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Shaping the Digital Identity in Slovak Academic Environment: From Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) to Effective Online Teaching*

Kształtowanie tożsamości cyfrowej w słowackim środowisku akademickim – od awaryjnego nauczania zdalnego (ERT) do efektywnego nauczania online

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Abstrakt. Rok 2020 był wyzwaniem pod względem poprawy lub rozwoju tożsamości cyfrowej. Elastyczność i zdolność adaptacji stały się kluczowymi umiejętnościami we wszystkich sektorach. Powodzenie każdej technologii informacyjnej czy też jej zastosowania zależy od sposobu jej wykorzystania. Jeśli chodzi o system edukacji, istnieje potrzeba dostosowania się do pokolenia Z; uczniowie powinni znajdować się w centrum kształcenia, natomiast nauczyciel powinien pełnić funkcję tutora lub coacha. Jest to możliwe dzięki x-learningowi, który opiera się na uczeniu się przez doświadczenie. Jak wiadomo, cała edukacja uniwersytecka przeniosła się jednak do świata online i doświadczyliśmy tzw. awaryjnego nauczania zdalnego (ERT). Z czasem przeszliśmy od ERT do efektywnego procesu nauczania-uczenia się online. Dobrze zaplanowany proces nauczania-uczenia się online znacząco różni się od kursów oferowanych online w odpowiedzi na sytuacje kryzysowe. W tekście przedstawiono różnice między tymi dwoma systemami wraz z zastosowanymi innowacyjnymi metodami nauczania. Celem autorek jest podzielenie się informacjami dotyczącymi najlepszych praktyk w nauczaniu online oraz hybrydowej lub internetowej formy stażu, które ukształtowały tożsamość cyfrową. Innowacyjne metody w połączeniu z nowoczesnymi technologiami obecnie oferują szeroki zakres procesu nauczania-uczenia się.

Słowa kluczowe: tożsamość cyfrowa; innowacyjne metody nauczania; staż; nauczanie online; awaryjne nauczanie zdalne; ERT; x-learning

Abstract. The year 2020 was challenging in terms of improving or developing a digital identity. Flexibility and adaptability have become crucial skills in all sectors. The success of any information technology or its application depends on its usage. Regarding education system, there is a need to adapt to Generation Z, making the students the centre of their training, leaving the teacher as a tutor or coach of their learning. This is possible to achieve *via* x-learning, which is based on learning by experience. However, the whole university education has moved to the online world and we have experienced so-called emergency remote teaching (ERT). During the course of time, we have moved from ERT to an effective online teaching-learning process. Well-planned online teaching-learning process is meaningfully different from courses offered online in response to an emergency situation. Differences between these two systems together with applied innovative teaching methods are provided in the text. We would like to share the best practices in online teaching as well as hybrid or online form of internship that have shaped the digital identity. Innovative methods together with modern technologies offer a wide range of the current teaching-learning process.

Keywords: digital identity; innovative teaching methods; internship; online teaching; emergency remote teaching; ERT; x-learning

TRANSITIONING EDUCATION TO THE DIGITAL SPACE: CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers in an academic environment faced challenges in their competences and skills in spite of their long-term practical experience in face-to-face (personal) teaching and lecturing, in many cases. As a respond, many academic and expert studies and articles have already been published in a struggle to analyse the sudden shift to online teaching process in regular university education process, and naturally, to bring some answers,

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interesting and useful advice and best practices to the foreign academic colleagues. Slovakia and teaching at Slovak universities were not out of this process. The year 2020 was challenging in terms of improving or developing a digital identity. Flexibility and adaptability have become crucial skills in all sectors, education included. At the beginning of March 2020, we unexpectedly "stayed at home" and the whole university education moved to the online world and teachers transited the educational process to so-called emergency remote teaching (ERT). Well-planned online education is meaningfully different from courses offered online in response to a crisis or disaster. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused that schools and universities, unexpectedly and unexperienced in the matter, had to decide how to continue the educational process in order to keep their staff and students safe. The virus was spreading fast so schools and universities opted to cancel all face-to-face classes including cancellation of students' practical internships. Moving all instructions online was a great challenge as schools and universities had not had such an experience before. The speed of moving to online space was staggering, immediate and found the teachers and the students unprepared, in most cases.

Education of Slovak university teachers in the matters of modern lecturing or pedagogics is mainly a part of their university education while gaining their expertise in their field of science. There is also a possibility of a two-year post-graduate study of pedagogics, preparing university teachers for educational process and giving them basic knowledge in the field. Only occasionally, such education and courses involved practise of online teaching (see Law No. 138/2019; Law No. 131/2002), as face-to-face teaching formed the core volume of educational activities and processes. There is no institutional and formal (government-led) process of educating university teachers in innovative teaching methods, even no online teaching methods and technologies applicable in university teaching process, however the teachers feel their need for such "new" methods and methodologies for acquiring new skills. These self-improving activities of university teachers have been therefore left to non-governmental sectors organising rather a nice number of courses, however, they are often charged. Joining the courses requires the aspect of self-motivation of the teachers themselves. In the pre-COVID-19 period, the most recognised in Slovakia were courses organised by a non-governmental organisation called Živica (for more information on courses, see Vzdelávacie centrum Zaježová), for example courses and training focused on new teaching methods in global education within the University Global Education Network. Despite the fact that their scope is mostly focused on primary and secondary schools, many of their online tools, book and teaching materials are widely applicable to an academic environment (e.g., their interactive

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education software for schools with all the necessary materials for interactive teaching with the possibility to manage and guide a course, evaluate students and support critical thinking and teamwork; for more information about the support provided to teachers, including materials, see Globálne vzdelávanie). Then also courses prepared by the Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia (PDCS Bratislava) struggled for preparing university teachers and lecturers in innovative and interactive teaching process, e.g. within the courses as "Training of trainers" or "Participatory methods of education within development education", methodology and practice altogether with courses focused on participatory practices in adult education and training for academics in practice (for more, see PDCS). The above-mentioned NGOs we have chosen among some more institutions because they offer courses developing the whole teachers' personality and leadership, offering the course focused on managing conflicts in a group, non-violent communication with students, safe use of online tools and also courses focused on how the youth is evolving and, naturally, how the teaching skills and abilities need to evolve, too. This is important for university teachers to understand this process of youth evolving in order to keep themselves in the position of a "modern teacher". These are global processes, not specific to the Slovak academic environment only. Therefore, regarding education system, there is a need to adapt to a new generation, making the students the centre of their training, leaving the teacher as a tutor or coach of their learning. All learners require the teacher to arise their interest and motivate them. Students' success is based on their direct personal engagement into the educational process. The pandemic situation revealed, in general, the unpreparedness of university teachers (though not only of them) to shift educational activities only and exclusively to the online space, i.e. the online space became the main teaching space, not a supplementary/additional one, as it was before the outbreak of the pandemic. Our experience in the educational process (the authors work in two disciplines – cultural studies and European studies and political sciences) has shown better preparedness of those teachers who completed some of the additional training in innovative and participatory education before the pandemic, as they were able to reflect and modify them in/to the online space at least to a limited extent, and thus maintain the effectiveness of education for both actors – students and teachers. However, the problem that everyone faced, regardless of their continuous pedagogical growth and education, was the application of modern online tools, and therefore the authors of this study present their experience and innovations in order to share the best practices.

The main challenge of this process was the need to combine two fundamental needs – a need to keep the teachers to be "modern teachers" (see below) and

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to modify the previous teaching methods to make them applicable in the online space, eventually to substitute those inapplicable by the new ones. Before the pandemic, there was a rising trend (in Slovakia but also in the close Czech Republic) of publishing books and instruction guides in modern and innovative teaching (for lecturing and teaching generally, see Langer 2016; for primary schools, see Bagalová, Gogolová, Dolnáková 2014; for specific fields of university education as technical education, see Stebila 2015)[1].

The pandemic tested the expectations laid on modern teachers and, in our opinion, they cover the main areas of the teacher's role and activities. Acknowledging the fact that the main role of university education generally is to: (1) prepare a student for his/her future professional carries (in the field of the study at least) to make a student competitive in a labour market, and therefore (2) to utilise the last chance to develop a young person in all the aspect of his/her personality with a complexity of IQ and EQ reflexed in his/her skills and abilities.

The predominant and core role is then rooted in the teacher's effort to maintain and even increase the interest of students in acquiring new or developing existing knowledge and skills during the education process and *via* the methods applied in a long-term manner. This core role to essential preconditions identifies:

1. The teacher's effort to enable students to apply the skills and knowledge thus acquired in their professional as well as private life. This requires the teacher applying his/her role of a mentor, coach, supervisor or even a mediator.
2. This goes hand-in-hand with the most challenging efforts the modern and effective teachers should struggle for the role of the teacher in changing their attitudes, thinking, perception of oneself and the world around him/her and his/her evaluation using various forms of informal teaching process, such as team-buildings, seminars, workshops or even discussion with some experts in/out of the field of study.

The pandemic unmasked that Millennials or Generation Y (digital natives, i.e. generation becoming adult around the new millennium and widely familiar with the online space – using the Internet, social media or any technical devices related) by their very nature has brought their own vision of the "dream work"

[1] It is worth mentioning that the authors of this paper conduct continuous research in this field and publish innovative textbooks on political science and international relations for teaching, e.g. authoritative and totalitarian regimes in interactive and innovative methods (e.g., see Tökölyová 2018), and for innovative teaching of cultural studies and development of digital identity (e.g., see Pondelíková, Pecníková 2020).

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and "dream work surrounding" pushing the employees to a new era of labour business. Naturally and as a consequence, requirements for modernising the previous "classic" methods of teaching (e.g., lecturing with a teacher as the only active entity, or reflected in ways of assignments with exams as checking the memorised knowledge, submitting papers and writing tests) have been challenging the teachers the most. This generation was followed by Generation Z with their own expectations and visions of the role of education in their life asking the schools to interlink their study with a real professional life, but applying digital means. This has made teachers to tackle with all phases of teaching process in their struggle to reflect expectations of these people around their education, i.e. a need for a reflection of new expectations even in the stage of preparing the lesson, its realisation, and finally the stage of assessment. This verifies, even in ordinary process of education, competences of the teacher. One of the best practices to design a suitable educational process for Generation Z, which we have experienced and can strongly recommend (not only for teachers), is joining the Design Thinking workshop (Figure 1). The workshop focuses on improving teamwork skills and digital skills in an online environment.

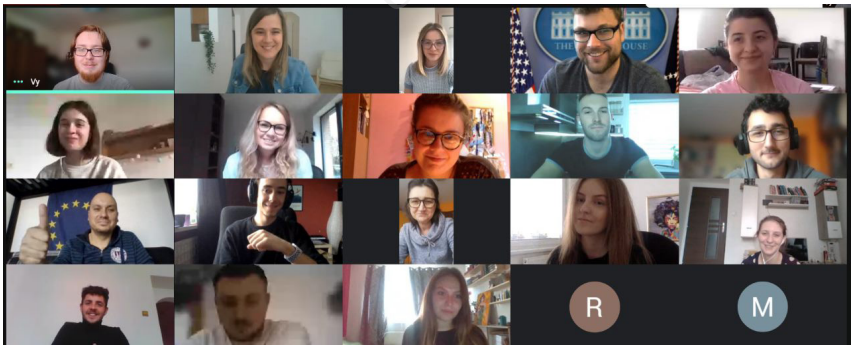

Figure 1. Design Thinking Team-Building delivered to students of the European studies and political sciences focused to using their digital skills in a teamwork atmosphere

Source: Tatiana Tökölyová archive, 2021.

The pandemic highlighted competences mostly in methods and personality (besides the professional ones). The competences in methodology and methods thus do include not only aspect of preparing the lesson including the aids and content, but mostly aspect of rising the students' motivation and activation *via* effecting communication and cooperation with the students – dramatic in-personal teaching, for some unexperienced teachers almost impossible online. Load put on students and naturally to teachers exposed inevitable role of competence

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in a "personality" of teachers. The emergency remote teaching, without any chance for getting some immediate training, revealed how neglected is a process of rising teachers' competence in keeping their interest in the students' needs as a sign of empathy, the ability to use nonviolent communication in the new and often stressful conditions (considering that most teachers are also parents of children whose teaching was also online and many times they needed help and assistance of their parents simultaneously), or under such unexpected and difficult conditions, the ability to maintain consistency of all three phases of the teaching process as well as creativity while maintaining a pleasant atmosphere in the group. These three aspects of teachers' competence (Langer 2016: 14–15) have influenced the effectiveness of the whole teaching process from the aspect of all entities – students, teachers and future employees.

Therefore, we claim that the pandemic revealed the postponed and even abandoned formal education and training of the teachers in using different types of devices, programs or applications sharing the knowledge to this generation in a meaningful way (for teaching Millennials and Generation Z, see Carter 2018; Cilliers 2017; Vizcaya-Moreno, Pérez-Cañaveras 2020). Although studying and teaching with the usage of information technologies has helped the situation, it still has many pitfalls. Many had to transform, create their digital "self" and identify with it. Scientific and technical progress in education is beneficial only when it is used wisely. No one was prepared for the situation, so it was difficult to choose from the possibilities that the world of the Internet offers. Even though today's requirements for education focus on innovations, personal contact and interaction between people seem to be irreplaceable.

EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING VS EFFECTIVE ONLINE COURSES

It is important to distinguish between the effective online teaching and instructions given in a hurry as the pandemic caught the world unprepared. In the beginning of the pandemic, the whole education process was moved online to help prevent the spread of virus, so with minimum resources and a little time teachers started emergency remote teaching. In contrast to well-prepared online courses, which take time to implement, teachers had to improvise and decide in less than ideal circumstances. Many of them found the whole process very stressful. According to Haque (2021) challenges that became visible with the COVID-19 crisis were, e.g., engaging and involving students in class sessions; modification and transformation of the in-class learning activities to motivate students in online classes; dealing with shy and less confident students behind the webcam to avoid having "ghost students" (virtually present but physically

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absent) in online classes. Thus, teachers have had to modify their teaching style to facilitate the students due to shifting firstly to emergency remote teaching later followed by an effective online educational process.

Effective online education is based on careful preparation of instructions, planning and systematic development. Normally, it takes six to nine months to set up well-prepared online course. Means, Bakia and Murphy (2014: 27) identify nine dimensions of online education. These are modality, pacing, student-instructor ratio, pedagogy, instructor role online, student role online, online communication synchrony, role of online assessments, and source of feedback. Interactions between student and teacher, student and student, student and content are crucial in online education. To increase learning outcomes, all these interactions need to be meaningfully integrated. Careful online class planning includes identifying the content as well as thought out all kinds of interactions. This approach recognizes learning as both a social and a cognitive process, not merely a matter of information transmission (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, Bond 2020). In contrast to face-to-face education that includes other possibilities, such as labs or libraries, online education requires taking into account all aspects of an overall students' ecosystem, which takes time to identify and build. One of the benefits of online education is that the content delivery is fast and inexpensive. In the current situation, it is impossible for everyone to suddenly become an expert in online teaching and learning.

Emergency remote teaching (ERT) is a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances (ibidem). It involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency is over. The primary objective in these circumstances is to provide temporary access to education. Educational planning in an emergency situation requires creative approach to problem solving. It is necessary to think outside the standard boxes to deliver the content. This depends on the level of digital fluency. Universities and schools have to provide help to quick development or improvement of teachers' skills to work in an online environment. However, the rapid shift to ERT may cause the diminishing quality of content delivered. The need to "just get it online" is in direct contradiction to the time and effort normally dedicated to developing a quality course (ibidem). Emergency remote teaching cannot be mistaken for a long-term online education, as it is only temporary solution to an unexpected situation. The access to education for everyone during ERT might be an issue. It is in contradiction to effective online education which ensures that all students can access and learn from the course materials, activities,

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and assignments. Institutions should be more flexible and even relax some requirements.

The threat of COVID-19 has brought challenges for institutions of higher education. All parties involved (students, teachers, staff) have to face this extraordinary situation. Although this situation is stressful, after the first wave, the institutions as well as students and teachers should be able to shift from ERT to quality online education with the usage of innovative methods.

INNOVATIVE METHODS IN TEACHING CULTURAL STUDIES AND EUROPEAN STUDIES AND POLITICAL SCIENCES

Cultural studies and European studies and political sciences are both interdisciplinary academic fields, within which cultural phenomena in society are studied throughout the prism of the social sciences and humanities. They perceive culture in an anthropological sense and are also interested in everyday manifestations of culture. In addition to the study of culture(s), they also deal with its derivatives, such as the study of identity (Šubrt, Arnason 2010: 123) or the relationship between languages and cultures (Šatava 2009: 52). In recent years, more attention has been paid to the study of identity/identities, so-called "multiple-identities approach" (Moree 2015: 15), in the context of intercultural relations, communication, which is a very broad and flexible concept.

When introducing innovations into the teaching of cultural studies and political sciences, it is necessary to define culture as a practical phenomenon that influences and interferes into everyday action on a practical and communicative level. Cultural values are beyond economic factors to understand their importance. According to Hutter and Throsby (2008) cultural values are as follows:

- aesthetic: properties of beauty or art shared in a culture,
- spiritual: value to a religious group,
- social: expressed in terms of identity and location,
- historical: reflecting cultures through time,
- symbolic: as purveyor of representational meaning,
- authenticity: accruing to the original work.

The university sector should provide students with particular examples of interactions that will lead them to think and perhaps use new approaches or perspectives towards culture and its values. While culture can be empowering, on the other hand it is also often devalued in social educational policy. Developing a cultural infrastructure is necessary for its support and improvement. As emphasized by Singh (2020: 38–39) "cultural practices, no matter how embedded in a society or communities, cannot survive without adequate support extending

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from political and social space to create art, financial reward for cultural production, and adequate exhibition and distribution network".

Regarding the relationship of the current generation of students to technologies, it is essential to focus on innovative teaching methods and sources that we can use, not only in the online world. However, at the same time, it is crucial to pay attention to the quality of the content, because it is important not only how, but also what students learn. As clear from the introductory section above, this is to agree with Bálintová (2009: 15) that nowadays must be evaluators, managers, facilitators, strategists and partners of students and colleagues. In teaching, they should be able to connect facts, engage students in unattractive topics, or inspire them to disseminate knowledge independently. Besides, they must pay attention to the effectiveness of learning, use modern methods, follow teaching trends and, of course, not to lose motivation. The role of the teacher today is diametrically opposed to that of the past. The teacher must face new situations and respect the character traits of nowadays students (sometimes strengthened by the influence of their upbringing and social living conditions).

Modern methods are supposed to help teachers overcome the years of rooted (even stereotypical) manifestations of students that are observed in the teaching process. Whether it is a problem to express one's opinion, fear of failure/shame, failure to communicate with classmates or teachers, servility in processing the task, almost no creativity in preparing assignments, etc. Innovative methods should, under favorable conditions, help gradually eliminate these problems. Among plenty the most popular and widely used are following methods:

1. E-learning can be characterized as the most modern way of multimedia teaching based on the Internet. It offers a wide range of applications and is characterized by creativity. E-learning allows teachers and students to create multimedia databases of knowledge in the form of online courses on the Internet. The essential part of this method is LMS (Learning Management System) that includes course management, students' evaluation and monitoring of their activities. In addition to LMS e-learning contains LCMS (Learning Content Management System), which includes courses for creating, importing, exporting, and sharing course content. E-learning is proceeded remotely.
2. X-learning or experiential learning is a well-known model in education. Kolb (1984) defines it as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (cited after Starting Point-Teaching Entry Level Geoscience). Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory presents a cycle of four elements (Figure 2).

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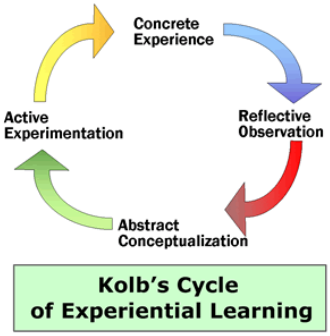

Figure 2. Kolb's Cycle of Experiential Learning

Source: (Starting Point-Teaching Entry Level Geoscience).

The cycle begins with an experience that the student has had, followed by an opportunity to reflect on that experience. Then students may conceptualize and draw conclusions about what they experienced and observed, leading to future actions. Although this continuum is presented as a cycle, the steps may occur in nearly any order (ibidem).

The essential components of x-learning include: students' personal engagement; personally significant or meaningful topics for the students; reflection or feed-back (opportunity for students to write or discuss their experience) should be ongoing throughout the process; students' intellect, senses, feelings and personalities; students' prior learning brought into the process. The role of teacher is to establish a sense of trust, respect, openness and concern for the students to gain the right experience.

3. Brainstorming is one of the most well-known methods and is used as an exchange of ideas. The advantage of this method is time and easy preparation. It can be used in various situations. Brainstorming is divided into two phases. The first is creative and spontaneous; the second phase is rational and logical. The aim of this method is to overcome the social and psychological barriers that students have when they are afraid to say their opinions out loud because of shame and fear.
4. Problem Teaching discovers knowledge that leads to the search for solutions and the acquisition of new knowledge through practical activities. Unlike traditional teaching, where the teacher conveys ready-made knowledge to the students, in problem teaching the teacher presents students various tasks that they have to solve them by themselves.
5. Cooperative Teaching helps students to be oriented in the issues that need to be addressed collectively. Through cooperative teaching, students seek to collaborate, communicate and evaluate each other. This method

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suitably prepares students for practice where it is necessary to reach a compromise or consensus.

6. Snowballing is a technique that helps students to teach each other important concepts and information. Knowledge is packed like a snowball through practice. Snowballing requires gradual involvement of students so that everyone expresses an opinion and, conversely, acquires and expands their knowledge thanks to others.
7. Concept Mapping is a great way to build upon previous knowledge by connecting new information to it. A concept map is a visual organization and representation of knowledge. It shows concepts, ideas and the relationships among them. Concept mapping is a method that encourages students to think freely about a particular topic.
8. Active Reading requires working with a text, in which students can search for the necessary knowledge, distinguish it from each other, compare and identify what is essential. A modern effective reader is not a mere "consumer" of the text; rather, they are "co-creators" of its connotative and denotative meaning(s), as well as ethical, cultural, social, political and many other implications. They are also "decision-makers" and "authorities", determining its significance for the life of the reader and their community (Javorčíková, Badinská 2021: 658). In this method, students strengthen their self-confidence, which contributes to their better expression and awareness of the structure and content of the text.
9. Dramatization is one of the interesting methods that results in a dramatic play. It uses the flexibility and creativity of students. The advantage of this method is that it helps change the relationships between students as they learn to control their emotions. It offers the opportunity to try different forms of behavior in a variety of situations. Dramatization is exceptionally active and interactive. Feedback from the teacher and classmates is immediate. Dramatization is a highly motivating method that encourages collaboration and teaches tolerance.
10. Active Writing is a method that leads students to improve their written expressions in a creative way in various forms (report, article, prose, etc.). The basis of effective active writing is the connection of knowledge from several subjects and scientific disciplines. This method requires students to clarify and classify scientific concepts, ideas and information for a specific purpose. It allows them to express their ideas and confront them with the views of others. In this method, students take responsibility for their own writing, clarify their ideas in the creative process, learn to formulate them stylistically correct and convey their findings to others.

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11. Intellectual and Didactic Games include various games such as crosswords, puzzles or matching words that force students to use knowledge and logical thinking. At present, the so-called "escape games" are very popular. The aim is to "free oneself" after solving the task.
12. Questionstorming is an analogy to brainstorming, but in this case the aim is not to make as many suggestions as possible to solve a certain problem, but to produce as many questions as possible about an object, entity, problem or topic. This method arouses curiosity and exercises flexibility.
13. Project Teaching help develop critical thinking. The main students' task is to transform the ideas into a separated project. Working on a project should be beneficial for the students and should lead them to creativity. Today, the issue of the project activities is rather their evaluation, which, despite the enthusiasm of the students, do not always meet the expectations from this kind of tasks. This is also a new challenge for university education and the question is how to consider it in evaluation.

The implementation of the above-mentioned methods in practice is often associated with unexpected pitfalls. The application of them in online space is even more difficult, however not impossible. In the following part of the text, therefore, we want to focus on the dimension and impact of digital identity, which is directly related to innovations in educational process and specific examples of the (non)use of innovations in practice.

DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL SKILLS AND APPLICATION OF INNOVATIVE METHODS IN PRACTICE

The coronavirus has brought new experience with the development of digital identity (teachers' and students'), which we have opportunity to test in real time and in real conditions. Personal identity is primarily associated with the environment in which a human being is born. These conditions determine the life of an individual to some extent. Over the time, the institutional aspect of identity develops, allowing a person to choose, based on their own decisions, what will shape their identity. Nowadays, people are spending more and more time in the digital world. The digital space that an individual accepts is closely linked to a modern culture, different from the one in which an individual was born and raised. Digital identity is based on new technologies that have a defining character in a human life (Pecníková 2018: 64). The best known of the digital space are social networks, in which users either reveal their identity using their own name, or create nicknames or fiktonyms. The nickname is considered to be an unofficial name of an individual, which reflects his/her mental and other character traits (Krško 2016: 40), and the

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fiktonym conceals the true identity with the usage of a fictitious name (ibidem: 46). For social network users, this is in contradiction to the underlying functioning of social networks, because, people who want to share common experiences, photos, comments, must inevitably know the identity of these secret users. Other ways of using digital space than social networking are more important for the future. People use digital space for remote work, education, cooperation in virtual teams, participation in video conferences, etc. All these activities are connected to a common concept, which is a digital identity. Generally, the digital identity can be considered a compilation of information about an individual's personality in a virtual environment (Pondelíková 2020: 31).

During the face-to-face education, we used several innovative methods, especially problem teaching, project teaching, active reading and writing, or dramatization. The effect of these methods was great and exceeded our expectations. Many teachers have respect for these methods in university education, but in our opinion, their introduction is currently necessary for students in order to acquire not only theoretical knowledge but also improve their soft skills. We have gradually implemented the introduction of innovative methods into teaching since 2018, the most intensively in 2020. Cultural studies and European studies and political sciences are among the modern and interdisciplinary study programs. They provide space for analyzes concerning issues of the influence of the media, literature or film on humans (especially young ones) and the world. During their studies, students learn about foreign cultures through language and vice-a-versa. Within the programs, they will not only get acquainted with European and non-European cultures. The requirement to speak a foreign language is not only a necessity in practice, but also becomes a certainty. Therefore, we recommend students to take part in studying abroad, where they can improve their language skills as well as develop their intercultural competence.

Globalization affects the world of culture, intensifies the need to develop creativity and requires knowledge of cultural contexts. It is this knowledge that can only be gained through interactive experience in a cultural environment (Dančišinová, Kozárová 2021: 76). Students are obliged to take part in a compulsory internship, where they acquire technical, administrative and other practical skills. Completing the internship allows them to develop a professional identity. During the face-to-face as well as online theoretical preparation, we applied some of the above-mentioned innovative methods. As an example we can mention studying visual art and photography of the 20th century. Highly motivated students approached this topic creatively and the results are pictures in Andy Warhol's style (Figure 3). They used various filters, colours, were inspired by Warhol's cans, or designed the collage in four seasons form.

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Figure 3. Andy Warhol's style photos

Source: Dominika Rapčanová and Karolína Vörösová's archive, 2020.

Preparation of versatile and flexible graduates with employment in governmental and non-governmental organizations, diplomatic services but also in the cultural and creative industries consists of getting to know the basics of management and marketing as well as acquiring presentation skills. One of the tasks was delivering their original political speeches as practical part of their lessons devoted to populism and propaganda (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Students delivering their original political speeches as practical part of their lessons devoted to populism and propaganda

Source: Tatiana Tökölyová's archive, 2019.

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It is not easy to prepare professionally and linguistically capable graduates who are able to succeed in the competitive environment of the labor market in both the public and private sectors. Experienced teachers are able to identify the interests and needs of students, while in classrooms they can create a fictitious but effective working environment similar to the real one. One of the parts of the studying the culture(s) is to get acquainted with the music, fine arts and architecture of a country. During the lectures, we used the method of active writing in a foreign language, which was later appreciated by our students, when they were given the task of writing an online article in the field of design and architecture. Their article about interior design (Kaja&Kornel 2020) was published on the webpage of our partner, not only for internship cooperation, Beevam. Since their internship, our students have written other articles, one about magical fountains (Kaja 2020) and the other about furniture (Kornel 2020). In addition to writing articles, students (under the guidance of our former graduate, who works as an editor-in-chief) have improved their digital skills and their result is a short video that aptly captures the preparation of a presentation on native advertising as well as cooperation between the educational and corporate sectors (Beevam 2020). Moreover, Beevam and our students agreed on further cooperation. We pay great attention to the internship of our students and we try to provide a "tailor-made" practice for each of them. Last year the coronavirus interrupted the internship, so the students had the opportunity to complete it online, so they experienced the hybrid form of their internship. This year, the internship took place exclusively online. Students have learnt to work with various applications such as *Canva*, which can be used to create promo materials. In addition, they were introduced to the *Matterport* scanning software, which allows creation of interactive 3D virtual reality space for various institutions. The articles about real estate, various gadgets or new trends in architecture and designed have already been written and will be published soon on the webpage of Beevam.

The situation brought the opportunity to diversify teaching by lecturing via Skype, MS Teams or Zoom and consultations by e-mail, via Facebook Messenger or other chats. For online testing we use ClassMarker. As every software, the ClassMarker has its positives and negatives. Among advantages belong easy test creation, security, results automatically graded, adjustable to subject's needs, etc. To avoid cheating, we randomize quiz questions and set the specific time for test taking. However, during the first wave of COVID-19 the test results were surprising. It seems that students can always find the way to behave in an unfair way. Project teaching was one of the preferred methods during the ERT. Again, we were not sure who we were evaluating as required projects were made at home. We tried plenty of innovative methods, some of them were very

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effective others less. On the other hand, some teachers continued in traditional way, they prepared worksheets that are more commonly used, more passive, but still effective in verifying what the students have learned. What we have found out, however, is the fact that the online world cannot replace reality. Ordinary human contact face-to-face, explanation of the curriculum in the classroom, discussion of the topic in class, are something that cannot be replaced even with the most sophisticated software.

CONCLUSIONS

The whole university education has transited to the online space. The emergency remote teaching emerged as a suitable alternative in the beginning of the pandemic, as we thought it would be a temporary shift in common teaching. Despite the fact that online education carries a stigma of being lower quality than face-to-face education, we managed it well to provide lectures and seminars, internship and even host lectures effectively with desired results. However, there is always a room for improvement as online education test flexibility and digital skills.

Digital identity is not one of the essential forms of identity, although it has now become primary. Qualified use of information technologies is becoming a prerequisite for the integration of young people into working life. The university education of the 21st century is moving towards digitization, but the teacher's personal interpretation continues to be the greatest benefit to students. Information technologies cannot replace what an experienced lecturer can teach, as any, not just innovative, method is effective in the hands of a competent teacher.

One of the university's tasks is to prepare young people for their future professional lives in an increasingly developed technological society. Teachers must therefore have a wide range of new, modern and innovative approaches to teaching. Based on the authors' personal experience with Design Thinking workshop as and innovative teaching method, we can claim that it provides constant monitoring of the students' needs. Design Thinking is used in the search for innovative and creative solutions to various problems. We can recommend it as one of the possible modern methods of teaching various academic subjects. Design Thinking brings a number of benefits for students who learn in a friendly environment. In addition, for teachers, it may become a part of their lifelong learning.

In conclusion, we would like to state that all the methods mentioned in the text can be implemented in ordinary as well as online teaching. But we have to remind that innovations are literally dependent on the motivation of the teachers and their efforts to teach traditional content in another form, i.e. from the quality

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of the above-mentioned teachers' competences in all stages of the teaching process. In our opinion, there is no need to start with the great demands on teachers and students as any, even the smallest attempt, is important. Nevertheless, we presume that online education, which is likely to be held in the upcoming days will be more prepared and effective and will take place in a pleasant and creative atmosphere for all, as it will be rooted in the valuable experience previously gained from ERT transformed (shifted) to a rather prepared and well-tried online teaching process. However, for educational institutions, this implies the need to provide the premises with the new technical equipment needed to achieve this goal.

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