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ENHANCING DISTANCE LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF PHYSICAL CULTURE COURSE

*The digital transformation of higher education has led to the widespread adoption of distance and blended learning formats, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes have raised new challenges for the teaching of humanities disciplines, including the History of Physical Culture, which plays a crucial role in shaping students' professional identity and intercultural competence. Despite the growing interest in digital education, methodological approaches to teaching this discipline in an online format remain underexplored. **Purpose.** This study aims to analyze the experience of designing and implementing a distance course on the History of Physical Culture, assess its effectiveness in developing professional and intercultural competencies, and propose improvements for online teaching methodologies. **Methods.** The study involved 67 first-year students and employed mixed methods, including literature analysis, observation, student surveys, and statistical data processing. The course was delivered via MOODLE, incorporating asynchronous content, synchronous discussions, interactive tools, and project-based learning. **Results.** Students positively evaluated the course's structure, interactivity, and accessibility. Asynchronous access to materials allowed for flexible learning, while synchronous sessions facilitated engagement. Key challenges included self-organization and the need for more contemporary sports-related examples. **Conclusion.** The study confirms the effectiveness of the blended approach in humanities education. Future improvements should focus on expanding multimedia content, refining assessment methods, and enhancing self-regulation support. These findings provide a framework for optimizing digital humanities instruction in sports education and beyond.*

Keywords: digital pedagogy, intercultural education, asynchronous learning, student self-organization, interactive tasks

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1. GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONNECTION WITH IMPORTANT SCIENTIFIC OR PRACTICAL TASKS

Contemporary transformational processes in higher education, particularly the digitalization of the learning process, have contributed to the widespread adoption of distance and blended learning formats. These changes gained special significance during the COVID-19 pandemic, which abruptly reshaped the educational landscape, forcing most higher education institutions to rapidly adapt teaching to a fully remote format [1; 2; 3]. The new challenges faced by all participants in the educational process have intensified the need to rethink methodological approaches not only to apply but also to theoretical disciplines, including those central to the professional training of students

enrolled in the 017 "Physical Culture and Sports" speciality [4; 5; 6]. Of particular importance in this context is the course History of Physical Culture, which plays a key role in shaping the professional identity of future specialists. Studying the historical foundations of physical education and the development of sports across different eras and countries promotes not only a deeper understanding of the field but also contributes to the formation of intercultural competence essential for effective interaction in a globalized professional environment. Knowledge of traditions, ideological foundations, and sociocultural features of the development of physical culture around the world enhances students' ability to engage in intercultural dialogue and fosters worldview maturity [2; 7]. Thus, the modernization of teaching methods for theoretical disciplines,

particularly the History of Physical Culture, emerges as a critical scientific and practical task in the context of digital educational transformation.

2. ANALYSIS OF RECENT STUDIES AND PUBLICATIONS

A review of recent scholarly publications reveals growing interest in distance education within the context of teaching humanities disciplines [6; 8; 9]. Recent studies highlight the relevance and effectiveness of platforms such as MOODLE, Zoom, and Google Classroom, as well as virtual reality technologies that support both asynchronous content delivery and synchronous interaction [8; 10; 11; 12]. It should be noted that distance learning has not only a technical but also a pedagogical dimension, and its success depends largely on how well the content is adapted to the digital format and how effectively the delivery methods meet students' learning styles and needs. In the context of teaching the History of Physical Culture, this implies a need for a thorough rethinking of didactic tools [1; 5; 12]. Moreover, the issue of methodological support for the course History of Physical Culture in distance learning remains insufficiently explored, particularly in terms of how the educational process affects students' motivation and the development of their professional and intercultural competencies. Existing academic literature lacks practical models for the implementation of a distance course in this subject within institutions of physical education and sports, as well as comprehensive analyses of its effectiveness and didactic conclusions regarding future improvements. This highlights the necessity of a study that would consolidate existing experience and provide methodological recommendations for the modernization of this discipline in the context of digital education.

3. FORMULATING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ARTICLE

The purpose of this article is to analyze the experience of designing and implementing a distance course on the History of Physical Culture for students majoring in 017 "Physical Culture and Sports", to characterize its content and methodological features, to assess how the distance format supports the development of key professional and intercultural competencies, and

to outline directions for improving teaching methodology in a digital environment.

Methods of the research. The study involved 67 first-year students (Educational Program "Physical Education" of speciality 017 "Physical Culture and Sport" (Bachelor's degree) of NU "Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic") and the lecturer responsible for the development and implementation of the course. The course was delivered via the MOODLE platform, which provided access to all necessary learning materials, including interactive assignments, tests, forums, video lectures, and feedback tools. Multimedia content—such as historical photographs, video clips, interactive maps, and presentations—was integrated into the course structure. For individual and group tasks, additional tools from the Google suite (Docs, Forms, Meet) were used.

To assess the course's effectiveness, several research methods were applied: theoretical methods for analyzing scientific literature and methodological materials on distance education; empirical methods including observation of the educational process and analysis of interim and final student assessments; and an anonymous online student survey ($n = 67$) that explored convenience, accessibility, motivational influence, and the overall effectiveness of the course in a remote format. Statistical methods were used to process the collected data, including quantitative and qualitative analysis, calculation of percentages, and means. The survey was conducted upon completion of the course via Google Forms. It included five closed-ended questions with multiple-choice answers and five open-ended questions aimed at collecting qualitative feedback.

The open-ended questions invited students to reflect on their impressions, difficulties, expectations, and level of engagement, as well as to assess the pedagogical value and practical relevance of the course. Specifically, the questions asked: What did you remember or enjoy most during the distance course? What aspects or elements of the course did you find challenging or inconvenient? Did this course help you better understand the role of physical culture in the history of society? Please provide an example. What formats or activities were missing in your opinion? Which skills or knowledge acquired during this course do you consider most valuable for your future professional activity?

The responses were used for qualitative analysis and integrated into the discussion section.

4. PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN RESEARCH MATERIAL WITH FULL JUSTIFICATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC RESULTS OBTAINED

During the implementation of the distance course History of Physical Culture, several methodological solutions were introduced to ensure effective learning outcomes for students. The instructional design was based on a combination of asynchronous content, synchronous interaction, interactive tools (discussion forums, Google Forms, cloud-based whiteboards such as Jamboard), and reflective tasks.

The course content was structured into modules based on historical stages in the development of physical culture, each covering a specific historical period or thematic direction (e.g., The Origins of Physical Culture: From Early Beginnings to Antiquity, Physical Culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Physical Culture in the Digital Age (21st Century)). Each module included: 10–15 minute video lectures with visual elements; a presentation with key concepts and dates; a required text-based outline; and a final quiz or interactive assignment. Each topic within a module incorporated a theoretical block (text lectures, video segments, presentations), practical assignments for independent work (essays, mini-research projects), interactive self-assessment quizzes, and feedback tools (forums, messaging, instructor comments).

Assessment procedures within the course consisted of three main components: ongoing, thematic, and final assessment. Ongoing assessment was conducted regularly and included testing after each module as well as evaluation of participation in forum discussions. Thematic assessment was aimed at measuring students' ability to apply knowledge creatively and included completion of creative assignments and project development. The final assessment took place at the end of the course and consisted of an online exam comprising a structured test and a mini-essay.

Pedagogical support played a vital role in the course. Instructor participation in discussions contributed to a supportive and friendly online atmosphere, while systematic feedback was

provided through the MOODLE platform. In addition, the instructor offered personalized comments on students' submitted assignments.

To improve the comprehension of complex topics and stimulate cognitive interest, a wide range of visual materials was actively employed: illustrations, photographs, archival videos, and chronological timelines. All modules included examples from the history of Ukrainian sports, which helped foster national identity and contextualize the course content professionally.

The teaching methods used in the course combined traditional pedagogical approaches with modern digital technologies. The lecture-and-presentation format, delivered through MOODLE, remained central. Video lectures, structured presentations, and text outlines were available asynchronously, ensuring flexibility and individualization of the learning process. The MOODLE platform facilitated not only asynchronous learning but also synchronous elements, including discussions via chats and video meetings.

An important component of the course's methodological framework was the use of reflective tasks such as essay writing, open-ended assignments during practical sessions, and the preparation of analytical responses in final discussions. These forms of academic activity were designed not only to reinforce acquired knowledge but also to develop critical thinking and awareness of the cultural and professional significance of the history of physical culture. This approach fostered intrinsic motivation and the ability to make interdisciplinary connections (see Table 1).

Based on the analysis of student responses obtained through an anonymous online survey, it was found that over 88% of students rated the MOODLE platform as convenient to use: 52.2% described it as very convenient, and 35.8% as rather convenient. This indicates effective integration of course content and a user-friendly interface tailored to the needs of students in the 017 "Physical Culture and Sports" speciality. The quality of the methodological content was positively evaluated: 68.7% of respondents reported that the learning materials were fully sufficient, while another 20.9% found them partially sufficient. Only 1.5% of students reported experiencing a lack of materials or difficulties in accessing them.

Table 1.

Methods of Distance Learning of the History of Physical Culture, Their Characteristics, and Examples of Interactive Tasks

Distance Learning Methods	Characteristics	Examples of Interactive Tasks
Synchronous Learning	Real-time learning, teacher and students interact simultaneously (online lectures, video conferences).	Discussion of historical events in a "round table" format in a video conference; Quiz with instant knowledge assessment during an online lecture; Analysis of historical documents in small groups using tools for collaboration (e.g., Google Docs).
Asynchronous Learning	Learning when students and the teacher do not interact in real-time (forums, email, pre-recorded video lectures, online courses).	Creating an interactive timeline of the development of physical culture of a certain period; Writing an essay reflecting on the impact of historical events on modern sports.
Blended Learning: Combination of Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning	Combination of elements of online synchronous and asynchronous learning.	Students watching video lectures at home (asynchronously) with further discussion and in-depth analysis in an online seminar (synchronously); Performing a group project to research a historical figure in the field of physical culture (asynchronously) with presentation of results in a webinar format (synchronously).
Project-Based Learning	Students work on a specific project that has practical application.	Creating a virtual museum of the history of physical culture of the Zaporizhzhia region; Developing a screenplay for a documentary about the contribution of prominent Zaporizhzhia athletes to the history of physical culture in Ukraine.
Gamification	Use of game elements in the learning process.	Creating a virtual "quest room" with puzzles related to historical facts, where students have to solve a series of tasks.

Regarding preferred content formats, students identified presentations (34.3%), online meetings (28.4%), video lectures (23.9%), and forum discussions (10.4%) as the most effective. Text-based outlines were the least preferred (3%), which suggests a need for more visual and interactive materials for this target group. It is also noteworthy that 64.2% of students considered interactive assignments (such as quizzes and tests) to be very useful, and 29.9% found them partially useful, confirming their high motivational value (see Table 2).

Finally, nearly all respondents (98.5%) confirmed that they consistently received feedback from the instructor. This indicator reflects an adequate level of pedagogical support, which is a critically important factor for the effectiveness of distance learning. In the context of online education, the instructor functions not only as a source of knowledge but also as a facilitator of the learning process: moderating discussions, providing support, adapting content to the needs of the group, and fostering students' emotional engagement [8; 9].

The analysis of students' open-ended responses provided a deeper understanding of their impressions, challenges, expectations, and

suggestions regarding the distance-based delivery of the History of Physical Culture course. Overall, the course received predominantly positive evaluations, indicating its effective organization, well-designed methodological structure, and successful adaptation to the digital environment. Students frequently highlighted the value of combining visual content with theoretical material, the ability to plan their learning independently, and the availability of instructor support when needed.

Students particularly appreciated the flexibility of the distance learning format. Asynchronous access to video lectures, presentations, and text materials on the MOODLE platform allowed them to study at their own pace and combine academic activities with other daily responsibilities. This approach significantly reduced academic workload and helped lower stress levels—an aspect most respondents identified as one of the key advantages of the course. The effectiveness of this format is also supported by recent scholarly research, where asynchronous content delivery is viewed as an effective tool for promoting students' self-regulation [6; 8].

Table 2

Evaluation of the Distance Course on Physical Culture History: Student Feedback Summary (n = 67)

No.	Question	Response Option	Percentage of Students (%)	Confidence Interval (%)
1	How convenient was the MOODLE platform for learning?	Very convenient	52.2	40.24 – 64.16
		Rather convenient	35.8	24.32 – 47.28
		Rather inconvenient	7.5	1.19 – 13.81
		Completely inconvenient	4.5	-0.46 – 9.46
2	Were the learning materials sufficient?	Fully sufficient	68.7	57.60 – 79.80
		Partially sufficient	20.9	11.16 – 30.64
		Lacked some materials	9.0	2.15 – 15.85
		Insufficient materials	1.5	-1.41 – 4.41
3	Most convenient format of materials	Video lectures	23.9	13.69 – 34.11
		Presentations	34.3	22.93 – 45.67
		Online meetings	28.4	17.60 – 39.20
		Text summaries	3.0	-1.08 – 7.08
		Forum discussions	10.4	3.09 – 17.71
4	Usefulness of interactive tasks (quizzes, tests)	Very useful	64.2	52.72 – 75.68
		Partially useful	29.9	18.94 – 40.86
		Did not complete	6.0	0.31 – 11.69
5	Feedback from the instructor	Always received feedback	98.5	95.59 – 101.41
		Occasionally received feedback	1.5	-1.41 – 4.41

Note. Responses reflect students' perceptions of the distance learning course "History of Physical Culture" at the end of the semester. Confidence intervals calculated at 95%.

At the same time, the integration of both asynchronous and synchronous components remains a crucial factor. Experience with this course has demonstrated that the effectiveness of distance-delivered humanities disciplines increases when video content, individual tasks, and forum participation are complemented by live communication through online meetings, webinars, or mini-seminars [13; 14]. This balance not only sustains students' interest and motivation but also enhances their critical thinking skills, and ability to construct arguments, analyze sources, and engage in professional discussions. The combination of diverse interaction formats creates conditions for active student engagement and deeper understanding of historical and cultural content [12].

Students described the course content as structured, logical, and accessible. In their open-ended responses, many specifically highlighted the usefulness of concise presentations with key points, aligning with previous findings that a structured delivery is essential for quality learning in the humanities [15; 16]. Moreover, students emphasized the pedagogical value of assignments requiring not rote memorization but analytical reflection, such as essays and open-response tasks. This approach corresponds to a competency-based educational model, in which

assessment serves not only a summative but also a developmental function [6; 15].

Despite the overall positive feedback, students noted several challenges. The most commonly mentioned difficulty was related to self-organization, particularly among those lacking prior experience with independent learning management. This issue is characteristic of distance education more broadly, as shown in recent research indicating that the absence of structured support and guidance may undermine student motivation and hinder autonomous knowledge acquisition [14]. Students also mentioned technical difficulties such as unstable internet connectivity, and expressed a need for more up-to-date content, including examples from contemporary sports practice to enhance relevance to their professional training.

In their responses regarding course improvement, students proposed adding more multimedia and interactive content—such as video podcasts and team-based games—echoing modern pedagogical approaches to online learning that emphasize the integration of active content with social interaction [11]. Visualization of historical content through illustrations, video clips, and biographies of prominent athletes, when combined with intellectual depth, fosters a sense of “presence” in the digital classroom and increases student engagement [11; 16].

Professional competence was developed through analytical and reflective tasks—particularly essays and open-response activities—which encouraged students to critically interpret historical events and connect them to contemporary sports practice. The inclusion of material on the history of Ukrainian sports fostered an understanding of the national context of professional activity, while the use of digital platforms contributed to the development of digital competence, a key element in modern sports education.

Intercultural competence was fostered through the study of historical models of physical culture across different countries. Comparative analysis of cultural traditions and participation in forum discussions supported the development of intercultural communication skills, tolerance, and the ability to engage in informed debate on topics related to international sports development.

Many students expressed interest in further study of the history of physical culture, citing its connections with politics, culture, and international processes. Their responses included reflections such as, “For the first time, I understood how sport shapes a nation,” and “It was interesting to learn about the link between sport and politics in different countries.” These comments reflect the formation of motivational and intercultural dimensions—core components in the training of future professionals in physical culture.

In the course of implementation, increased student engagement was observed, particularly during the use of interactive tools such as online quizzes, thematic forums, and group projects via Google Docs. These tools promoted active interaction between students and instructors, supported learning continuity, and strengthened interest in the subject. The MOODLE platform enabled flexible course management, task monitoring, and transparent assessment, contributing to a supportive digital learning environment. Overall, the survey results confirm the high quality of the course’s organization, content, and instructional implementation, as well as the effectiveness of digital tools in delivering history-related content in institutions specializing in physical culture and sports.

In light of these findings, it is advisable to further improve the History of Physical Culture course in the distance learning format by expanding multimedia content, enhancing interactivity, updating content to reflect current

developments, and supporting student self-organization through detailed scheduling with deadlines and the provision of self-management training. Additionally, optimizing technical aspects—such as creating guides for resolving common issues and ensuring 24/7 technical support—would improve course accessibility. Diversifying content delivery formats and refining assessment methods to ensure objectivity and comprehensiveness would significantly enhance the quality of distance education, making it more engaging, dynamic, and effective.

5. CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS STUDY AND PORPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH IN THIS AREA

The study confirmed the effectiveness of distance instruction for the History of Physical Culture course delivered to students majoring in 017 “Physical Culture and Sports.” The proposed methodology, combining asynchronous and synchronous learning via the MOODLE platform and Google digital tools (Docs, Meet, Forms), ensured high accessibility, flexibility, and variability in the educational process. The most conducive elements for developing professional competencies were assignments involving analytical engagement with historical events (essays, projects, reflection), allowing students to establish connections between the history of physical culture and current sports practice. Meanwhile, intercultural competence was promoted through comparative analysis of physical culture development in different countries, active participation in forum discussions, and tasks focused on international sports traditions, all of which supported the development of tolerant communication skills and global thinking.

The students’ positive evaluations of course organization and methodology were further supported by high levels of engagement - particularly with reflective activities, instructor support, visual materials, and interactive content. Tools that enabled individualization of the learning experience (e.g., asynchronous access to materials, and flexible task schedules) created favourable conditions for self-paced study and deeper knowledge retention.

This instructional model may be recommended for broader implementation across institutions specializing in physical culture, as it combines evidence-based effectiveness, practical flexibility, and alignment with current principles

of digital pedagogy. Project-based learning, content visualization (e.g., timelines), gamification (e.g., digital quests, quizzes), and the integration of both historical and contemporary sports contexts can be successfully adapted to other humanities disciplines.

Future research should focus on developing criteria for assessing the formation of

professional, intercultural, and analytical competencies among students in distance and blended learning formats, as well as evaluating the impact of various multimedia content formats (animations, video podcasts, infographics) on engagement and comprehension of course material.

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Анотація

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ПІДВИЩЕННЯ ЕФЕКТИВНОСТІ ДИСТАНЦІЙНОГО НАВЧАННЯ: ТЕМАТИЧНЕ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ КУРСУ «ІСТОРІЯ ФІЗИЧНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ»

Цифрова трансформація освітнього середовища висуває нові вимоги до організації навчального процесу, зокрема актуальним постає переосмислення методичних підходів до викладання курсу «Історія фізичної

культури» для студентів спеціальності 017 «Фізична культура і спорт», який має не лише пізнавальне, а й формувальне значення у професійній підготовці майбутніх фахівців. **Метою** дослідження було проаналізувати практичний досвід реалізації дистанційного курсу «Історія фізичної культури», оцінити його ефективність у контексті формування професійних і міжкультурних компетентностей студентів, а також визначити перспективні напрями вдосконалення змісту та методики викладання дисципліни в цифровому середовищі. Було проаналізовано змішаний освітній підхід, що передбачав поєднання синхронної (онлайн-зустрічі, дискусії) та асинхронної (відеолекції, тести, презентації) форм навчання на платформі MOODLE із застосуванням сервісів Google. Для оцінювання ефективності курсу було проведено онлайн-анкетування серед 67 студентів. Визначено що 89,6% опитаних оцінили навчальні матеріали як повністю або частково достатні. Найзручнішими форматами подачі інформації були визначені презентації (34,3%), онлайн-зустрічі (28,4%) та відеолекції (23,9%). Інтерактивні завдання визнали корисними 64,2% респондентів, а 98,5% підтвердили високий рівень педагогічної підтримки. З метою формування професійних компетентностей пропонувалося виконання аналітичних завдань, які допомагали встановити зв'язок між історичними фактами та сучасною спортивною практикою. Формування міжкультурної компетентності забезпечувалось через завдання з аналізу розвитку фізичної культури в різних країнах, участь у форум-дискусіях і міжкультурних порівняннях. Виявлено потребу в розширенні інтерактивних компонентів, у збільшенні частки візуалізованого контенту, а також у системній підтримці самоорганізації студентів. Отримані результати підтверджують ефективність методичного наповнення й організації курсу, свідчать, що поєднання цифрових технологій із педагогічною рефлексією створює сприятливі умови для результативного дистанційного навчання.

Ключові слова: цифрова педагогіка, міжкультурна освіта, асинхронне навчання, самоорганізація студентів, інтерактивні завдання

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