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EXPERIENCE OF ASYNCHRONOUS DISTANCE LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION

In asynchronous education, learning is self-placed, and users have to access to previous activities contributed by others from the same group [1]. For example, students can ask questions, reply and comment when they log in to the platform.

Asynchronous education has benefits:

- Self-determined time of readiness.
- Focusing on specific task.
- Ability to absorb and consider information before responding [2].

This nature of interaction encourages comprehensive contributions to the group.

Due to the martial law, occupation of Ukrainian territories, constant bombing and terrifying of citizens, 30% of students had to leave the country and seek for shelter abroad, even in countries which have a large time-difference with Ukraine. Therefore, a problem of performing an asynchronous distance learning arose.

In order to achieve the main goal of all educators – to create a comfortable environment for learning – teachers of the department of Histology, Cytology and embryology of Zaporizhzhia State Medical University have taken to underlisted steps.

First, we did not transition our entire curriculum to an asynchronous platform because some students prefer traditional didactic curriculum, or they might not use asynchronous resources in the way that teachers had hoped. However, making some content completely asynchronous allowed flexibility for students which have large time difference with Kyiv-time. Asynchronous learning can help streamline or shorten in-person didactics, even when some in-person instruction is required (such as when introducing new students a virtual microscope).

Second, we recorded all classes in conferences in Microsoft Teams. All sessions can be accessed at a time, comfortable for everyone. However, watching recorded classes is entirely passive, so we assigned to write a reflection or post on a discussion board in order to keep learners engaged.

Third, to evaluate student's knowledge and skills we developed multiple-choice questions. In addition to them, our staff developed open-question tests, choose an order and match tests which

included questions with photos of histological slides, taken from virtual microscope simulation. Additionally, our moderators created discussion boards which help students process content and involve them in asynchronous interaction with groupmates and other students.

In conclusion, applying of techniques asynchronous of distance learning due to evacuation of students during martial law proved to be beneficial also during blackouts which effected every Ukrainian city. For comfortable educational environment, it will be important for medical educators to gain competency with technology used for asynchronous distance learning.

References:

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2. Watts, L. (2016). Synchronous and asynchronous communication in distance learning: A review of the literature. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 17(1), 23.