

THE USE OF BLENDED LEARNING IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM AT HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT

ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ЗМІШАНОГО НАВЧАННЯ ПІД ЧАС ВИВЧЕННЯ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ У ВИЩИХ НАВЧАЛЬНИХ ЗАКЛАДАХ

The article is devoted to the topic of blended learning, which became a very popular and widespread phenomenon in the Ukrainian education system due to the war in Ukraine.

With the onset of covid-19, when many bans appeared, it became impossible to adhere to traditional forms of teaching, which involve the presence of students and a teacher in the classroom, live communication, lectures and seminars. The world and the education system quickly found their way and switched to a distance form of education. Some teachers and students lacked the technical knowledge to use E-learning systems to their full potential, but after a few months this gap was closed. It seemed that the problem was solved and it was possible to switch to new forms of education and forget about the old ones. But not everything looked so rosy. After numerous forms of control, it became clear that the level of assimilation of the subject leaves much to be desired, the level of students' knowledge has deteriorated compared to more traditional teaching systems. Unfortunately, the situation in Ukraine does not allow to return to classrooms on a permanent basis, so a dilemma arises: should we risk the lives of students and teachers and study in classrooms or ignore the increasingly deteriorating level of knowledge and continue to give preference to distance education? In the light of the above-mentioned question, it will be reasonable to turn to compromise education systems that allow bringing the traditionality of communication and discussion of problems that are inherent in traditional forms, at the same time leaving room for newer remote, and hence safer, education systems.

The article examines and analyses different definitions of the concept of "blended learning", which were put forward by different authors at different times. The structure of blended learning is analysed, the advantages and disadvantages of each form are analysed, for which stages of the education system it is best suited, a consideration of the main features of blended learning is proposed, as well as a list of digital resources necessary for conducting lessons on this type of learning.

Key words: *blended learning, distance education, e-learning, rotation model, flexible model.*

Стаття присвячена темі змішаного навчання, яке стало дуже популярним і розповсюдженим явищем в системі української освіти завдяки війні в Україні. Глобальні виклики людству такі як Ковід 19,

і локальні проблеми як ось війна в Україні внесли свої зміни в процес освіти. Ці зміни торкнулися всіх ступень освітнього процесу починаючи від садочка закінчуючи вищими навчальними закладами. Хоча кожен етап важливий і безсумнівно заслуговує на розгляд, але в межах однієї публікації цього зробити неможливо. Ця публікація стосується і розглядає проблеми викладання, а саме викладання іноземних мов у вищих навчальних закладах.

З початком Ковід 19 коли з явилася багата заборон, стало неможливо дотримуватися традиційних форм викладання, які передбачають наявність учнів та викладача в аудиторії, живе спілкування, лекції і семінари. Світ та система освіти швидко зорієнтувалися та перейшли на дистанційну форму освіти. Деяким викладачам та студентам не вистачало технічної обізнаності для використання систем E-learning на повну, але через декілька місяців ця прогалина була закрита. Здавалося, проблему вирішено і можна перейти на нові форми навчання і забути про старі. Але не все виглядало так райдужно. Після численних форм контролю стало зрозуміло, що рівень засвоєваності предмета залишає бажати кращого, рівень знань студентів погіршився в порівнянні з більш традиційними системами викладання. нажалі ситуація в Україні не дозволяє повернутися в аудиторії на постійній основі, тож постає дилема: чи ризикувати життям студентів та викладачів і займатися в аудиторіях або не зважати на все більш погіршуваний рівень знань і продовжувати надавати перевагу дистанційній освіті? В світлі вище зазначеного питання буде розумним звернутися до компромісних систем навчання, які дозволяють привнести традиційність спілкування та обговорення проблем, які притаманні традиційним формам, в той же час залишаючи місце для новітніших дистанційних, а звідси і безпечніших систем навчання.

В статті розглядаються і аналізуються різні дефініції поняття «змішаного навчання», які висувалися різними авторами в різні часи. Аналізується структура змішаного навчання, аналізуються переваги і недоліки кожної форми.

Ключові слова: *змішане навчання, дистанційна освіта, e-learning, ротаційна модель, гнучка модель.*

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Stating the problem. Gone are the days when teachers of higher education institutions could use and be guided by purely traditional approaches in studying disciplines. Global challenges to humanity, such as Covid-19, and local problems, such as the war in Ukraine, have made changes in the education process. These changes affected all stages of the educational process, from kindergarten to higher educational institutions. although each stage

is important and undoubtedly worthy of consideration, it is impossible to do this within the limits of one publication. This publication concerns and examines the problems of teaching, namely the teaching of foreign languages in higher education institutions.

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communication, lectures and seminars. The world and the education system quickly found their way and switched to a distance form of education. Some teachers and students lacked the technical knowledge to use E-learning systems to their full potential, but after a few months this gap was closed. It seemed that the problem was solved and it was possible to switch to new forms of education and forget about the old ones. But not everything looked so optimistic. After numerous forms of control, it became clear that the level of assimilation of the subject leaves much to be desired, and the level of student achievement has deteriorated compared to more traditional teaching systems. Unfortunately, the situation in Ukraine does not allow to return to classrooms on a permanent basis, so a dilemma arises: should we risk the lives of students and teachers and study in classrooms or ignore the increasingly deteriorating level of knowledge and continue to give preference to distance education? In the light of the above-mentioned question, it will be reasonable to turn to compromise education systems that allow bringing the traditionality of communication and discussion of problems that are inherent in traditional forms, at the same time leaving room for newer remote, and hence safer, education systems.

Analysis of the research and publications on the issue under consideration. Since there are several terms in the scientific literature devoted to this topic, we suggest considering them from the point of view of their synonymy.

At the moment, there are terms “distance education”, “E-learning”, “blended learning”. Is there any difference between them or are they completely synonymous terms?

“Distance learning” refers to any education provided without the teacher and students being physically present together. [4] In the past, high schools and universities offered correspondence courses as a method of distance learning. Course materials were often sent to a student by mail and assignments were completed online or returned to the teacher by mail.

More recently, distance learning programs are making use of the incredible opportunities afforded by modern technology and offer very effective learning opportunities in all manner of distance education courses. From kindergarten to elementary school to university, effective distance learning is now a viable option. What is E-learning then? Wikipedia gives the following definition. Electronic learning (English E-learning, short for English Electronic Learning) is a system of learning with the help of information and electronic technologies. There is a definition given by UNESCO specialists: “e-Learning — training with the help of the Internet and multimedia.” [5]. E-learning is “the learning supported by digital electronic tools and media” and m-learning is the “e-learning using mobile devices and wireless transmission” [3: 255]

and finally, the “Digital learning is any type of learning that is facilitated by technology or by instructional practice that makes effective use of technology” and it occurs in all learning areas and domains [2: 2].

If you delve into this issue, you can find out that there are d-learning and m-learning, which stands for distance learning and mobile learning, but this is basically the same. After considering these definitions, we can conclude that there are not many differences between the concept of distance education and e-learning, since now technically all distance education is conducted via the Internet with the help of computers.

Let's consider the definitions of blended learning. There are two blended learning definitions that are most frequently cited in the literature. These have been suggested by Graham [7], and Garrison and Kanuka [6], and have been cited 2149 and 3116 times, respectively (Google Scholar, Oct 25, 2018). Graham defines blended learning as follows: “Blended learning systems combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction” [7: 5]. Garrison and Kanuka define blended learning as “the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences” [6; 96]. A third, slightly less influential, definition was put forth by Allen and Seaman (2010, cited 988 times according to Google Scholar, Oct 25, 2018). They define a blended learning course as follows: BCourse that blends online and face-to-face delivery. Substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, typically uses online discussions, and typically has a reduced number of face-to-face meetings [2; 5].

Highlighting previously unresolved parts of the overall problem. Although we have analysed various definitions of the term blended learning, we state that it is widely implemented in schools and higher educational institutions, it still remains uncertain which form of blended learning should be used for teaching foreign languages in higher educational institutions, given that there are different models of blended learning.

The purpose of the paper is to determine the main features of blended learning, consider the main models of this type of learning and, after analysing their advantages and disadvantages, determine which model will be best suited for teaching foreign languages in higher educational institutions

Presentation of the main material. Blended learning has its own characteristics:

- a change in emphasis in the relationship between the teacher and students: instead of voicing the educational material and developing certain skills, the teacher organizes the educational process;
- the priority of individual activity of students (the basis of educational activity is purposeful, intensive and controlled individual work, each student can study in a place convenient for him, individually,

comprehensively using special teaching aids and agreeing on the possibility of special contact with the teacher; the student becomes a subject who is helped to study.

It's of common knowledge that there exist four forms of blended learning.

Rotation model

The rotational model alternates online and offline learning according to a certain defined schedule or instructions of teachers. Such a model covers:

- work in small groups or as a whole class;
- group projects;
- individual work with teachers;
- written assignments.

The model “Rotation by stations” or “Change of work areas” is suitable for junior and middle grades in the school. For the correct educational process, the teacher divides students into 3 teams by zones (stations):

- the first station works with the teacher;
- the second station does project work in groups;
- the third station is online training.

The “Rotation of laboratories” or “Change of classes” model is less effective because it does not include mandatory project work. Part of the lessons are held in regular classrooms, and one of the lessons is given to the children to work in the computer classroom. There, students work individually in an online format to deepen or consolidate the knowledge they have acquired.

The “flipped classroom” model is considered the easiest to implement. It combines learning at home (where students study new theoretical material in an online format: watch video lectures, read articles, etc.) and at school, where they consolidate what they have learned and update the knowledge they have acquired.

“Flexible model” or “individual rotation” is held in large premises (library, assembly hall, etc.), where each student has a workplace. In addition, in the large space there are areas for working in small groups, for discussion or for carrying out laboratory exercises.

Flexible model

A model where students have a flexible schedule that changes according to the need to understand a specific topic and course. The number of teachers in this type of work varies depending on the number of group and individual works of students.

Self-blend model

The self-blend model only one subject is studied online, while students take other subjects at school or university. Sometimes the model compensates for the lack of in-depth courses at school or subjects of free choice.

In-depth virtual model

Unlike the “self-blending” model, the “in-depth virtual” model covers all courses, not selectively. In addition, students independently distribute online and offline parts of training, where the online part can be listened to both in the educational institution and outside it.

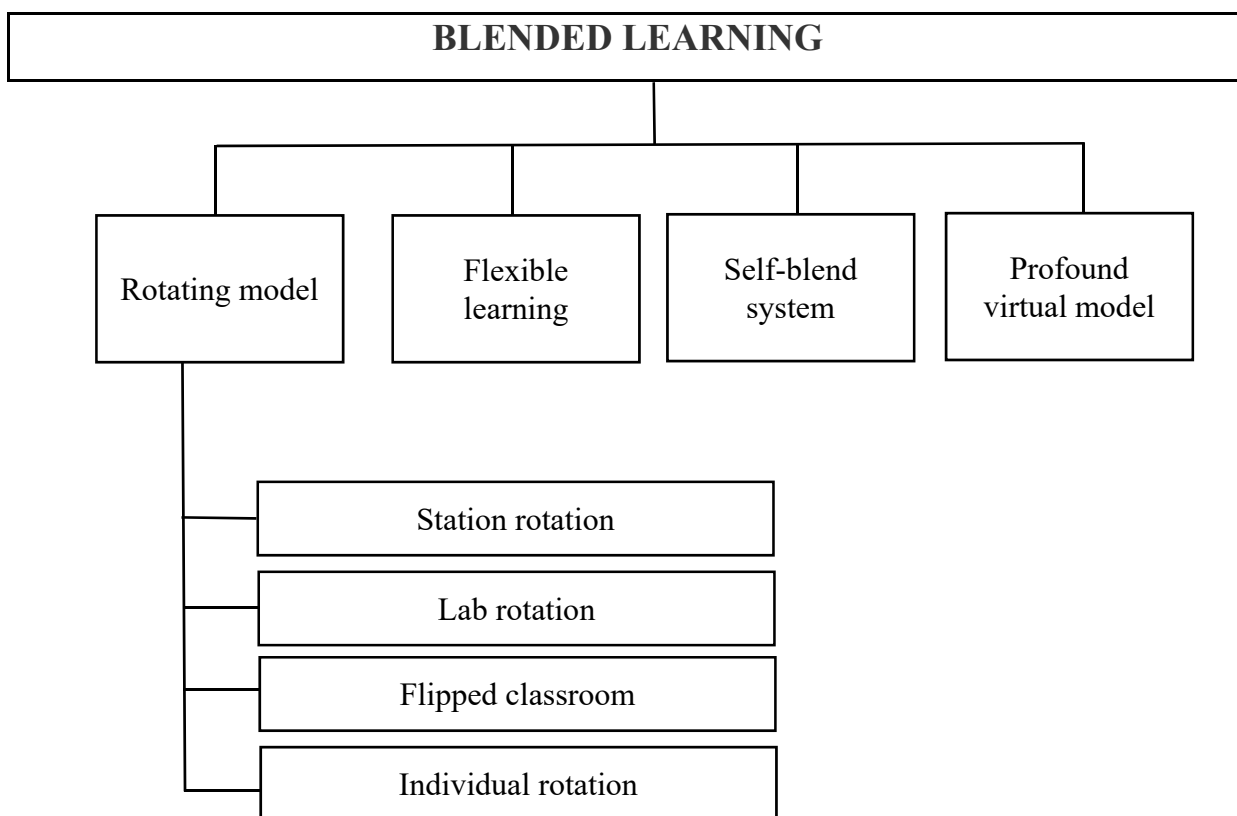


Fig. 1

The implementation of blended learning involves the use of various types of digital resources:

- tools for planning educational activities (electronic magazines, organizers);
- tools for creating communities (social networks);
- tools for cooperation (Google Docs, Word online);
- tools for communication and feedback (Hangout, Meet, Zoom, Skype);
- tools for creating educational content (Padlet, Educreations, Quizlet, Quizwhizzer, Kahoot, Class-Marker), digital collections of educational content (Testorium, Mozaik, Octagon studio etc).

Speaking about the specifics of teaching a foreign language in conditions of mixed education, it should be noted that it will be different depending on whether it is a language university or a faculty or not. At the language faculty, the foreign language study program includes both lectures and practical classes, while at a non-linguistic university it is only practical classes.

Delivering lectures fits very well into the online format of learning, because in this type of activity there is lecturer-student interaction, but there is no interaction between students, and even this interaction is one-sided, because the student is not required to actively work. His task is only to passively learn the material provided by the lecturer, so for lectures it would be ideal to use an online format, using such circular tools as Zoom, Meet etc.

Conclusion. Speaking about the specifics of teaching a foreign language in conditions of mixed education, it should be noted that it will be different depending on whether it is a language university or a faculty or not. At the language faculty, the foreign language study program includes both lectures and practical classes, while at a non-linguistic university it is only practical classes.

Lecturing fits very well into the online format of learning, because in this type of activity there is lecturer-student interaction, but there is no interaction between students, and even this interaction is one-sided, because the student is not required to actively work. His task is only to passively learn the material provided by the lecturer, so for lectures it would be ideal to use an online format. Practical classes are characterized by active interaction between “teacher-student”, student-student”, they actively work in pairs or groups.

Therefore, it would be appropriate for linguistic universities to use a combination of lectures held online with practical classes held in classrooms.

For non-language higher education institutions, the situation is slightly different. All classes are practical and using online models will not be as effective as working in the classroom. But if the security situation does not allow all pairs to be conducted in the classroom, then it would be appropriate to use a rotational model, where a third of the group can be present in the classroom, a third will be involved in group work, and a third will work online. If for some reason this model cannot be applied, then the inverted class can be an alternative. With this model, the teacher can give tasks for learning new grammar to students at home, providing them with the necessary resources, thus turning this component of the lesson into individual study. Performance of practical tasks can be left for classroom study.

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