkins et al. *Teaching of Psychology*. 2022. P. 009862832110590. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/00986283211059067>

³⁷ Lathrop A., Foss K. Student Cheating and Plagiarism in the Internet Era: A Wake-Up Call. Libraries Unlimited, 2000. 255 p.

³⁸ Kember D., Fan S. *Review of Literature on Attrition. Adapting to Online and Blended Learning in Higher Education*. Singapore, 2023. P. 157–173. URL: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-0898-1_9

³⁹ Ibid.

pursuits⁴⁰. Appreciating the significance of their contributions encourages students to engage in authentic and original work, reducing the temptation to resort to dishonest practices.

Providing Resources. Furthermore, offering resources such as writing and study skill workshops plays a vital role in supporting students' academic development and integrity. These workshops equip students with essential skills, including proper citation practices, effective research techniques, and critical thinking strategies. Access to these resources ensures that students have the tools and knowledge to produce high-quality work and make informed ethical decisions⁴¹.

Randomization of Assessments. While designing course assignments, instructors can employ several effective strategies, including randomizing questions and answers on quizzes and exams using Learning Management System (LMS) features. This strategy promotes academic integrity in asynchronous language teaching. By randomizing the order of questions and answers, instructors can reduce the incentive for students to share answers, as the likelihood of receiving the same questions in the same order decreases⁴². Moreover, it enhances the validity of assessments, ensuring students are tested on their understanding of the material rather than their ability to memorize a specific sequence of questions or answers⁴³. By incorporating these LMS features, instructors create a fair and unbiased assessment environment.

Original Assignments. In addition to randomization, instructors can steer away from assignments and materials easily found online, thereby diminishing the temptation for students to resort to academic dishonesty. Opting for original assignments customized to align with specific learning objectives and course content reduces the chances of cheating while fostering genuine engagement⁴⁴.

Furthermore, designing original assignments provides an opportunity for instructors to align assessments with specific learning outcomes. Tailoring assignments to target desired skills and competencies ensures active student participation in the learning process and accurate measurement of their

⁴⁰ Parnter C. Academic Misconduct in Higher Education: A Comprehensive Review. *Journal of Higher Education Policy And Leadership Studies*. 2020. Vol. 1, № 1. P. 25–45. URL: <https://doi.org/10.29252/johepal.1.1.25>

⁴¹ Burgason K. A., Sefiha O., Briggs L. Cheating is in the Eye of the Beholder: an Evolving Understanding of Academic Misconduct. *Innovative Higher Education*. 2019. Vol. 44, no. 3. P. 203–218. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-019-9457-3>

⁴² Sutherland-Smith W., Dawson P. Higher Education Assessment Design. *Contract Cheating in Higher Education*. Cham, 2022. P. 91–105. URL: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12680-2_7

⁴³ Golden J., Kohlbeck M. Addressing cheating when using test bank questions in online Classes. *Journal of Accounting Education*. 2020. Vol. 52. P. 100671. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaccedu.2020.100671> (date of access: 29.09.2023).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

progress. This alignment between assignments and learning objectives helps students grasp the purpose and relevance of their work, further motivating them to approach assignments with integrity and a commitment to academic excellence.

Higher-Order Thinking. Incorporating assessments that demand higher-order thinking skills is another potent tool to foster academic integrity and deter cheating. These assessments challenge students to analyze complex scenarios, evaluate multiple perspectives, and propose creative solutions, mirroring the cognitive demands they will face in real-world situations⁴⁵. Moving beyond rote memorization, higher-order thinking assessments require critical thinking, logical reasoning, and the application of knowledge in context-specific ways⁴⁶. By engaging students in these cognitive processes, instructors not only cultivate a learning environment that values critical thinking but also equip students with essential skills for problem-solving, decision-making, and effective communication. This approach promotes academic integrity while nurturing a deeper understanding of the subject matter and its practical applications.

Promoting Collaboration. Furthermore, promoting collaboration among students in online teaching is not just a pedagogical approach but also an effective strategy for cultivating integrity within the virtual learning environment⁴⁷. Collaborative learning activities offer numerous benefits that contribute to the promotion of academic integrity. Firstly, collaboration encourages active student engagement, reducing the motivation for cheating. Working effectively with others is instrumental in developing teamwork skills and a strong work ethic. Moreover, collaborative learning fosters a sense of community, where students develop a stronger connection with their peers, leading to a shared responsibility for upholding academic integrity⁴⁸. Collaborative learning activities also provide an avenue for peer learning, particularly valuable in diverse educational contexts. Through collaborative tasks, students learn from their peers, share diverse perspectives, and collectively construct knowledge. This peer-to-peer learning approach promotes a deeper understanding of the subject matter and encourages critical

⁴⁵ Sutherland-Smith W., Dawson P. Higher Education Assessment Design. *Contract Cheating in Higher Education*. Cham, 2022. P. 91–105. URL: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12680-2_7

⁴⁶ Bradfield G., McAllister R. Strategies to Maximize Academic Integrity in Online Education. *The Journal of Adventist Education*. 2022. Vol. 84, № 2. P. 18–24. URL: <https://doi.org/10.55668/jae0005>

⁴⁷ Holden O. L., Norris M. E., Kuhlmeier V. A. Academic Integrity in Online Assessment: A Research Review. *Frontiers in Education*. 2021. Vol. 6. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2021.639814>

⁴⁸ Awdry R., Ives B. International Predictors of Contract Cheating in Higher Education. *Journal of Academic Ethics*. 2022. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-022-09449-1>

thinking and problem-solving skills, crucial for success in academic and professional pursuits.

Online Tools. To effectively promote collaboration and academic integrity, instructors can incorporate various strategies and tools into their online curricula. For example, they can design collaborative projects that require students to work together to solve real-world challenges. Utilizing online collaboration platforms and discussion boards creates a space for students to collaborate virtually, share ideas, and engage in meaningful dialogue⁴⁹. By setting clear objectives and creating a supportive environment valuing teamwork and ethical behavior, instructors instill the principles of academic integrity and prepare students for their academic and professional journeys.

CONCLUSIONS

The multifaceted challenges that have beset education in Ukraine, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the contextual complexities arising from armed conflict, have necessitated a swift and profound adaptation within the higher education landscape. The resilience exhibited by both educators and students during these trying times is emblematic of the unwavering commitment to the pursuit of quality education and the indomitable spirit of learning.

The first facet of addressing mental health and well-being underscores the broader significance of education that extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge. It accentuates the profound responsibility of educators to create pedagogical environments that are characterized by safety, inclusivity, and nurturance. These environments are essential for enabling students to flourish, even amid adversities. By embracing practices that foster open channels of communication, active listening, mindfulness, stress reduction, and judicious workload management, educators play a pivotal role in supporting the comprehensive development of their students.

The second central element revolves around the effective organization of the learning process. The experiences garnered from navigating both synchronous and asynchronous learning modalities during the pandemic and the exigencies of wartime conditions have illuminated the critical importance of adaptability and resilience in pedagogical strategies. By delineating clear objectives, employing interactive instructional techniques, harnessing technology effectively, managing time sagaciously, and ensuring accessibility and inclusivity, educators can craft engaging and efficacious learning experiences for their students.

⁴⁹ Bradfield G., McAllister R. Strategies to Maximize Academic Integrity in Online Education. *The Journal of Adventist Education*. 2022. Vol. 84, № 2. P. 18–24. URL: <https://doi.org/10.55668/jae0005>

The third focal point, which centers on academic integrity, underscores the premise that education ought not to be confined solely to the impartation of knowledge and skills. It is equally imperative that education inculcates in students the cardinal virtues of honesty, integrity, and ethical comportment. The preservation of academic integrity assumes paramount significance in shaping the next generation of professionals, imbuing them with the ability to navigate their respective domains with ethical rectitude and operational efficacy. Strategies such as the creation of bespoke assignments, the judicious utilization of plagiarism detection tools, the formulation of assessments that demand higher-order cognitive faculties, and the propagation of academic probity through discursive and resourceful means all contribute substantively to the cultivation of a milieu predicated upon integrity.

In essence, the formidable challenges that higher education in Ukraine has encountered underscore the imperative of adaptable, student-centric, and ethically informed approaches to pedagogy. It necessitates a concerted collaborative effort among educators, administrators, and policymakers to ensure that the pursuit of quality education remains undeterred, irrespective of the contextual complexities. The resilience demonstrated by the educational community in Ukraine serves as a source of inspiration, illustrating that even in the face of formidable adversities, the pursuit of knowledge and excellence endures resolutely.

SUMMARY

Ukrainian higher education system faces challenges, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the complexities and losses caused by the war. However, educators and students have been demonstrating remarkable resilience and adaptability in addressing these challenges.

Key dimensions explored in this study encompass creating supportive learning environments, optimizing teaching and learning organization, and upholding academic integrity.

Educators play a pivotal role in cultivating inclusive learning environments that prioritize students' mental well-being through open communication, active listening, mindfulness practices, stress management techniques, and flexible workload management. Additionally, effective teaching and learning organization, including clear learning objectives, interactive pedagogical methods, adept technology use, efficient time allocation, and inclusive practices, are paramount when transitioning between synchronous and asynchronous learning modalities. Furthermore, the enduring commitment to upholding academic integrity remains fundamental, with strategies such as tailored assignments, plagiarism detection tools, assessments promoting critical thinking, and proactive measures to promote

academic honesty contributing to an educational environment grounded in integrity.

The manuscript underscores how adaptive, student-centered, and ethically driven approaches have fortified Ukraine's educational community in its unwavering pursuit of knowledge and excellence amidst significant adversities.

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