



Teaching environmental studies online during the war

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Abstract

This individual narrative focuses on the innovation of an environmental studies lecturer trying to teach in the field during air raids.

Keywords

air raids, field training, environmental studies, wartime education

With the beginning of the Russian aggression, frequent air raids interrupted classes, and it was necessary to move with students to underground shelters. For natural sciences, this posed significant difficulties. So, most classes at the university were held in the online mode. The previous experience of teaching in the conditions of Covid quarantine helped me a lot. I conducted lectures and seminars using Google Meet or Zoom. I also used Moodle platform as a learning management system. Constant shelling of energy facilities in Ukraine by Russian troops led to frequent power outages. Perhaps the biggest problem for me in 2022 and 2023 was blackouts. No electricity supply, no lights, no TV, the electric stove does not work. For cooking, it was necessary to purchase some tourist cooking devices like portable gas stoves. To have some light for conduct of classes according to the schedule, I had to buy several car batteries, charging devices to charge these batteries when the power is on, and 12-volt LED light bulbs and strips. During the blackouts, the laptop can run for several hours, but the Internet from my ISP did not work. Therefore, I had to connect to additional provider that used telephone lines. But even in this case, the router had to be powered by the battery.

The biggest challenge for my teaching was conducting a summer ecological field training. In previous years, my students and I went to one of the nature reserves for two weeks, and there we performed observations and analyses onsite together. This summer, all students had to do field training at their places of residence. Some students of the group went to their parents in different regions of Ukraine, and some of the students were abroad. In this situation, the distance education platform was very useful. I had to develop a series of practical tasks that students could complete independently, not far

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from their homes. They read the tasks on the course page on the platform and then uploaded the completion report. Every morning, the students could get online advice on task completing. For constant work monitoring, every student had to upload a photo of the pages of the field diary daily. The diary records included field observations related to current tasks, with date and geolocation.

In my opinion, when the situation improves and it is possible to return to studying in university classrooms and laboratories, it will be reasonable to use distance educational platforms as additional learning tools.