

Case study

Distance learning in the training of military professionals in the age of the COVID-19 pandemic

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INFORMATION

Article history:

Submitted: 23 August 2021

Accepted: 10 September 2021

Published: 15 September 2021

ABSTRACT

The modern military requires professionals in its ranks. One of the many dimensions of professionalization is education and training aimed at building human capital. Modern equipment or specialized training devices are not sufficient for education to be effective; innovative teaching methods are also needed. Constantly growing needs in the field of education and professional development are determinants in the search for modern education forms, methods and tools adaptable to the military environment. As part of the education and professional development process, the military education units of the General Command of the Armed Forces concentrate their main efforts on the course training of soldiers and staff of the Ministry of National Defense, training of candidates for non-commissioned officers and specialized training of candidates for professional privates. As an organization, the Armed Forces must operate regardless of the emerging threats. Therefore, they must perform tasks in the most difficult and unpredictable circumstances. Paradoxically, the pandemic proved to be a catalyst for military education units to raise the level of teaching and enrich the ways of transmitting knowledge, including the popularization of distance learning. This paper discusses the distance learning model in operation at the Polish Armed Forces. The process of military professionals training using remote learning methods and techniques is characterized. Conclusions and experiences concerning the implementation of remote learning in the pandemic counteracting conditions are presented. The article also indicates the desired directions of transformation in the area of remote learning applied in the Polish Armed Forces.

KEYWORDS

remote learning, military education, military professional, forms and methods, lessons learned



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Introduction

Training is the primary task of the Polish Armed Forces carried out in peacetime. It is a purposeful, planned and systematic activity, aimed at shaping high combat and moral qualities of soldiers who are to obtain the necessary knowledge, habits and skills to act in peacetime and

under conditions of threat to the national security or war. There are four subsystems within the training system of the Polish Armed Forces. One of these is the professional education subsystem. Professional education is defined as a purposeful training activity that prepares soldiers for professional individual and team performance. The specific objectives of the training include individual preparation of the specialist soldier, resulting from the soldier's function, as well as coordination of the activities of subdivisions, branches and tactical compounds to perform a variety of military and non-military tasks [1, p. 11]. In-service training, as a continuation of the education process, is an indispensable part of every soldier's professional development. Its primary purpose is to professionally prepare soldiers and sustain their ability so that they can competently perform assigned tasks at all levels of command and management. Enhancing general and specialized knowledge and preparing for independent problem-solving in the decision-making process is also an important element [2].

The subject of research in this article is the use of remote learning in the process of preparing military specialists on the example of military education units of the Armed Forces General Command (Polish: Dowództwo Generalne Rodzajów Sił Zbrojnych, DG RSZ). The research problem, on the other hand, is focused on the question concerning the organization of the teaching process and the use of modern teaching methods and tools. For the article, literature and sources search was conducted concerning the topics of distance learning, problems of military education and organization of training and professional development. Contemporary directions of e-learning development and practical attempts to implement modern methods and forms of education for the needs of the army were analyzed. The search conducted enables the conclusion that no research on the application of remote learning in the process of military specialist training has been conducted so far. In terms of empirical methods, a narrative unstructured interview with experts was used to identify systemic flaws, but also to identify expected organizational and functional changes. The article consists of three parts that address the following issues: e-learning in the Polish Armed Forces, preparation of military specialists in the age of pandemics, and conclusions and experiences concerning the implementation of distance learning. The purpose of the content presented in the article is to identify the problems of remote learning in the age of pandemics and to indicate the desired directions of changes in the functioning model of distance learning in the Polish Armed Forces.

Proper training of soldiers has an impact on the effectiveness of combat operations; it allows the efficient use of acquired skills, gives soldiers a sense of confidence and is essential for the professional performance of tasks. As technology has evolved and advanced, operations conducted by the Armed Forces have become more complex. The nature of missions requires the use of a variety of specialized combat equipment. Conduct of operations is also an activity integrating combat, support and security tasks that require proper preparation and effective use of military equipment with varying degrees of technical complexity. As a consequence of scientific development and technological progress, the requirements for specialized skills necessary to operate modern military equipment are increasing. The preparation of military specialists must therefore be adapted to the new technologies being implemented in the Armed Forces and, therefore, it requires modern teaching methods, techniques and tools. The ever-increasing needs in the scope of education, skill development and supplementing specialist knowledge require systematic analysis of global training trends and continuous development of methodology as well as the use of the latest technological advances. The development of technology is not only a challenge for every citizen but it is also a challenge for the organization of the education process. The dynamic digitization present in all domains

of life also finds application in military education. However, current technological progress is faster than the ability of educational systems to accommodate it. Today's soldier, a participant in the educational process, is a technologically advanced, multi-tasking person, a member of the digital generation, for whom the use of a computer, tablet or other mobile devices with Internet access is a common everyday activity. The desire for learning, mobility, and access to knowledge implies the need to move education into cyberspace to a much greater extent than ever before [3, p. 45].

1. Distance learning at the Armed Forces General Command

The process of education and professional development of privates and non-commissioned officers is carried out based on the military education units subordinate to the Armed Forces General Commander (Polish: Dowódca Generalny Rodzajów Sił Zbrojnych, DG RSZ)¹. The main task of those units is to prepare commanders and military specialists in all corps, personnel groups and military specialties to perform tasks in accordance with the needs of the Polish Armed Forces. Training centers and non-commissioned officer schools conduct the educational process to prepare soldiers to perform their duties in official positions. The essence of educating military specialists is to prepare them to operate and repair modern equipment or weaponry. Military education bears responsibility not only for the quality and manner of education but also for the level of theoretical and practical preparation of its graduates. A professional soldier must possess the highest level of competence and capability, as well as the proper technical knowledge to make the best use of all the advantages of available combat technology. In this age of rapid technological development and a professional army, the soldier must be able to keep up with progress and improve their own skills. To meet such specified requirements for the preparation of graduates, military education units must adapt to the changing conditions and needs of the national defense system. Each year, the number of graduates of various courses increases, and the training process consumes significant funds from the budget of the Ministry of Defense. Vocational education and training is mainly provided on a full-time basis. Training centers and NCO schools also can implement remote learning [4].

In the literature, there are many definitions of remote learning, often also referred to as distance education, virtual education, e-education or online learning. Distance learning is also known as e-learning. According to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education [5], remote learning is a type of education in which the transmission of content and verification of its course and effects is carried out using available communication technologies, in particular mail, voicemail, e-mail, television or the Internet, without constant and direct contact between the teacher and the learner. According to Mirosław Kubiak, "distance learning means conducting the teaching process in conditions when the teacher and students are staying away from each other and are not in the same place; in addition to traditional means of communication, also modern, highly advanced telecommunication technologies, including voice, video images, computer data and printed materials, are also used to transmit information"

¹ Land Forces Training Center in Poznań, Artillery and Armaments Training Center in Toruń, Engineer and Chemical Training Center in Wrocław, Air Force Training Center in Koszalin, Aviation Engineering Training Center in Dęblin, Naval Training Center in Ustka, Military Medical Training Center in Łódź. Land Forces Non-Commissioned Officers School in Poznań; Non-Commissioned Officers School of Air Forces in Dęblin, Naval Non-Commissioned Officer School in Ustka. Divers and Scuba Divers Training Center of Polish Army in Gdynia.

[6, p. 11]. According to the “Distance Training Concept” in force in the Polish Armed Forces, distance training is defined as a way of conducting the education process in the conditions when the contact between the teacher and the student is limited [4, p. 10].

The model of distance learning in the Polish Armed Forces is based on the solutions in force in NATO. As a member of the alliance, Poland has agreed to unify and adopt the existing solutions. That approach makes it possible, prospectively, to completely integrate the systems of individual member states and to access common training resources. NATO Bi-Strategic Command (Bi-SC) Directive 75-7 [7] defines Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) as “an interactive, outcomes-focused approach to education, training, and performance-aiding that blends standards-based Distributed Learning”. It also provides for e-learning combined with other teaching methods that do not require the student to be present at a specific location. It should be noted that remote learning (commonly referred to as e-learning) refers to educational content delivered through a digital device (such as a computer, tablet, or smartphone) to support learning. Although the definitions of e-learning and Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) are very similar, often organizations prefer one term over the other, although they can be used interchangeably [8, p. 8].

According to the quoted “Distance Training Concept”, e-learning is intended to support the education of soldiers of all personnel corps, education at military universities, training in military education units, training of commands and staffs as well as training of troops. A prerequisite for the proper functioning of e-learning in the Polish Armed Forces is to precisely define competencies at different levels of command. Competency supervision of the distance learning system is provided by the Functional Training System Organizer. That task is performed through the Doctrine and Training Centre of the Polish Armed Forces (Polish: Centrum Doktryn i Szkolenia Służb Zbrojnych, CDiSZ), which serves as the competence center for e-learning in the Polish Armed Forces [9]. In this respect, CDiSZ is responsible for managing the system in the Ministry of National Defense, setting the directions of development and its documentary instrumentation. Also performs tasks related to participation in the implementation of distance learning standards, new technology solutions, as well as performance assessment and evaluation. Furthermore, it also acts as a coordinator of other participants and components of the system.

An important link in the distance learning system is the Armed Forces General Command. Through the Training Inspectorate, it ensures the proper functioning of the distance learning system in the military education units of the Armed Forces General Command. In the framework of its competencies, it defines the principles and scope of distance learning, analyses and evaluates the learning process and indicates the directions for development. The Training Inspectorate also commissions the supervised units to develop courses and ensure that applicable standards are maintained. The military education units of the Armed Forces General Command, apart from carrying out the process of education, including remote learning, also develops and implements e-learning courses into its training programme. In accordance with the adopted assumptions, they are the main centers responsible for the creation of courses and training of this type for the needs of the units of the Armed Forces General Command and the Polish Armed Forces.

Proper functioning of distance learning in the Polish Armed Forces requires professional ICT support and security, also in technical and administrative areas. This capability in the Polish Armed Forces is provided by the Regional IT Center in Krakow. Technical support refers to the provision of tools, instruments, equipment, maintaining the integrity of databases and the implementation of training necessary in the process of creating courses and e-learning

materials. The administrative area includes, but is not limited to: carrying out tasks related to the operation, implementation and design of organizational solutions, administration of services and management of the e-learning platform, i.e. the domain constituting a virtual environment for learning and teaching. For the purposes of remote learning, two platforms have been launched in the departmental information system, MILNET-I and MILNET-Z, designed for the processing of classified and unclassified information, respectively. Any person with Internet access holding an account in the Ministry's domain can use the MILNET-I platform. The MILNET-Z platform, on the other hand, is intended for users of the departmental system. Each platform has several functionalities allowing communication, remote work, processing and archiving of files, as well as user management.

2. Educating military professionals in times of pandemic

In late 2019 and early 2020, during the outbreak of the SARS Cov-2 pandemic, many institutions implemented remote work to replace their current method of working to reduce transmission of the virus. Overnight, employees of many private or public companies had to start working remotely using publicly available tools that they had never used before. The education system, which also transferred to virtual space, was put in a similar problematic position. Remote working and learning require many components, however, modern technologies enable efficient communication and learning [10, p. 148].

Remote learning is not a new thing. Since the 1950s, open universities have been in operation, and with the growing popularity of the Internet, that form of education was incorporated into the offer of the majority of universities and other training institutions worldwide. What has become new, also for the military, is the scale of remote learning delivered online, the scale of which has certainly been necessitated by the pandemic. It is important to note that the transfer of education to the virtual space was done on an emergency basis, and not on a programmed basis. It was more of a rescue operation at first than a well-thought-out strategy. It could be stated that it was a kind of experiment, but certainly not a scientific one. As stated by M. Bodziany [11, p. 93], e-learning is successfully used by many armies of the world for education and training in peacetime, while there is no reliable information on the use of remote learning methods in a state of emergency or crisis, which is undoubtedly the case during the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Until the outbreak of the pandemic, remote learning at the Polish Armed Forces had only a supporting, complementary function and it was involved making various types of materials, instructions or courses available online (including closed networks) mainly in a self-study format. More modern forms of distance learning were not used. This is mainly because the education of military specialists is largely based on practical classes, and it aims to master the use of specialized equipment or combat technology, which naturally entails great limitations in terms of distance learning.

However, the pandemic has forced a change in the approach to distance learning; what was previously impossible for many years suddenly became possible, and what seemed very simple turned out to be quite complicated. How has the military handled education in the age of pandemics? In the first place, as of April 10, 2020, course education and in-service training were suspended for two weeks [12]. At that time, with the participation of authorizing officers, it was analyzed which forms of education can be abandoned, and what is essential and indispensable in the military education system to maintain a continuous supply of qualified personnel. The next step was to determine which components can have a fully remote form, what can be taught in a hybrid form, and what, unfortunately, must be carried

out in a traditional, on-site manner [13]. With the development of the epidemic situation in the country, from the time of the suspension of training in military education units until its restart, 148 further training courses under the Professional Development System, in which 2,826 students were to participate, were canceled. Modular education was introduced in a large number of courses. Courses – depending on their specifics – have been divided into several modules [13]. These included self-learning module, online lectures module, practical class module. Self-learning modules have a text form and contain multimedia components, illustrations, audio commentaries, animations, short film sequences or expert advice to enrich and facilitate understanding of the content. Exercises, tests, simulations and quizzes were prepared to solidify the previously acquired knowledge. All those components facilitate knowledge testing, but also suggest how to put theory into practice and indicate which elements a student should spend more time on. In the synchronous online module, lectures were delivered using popular tools like MS TEAMS or GOOGLE MEET. As many as 25 qualification courses were delivered in this format, including 12 courses for the rank of a senior non-commissioned officer and 13 courses for the rank of non-commissioned officer. The smooth introduction of that form of teaching required several organizational measures, including technical ones. Language education was the one that has been most efficiently re-organized. It has been temporarily fully replaced by remote learning at every level. This was not a big problem because language teachers were already commonly using multimedia in their work and had extensive experience in that respect. Unfortunately, it was not possible to opt out of the practical classes and they were held under a strict sanitary regime. Mobile training teams were used in the implementation of courses dedicated to specific military units, i.e. courses for specific needs.

For the smooth resumption of in-service training in military education units, several scenarios were prepared, which included the implementation of the educational process for in-service training, qualification and language courses while maintaining the restrictions in accordance with the sanitary guidelines of the Chief Sanitary Inspector of the Polish Army. To implement the “Plan of professional development implemented in military training units subordinate to the Armed Forces General Command for 2020”, a variant was adopted, which assumed the start of training in three groups of courses, maintaining the priorities indicated by authorizing officers. Upon the fulfilment of all conditions, on 8 June 2020 stationary training was restored in all education and training formats. Following the option adopted, the main effort was focused on launching Group Two and Group Three courses, while Group One courses were implemented as per the timelines contained in the “2020 Professional Development Plan”, taking into account additional training needs resulting from the adopted training priorities for the 18 DZ and PKW certification².

3. Conclusions, experiences, good practices

Conclusions, experiences and good practices related to the implementation of education and in-service training under restrictions during the SARS Cov-2 pandemic are followed in accordance with the system of experience utilization in effect in the Polish Armed Forces [14]. A year after the outbreak of the pandemic, a training and methodology briefing [15]

² Group One: courses planned to be conducted in accordance with the professional development plan, 470 courses, planned period of completion by the end of 2020; Group Two: courses conducted remotely for the theory part only, 32 courses, planned period of completion by October 15, 2020; Group Three: courses suspended in full, 116 courses, planned period of completion by November 27, 2020.

was conducted with commanders of training centers and non-commissioned officer schools, during which the functioning of military education during this difficult period was discussed [16]. One of the many issues discussed included remote learning and its implications. Commandants, as the organizers of education, analyzed and evaluated the implementation of the education process in their subordinate military education units. Many conclusions and recommendations were developed based on the interviews with those responsible for education.

The main problem identified is the lack of systemic solutions and in particular the lack of a strategy for the development of distance learning that precisely defines all its aspects. A convergent position, but in the context of the educational process and distance learning implemented at universities, is presented by M. Bodziany [11, p. 107-109]. "Concept of distance training in the Ministry of National Defense" developed in 2016 has never really been instrumented with implementation documents. The content included in the concept has become outdated not only because of the pace of information technology development but also because of changes in the organization of the educational process. At the time of its publication, the cited concept contained some gaps and was not a perfect document. It did not even consider the methodological idea of remote learning, nor did it indicate how to ensure the quality of the learning process. Behaviorist, humanistic and constructivist concepts are most commonly identified in publications on distance learning [17, p. 213]. In a military environment, the best solution is to use a constructivist model that allows learners to create individual collections in a virtual space. In this model, the teacher is a resource of knowledge, but they allow learners to discover it while motivating them to be independent and active [18, p. 3]. The existing gap has been recognized by the organizer of the functional training system, P3/P7 Board of the General Staff of the Polish Army, which will appoint a Working Group to develop a supplementary document "Organization and functioning of distance training in the Ministry of National Defense DU-7.0.7" [19].

The lack of adequate preparation of the teaching staff for remote delivery of classes also proved to be a problematic factor. It was particularly evident in two areas: technical knowledge and methodological competency. Personnel of military education units, especially in the first weeks of remote teaching, felt discomfort due to deficiencies in technical competence (insufficient knowledge of tools) and, equally and perhaps more importantly, lack of certain methodological competencies. As M. Muchacki notes, the technological competencies of teachers should be associated with and supported by methodological competencies. The ability to use a wide range of electronic tools should go hand in hand with modern methodological capabilities [20, p. 432-434]. The lecturers' level of digital competence and their methodological preparation shaped the quality of the classes. A large group of lecturers were not prepared to teach remotely. Most often, they taught the class without interacting with the learners, providing information and telling them to complete the material on their own. The tools used were usually the ones related to receptive teaching methods (film screenings or presentations), while activity-based methods were used much less frequently. A similar situation was identified and presented in a research report conducted by the Digital Center concerning the diagnosis of the situation faced by schools as a result of the pandemic [21, p. 27].

There was also a noticeable lack of ability to develop and maintain motivation among trainees, communication skills and the ability to adapt to the requirements of remote education participants. Any lecturer implementing remote learning should be aware that learners are well motivated at the beginning of the process, but their motivation decreases over time. An important prerequisite for remote learning is direct contact between the lecturer and the learner. "This contact will deepen the interaction between both sides of the process"

[17, p. 214]. It is therefore up to the lecturer to maintain the students' engagement and stimulate it. Remote teaching in itself is not a motivating element in terms of learning. The learner realizes that it is up to them to acquire knowledge or new competencies [22, p. 17]. The hardest part, however, was to break the mindset and habits of those in charge of the training process. With the introduction of distance learning, there have been different expectations of learners towards the lecturers. The lecturer is now seen as a guide and a partner supporting the achievement of the intended educational goals, rather than a supervisor and master delivering knowledge and monitoring its acquisition. In remote learning, it is particularly important to be able to communicate appropriately with learners through clear and precise instructions and to recognize and be sensitive to learners' needs. It is very important in the process of remote education that the learning content provided meets the needs of the learners. As pointed out by M. Plebańska [23, p. 37-42], the way the classes are conducted must be consistent with the learning objectives set beforehand and, most importantly, meet the needs, expectations and abilities of the educational process participants. However, a key role in the education process is played by the teacher, who must accentuate his or her role in the process, which has a decisive impact on the effectiveness of education. "The teacher is supposed to help the student on the way to their own construction of a world of values and their own bank of information" [17, p. 216].

The validity of using the current curriculum is also questionable. This raises the question of whether it can be the basis for remote or combined classes without any adjustment. What is appropriate for traditional learning is usually also appropriate for remote learning. However, this is not always the case and therefore cannot be used indiscriminately. The virtual world has its own peculiarities that must be taken into account when implementing the teaching process. When making revisions to course syllabi for the use of distance learning techniques and methods, it is useful to consider incorporating universal content concerning the search for information sources and critical thinking skills. It is also reasonable to change the methods of verification of the learning outcomes. Memory-based methods in a situation where exams are delivered remotely should become obsolete and be replaced with more modern ones that rely on information selection and problem understanding.

The implementation of distance learning is largely affected by the imperfection of the adopted organizational solutions in terms of the structure of distance learning units and teaching methodology sections. These two units undoubtedly play a key role in the process of preparation for the implementation of education, and the quality of the prepared materials, as well as the classes themselves, depend on the competencies of their employees. The functioning of these units should be oriented towards searching for innovative forms and methods of teaching, implementation of pro-quality activities, including the introduction of uniform standards for final exams, supervision of the quality of educational programs, organization of methodical training and methodical supervision and, to a lesser extent, control of the work of lecturers and instructors. It should be noted that the staff of those units is inadequate to meet the needs of the education and professional development process, and they lack specialists in remote learning methodology and quality assurance.

However, technical issues were the ones that caused the most problems in remote learning. An analysis of the available sources shows that such problems were common to all. They involve the quality of computer hardware, software used, the format of supported files, speed of Internet connections, or possible technical support for users. Another challenge during remote learning was ensuring the protection of classified information. This does not apply only to the content being transmitted, but also to the equipment or IT networks being

used for that purpose. Here, there was a clash between needs and opportunities in terms of military versus commercial network use, business versus private equipment, the ability to connect mobile devices, or the installation of appropriate software. Unfortunately, as life has shown, not everything could have been foreseen and the current regulations in this area do not match the current reality.

Military education units were obliged to change the way they operated overnight. The analysis of the information collected shows that there was variation across the training centers in terms of how remote classes were structured and delivered. The constraints of available infrastructure, the experience and preferences of the lecturers, as well as their competencies played a great role. The most significant issue, however, is the quality of knowledge and skills that the remotely educated soldiers have acquired. It also largely depends on the teaching methods and techniques chosen by the lecturers. To evaluate their validity, it is necessary to evaluate the classes conducted. Only based on the evaluation results it will be possible to diagnose the mistakes made and implement improvements to the adopted forms, methods and techniques of teaching [24, p. 52-63].

Conclusions

The need for permanent education, i.e. acquiring knowledge and experience throughout life, characteristic for the dynamically developing information society, implies rapid development of alternative methods and forms of education. Remote learning effectively supports the education process, especially for adults. "The popularity of online learning platforms worldwide proves that they are an effective tool to support the teacher's work" [24, p. 213]. This form of education has also found its way into the offer of military education units and has been used successfully by them. Multimedia are embedded in the development of modern science. They create new value and set directions for development. They simplify access to knowledge and bridge the boundaries between teachers and learners. However, they require new skills regarding the use of computers, tablets or smartphones in professional activities. At the same time, they represent a great pedagogical potential that can be used in the educational process [25, p. 189].

The success of distance learning is determined by a number of factors which include available technology, teaching resources, teachers, administration, and mainly the attitudes and needs of the learners. The dynamic development of digital information technologies determines the need for changes in the approach to e-education. We live and function in a media world, a space where portable computing devices and wireless Internet access have become widespread. Modern technology and advanced means of communication and learning are increasingly influencing society and shaping the functioning of the new generation. It is the younger generation that candidates for military service are recruited for, so the form of education and preparation for the profession of a soldier should be appropriate for the 21st century. Young people want to acquire knowledge using the achievements of civilization. Therefore, it becomes necessary to conduct classes in a form that is attractive to the younger generation [24, p. 214]. The changing paradigm of mobile education, abbreviated as m-learning, is defined in the literature as follows: "m-learning should be understood as the wide range of educational opportunities provided by the combination of mobile technologies, wireless networks, and e-learning technologies" [26, p. 26]. The ongoing shift in e-education due to the use of mobile devices in the teaching and learning process requires updating the existing educational technology by complementing traditional methodological structures

with m-learning solutions that fit the learning process and the changing perceptual model of learners. M-learning allows you to learn anywhere, anytime, and whenever you feel like it. This idea should guide the organizer of the functional training system in the Polish Armed Forces in the development of the distance learning concept.

Pandemic time has shown that it is possible to conduct classes using distance learning methods and techniques. The pandemic-enforced ad hoc solutions in military education have yet to be thoroughly analyzed, but it is safe to say that there will be no return to the traditional education model, at least not to the same extent. It would therefore be necessary to continue the transformation process forced by the circumstances and to use the lessons learned to make significant changes and transform the emergency solution into high-quality remote learning.

Acknowledgement

No acknowledgement and potential founding was reported by the author.

Conflict of interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

Author contributions

The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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Nauczanie zdalne w procesie przygotowania specjalistów wojskowych w dobie pandemii COVID-19

STRESZCZENIE

Nowoczesna armia wymaga w swoich szeregach profesjonalistów. Jednym z wielu wymiarów profesjonalizacji jest kształcenie i doskonalenie zawodowe umożliwiające budowanie kapitału ludzkiego. Aby kształcenie było efektywne nie wystarczy tylko nowoczesny sprzęt czy specjalistyczne urządzenia szkolno-treningowe, ale potrzebne są również innowacyjne metody nauczania. Stale wzrastające potrzeby w zakresie

kształcenia i doskonalenia zawodowego są determinantem w poszukiwaniu nowoczesnych form, metod i narzędzi kształcenia możliwych do adaptacji w środowisku wojskowym. W ramach realizacji procesu kształcenia i doskonalenia zawodowego jednostki szkolnictwa wojskowego Dowództwa Generalnego Sił Zbrojnych główny wysiłek koncentrują na szkoleniu kursowym żołnierzy oraz pracowników resortu obrony narodowej, kształceniu kandydatów na podoficerów oraz przygotowaniu specjalistycznym kandydatów na szeregowych zawodowych. Siły Zbrojne są organizacją, która musi funkcjonować bez względu na pojawiające się zagrożenia oraz realizować zadania w najtrudniejszych i nieprzewidywalnych uwarunkowaniach. Pandemia okazała się paradoksalnie katalizatorem dla jednostek szkolnictwa wojskowego do podniesienia poziomu nauczania i wzbogacenia sposobów przekazywania wiedzy, w tym upowszechnienia nauczania na odległość. W artykule omówiono model nauczania na odległość funkcjonujący w SZ RP. Scharakteryzowano proces przygotowania specjalistów wojskowych z wykorzystaniem metod i technik kształcenia zdalnego. Przedstawiono wnioski oraz doświadczenia wynikające z realizacji kształcenia w warunkach przeciwdziałania pandemii. Artykuł wskazuje również pożądane kierunki transformacji w obszarze kształcenia zdalnego stosowanego w SZ RP.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE kształcenie zdalne, szkolnictwo wojskowe, specjalista wojskowy, formy i metody, wnioski i doświadczenia

How to cite this paper

Woźniak RP. *Distance learning in the training of military professionals in the age of the COVID-19 pandemic*. Scientific Journal of the Military University of Land Forces. 2021;53;3(201):602-13.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0015.3412>



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