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**UPDATING THE COMPONENTS OF THE DISCIPLINE
“LIFE SAFETY” IN UKRAINE’S HIGHER EDUCATION AS A
RESPONSE TO THE THREATS OF FULL-SCALE WAR**

The transformation of the educational process in Ukraine, particularly in the domain of security-related disciplines, represents a direct consequence of the armed aggression that commenced in 2014 and escalated to a full-scale nature commencing in February 2022. The discipline of “Life Safety” has traditionally occupied the position of a predominantly theoretical course, focused on the prevention of technogenic catastrophes, domestic injuries, and general knowledge pertaining to emergency situations during peacetime.

However, in the conditions of war, the role of the discipline “Life Safety” has undergone a radical transformation, evolving into an instrument for forming practical, vitally essential competencies that are critically important for survival and the maintenance of societal functioning amid constant military threats [1]. This transition reflects the concept of “total war”, where the front line extends through civilian populations and critical infrastructure. Safety education is now directly aimed at enhancing whole-of-society resilience (“whole-of-society resilience”).

Phenomena that were previously considered exotic or rare have become everyday realities, necessitating specialized preparation. These include military threats such as: psychological preparation for conflict, combat techniques, countermine activities, medical knowledge for providing first aid to the wounded, organization of population evacuation, and operations in de-occupied territories.

One of the key directions has been the significant expansion of the scope of security disciplines in higher education institutions through the

implementation of the Basic General Military Training (BGMT) course. The objective of the BGMT course is to cultivate necessary military skills and abilities among youth, as well as to ensure citizens' readiness to defend the Fatherland, its independence, and territorial integrity in accordance with constitutional obligations. BGMT serves as an instrument for integrating components of military training into the system of civic education, into the state's security framework, and contributes to the realization of the National Resistance Concept by incorporating NATO standards and European models of total defense (comprehensive security) into security discipline courses.

Analysis of sources [2 – 4] indicates, however, that the transformation of the discipline “Life Safety” in higher education in Ukraine under conditions of full-scale war is not merely a reaction to the crisis, but the beginning of a structural reform. The war has acted as a catalyst, accelerating processes that might have developed more slowly, but it has also revealed fundamental internal problems of the system, such as insufficient funding, infrastructure issues, and the psychological readiness of participants in the educational process. This creates a unique testing ground for researching how the educational system can adapt to extreme conditions while maintaining the quality of education and supporting the psychological well-being of students and educators.

Thus, the substantive transformation of the discipline “Life Safety” represents the most prominent aspect of the crisis adaptive process. The war has led to abstract concepts of safety acquiring concrete, vitally important content. The discipline has ceased to be merely an academic subject and has begun to take on the character of tools for survival, adaptation, and the construction of future society. This process is a direct consequence of the changes inflicted by the enemy and reflects the principle of vital necessity to adapt to new realities in order to ensure the continuity of the educational process and the preservation of human capital.

The most notable aspect has been the practical orientation of teaching the discipline “Life Safety” in higher education institutions. For universities that conduct youth training in the course “Life Safety”, traditional teaching methods have proven insufficient. They are compelled to radically alter

their methodology, integrating real military practices and scenarios [5]. This includes the use of simulators and virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies for the safe rehearsal of complex situations. Online platforms are actively employed for conducting trainings, which enable the formation of basic knowledge in the fundamentals of state defense, civil protection, pre-medical aid, and information security; the development of practical skills in tactical, engineering, and firearms training; the cultivation of patriotism, discipline, collective interaction, and psychological resilience; as well as the practice of decision-making under stressful conditions.

The conditions of full-scale war have compelled Ukrainian higher education to undergo a rapid and profound methodological revolution. The transition from traditional forms of instruction to flexible, technologically supported, and human-oriented approaches has become not merely an option, but an absolute necessity for ensuring the continuity of the educational process.

However, the war has introduced specific challenges to basic work skills, particularly in remote mode, which have led to a radical rethinking of pedagogical practices. This has resulted in an increased role for asynchronous formats, which provide students with flexibility and the opportunity to learn at a convenient pace, when there are no air raid alerts or access to stable internet. Tools for creating interactive presentations, collaborations, and recorded lectures have become indispensable for ensuring the continuity of education.

Technologies are utilized not only as a means of content delivery but also as a tool for psychological support. Gamification is applied not solely for knowledge assessment but also for alleviating psychological tension, enhancing motivation, and fostering a sense of social interaction.

Digital messaging platforms have become an integral part of the educational process, employed for operational communication, organization of group work, and the creation of formal and informal spaces for support. Recording classes and the ability to review materials at any time allow students to adapt the pace of learning to their individual circumstances, which is particularly important for those unable to attend in real time due to territorial mobility or health conditions.

The most profound change is the shift in teaching paradigms toward trauma-informed pedagogy. The war has created conditions of constant stress, which has become the primary obstacle to learning. As a result, educators are trained to prioritize students' psychological well-being. This includes demonstrating empathy, creating a trusting and safe environment where students feel control over their learning.

A special place in the new methodology is occupied by service-learning – a form of project-based activity where the educational process is integrated with real societal needs. This approach serves as an important tool for patriotic support and maintaining student motivation. Examples include campaigns to boycott aggressor companies, assistance to volunteer movements, and organization of charitable actions. Such projects provide students with a sense of involvement in a meaningful cause, enhance self-esteem, and impart a sense of purpose, which are critically important factors for overcoming depression and apathy in crisis conditions.

Overall, the methodological transformation represents not merely a technical transition to new platforms, but a profound cultural shift. Teaching becomes more humanistic, flexible, and focused on the psychological well-being of students, as this has emerged as the primary obstacle to effective learning under wartime conditions. This process demonstrates the remarkable adaptability of Ukraine's education system, which identifies new approaches to ensure the quality and continuity of education, even in extreme circumstances.

Thus, the war has illustrated that Ukraine's higher education system, despite its considerable resilience, remains vulnerable to a range of internal risks. Effective adaptation of the educational process depends not only on the level of technological provision but also on stable funding, guarantees of physical security, and, above all, the development of an effective system of psychological support for all participants in the educational environment.

The transformation of the discipline “Life Safety” within Ukraine's higher education system under conditions of full-scale war constitutes not simply a response to crisis circumstances, but the inception of a profound structural reform. The war has served as a catalyst for processes that, under normal conditions, would have developed more slowly, while simultaneously

exposing key internal problems of the system – insufficient funding, outdated infrastructure, and limited psychological readiness of educators and students. This establishes a unique foundation for further research into how the educational system can effectively adapt to extreme conditions, preserving the quality of education, operational stability, and psychological resilience of all its participants.

References

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