

EVALUATION OF MASTER'S THESIS
Master's Program in Sociology

Major Subject: Studies in European Societies

Author of thesis: Zhuk Ivan Igrevich

Title of thesis: An impact of Virtual Learning Environments on communication process between students and instructors

DEFINITION OF RESEARCH

- 1) Definition of the research problem..... 5 **4** 3 2 1
2) Relation to existing research 5 4 **3** 2 1

INDIVIDUAL PARTS OF THE STUDY

- 3) Concepts, models, hypotheses and frameworks..... 5 4 **3** 2 1
4) Data collection..... 5 4 **3** 2 1
5) Analysis 5 4 **3** 2 1
6) Discussion, interpretation of results and conclusions 5 4 **3** 2 1

UNDERSTANDING OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC

- 7) Balanced structure of the report..... 5 4 **3** 2 1
8) Organization and coherence 5 4 **3** 2 1
9) Thorough and in-depth study..... 5 4 **3** 2 1
10) Analysis that demonstrates independence, criticism and effort..... 5 4 **3** 2 1

LANGUAGE AND LAYOUT

- 11) Reporting style and layout 5 4 **3** 2 1
12) Language and readability..... 5 **4** 3 2 1

5 = excellent; 4 = good; 3 = satisfactory; 2 = sufficient; 1 = poor .

THE TOTAL GRADE: 3 (satisfactory)

The strengths of the paper:

- the characteristics of the virtual learning environment (VLE) are given, its strengths and weaknesses are described;
- the content and purpose of the main elements of the VLE are revealed;
- the conditions for the effective use of the VLE in the educational process are specified;
- the capabilities of Sakai and BlackBoard systems in improving communication between students, as well as between students and the teacher in the educational process are described;
- the differences between the communication channels used by students of St. Petersburg State University and the University of Warwick are described;
- specific barriers to communication between students and teachers in each of the universities are identified.

The weaknesses of the paper:

- according to the text, the thesis does not fully correspond to the major subject of the study; it is rather closer to pedagogy;

- the student does not focus on theoretical framework of the research; the maximum that he done is definition of the concept of "virtual learning environment" while such concepts as "communication", "communication in the process of learning," "communication barriers" are dropped out of the study;
- the research objectives are only partially resolved: the empirical study does not reflect the extent to which instructors and professors are included in the VLE, to what extent they are satisfied with their participation, what barriers to communication with students they fix, etc.; there is no corresponding comparison between the two universities;
- the empirical study is described perfunctorily: there is no justification for the sample when conducting an online survey, there is no the description of this sample; there are no characteristics of informants whose students interviewed; there is no example of an interview transcript; the survey data are not fully presented; the research tools presented in the appendix do not meet the requirements;
- the paper is poorly structured, there are a lot of logical gaps in the text (see, for example, Chapter 2 related to the description of the design of the study); there are no conclusions e chapters;
- text design does not meet the requirements;
- the list of literature is extremely small, and that indicates that the student investigated the subject of his thesis insufficiently.

Additional comments: Zhuk I.I. worked irregularly; the shedule of the thesis preparation was constantly violated; contacts with the academic advisor were episodic and always initiated by the advisor; most of my recommendations were not taken into account by the student; the last version of the thesis was submitted to the academic advisor behind the deadline, so for me there was no possibility to make recommendations on its improvement.



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