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## Design of an Educational Environment for Primary School Students in War Conditions

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of scientific research is to highlight the main requirements for the design of the educational environment of the primary school in war conditions. The study of legislative and regulatory documents constitutes the research methodology for determining the requirements of the professional activity of a primary school teacher in the conditions of martial law. In accordance with the objective, the following research tasks are defined: point out the main factors of influence in the educational process of primary school in the context of martial law; characterize the means to overcome negative influences on the educational process and its participants when designing the educational environment of an elementary school. The main factors that negatively influence the educational process of primary school under conditions of martial law are the predominant use of distance learning.

KEYWORDS: Elementary school, educational environment, teacher, education, design.

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## Diseño de un entorno educativo para estudiantes de primaria en condiciones de guerra

### RESUMEN

El propósito de la investigación científica es resaltar los principales requisitos para el diseño del entorno educativo de la escuela primaria en condiciones de guerra. El estudio de los documentos legislativos y reglamentarios constituye la metodología de la investigación para determinar los requisitos de la actividad profesional de un maestro de escuela primaria en las condiciones de la ley marcial. De acuerdo con el objetivo, se definen las siguientes tareas de la investigación: señalar los principales factores de influencia en el proceso educativo de la escuela primaria en el contexto de la ley marcial; caracterizar los medios para superar las influencias negativas sobre el proceso educativo y sus participantes al diseñar el ambiente educativo de una escuela primaria. Los principales factores que influyen negativamente en el proceso educativo de la escuela primaria en condiciones de ley marcial son el uso predominante de la enseñanza a distancia.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Escuela primaria, ambiente educativo, maestro, educación, diseño.

### Introduction

The design problem of an educational environment for primary school students became particularly important with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges of which were the impetus for rapid and effective transformations in the primary education Ukrainian system, particularly the improvement of digital technologies and introduction of new approaches to the educational processing organization. The relevance using such approaches has gained momentum since the end of the February 2022, when the entire country found itself in a state of military conflict due to the existing threat to the life and health of participants in the educational process. The Ministry of Education and Science in Ukraine constantly emphasizes the creation of a safely educational environment, which can be ensured thanks to the individualization and distance learning (About the educational processing organization in primary schools in wartime conditions, 2022). At the same time, research conducted by the State Service for the Quality of Education together with the project "Support of Governmental Reforms in Ukraine" (SURGe) showed that the educational process in the distance learning conditions are insufficiently flexible and limited in the activity types. Thus, distance learning had a negative impact on student learning outcomes, as indicated by a survey of primary school teachers, especially in

mathematics (51% - rural, 42% - urban) and foreign language (56% - rural, 33% - urban) (Official website of the State Education Quality Service in Ukraine, <https://sqe.gov.ua/u-selakh-mayzhe-vdvichi-menshe-uchniv-mayut/>). Among the factors that have a negative impact on the learning outcomes of elementary school students in distance learning conditions, teachers first of all name: lack of live communication; children's inability to learn independently; lack of full distance courses on school platforms (Official website New Ukrainian School, <https://nus.org.ua/articles/zmishane-navchannya-yak-organizuvaty-yakisnyj-osvitnij-protses-v-umovah-vijny/>). In addition, many primarily educated students found themselves in difficult conditions that make not only face-to-face education impossible, but also distance education in synchronous mode. Therefore, the primary school teachers' preparation to design an educational environment requires an immediate response changing influencing factors in wartime conditions.

## 1. Materials and methods

The research methodology includes legislative and regulatory document analysis to identify the main negative impact factors on the educational primary school processes in the martial law and means context overcoming them; An analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature to determine the features of the educational environmental design, taking into account existing educational and developmental barriers in wartime conditions. In general, the organization of high-quality distance learning requires access to the Internet; technical support (computer, tablet, smartphone, etc.) for all primary school students and teachers; a sufficient level of teachers' mastery of various distance learning technologies and, necessarily, safe living conditions for all participants in the educational process.

We also rely on our own scientific research, which is reflected in the articles «Essence and structure of the future primary school teachers' preparation to design the learning environment», and «The influence of the primary educative state reform in professional trainings of future teacher».

## 2. Results and discussion

On the territory of Ukraine, the practice of mixed education in a combination of face-to-face and distance learning based on multi-model implementation principle on the educational process in general secondary educational currently prevailed institutions.

The most popular is the rotation model, the essence of which is the so-called "rotation" of students at school and the "rotation" the types of their activities, when students work on part of the material independently, and in the class they discuss questions, consulting with the teacher or studying the next material part.

In addition, a flexible model is used, where students work according to an individually adjusted schedule, mostly online, and the teacher is an instructor who coordinates their activities and advises; the personally-oriented model involves learning according to individual educational trajectories (students study face-to-face, and in parallel work with external electronic resources, online courses), which is effective for in-depth study of some subjects; an enriched virtually environmental model, when the main work is carried out online in distance courses, but at the same time the student can attend certain lessons (if this model is applied individually), or certain lessons are held for students of the whole class (for example, at the beginning and end of the topic, for project protection, discussion of certain topics) and others (Official website of the New Ukrainian School, <https://nus.org.ua/articles/zmishane-navchannya-yak-organizuvaty-yakisnyj-osvitnij-protses-v-umovah-vijny/>).

Institutions of general secondary education, regardless of the chosen educational form, continues implement those educational programs that were chosen and approved by them at the beginning of the academic year. For temporarily displaced students who studied under educational programs that are different from the one implemented in the educational institution, including studying with other textbooks, the teacher adapts educational material taking into account what the student has already mastered. In order to individualize education, the teacher determines the student's readiness for further educational programing mastery in a convenient and methodologically appropriate way.

To solve the problem of providing temporarily displaced students with textbooks, electronic versions of valid textbooks for students of grades 1-4 are used, access to which is open. Given that the Internet can be unstable in wartime conditions, electronic versions of textbooks can be downloaded to media (About the organization of the educational process in primary school in wartime conditions, 2022).

The teacher can conduct distance learning in synchronous and asynchronous modes using electronic educational platforms (Google Workspace, Google Classroom, New Knowledge, HUMAN.UA) and online communication services and tools (Zoom, Skype, Team, basic Google services: Gmail, Calendar, Meet, Jamboard, Chat, Hangouts, YouTube and others).

It is worth noting that the determined factors faced by Ukrainian society were facilitated by the organization of free training by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine with the support of Google within the framework of the "Google Digital Tools for Education" program. The purpose of the program is to expand the possibilities of using digital tools to organize distance learning and increase the efficiency of the educational process. After all, some Google tools have already been mastered by educators and are actively used in the organization of feedback from applicants (Google Classroom, Google Meet, etc.). But practice proves that the possibilities of these tools in education are not used to their full extent.

For example, the most widely used is Google Classroom as a tool for students to access materials and tasks of educational components, organize feedback and control. However, Google's tools allow you to diversify the distance educational process, give it interactivity and make it more interesting in conditions of isolation and lack of access to any sources. So, using the digital tool Google Jamboard allows you to create an interactive board both for the frontal work of applicants and for individual types of tasks. The service helps you work with a board similar to a slide, where you can add notes, images, text and much more. When working with the material, you can use a laser pointer, its red mark disappears in a few seconds. As with other Google documents, there is an option to share access with other users so that they can draw and write on the board together with the teacher. Such work expands and "invigorates" the possibilities of presenting theoretical material, gives practical classes dynamism, and most importantly, allows to assess the level of mastery and understanding of the current topic of the educational component by the students.

Messengers, such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Viber, etc., have become one of the popular means of remote communication used in the educational process, which are used not only as means of transmitting messages, but also as necessary means of organizing educational activities in asynchronous mode. Asynchronous learning requires a high level of

self-discipline and the ability to manage one's own time from learners, which can cause significant difficulties given the age of the learner. Also, in the conditions of the asynchronous learning mode, the student may feel isolated.

We take into account that the modern generation of primary school students is characterized by the dominance of visual thinking, "clip" thinking, which provides an opportunity to effectively familiarize yourself with information using visualization, interactive games, various methods, etc. In this regard, the perception of educational material by children of primary school age depends on the goals of the lesson, forms and methods of organizing the educational process. According to psychological characteristics, students of primary education best perceive information through visual representations, that is, with the help of drawings, diagrams, tables (Zhytienova, 2016).

The assessment is based on the principles of child-centeredness, objectivity, integrity, fairness, impartiality, systematicity, criteriality, flexibility, perspective, differentiation and confidentiality, as well as planning, clarity, transparency, openness, benevolence (On the approval of methodological recommendations on the assessment of student learning outcomes 1-4 classes of general secondary education institutions, 2021). Of particular importance in wartime conditions is formative assessment, during which primary school teachers provide individual feedback to students and create conditions for eliminating identified difficulties in achieving expected learning outcomes.

War events affected the attitude, thoughts, and actions of children, which contributes to the introduction of certain corrections aimed at supporting and developing strength, morality, national spirit, formation of patriotism, love and respect for the Motherland, native region. So, every morning, at 9:00 a.m., all students of education, including primary ones, honor the memory of the dead with a minute of silence (About the nationwide minute of silence for those who died as a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, 2022). In order to explain the importance and necessity of this action, primary school teachers use video and audio materials, parables, fairy tales, poems, taking into account the age characteristics of the students of this category.

Amendments were made to the Concept of National-Patriotic Education, among the main components: civic-patriotic, spiritual-moral, military-patriotic and environmental education (On some issues of national-patriotic education in educational institutions of

Ukraine, 2022). During educational activities, primary school teachers take care of honoring public holidays; great attention is paid to the study of the history of the formation and culture of the Ukrainian people; if possible, they actively involve in the educational process figures of modern culture, art, science, sports, who show an active civic and patriotic position; participate together with students and their parents in charity events, etc.

In the conditions of martial law, the psychological support of primary school students becomes special. The situation that Ukraine is experiencing over the last year is classified in science as extraordinary or extreme. For those who experience it, an extreme situation can become stressful, traumatic and cause a significant violation of physical and mental health, the entire life of a person. In the psyche and behavior of children, adults can observe many destructive manifestations that interfere with normal life activities and learning: regressive behavior, intrusive memories, feelings of emotional depression and alienation, withdrawal, irritability, vulnerability and increased tearfulness for minor reasons, mood swings, immersion in self and dreaminess, psychosomatic symptoms, problems with sleep, concentration, etc. It is important to notice children's manifestations and help overcome them (Kisarchuk *et al.*, 2015).

Thus, the use of artificial tools by elementary school teachers helps to have a positive impact on students, such as: establishing value orientations; development of various artistic activity ways, creative and communicative abilities; development of self-knowledge, self-regulation, self-actualization; reduction of emotional anxiety, consolidation promotion of positive behavioral reactions.

In the office, with the help of furniture, a "clean" zone (chairs form a circle) is created for group discussion, a "working" zone (the floor and table are covered with a film) - for visual work. Group members are given a choice. Common works are usually created on the floor in the "work" area. Group work is conducted with various visual materials. Along with watercolor paints, pencils, wax chalk, charcoal, special paints for handwork, markers for creating an image on glass, plastic materials of different densities and colors, paper of different formats and shades, glue, etc. are also used (Tiunova *et al.*, 2018).

Attention should also be paid to physical activity (sensory charging, breathing exercises, stretching, etc.) and exercise, taking into account children's capabilities.

Children's play activities are an important condition for the development and maintenance of social, communicative, and cognitive skills. It is good if at this time children have the opportunity to interact with their peers, discuss or retell cartoons, movies. Different types of games (mobile, sensory, didactic) provide an opportunity to relieve tension, provide the child with rest, and contribute to the consolidation of certain achievements (Bogdanov *et al.*, 2018).

Primary school teachers conduct motivational five-minute "morning meetings". Morning meetings were introduced into the schedule of the New Ukrainian School as a daily practice that allows for a positive primary educational setting for students of whole day in general and for learning, particularly, which ensures the formation of a strong, responsible, caring class community; enables the inculcation of democratic values, the formation of active responsible citizenship, and also ensures the academic social and speech skills activation by children. One of the important mission parts of elementary school teachers in wartime is to create lightness and ease atmosphere in the classroom. Even online, far from home or school, everyone should feel himself like an equal part of the very team, heard and psychologically protected.

## Conclusion

The main factors negatively influencing on the educational primary school process in the martial law conditions are the predominant use of distance learning; changes in students' consciousness; destructive manifestations in psyche and behavior. Overcoming the existing educational and developmental barriers can be carried out thanks to the educational environmental design for the primary school taking into account the current legislative and regulatory documents; available resource support; the multimodality principle of organizational educational forms; potential opportunities for participants in the educational process; available electronic educational platforms and communication online services; available academic and personal results of training, upbringing and development. We associate further research in this direction with the implementation of overcoming means negatively effect during military conflict on the professional training of future primary school teachers.

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