

PSYCHOLOGICAL REHABILITATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS DURING WAR

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Summary

The war in Ukraine has forced many students to leave the country and continue their studies remotely. This study aims to analyze the problems faced by higher education students and provide them with recommendations on how to overcome the socio-psychological consequences through distance learning.

This study aims to identify ways to support students in restoring their psychological health, adapting to temporary living conditions and developing a positive outlook on their future. The study emphasizes the role of university professors in facilitating student access to educational and training programs and supporting socio-cultural integration in countries of temporary residence.

To achieve this, we examined the issues faced by displaced students and selected suitable methods and principles for working with them pedagogically. In particular, we employed scientific induction to help students understand the connections between social phenomena and processes; an empirical method based on online testing; and comparative analysis to activate a positive emotional state. We used an important method of interactive influence, such as conversation, to identify students' personal views. When preparing cultural and educational programs to help displaced students adapt to new conditions successfully, we took the following principles into account: an integrated approach to education; educating individuals as part of a team, involving students in the work of Ukrainian communities in other countries; and the unity of students' consciousness and behavior.

The study determined the effectiveness of these methods and measures of pedagogical action. Communicating with students who switched to online learning affirmed their civic position, improved their performance and enhanced their intellectual potential and mental health. The experience described in this paper will be useful for lecturer-mentors in educational institutions to use.

Key words: forced migration, distance learning, socio-psychological problems, principles of pedagogical action, counseling, adaptation, psychological recovery.

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1. Introduction

The unprovoked war waged against Ukraine by the Russian Federation has led to significant changes in Ukrainian society. We have witnessed destruction, violence, injuries, massacres and tragic reports from many parts of the front line. This situation has continued for more than three years. Even in the early stages of active hostilities, reports at an expanded government meeting highlighted the enormous impact of the war on people's mental health (*Liashko, 2023*). All participants at the meeting emphasized the importance of implementing measures to improve public health on a large scale. Such measures were particularly pertinent for those forced to seek refuge outside their country (*Karamushka et al., 2022*). Forced migration has caused people to experience a stressful psycho-emotional state and a subjective feeling of anxiety, even when they are in a safe place. Students lost the opportunity to continue their education at Ukrainian educational institutions (*Bratsyun, 2023*). To continue their education, young people were forced to leave their previous places of residence and study remotely.

Faced with new and completely unusual circumstances, students encountered various difficulties. These were primarily economic and domestic problems, and an initial lower level of well-being (*Polyvianaia et al., 2025*). Not everyone was able to immediately secure housing favorable for studying. Many students only managed to solve their financial problems by finding additional, mostly unskilled work. Moreover, not knowing the language of the host country had a significant impact on both the adaptation process and the general mental state (*Kredentser, 2023*). This can lead to self-doubt, anxiety, despair and apathy in young people. Virchenko's work on mental health studied the main types of mental disorder and the prevalence of depressive symptoms among Ukrainian students during the war (*Virchenko, 2024*).

In psychological recovery practice, there is already a wide range of programs aimed at solving this problem (*Cogorno et al., 2023*). An important part of these programs is collective conversations, which bring people together based on common interests and encourage them to find ways out of difficult situations. Examples include the Dispositional Optimism Test, the Wiesbaden Positive Therapy Inventory, and the Resilience Test (*Kobzar et al., 2024*).

The efficacy of mitigating stress factors can be assured by taking into account interests, requests, and predilections. There is an urgent need to develop and implement programs to help Ukrainian forced migrants integrate into European communities (*Collie-Chamnet and Dribas, 2023*).

To improve the results of distance learning in their chosen specialty and help students overcome depression and psychological discomfort, lecturers at the Department of Language Training and Communication at Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture have established individual communication with their students. To this end, they have selected literary and artistic events that have been tried and tested in educational work with students and adapted to their new social and living conditions as temporary migrants. Department members constantly monitored publications of research appearing in collections and journals over the past three years. From the works of teachers (*Senovska and Nestayko, 2025*), psychologists, sociologists (*Gorokhova et al., 2025*), ethnolinguists (*Bagan, 2024*) and physicians (*Bratsiun, 2022*), the lecturers-mentors have gleaned useful advice for their work. The methods and principles of pedagogical action proposed in the latest research were actively implemented in the preparation and delivery of training sessions and educational activities for the psychological rehabilitation of students in war conditions.

2. The formation of a harmoniously developed personality is the purpose of educational work

To the important functions of higher education pedagogy belong the theoretical study and description of pedagogical phenomena and processes; the analysis of cause-and-effect relationships; and the generalization and interpretation of pedagogical experience (*Strazhnikova, 2018: 10*). The teaching staff at the Department of Language Training and Communication recognize the effectiveness of combining these components harmoniously in educational work, resulting in the development of young people's personalities. Activities such as preparing evenings, meetings with artists, organizing exhibitions, celebrating memorable dates, concert programs, excursions and competitions lay the foundation for moral consciousness, self-awareness and responsibility.

Civil society, especially under the challenging conditions of martial law, presents significant challenges to higher education because the state requires patriotic young individuals willing to study and work for the benefit of their country. Contemporary researcher I. Ustymenko notes that patriotic education is currently a pedagogical category undergoing renewal (*Ustymenko, 2022*). An important aspect of this renewal is fostering a respectful attitude towards the native language, culture, and traditions; taking responsibility for the environment; contributing to the well-being of the nation; and aspiring to work for the benefit of one's homeland and its people (*Marchenko, 2022*).

The formation of young people's patriotic feelings requires them to realize the importance of their native language for the existence and unity of the nation. Therefore, lectures and practical classes place great importance on studying the difficult struggle of the best Ukrainian people for the right of the language to exist, spread, and develop.

In his ethnolinguistics study, Bahan (*Bahan, 2024*) notes the importance of formulating interesting and meaningful tasks that cater to students' interests. Taking such interests into account, the university prepares cultural and educational programs. After lecturers have explained the ideological essence and artistic means of the proposed works, students choose independently which one they will read on stage. These poems explore the role of language and its beauty and richness. As well as poems by renowned writers such as Oleksandr Oles, Maksym Rylsky, Dmytro Bilous, Lina Kostenko, Dmytro Pavlychko, Ivan Drach, Pavlo Movchan, Volodymyr Bazylevsky and Liubov Holota, students also present poems by their favorite authors during the discussion.

Events such as the collective writing of a radio dictation of national unity involving all participants in the academic process, holding a Ukrainian language Olympiad at the university, student research conferences and literary contests contribute to the formation of an active civic position. These activities raise the intellectual level, strengthen memory and develop creative abilities, thus strengthening students' authority among their peers and lecturers. They help young people to establish themselves and feel confident in the social environment. Members of the Department of Language Training and Communication also invite distance learning students to participate in these online events.

In difficult times for Ukraine, the unity of people, their adherence to ethical standards of behavior, the ability to live in accordance with humanistic principles, norms and rules of morality, which is of a universal nature, is especially needed (*Toftul, 2014: 80*). Examples of manifestations of such moral qualities are instilled on the examples of actions of prominent historical figures, characters of literary works, so the university organizes literary evenings, meetings with writers (*Akhmediyeva and Autayeva, 2024*). In preparing for such events, the

pedagogical method of *forming consciousness* is chosen. For example, in the last three years alone the most difficult for our country, a well-known politician and cultural critic Mykola Tomenko, author of the books *Seven Wonders of Ukraine* and *Alphabet of a Citizen of Ukraine*, has repeatedly delivered popular science lectures to teachers and students. His lectures on the lessons of Ukrainian constitutionalism, the works of Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Nechuy-Levytsky, and Oleksandr Dovzhenko are extremely relevant in today's environment. Presentations of new books by contemporary writers Vasyl Dobriansky, Tetyana Belimova, Olga Selipa, Andriy Kokotiukha, Oksamytkha Blazhevskha, and Serhiy Klimovych were organized. Their creative work has become a good model of behavior, an example for every young person to follow, even in the difficult times of martial law in the country.

Analyzing various areas of value formation in young people, L. Korinna identifies among others such as the emotional attitude of a young person to citizenship (*Korinna, 2009*). It is the language, literary and folklore educational activities at the university, in the houses of creative unions of Ukraine, and in museums and exhibition halls that shape this attitude, promote the intellectual and aesthetic development of young people. In addition to their instructive content, these events make an aesthetic impression due to the artistic design of the events and the presence of appropriate paraphernalia: national costumes, embroidered and woven towels, and folk art.

It is important to note that before each of these events, an artistically designed announcement is posted on the website of the Department of Language Training and Communication, inviting distance learning students to participate in them.

3. Mentoring distance learning students in their psychological recovery

Students who have changed their place of residence due to the war and switched to online education remain members of the university community. They continue to study their chosen subjects, conduct research and complete individual tasks. As mentioned in the previous section, they are encouraged to participate in the organization and delivery of all literary and artistic events held at the university. However, lecturers are looking for new forms of pedagogical action for those who continue their studies remotely. After all, as O. Dubaseniuk rightly notes, innovations in pedagogy are connected with general societal processes, such as globalization and integration (*Dubaseniuk, 2009: 14*). The forced relocation of students to another country and the need to overcome the difficulties associated with transitioning to online learning have accelerated the process of humanization and the elevation of the individual to the highest social value. To improve the psychological health of students who are forced migrants, the Department of Language Training and Communication's main task is mentoring.

In order to communicate effectively with displaced students, teachers must study and take into account the various circumstances they face. It is important to understand which regions young people have moved from and the reasons behind their relocation. As Polyvianaia (*Polyvianaia et. Al, 2025*) admitted, whether the move was within Ukraine or abroad had a significant impact on mental health outcomes. It is also important to consider whether other family members are nearby, whether living conditions are adequate and whether there is access to educational literature. Regardless of the reasons for moving, however, anyone who has had to change their usual circumstances needs psychological support (*Shchootka, 2024*). According to lecturers and advisors, students should be helped to adapt to new conditions and take the most optimal steps for self-assertion in a new social environment and cultural space.

Even communicating with lecturers and friends from the university can contribute to a sense of belonging in an environment that was previously familiar, and inspire optimism.

Lecturers from the university's Department of Language Training and Communication analysed information about opportunities for young people to continue their education and participate in social events. Most of them have temporarily left for European countries. As L. Tallaj notes in her article about students' mental health problems, European educational systems have demonstrated empathy and operational flexibility in meeting the academic needs of displaced young Ukrainians without disadvantaging them (Tallaj, 2024). Under favorable circumstances, they have opportunities for self-realization, revealing their knowledge and talents, and for the active involvement of their organizational skills and psychological regulation, as they did in their homeland. According to the EPRS, it is European countries that have received the largest number of Ukrainian students. As of the end of March 2022, these countries were Poland (26,938 students), Germany (6,319 students), the Czech Republic (3,132 students), Slovakia (2,911 students) and Austria (1,450 students) (Katsarova, 2022). Over time, this number has increased significantly. For example, Poland, which is particularly friendly towards Ukraine, has seen a significant increase in Ukrainian students: currently, 48,150 Ukrainian students are studying there, which is 21,212 more than in the first months of the war (Savchyshyn 2024).

In many countries, Ukrainian young people participate in cultural and artistic programs, learning about the traditions of other nations while also promoting Ukrainian culture. While staying in countries that have provided them with temporary asylum, we encourage our students to play an active role in celebrating national holidays and in literary and musical events dedicated to the work of renowned writers, artists and composers. Ukrainian communities exist in many European cities and towns. Members of these associations have made it a tradition to celebrate national holidays, organize calendar events and implement folk art traditions. In the study of the formation of civic values, L. Korinna considers the 'emotional attitude to citizenship' to be an important factor (Korinna, 2009: 486). Cultural and educational events contribute the most to the emotional perception of the world. Therefore, advising students to participate in preparing evenings, exhibitions, excursions and meetings with artists is relevant, as it stimulates thought, improves memory and helps young people integrate into the environment of both compatriots abroad and the local population.

Individual mentoring is a form of pedagogical influence that allows lecturers to expand students' knowledge and strengthen their competence and familiarity with the material. Thus, ahead of National Flag Day and Independence Day celebrations in Ukraine, information about the role of the blue and yellow Ukrainian flag in creating a living chain of unity, even before the adoption of the Act of Independence on 21 January 1990, is highly relevant (Viatrovykh, 2023: 476). Examples of the combination of blue and yellow colours in the works of Ukrainian artists can be found in reports on the meaning of national symbols for Ukrainians (Smetanska, 2024). During Taras Shevchenko celebrations, lecturers send students videos posted on the university's website featuring readings of the poet's works translated into other languages by KNUBA foreign students (Khomenko, Biletsky, 1989). To introduce participants to Shevchenko's artistic heritage, we recommend reproductions of his own works and those of his contemporaries, as these provide realistic depictions of life at the time (Yatsiuk, 2004). We recommend materials about the creativity of the young Taras for participants in such meetings (Litvinova, Kotukova, 2019: 21–22) and about the originality of his poetic handwriting (Zhovnir et al., 2024). Demonstrating excerpts from feature films and documentaries about Shevchenko would also be successful. Active participation in the organization and delivery of artistic events enables students to broaden their horizons, realize their potential and enhance their standing

within Ukrainian communities. All of this contributes to their psychological recovery in conditions outside their home country.

University mentors advise students to actively integrate into the socio-cultural space of their country of temporary residence in order to assert themselves. It's not just about being grateful for shelter. Every young person, especially a student, naturally strives to acquire new knowledge and experience aesthetic pleasure. In order to successfully integrate into a different social environment, Ukrainian youth must demonstrate a high level of education through their actions and reveal moral qualities such as respect for others, tolerance and compassion. After all, a person is only guided by the highest, unconditionally universal values when they are guided by moral motives (*Blikhar et. al, 2018: 26*). Adherence to the principles of moral and ethical behavior will help temporary migrants gain credibility and find friends and advisors in their new environment, enabling them to learn more about the host country's peculiarities. This will greatly deepen Ukrainian students' general knowledge, as well as contributing to their self-affirmation and strengthening their mental health.

As Y. Rubinska rightly notes, every displaced person runs the risk of facing psychological problems and unfamiliar conditions, creating a stressful situation. This requires active interaction with the environment (*Rubinska, 2024*). To maintain psychological balance and avoid feelings of alienation, mentor lecturers advise their students to establish such interactions by studying the peculiarities of the places in which they are staying. When adapting to temporary living conditions, it is important to familiarize yourself with information about the host country, such as its history, political position, geographical location, natural resources, population, mentality, artistic values and famous people (*Mykhaylyshyn et al., 2024*).

Thus, given T. Horokhova's opinion that Germany focuses on structured institutional support and policy-driven initiatives (*Gorokhova et al., 2025*), mentors advise students to participate in events and actions initiated by government agencies. There is already a result. In August 2024, students studying in Germany attended a solemn meeting of Hof residents with Maria-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, a German federal government representative and great supporter of Ukraine. Her optimistic speech impressed the Ukrainian students in attendance.

Our students also took our advice on which artistic achievements in which country are worth seeing into account. Students currently in Belgium familiarized themselves with a series of paintings by the outstanding Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens in Antwerp Cathedral. For those temporarily based in Vienna, lecturers recommended attending regular music festivals showcasing the works of renowned Austrian composers. Those in Ljubljana were recommended materials about the social activities and literary heritage of France Prešeren, whom Slovenes compare to Taras Shevchenko for the power of his poetic imagery. Similar practices are conducted for students in Poland, particularly in Warsaw, Krakow and Szczecin. Students from the Faculty of Civil Engineering at the university, who study remotely from the Polish city of Wrocław, participated in a festive procession and a rally on Ukraine's Independence Day together with other members of the Ukrainian community. The students themselves report that such actions are extremely necessary and memorable. As O. Dubinina states, it is important to provide pedagogical support to Ukrainian students to help them assimilate new values while maintaining their national identity (*Dubinina, 2025*). Young people's desire to learn about and study the languages of their host countries also fosters positive attitudes towards Ukrainian students among the local population.

According to N. Senovska and I. Nestayko, it is important to apply the principle of educating individuals as part of a team in pedagogical work (*Senovska and Nestayko, 2025*). At the celebration of the Day of Ukrainian Embroidery in Amberg, Germany, the consultants provided

the participating students with information about the features of geometric and floral embroidery designs from different regions of Ukraine, as well as the symbolism of the combination of red and black and blue and yellow. The celebration featured the song 'Two Colors' by Taras Shevchenko National Prize laureates: composer Oleksandr Bilash and poet Dmytro Pavlychko. This song has been popular for six decades. The active participation of Ukrainian students and their demonstrated knowledge of their own literature and music strengthens their authority and gives them confidence in their moral strength. It also promotes their integration into a different social environment and ensures their psychological balance. Students' participation in cultural and artistic events is also facilitated by workshops held by Ukrainian communities in many countries, teaching skills such as making motanka dolls, crocheting, painting or decorating Easter eggs, and embroidery.

Lecturers-consultants advise students in the Baltic States to popularize Ukrainian folk art and study Latvian and Estonian folk traditions. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are known to be friendly towards Ukraine due to their favorable policies and affordable educational opportunities (*List of Universities Helping Ukrainian Students, 2022*). Ukrainian national holidays are also celebrated at a high level there, with the use of state symbols approved by the Constitution of Ukraine on 28 June 1996. Lecturers suggest popularizing information about these symbols: The national flag of Ukraine is blue and yellow, the national anthem is the first verse of a solemn song created in 1865 by the composer Mykhailo Verbytskyi and the poet Pavlo Chubynsky, and the state emblem is a trident, the sign of the princely age of Volodymyr the Great.

Many students temporarily abroad participate in the celebration of Ukrainian national holidays and folk rituals. Online consultant lecturers familiarize them with the meaning of the symbols associated with these events. For example, the star carried by carolers symbolizes the Star of Bethlehem, which announced the birth of Christ to the world. The *didukh* on the Easter table symbolizes the harvest and honors an ancestor, while the fire wheel on Kupala Night represents purification from evil. Preserving and popularizing the traditions of their people among other ethnic groups helps students to feel connected to their historical and cultural heritage, to feel proud of their homeland and to increase their optimism and psychological balance.

4. Discussion of results and planning of further activities

The issue of the psychological rehabilitation of students who have switched to distance learning due to the threat of war remains relevant. At meetings of the Language Training and Communication Department at Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture, lecturers regularly report on their work with individual students. Colleagues share their experience of communicating with these students. To further support young people living in other countries, the department's faculty will continue the work described in previous sections. Meetings with psychologists are periodically held in the reading room of the KNUBA University Library, where lecturers receive guidance on working with displaced students. The experience of psychologists and practicing lecturers is studied in the programs. Webinars, talks and discussions are held to address the issue of how effectively students adapt to the conditions of temporary migration.

Mentor lecturers advise students to remain integrated into the cultural life of their Ukrainian university by participating in international cooperation between higher education institutions. Several effective strategies have been developed for this purpose. One of these is the International Mobility Program, which enables students to participate in exchange programs while maintaining ties with their home universities (*Melnyk et al., 2024*).

The department's faculty advise students to join 'Virtual Clubs and Communities' that bring together young people with shared interests in literature, history or art. Participation in these communities gives students the opportunity to maintain contact with their cultural roots. "Online Cultural Events", such as festivals, webinars, and online discussions organized between universities, are also important. Ukrainian students who are forced to stay abroad can participate in these events and share their experiences (Zhurchenko, 2024). Participation in these programs helps students to affirm themselves and promotes psychological recovery.

5. Conclusions

In order to provide psychological support to students forced to switch to distance learning, lecturers from the Department of Language Training and Communication at Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture analyzed research from lecturers and psychologists. They identified the most effective methods for working with students remotely to improve their psychological health. They identified effective methods of pedagogical action to help students assimilate knowledge, instill moral and ethical behavior in young people, broaden their worldview, and foster humanistic qualities. When preparing for literary and artistic events, department lecturers and student government representatives chose the most effective methods and principles of pedagogical action. The process of involving distance learning students in cultural and artistic events was adapted to the circumstances. The socio-economic conditions and problems faced by the students were taken into account. The peculiarities of the host countries' state and political systems, as well as the presence or absence of Ukrainian communities in the students' places of residence, were considered. Familiarizing lecturers with this information about each student ensured an individualized approach to mitigating the negative effects of stressful psychosocial conditions.

The lecturers chose methods for the psychological rehabilitation of students, which strengthened their self-confidence and conviction in the importance of their role in rebuilding an independent Ukraine and its prominent place in the European community. Consequently, students' participation in cultural and educational events organized by Ukrainian communities and international student associations was effective. Lecturers-mentors played a positive role in preparing these events by assisting in the selection of scientific and popular science literature and by sending relevant scientific and fiction literature, photos, and videos. The results of communication between lecturers and students included increased intellectual growth, aesthetic development, and psychological recovery.

Considering the positive effects of working with students, university professors continue to familiarize themselves with the research of lecturers and psychologists to implement educational experiences in higher education institutions in Ukraine and abroad. They also plan to develop linguistic, literary, and folklore programs to study the history and culture of the Ukrainian people with foreign students at the university. They will continue to organize virtual events under international interuniversity relations programs.

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