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AVATAR AS A TOOL FOR PERSONALIZING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN A DIGITAL UNIVERSITY

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The transformation of the perception of communication resources in the digital age leads to an increase in the importance of figurative information transmitted through symbolic forms. As social communication moves to the digital environment, a new need arises - self-identification through tools that reflect the individuality and values of a person in the virtual space.

A communication specialist should know the theory of the communication process and skills of information and communication interaction in various formats and environments. A public speech is considered effective if it is audience-oriented and the change of communication strategies and tactics in the course of interaction is justified. A successful communicator is able to adapt to the situation, maintaining contact with the audience even in remote communication [1;2].

In the context of the growing volume of online communications, the teacher is faced with the task of searching for and using figurative tools that can provide active interaction with students [3, p.6]. In turn, students must learn not only to perceive but also to generate and transmit knowledge in the form of visualized figurative information. This approach contributes to the development of the creative potential of the individual, forms a holistic worldview and skills of visual modeling of knowledge.

The modern educational environment is characterized by a demand for interaction not only with a physical person, but also with their virtual

representation - a digital avatar. The positioning of an individual in the digital space is gaining the same importance as in real life, and the development of augmented and virtual reality technologies creates conditions for the use of “digital masks” that provide a safe and flexible presence in the learning environment [4;5].

The popularity of avatars can be explained by a person's desire for comfortable self-identification in digital interaction. In the context of online communication, an avatar becomes a means of visual expression that contributes to the formation of social connections. It does not replace the subjects of the educational process, but acts as an intermediary that supports learning interaction in a digital format.

One of the functionally effective forms of digital mediation in the educational process is the so-called “digital mask” - a virtualized image of a communication participant that is broadcast in the digital environment as a tool for optimizing pedagogical interaction [6, p.53]. The use of such a virtual avatar allows us to rethink and modernize the traditional “teacher-student” communication model by supplementing it with a third element - a virtual intermediary who performs the function of communicative support in the realization of educational goals.

The “teacher - avatar - student” model allows the teacher to maintain control over the presentation of content and, at the same time, adapt the visual environment, in particular, hide or modify the background of the broadcast, which is relevant for the implementation of synchronous online classes. In this context, an avatar appears as an element of a digital representation of a person (“digital face”), which serves as a communicative facilitator and a tool for personalizing interaction in a digital learning environment.

Another type of avatar is a personal digital assistant. Such a tool represents a modern form of digital support that combines elements of a recommendation system, a dialog interface, time management, and a communication platform. The popularity of such solutions is due to a number of indicators, including a high level of interactivity, responsiveness, accessibility, intensity of information presentation through multimedia, and the ability to differentiate content depending on the target audience.

The functionality of a personal digital assistant is wide and varied. Among them are the motivational function (helps to set students up for achieving educational goals), epistemological (the use of the tool stimulates cognitive activity and the desire to learn new information), perceptual (ensures

adequate perception and interpretation of messages), presentation (allows visualization of educational progress), consulting (provides recommendations based on the user's scientific interests), etc.

It is noteworthy that the use of online assistants allows students to save time significantly, since the advice offered is recommendatory rather than prescriptive [7, p.45]. It is important to emphasize that the key purpose of a digital tool is to perform an auxiliary function in the educational process. The formulation of learning tasks is exclusively the responsibility of the teacher, while the digital assistant plays the role of a facilitator: it offers options, motivates, and promotes cooperation between the participants in order to achieve coherent results of joint activities.

Currently, improved versions of such online assistants are being developed with an additional game module containing elements of gamification. This makes it possible to increase motivation, transform the emotional state, influence the behavioral attitudes and intentions of students, forming a favorable attitude to the perception of information [8, p.44].

The existence of different types of avatars, including a digital mask and a personal assistant, helps students develop a conscious attitude towards them. This prevents the misconception of an avatar as a full-fledged substitute for a teacher, which is extremely important, as such a substitution can lead to a decrease in cognitive concentration and the formation of dependence on digital devices. The dominance of visual content in the digital environment poses certain risks because “in the process of decoding such information, visual components prevail over the content part,” which makes it difficult to comprehend the material in depth.

The consequence of excessive visualization can be a limitation of the individual's ability to reflect on the target, structural and content, and axiological aspects of information. In this regard, effective pedagogical practice should be based on a combination of online and offline forms of learning [9, p.10]. In particular, it is advisable to use a distance format for mastering theoretical material and a classroom format for implementing practical exercises that promote the development of communication skills, emotional intelligence, empathy, ethical guidelines, and professional values.

It can be stated that the avatar, as a tool for personalizing the learning environment in a digital university, acts as a powerful intermediary between the subjects of educational interaction, capable of transforming traditional communication models towards more flexible, multimedia, and emotionally

oriented interaction. Its use in the form of a digital mask or personal assistant helps to individualize the educational experience, expand the possibilities of visual modeling of knowledge, develop creativity, and create a safe communication space for students with different levels of psychological confidence. At the same time, excessive visualization and autonomy of digital avatars require a pedagogical balance between online and offline interaction, since only a combination of digital tools and live emotional and ethical communication ensures the integrity, humanism, and effectiveness of modern university education.

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