

# EXCURSION IN DISTANCE LEARNING EXKURZIA V DIŠTANČNEJ VÝUČBE

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## Abstract

Distance education is a modern form of education, which is so far only a supplementary in our school system. However, the crisis situation has opened up its potential for use in teaching, even in subjects requiring the direct participation of students in order to fulfill their goals. One such subject is an excursion which we had to modify to the given conditions and the students completed it with the necessary objective restrictions. Despite the positive responses in the student's reflections we perceive this form of realization of the excursion as exceptional because we can induce a real experience only in the real not the virtual world. However, it is a good space for the development of ICT and media skills of students and for the development of critical thinking in learning about the realities their context and didactic transformation in the didactics of primary education

**Key words:** *primary education, excursion, distance education, social science, science and technical education*

## Abstrakt

Dištančné vzdelávanie je moderná forma vzdelávania, ktorá je v našom školskom systéme zatiaľ len doplnkovou. Krízová situácia však otvorila jej potenciál využívania vo výučbe, a to aj v predmetoch, vyžadujúcich pre plnenie svojich cieľov priamu účasť študentov. Jedným z takých predmetov je exkurzia, ktorú sme museli modifikovať na dané podmienky a študenti ju absolvovali s nevyhnutnými objektívnymi obmedzeniami. Aj napriek pozitívnym odozvám v študentských reflexiách, vnímame takúto formu realizácie exkurzie ako výnimočnú, pretože skutočný zážitok môžeme navodiť len v skutočnom, nie virtuálnom svete. Je však dobrým priestorom pre rozvoj IKT a mediálnych zručností študentov a na rozvoj kritického myslenia pri poznávaní reálií, ich súvislostí a didaktickej transformácie na didaktikách predmetov primárneho vzdelávania.

**Kľúčová slova:** *primárne vzdelávanie, exkurzia, dištančné vzdelávanie, spoločenskovedné, prírodovedné a technické vzdelávanie*

## 1 EXCURSION AS AN EFFECTIVE FORM OF EDUCATION

Excursion is an organizational form of teaching which has several benefits leading to its effectiveness. It uses an external environment has a motivating effect and transfers teaching to real space. Teaching through the excursion "combines acquired concepts with real examples allows students to get a comprehensive picture of the country, develops an understanding of the complexity of real examples and students learn more, teachers teach better." (Sang, 2017 In Csachová, S., Kulla M., 2017, p. 47). For the teaching of science and social science subjects it can be used well in primary education. Therefore one of the disciplines that students - future teachers for primary education can choose at the Faculty of Education, MBU in Banská Bystrica is the subject Excursion - science, social sciences and technical realities. It is a platform that

in the training of future teachers supports an integrated complementary approach to the content of education especially in subjects at the primary level of primary school - homeland studies, elementary school, science, ethical education, work teaching, but also others. The subject was in the past compulsory for all students of primary education teachers and although its classification has changed and become optional students are aware of its importance in their teacher training and student education, participate in the excursion every year and present its benefits in the final reflection.

## **2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXCURSION IN THE DISTANCE LEARNING PROCESS**

After the declaration of a state of emergency in Slovakia as a result of the pandemic of the new coronavirus on 16 March 2020 full-time education was also interrupted at Slovak universities. The whole teaching moved exclusively to the virtual environment, in which students and teachers had to set up the necessary changes, necessary for the exclusively distance form of teaching, real requirements not only for the course but also the completion of subjects. This was not a problem in many disciplines, several teachers and students knew e-learning education and used it in everyday operation. However the nature of some subjects excluded the distance form externally because their goals require the active direct participation of students in fulfilling the goals. Such a subject is also an excursion in which one's own experience, experience and the possibility to use as many senses as possible in learning significantly strengthen the quality and durability of the acquired knowledge. An experience that evokes direct experience increases efficiency and supports the motivation of cognitive processes and is an important element in building interest in learning about the landscape, its nature, culture and history or emotional relationship to their homeland. The situation that occurred in the summer semester forced us to consider how to implement the excursion so that students can complete the course while maintaining the quality of their acquired competencies.

The two basic goals that the subject of the Excursion - natural sciences, social sciences and technical realities obligatorily fulfills:

- "To create a model situation for students, which they will apply in real pedagogical practice to specific conditions - to participate in the organization of the excursion, fulfill the tasks arising from educational goals and experience the motivational effect of learning about new areas, creating new experiences and their potential for their own pedagogical practice in teaching homeland studies, natural sciences, cultivation work, work teaching, primary schools, but also other subjects at the 1st stage of primary school,
- Visit, get to know and experience as many places, objects and facilities as possible, which the temporal and spatial scope of the excursion allows "(Gašparová, 2005), this year's form of its implementation has partially transformed and supplemented by others:
- Be able to link the information obtained from a specifically identified source, given by the URL, with the information searched separately in order to provide the correct answer to questions in the final reflection,
- The ability of students to choose the most suitable and least suitable places for the age category of children they will teach to justify their decision - developing students' critical thinking,

- Be able to connect the visited object with a specific educational standard of the state educational program at a given level of education.

## 2.1 CONTENT AND EXCURSION PROGRAM

Students in the e-learning environment were given a moodle assignment to complete the excursion. These were instructions on its course and method of evaluation. Students received 37 URLs that redirected them to various forms of examinations and sources of information that offered them to improve their own cognitive competencies. We focused their selection so that they are not monotonous and monotonous - from **simple tours of websites** (water mill in Kolárovo, waterworks Gabčíkovo, Solivar in Prešov, Museum of Education and Pedagogy in Bratislava), through **virtual tours** (Spiš Castle, Košice, Slovak Museum of Nature Protection and Speleology in Liptovský Mikuláš), **online guides** (Slovak Map Museum Kynceľová), **videos** (Slovak Opal Mines, in Slanské vrchy, European Planetarium Day, Čiernohronská Railway in Čierny Balog), **animated stories** (Legends of the Sovereigns U , The Story of Bratislava Castle, Bratislava Fairy Tales), **digital museum** (SNP Museum in Banská Bystrica), **exhibition of educational programs** (Museum of Special Education in Levoča, Hurbanovo Observatory and Planetarium), **interactive lectures** (physical experiments on the Planetariums page, electric current, mystery fuj and whistles - how the tone is created, how they are tuned, etc.), **the SMOPAJ application**, up to the entrance to **museum pedagogy** (Slovak National Museum).

To complete all the tasks the students had a month and at the end processed a reflection in a prepared questionnaire. In addition to the tasks that required them to fulfill other new information that was not part of the virtual excursion up to their evaluation of the places visited in terms of their attractiveness and effectiveness for meeting educational goals in pre-primary and primary education. According to the above criteria they rated clearly the most positive planetariums - the highest rating of 5 was given by the student to 73.2% of the total number of 41 students (n=30), the rating of 4 was given by 22% - (n = 9). The highest scores in the evaluation were also obtained by animations of stories - fairy tales, tales - 58.5% (n=24), which were obtained by rating 4 in 29.3% of respondents (n=12). The Museum of Special Education in Levoča also received a high score in rating 5, 53.7% of respondents (n=22) marked it as suitable for the given age category, and 26.8% of students (n=11) marked it as rating 4. According to students, the Čiernohronská Railway (5-48.5%, 4 - 31.7%), caves (5 - 46.5%, 4 - 41.5%) and others followed as very suitable for children in early education. On the opposite scale of evaluation, as inappropriate (rating 1, resp. 2), the visited places appeared exceptionally but at most 1 respondent at each place with the above 0. We conclude that the selected places were chosen appropriately not only as enriching content for knowledge and competencies of students but also for their appropriate transformation into the content and process of education in their future pedagogical practice, which students expressed in the comments of their evaluations. The distance form of the excursion also had its **disadvantages**:

- There was no real real experience, which is evoked only by the irreplaceable genius loci of the visited place,
- Students had to work with computers and the Internet which are more technocratically oriented activities, especially if we want to shape the cultural literacy and social competencies of students, future teachers,

- Partially limited choice - depending on how the institutions are prepared for this type of attendance and also what they offer in digital form,
- During the excursion, students traditionally visited a theater performance or opera in Košice or Bratislava, which we omitted in the distance form,
- There was a lack of "added value" of the excursion - mutual acquaintance of students, new common experiences and gained experience.

Compared to the traditional, classical form however we can also name some **advantages**:

- The program and its selection did not depend on any necessary restrictions - direction, length of the route and time needed for transfers, opening hours of the visited institutions and the need to comply with them, etc.
- The selection of visited places included the whole of Slovakia, not only its part, which was traditionally limited by the duration of the excursion - 4 days,
- No financial costs that the excursion normally requires - travel, accommodation, meals, entrance fees.

That the excursion realized via the Internet also makes sense even though it lacked the characteristic features of the testimonies of the students in its evaluation.

"I was very much looking forward to the excursion but despite the fact that it could not be realized as planned in this way I learned through the videos about monuments that I did not even know we had in Slovakia. A great selection that is also suitable for first graders."

"I'm sorry that we couldn't make this excursion but at least we made it so virtual. It was very difficult to find information about what is in the premises of the former military grammar school. In the attached video only where he studied was said. In the end I got this information from the address where the grammar school was located, and the Business Academy now has the same address. Some of the attached lines were very interesting, helpful, and I will definitely visit some places in the future. "

"I like that I was also able to get acquainted with new important places, because I didn't even know some of them. However I'm sorry that the excursion took place only in this way, but I think it enriched me in this way as well."

"I really liked the form you chose in this subject. You made available to us a number of interesting links, thanks to which I learned a lot of interesting things. Many videos inspired me to visit Spiš Castle, planetariums with my students but and other points of interest."

"It's a pity that this excursion could not be realized. However it is definitely a very inspiring set of materials and ideas on how we can work with students in practice classes and in the future."

"Thank you for the enrichment, I think that even though we could not take the excursion, although it is a pity I learned about the new places and especially about what these places offer in my future practice."

In the reflective part of the excursion students could also suggest their own ideas on how to complete the distance form of the excursion, resp. how to work with it in normal conditions for example in seminars on didactics especially social science subjects and ethical education with practice, science and technical subjects, but also others. The

proposals mostly brought specific places which we could also include in the program. However the choice was determined by their focus - it was necessary to evenly cover patriotic, scientific, technical and other areas, certain limits were also brought by the time needed to complete all tasks. In no case was it possible to contain everything that would be beneficial for the knowledge and experience of the future teacher into his forthcoming practice. We expect that the motivating factor which we assume has been activated in students, will stimulate their need to look for other not only virtual, but subsequently also real experiences in getting to know the country and their homeland.

### 3 CONCLUSION

The development of technology and electronization in all areas of contemporary life is becoming a matter of course for us. Today this process is already a matter of course in the educational processes of all levels of school education. It is a trend that brings modern tools to schools, speeds up many processes but also requires a sensible approach to their selection in order to maintain the balance and variety of activities for pupils and students in developing their personalities. It is important to consider when the use of technology becomes an end in itself and when it is an effective resource in teaching. The excursion is despite some of the mentioned advantages of its distance form certainly a real excursion only if its parameters of realization in the external environment are preserved inducing and surviving the experience of the visited place and thus its emotional connection with pragmatic facts and realities. We perceive the program of the excursion prepared in this way in the future more than an additional form of teaching subject didactics because even in times of good conditions for ICT education, computer or virtual environment will not replace real experience of real environment and students' activities, cooperation, cooperation and shared joy.

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