

UDC 141.2: 37.013.73 +372.881.1

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## **PHILOSOPHICAL AND EDUCATIONAL ORIENTATION OF iTUNES UNIVERSITY AS A POSSIBILITY OF SATISFYING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS FOR EDUCATION**

*The potential of iTunes University as a tool that allows every individual to realize personal needs for education, self-education, and self-fulfillment is analyzed in the paper. The valuable aspects of iTunes U application include epistemological, educational, creative opportunities; openness, diversity, and heterogeneity; multifunctionality and interactivity. The author underlines that effective practical use of iTunes U in national realities should include the development and implementation of the strategy based on existing international experience, its adaptation to the specific goals and objectives of teaching and learning.*

**Keywords:** iTunes University, podcast, educational potential, global learning process, self-education, self-fulfillment, language education.

There is no doubt about the significance of educational innovations as the fundamental mechanisms for transformations in the field of education. Under conditions of rapid technological changes, «... the introduction of innovation has become one of the main features of a social construct, which is called «information society» and «knowledge-based society» in contemporary research» [8, p. 73]. The universities also are not isolated from these changes; they actively respond to them while maintaining their identity and teaching practice proved through the ages. Hence, we can talk about «a dialectical unity between traditions and innovations». Accordingly, the innovative character of the modern era in university context is realized only in the background of academic traditions historically verified and tested by practice [10, p.14].

There have been relatively intense debates on the «destiny of the University» in the modern philosophy of education. Nowadays, universities are facing the challenge of their place, role, and mission in society. «Under conditions of changeable modernity, there raises the issue of adaptability of this institution to variable social, cultural, political reality» [2, p. 24]. In a sense, an example of such adaptability is iTunes U (iTunes University). It can be suggested that it functions as a sort of «digital extension» of the modern universities and in the future might become an integral component of universities as a whole. The necessity of understanding of iTunes U is determined by the discrepancy between the global trend toward its use for education and the level of its analysis in the field of philosophy of education.

The methodological and theoretical foundation of this study is the vast literature on world philosophy and educational thought, contemporary domestic and foreign research on issues of the philosophy of education.

**The role and significance of higher education** in the XXI century, the mission of modern university education were analyzed in the works of post-industrial society theorists such as D. Bell, P. Drucker, V. Inozemtsev, M. Castells, M. Porter, A. Toffler [9] and others. Theoretical and methodological aspects of the development of higher education in Ukraine have been examined in fundamental research of prominent Ukrainian academics as V. Andrushchenko [2], V. Baranovsky, Y. Bystrytsky, B. Bekh, L. Huberskyi, G. Volynka, V. Kremen. Also, we should name Ukrainian scholars whose works are devoted to research on the place, role and purpose of the university in the present conditions, such as S. Kurbatov [7], I. Predborska, S. Terepyschyi, A. Tymoshenko, E. Pinchuk, D. Shevchuk, T. Zhyzhko [10] and others. The global context of educational activities has been thoroughly investigated by V. Viktorov, A. Liferov, S. Malkova, A. Nawrocki, I. Tahunova and others. Contemporary issues in the philosophy of education have been studied in the papers of L. Gorbunova, N. Kochubei, S. Kutsepal, V. Kushnir, V. Pazenko, I. I. Predborska, V. Redyuhina, S. Sheveleva and others. As for the iTunes U, the first step toward its analysis has already been taken by such researchers as D. McKinney, J.L. Dyck, E.S. Luber. They examined the efficiency of podcasts used in mobile learning in higher education [8]. However, it appears that iTunes U has not yet received philosophical and theoretical analysis in Ukrainian studies, which determines **the relevance of this article**.

**The paper attempts to examine** the potential of iTunes U as a tool to meet individual needs for education, self-education, and self-realization in contemporary «knowledge-based» society.

There is no doubt about the need to implement the educational innovations, but the quality assessment of these innovations is a very topical issue. «Regrettably, we are constantly dealing with the issue of putting into practice the new forms, values, approaches, technical and technological means in the context of a rather conservative and tradition-oriented educational mechanism» [7, p.79]. Therefore, the study on educational innovations and evaluation of their efficiency is a necessary condition for their thorough understanding and further implementation in Ukrainian practice. Moreover, the innovative component of the educational process acquires particular significance in the new imperatives of the quality of foreign language education.

iTunes U is a gratis application that can be downloaded from the iTunes Store. iTunes University is a place where anyone can learn, using the world's largest resource of free educational content from universities and colleges [4, p.2]. With iTunes U education institutions can distribute free of charge lectures, presentations, training materials that demonstrate their academic and intellectual potential.

It can be suggested that the existence of iTunes U is determined by normative interaction with developers, authors of courses, learners, and all interested people; the need to demonstrate educators' intellectual and creative potential; ongoing interaction with the «outside world» to include various information in «inner world» of modern man.

iTunes U permits the individual to be a part of the global educational process, actively integrate it and use its achievements, as nowadays, there is a possibility to make use of educational resources from world's leading universities as Harvard,

Yale, Oxford, Cambridge, and many others. Its intellectual potential provides for the implementation of two important functions related to the transfer of cognitive products: firstly, it serves as a source of knowledge and experience; secondly, it enables an individual to realize personal needs, conditioned by one's subjective experience. It seems possible to identify such characteristic features of iTunes U: the institutional identity; the academic potential of institutions participating in it; diversity of subject choice, including natural, social and human sciences.

The identity of the institution refers to how and by whom the University's image is presented in iTunes U. Exploring the courses represented within universities and colleges helps acquire a deeper understanding of their scientific potential as well as teachers' personal contribution in the disciplines.

iTunes U may be seen as space, which provides educators with additional opportunities for self-fulfillment, for the demonstration of their scientific and pedagogical potential in the educational process. From the viewpoint of positive knowledge growth, particular interest presents the educators' activity in this space, representation of their scientific knowledge baggage and how their activity-communicative potential is implemented through information, relationships and connections with their students. It can be suggested that educators' influence on their students and the world learners' auditory is exercised in direct proportion to the level of their scientific knowledge and expertise.

The concentration of the variety of educational resources in one place creates a unique educational content portal. This complex and multi-faceted space includes both traditional and innovative, makes possible the use of theoretical and practical innovations in the field of education in all their diversity. It might be suggested that the purpose of its development is the reproduction of socio-cultural experience and socially significant knowledge in the context of the cognitive and informational interaction in the global educational environment. It appears that the primary means of achieving this goal are the creation and the distribution of such «products» as podcasts (in audio and video formats), images, books, documents, which contain relevant information; reflect the norms and values of society and contribute to creative skills development. This space is designed as an open system, which functioning is aimed at integrating the educational resources of schools, their potential into a developed information structure according to the target settings of the network society and the mission of iTunes U. Also, it may be suggested that its use in the educational process helps shape the nonlinear way of thinking of all its participants. A. Gumenuk identifies the nonlinear way of thinking as that way of thinking, which «...considers man and education as open, complicated systems that are in a state of immanent movability and fulfillment of creative potential...» and «recognizes the importance of personal choice» [3, p.79], the opportunity for self-education.

The concept of iTunes U is, rephrasing Karl Jaspers, «a requirement for full transparency along with the task of establishing the limitless relationship to bring indirectly an individual to the whole» [6, p. 85]. Also, due to the educational collections, it may be said that it is something more than available software application, and it may be considered as a system that is open to society. Moreover,

as a transmitter of intellectual potential of participating education institutions, iTunes U directly affects the change in approaches to providing educational information and therefore, represents the progressive dynamics and the evolution of the educational process. Thus, iTunes U may be seen as a space where the current trends of university education, namely «education for all» and «lifelong learning», its flexibility, openness and heterogeneity are represented.

It is crucial to highlight that iTunes U as an intermediary between the participants of the educational process does not change the essence of education, as it changes its form, but not the content; it performs supplementary, technical functions.

It could be said that iTunes U is relevant to the education and socio-cultural conditions of modern society, organized as a system of open social networks. A particular aspect of its functioning is the variety of methods, forms, and ways of getting information and delivering it to digitally native students since the task of modern education is not only the transfer of knowledge and mastery the different ways of obtaining information and most importantly is its perception, learning and creative use. Indeed, educators' and students' unhappiness in fetters of curricula, monitoring and mass results, and the lack of incentive to understand the real situation create the atmosphere, in which, apparently, good results in technical skills and knowledge based on questioning may be achieved, but actually knowledge, ability to take risks in undertaking research and expressing opinions, become impossible [6, p. 83].

It is worth noting that iTunes U allows to organize work with large amounts of educational information that is constantly updated and supplemented in various differential mode from multiple heterogeneous sources. Also, educational content selected and structured by educators is an essential condition that ensures the conformity of the content to the objectives and tasks of training and students' needs and interests. Besides, exports of materials in different formats, as well as the compactness and reliability of data storage greatly expand the opportunities for education and self-education since lectures and notes are always available. After installing the necessary software on the device and accessing iTunes U, contemporary students can work with educational material at a convenient time and comfortable pace; they can choose the lecture resources, subscribe to them, and listen to them on their own in any order depending on their preferences, interests, level and field of training. In this regard, it is worth recalling the words of A.Toffler that «computer assisted education, programmed instruction and other such techniques, despite popular misconceptions, radically enhance the possibility of diversity in the classroom. They permit each student to advance at his own purely personal pace. They permit him to follow a custom-cut path toward knowledge, rather than a rigid syllabus as in the traditional industrial era classroom» [9, p. 143].

Individual's reasons determine the choice (of an institution, a collection or a course), the implementation of which depends on a combination of internal and external determinants. For instance, external determinants can be based on teacher's or friends' recommendations. Internal ones are based on personal preferences. It can be assumed that individual choice, based on interests, as well as the system of preferences, give rise to the meaning of one's being, and are the vectors that make up

the structure of the individual educational process. While solving own existential issues, one contributes to self-education in accordance with personal and professional needs, interests, vital circumstances, which is reflected in the state of self-education. The choice here appears as a motivated, organized and even operational activity (i.e., search on the categories, downloading and subscription to courses from the catalog) susceptible to external determinants and determined by the individual. This activity includes an easy, semantic and personal choice. So, the choice is a process, activity, and the result; it is a means of education and self-education, it is value-oriented, meaningful, and substantive.

Consequently, iTunes U may be seen as a cumulative platform for distance, mobile, and e-learning, which includes timing, spatial, substantive, and organizational components. Accordingly, it creates alternatives possibilities for gaining information and enhancing knowledge level in various fields of education and training; offers varied educational paths, and ample opportunities for setting personal and professional trajectory and self-determination.

Overall, it can be said that iTunes U is a multifunctional space designed to the dissemination and accumulation of information, digital educational resources, which provides the ability to use them for educational, educative and information purposes.

It is certain that the application of iTunes U in the national reality requires its methodological, logical-epistemological, technological and technical elaboration, as well as models of organization, leadership, and management of the learning process. It means that the institutions need to develop strategy, participatory mechanisms, programs, staff training activities, allocate resources. It also requires high-level commitment to greater participation. There arises the question not only about the reproduction of available intellectual resources on iTunes U and implementation of ways and means of using them, but also the necessity of creating our educational resources to promote Ukrainian Education and Science. Therefore, iTunes U may become a platform to present and promote national educational achievements to the world.

However, resource potential of iTunes U can be successfully implemented in our system of higher education under certain conditions. The first most significant implementation issue can be identified as technical. It mainly results from the level of technical equipment faced both by education institutions and by students but is exacerbated by economic factors related for instance to acquisition costs of iPads (it should be remembered that iTunes U is an application for iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch). Nevertheless, it should be underlined that browsing, listening to, and downloading available courses from the catalog on iTunes U are possible on a personal computer.

Although the course creation seems to be easy, it is worth noting that, there are requirements that shall be met to create and deliver courses on iTunes U. The first one is personal Apple ID to access to iTunes U Course Manager. In this respect, it should be highlighted that only affiliated educators representing the official institution are authorized to deliver educational content to iTunes U. Moreover, this education institution must have a public iTunes U website, not to mention the fact that the content license is needed. Having logged in to iTunes U Course Manager,

one needs to follow the instructions [5, p. 3]. It is worth stressing that nowadays courses can be created on iPad.

Educational resources on iTunes U might serve as a supplementary source of professionally-oriented information to help students enhance foreign language knowledge in their specialty. Authentic content is a significant source of replenishment special scientific vocabulary and terminology in the specialty in the target language. In this respect, it should be pointed out that the overwhelming majority of educational content presented at iTunes U is in English that may be explained by the fact that English is the predominant scientific language, the rise of which «is unprecedented since the times when Latin dominated the academy in medieval Europe» [1, p. 2]. Given this, foreign language proficiency is the main condition of efficient and sound use of authentic educational resources on iTunes U.

It should also be emphasized that the available authentic educational content on iTunes U will not only open new educational opportunities but also will pose specific challenges to all participants of the educational process. Among them, first, it can be named the task of differentiation and recognizing the value-relevant information.

iTunes U is an open educational space but, as a result of this opening, there are various learning directions and trajectories, and consequently plenty of choice issues. Also, since courses and collections are constantly updated and renewed, it may turn up that learners are in the situation of permanent choice. Accordingly, the lack of students' readiness to use iTunes U in the learning process can be one of the obstacles to its successful application.

Then, the development and implementation of a strategy based on existing foreign experience. The efficient practical adoption of resources in foreign languages should include the selection of educational material by the curriculum; its adaptation to specific goals and objectives of teaching and learning, and to the level of students' foreign language proficiency.

Finally, notwithstanding the new opportunities for self-education, there is a risk of non-productive use of iTunes U, such as the desire to listen to music or view entertainment as it is an application to iTunes, which is, above all, the digital music service, a content management system.

On the whole, it could be said that authentic materials presented at iTunes U, provide additional options to master a foreign language; promote individual value attitude to foreign language education, especially in the present conditions of social development, when a foreign language is an important tool in the professional activity of any specialist.

Therefore, iTunes U may be seen as a platform to realize teachers' and learners' potential in the educational process; space, which provides all interested people with opportunities for personalized and life-long learning regardless of their place of residence; a tool that may be used to enhance the quality of language learning through the use of authentic educational content.

**To conclude**, the valuable aspects of iTunes U application, regarding philosophical and educational potential, include epistemological, educational, creative opportunities; openness, diversity, and heterogeneity; multifunctionality and interactivity; the opportunities for self-education and life-long learning.

It can be said that the conceptual model of iTunes U is in the process of developing and setting its priorities for prospective solutions to current issues of the educational process and its possible future. Further theoretical foundation has the perspective to enable Ukrainian educators to adopt practically iTunes U in reasonable and significant ways, and to ensure its application and pragmatic value in Ukrainian education system to represent its academic potential.

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## ФІЛОСОФСЬКО-ОСВІТНЯ НАПРАВЛЕНІСТЬ iTUNES U ЯК МОЖЛИВІСТЬ РЕАЛІЗАЦІЇ ІНДИВІДУАЛЬНИХ ПОТРЕБ ОСОБИСТОСТІ В ОСВІТІ

В статті проаналізовано потенціал iTunes університету в якості інструменту, який дозволяє реалізувати особисті потреби в освіті, самоосвіті та самореалізації. Показано,

що ціннісні аспекти застосування iTunes U включають в себе епістемологічні, освітні, творчі можливості; відкритість, різноманітність і гетерогенність ресурсів; багатофункціональність і інтерактивність. Зроблено висновок, що ефективне практичне застосування iTunes U в національних реаліях повинне включати в себе розробку і реалізацію стратегії на основі існуючого зарубіжного досвіду, її адаптацію до конкретних цілей і завдань викладання і навчання.

**Ключові слова:** iTunes університет, подкаст, освітній потенціал, глобальний освітній процес, самоосвіта, самореалізація, мовна освіта.

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## **ФИЛОСОФСКО-ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНАЯ НАПРАВЛЕННОСТЬ iTUNES U КАК ВОЗМОЖНОСТЬ РЕАЛИЗАЦИИ ИНДИВИДУАЛЬНЫХ ПОТРЕБНОСТЕЙ ЛИЧНОСТИ В ОБРАЗОВАНИИ**

В статье проанализирован потенциал iTunes университета как инструмента, который позволяет реализовать индивидуальные потребности личности в образовании, самообразовании и самореализации. Показано, что ценностные аспекты применения iTunes U включают в себя эпистемологические, образовательные, творческие возможности; открытость, разнообразие и гетерогенность ресурсов; многофункциональность и интерактивность. Сделан вывод, что эффективное практическое применение iTunes U в национальных реалиях должно включать в себя разработку и реализацию стратегии на основе существующего зарубежного опыта, ее адаптацию к конкретным целям и задачам преподавания и обучения.

**Ключевые слова:** iTunes университет, подкаст, образовательный потенциал, глобальный образовательный процесс, самообразование, самореализация, языковое образование.

*Стаття надійшла до редколегії 10.03.16 р.*

*Рекомендовано до друку 15.03.16 р.*