

School Education Has Taken the Path of Digitalization

This year at the beginning of March, EGAP Program chose 10 amalgamated communities from the pilot regions where the Program is implemented – Vinnytsia, Volyn, Dnipropetrovsk, Luhansk, and Odesa oblasts – to become the winners of the competition. In the middle of March, however, the national quarantine was announced, propelling the self-organization of the remote work among Ukrainians. People were not ready for these drastic changes. Ukrainian educational system, in particular, faced a severe crisis as no one has expected the urge to completely change the approach to teaching pupils and students in the shortest term possible.

The quarantine and switching to remote learning became a challenge to all Ukrainian teachers. Teachers from villages and rural areas turned out to be the least accommodated for the organization of online learning at schools. Someone managed to adapt to the new conditions quite quickly (for example, using Viber for sending the tasks), while others did not even know where to begin.

EGAP Program implemented by East Europe Foundation with the support of Switzerland, has joined the process of developing an effective format of remote learning and has launched a number of webinars for educators in 10 pilot digital Ukrainian amalgamated communities. Undoubtedly, effective implementation of such policy is impossible without joining forces and resources of the local authorities, school administrations, and teachers themselves. We are delighted to present you with our first results.

All of us were learning little by little...

One of our first speakers at educating webinars developed by EGAP Program became the headmaster of Zymne Lyceum – Volhynian **YULIIA STEPANIUK**. She shared her experience of organizing the educational process and gave advice on how to motivate pupils for intensive studying at home.

The school administration has created classes in Google Classroom where teachers and pupils could join for a learning process. Every teacher posts their subject material and tasks according to the syllabus and sets a deadline. In their turn, pupils do these tasks and send them back to teachers with the help of smartphones or computers with the installed Google Classroom app.

Such an approach is suitable for both sides: teachers and pupils.

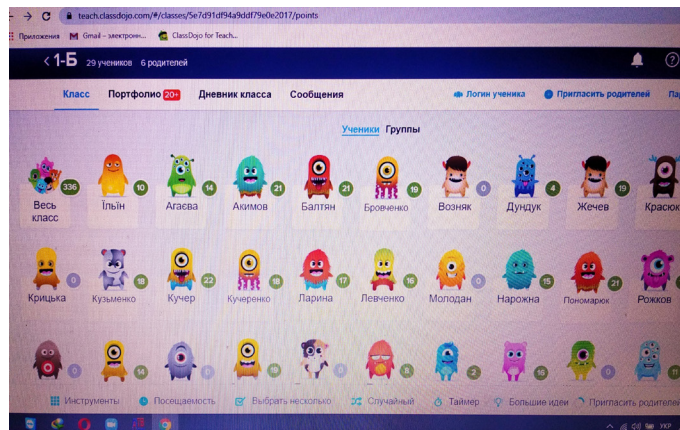
”As for me, I extremely enjoy our remote learning as it is easy to reach out to a teacher, there are clear explanations and interesting tasks – tests and quizzes, etc., and most importantly – everything is straightforward! If we continue to study remotely, I would want it to remain the same,” – says **ALINA BILOHVIK**, a pupil of the 9-A grade.

”The period of quarantine has become a peculiar “challenge” for teachers, pupils, and parents. We, teachers, had to switch from traditional lessons to remote online learning in a short time. There are some pitfalls regarding distance learning but it includes quite a few advantages, too. For example, pupils’ growing interest to a new interesting method of learning, saving resources of all participants of the process, automation of task control, and total digitalization appeal to pupils as they are used to growing up in a familiar to them digital world,” – believes English teacher **GALYNA ZHALOVAGA**.

Online-events organized by EGAP Program became not only a place where educators can share their experiences about utilizing various online-tools for effective distance learning but also an amazing source of support for those who want to learn and implement new methods and technologies in their teaching process.

”EGAP Program webinars are a great idea and an aid for teachers in the time of quarantine during the active integration of distance learning. I took away lots of new and useful information. As it turns out, there are plenty of online tools for effective interactions between a teacher and pupils or a teacher and a class and vice versa. After participating in webinars, we have started to apply our new knowledge to practice. I thank the speakers for informative consultations and workshops. Now I try to practise the acquired skills myself as well as teach my colleagues something new,” – says the headmaster of Shtun School, Ukrainian language and literature teacher, resident of Vyshnivska ATC **SVITLANA BULAVCHUK**.

After the webinars, almost all teachers from digital amalgamated communities rushed to utilize in their job such tools as Zoom, Vibew, Google classroom, ClassDojo. Although no virtual service can replace live communication, these online tools are an excellent solution in such hard times.



Online Math class in the 1-B grade of Shabiv School.

Tetiana Zavelia, a primary school teacher at Shabiv School, teaches a Math lesson online.



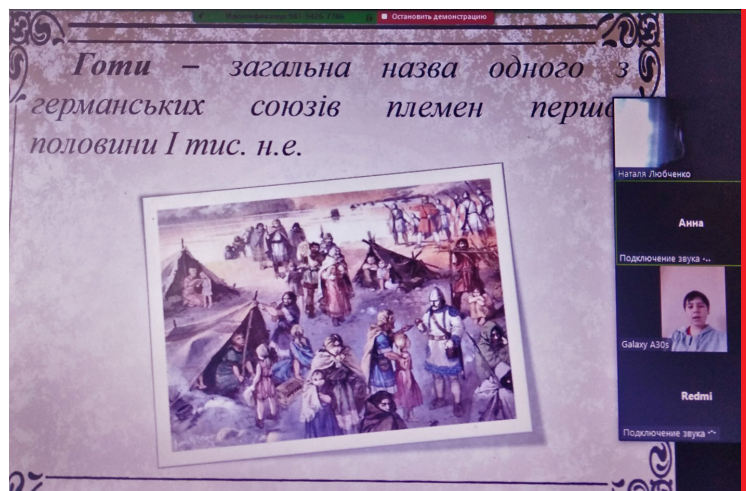
A teacher from Luganshchyna **OLENA DONTSOVA** appreciated the advantage of Google Classroom and other tools, as they enable teachers to organize high-quality distance learning without interrupting it. Her colleague – a crafts teacher from Bilovodsk school **YURIY ARTIUSHENKO** – has already had the skills of using the Google Classroom platform; according to him, EGAP Program webinars gave him a chance to improve his skills and opened up new opportunities for applying digital tools to the arrangement of online learning.

“I has been already familiar with Google Forms app and used it in my job. However, such services as Master Test, Playbuzz, EasyTestMaker, ProProfs Online Test Pad will help math teachers with making up and giving exams or other various forms of testing,” – emphasizes Math teacher of Pidgorodnenskyi Educational Complex #1 **TAMARA TEREHOVA**.

Smartphone as a tool for gaining knowledge

A married couple **TETIANA** and **ANDRII OREL** who teach math and history in Educational complex “Secondary School Gymnasium #2” in Illinetska ATC decided to use a smartphone as a tool for acquiring new knowledge. How do you encourage pupils to be interested in studying? How do you make pupils to pay attention to a teacher’s words instead of looking in the screens of their smartphones? They shared their success story during one of the educational webinars by EGAP Program.

Interactive game-based learning platforms such as Kahoot or Classtime help pupils learn new material and consolidate knowledge by taking quizzes and tests while playing. Instead of a usual test in a notebook, a pupil grabs their smartphone and in a couple of minutes, they have a result of their work after taking the test online. Most of us probably remember how we used to color in contour maps and learned material from atlases, but owing to interactive technologies, we can make it even more interesting. What is most important – pupils enjoy studying something new while using gadgets already familiar to them.



All digital amalgamated communities selected by EGAP Program within the framework of an open competition differ by their population and number of towns but they are united by a will to use digital technologies and readiness of local authorities for a sustained and open dialogue with the community. The quarantine poses an unparalleled challenge for pupils, parents, and teachers. However, along with crises, there comes an opportunity for development. In the modern situation of the necessity of covering learning material remotely and organizing up students’ feedback, EGAP Program facilitates the digitalization of the regions by setting up examples of successful conversation between authorities, school management, and the educators themselves.

Pupils of Shabiv Secondary School join online classes with their phones.