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BLENDED LEARING FOR TEACHING ENGLISH: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

The modern era of information technology has brought enormous changes in the lifestyle of humanity, as well as in the fields of medicine, science, culture and education. Such changes are currently being researched and analyzed by modern scholars and educators. Availability and ease of use of technologies have prompted many instructors and lecturers to implement them in an educational context. Modern students are well-versed with the latest information technology and can easily complete any task with the help of computer or other gadgets.

Nowadays, in Ukraine, there is the problem of rapid "knowledge aging" and the need for processing a large amount of information, thus, the country needs new professionals with modern knowledge and competencies which are needed for lifelong learning. In order to achieve this goal, our educators created new types of learning which combine past achievements and valuable past experience and new information technologies.

The term "blended learning" is increasingly used for characterizing the methodology that combines online learning, traditional learning and individual student work. It means not only the use of modern interactive technologies added to the traditional ones, but a qualitatively new approach to learning that promotes a certain transformation in learning, or in other words, a flipped classroom [1].

Nowadays, there is no clear definition of the term "blended learning" or an official permission for its use. Blended learning is a mass phenomenon, according to the data given by scientists in 2000, there were 45,000 people who used blended learning. Ten years later their number was more than 3 million users [2, p. 5].

The terminology associated with blended learning appeared at the beginning of the 21st century, but the idea of using such methodology came to existence much earlier. For the first time, the term blended learning appeared in the 1999 newsletter,

when an Interactive Learning Education Company announced its change of name on EPIC and noted that it would use blended learning techniques. So, this term was used for a variety of methods until 2006, when Bonk and Graham published the Handbook of Blended Learning, which defined the mix of learning as combining traditional learning (face-to-face instruction) with computer mediated instruction. Consequently, modern educators agreed on the three main components of blended learning: traditional teaching activity in the audience led by an experienced instructor; different ways or mechanisms of using educational materials and structured individual learning, using the experience of direct communication, and online learning [4].

The Internet sources are very useful for learning languages, because students can use authentic texts, communicate online with the native speakers via the Internet, and practice a foreign language online with anyone in different countries around the world. Taking this into account, many universities have begun to use online learning together with traditional face-to-face learning.

Advantages and disadvantages of using blended learning

Researchers define a number of factors that influence the effectiveness of blended learning. First of all, lecturers must have a clear understanding of the importance of blended learning and the ways of its usage. Therefore, they must have an appropriate training themselves and they should motivate students. This approach to learning makes us change the traditional idea of the lecturer's role. The term "facilitator" appeared, its main task is to help students acquire knowledge and skills, sufficient to master the material online and manage the process of further obtaining the significant learning experience. The main tasks of the facilitator are the development of course content, ensuring successful communication in the virtual classroom in the mode of student – lecturer, student– student, conducting analysis of the evaluation results.

The disadvantage of blended learning is the dependence of users on technical equipment. It should be reliable, easy to use, and modern, otherwise we won't have the desirable effect. The question of technical support is very important. There is also irregularity of students' working with lectures and, as a consequence, students' lag. In

addition, computer illiteracy can prevent from access to course materials. There is a necessity to obtain good computer knowledge to get good results in blended learning. During the organization of educational process of future English teachers based on the model of blended learning we should take into account possible difficulties, namely:

- ➢ the need to equip universities with a sufficient number of computers and software;
- ➢ the presence of technical problems;
- ➢ computer literacy level both for students and teachers;
- ➢ great amount of time spent on preparing for classes using innovative technologies;
- ➢ almost complete absence of special software for training materials;
- ➢ determination of the optimal place for information and communication technologies in the educational process [3].

Among the benefits of blended learning, researchers define the opportunity to analyze the collected information, adapt the learning process and evaluation to the individual characteristics of each student. They noticed the opportunity to get a positive learning experience while doing individual work, and during joint training in a virtual environment, it leads to success. Summing up, we would like to mention the benefits of blended learning:

- individualization of training;
- possibility of self-development, self-education;
- motivation of students, sense of success;
- possibility of testing a large number of students and receiving immediate feedback;
- increasing the training time and quantity of materials;
- using authentic educational materials;
- coverage of a large number of participants in the training;
- possibility to improve working conditions;
- possibility to involve the best lecturers and consultants;
- saving of resources;

- mastering the interactive programs by students and their parents;
- reduction of computer illiteracy [5, p. 97].

Also, the advantages of blended learning for forming the professional competences of future English teachers are:

- efficiency and productivity of the learning process;
- flexibility - the opportunity to study at a convenient time for a student, and at the tempo required for him or her, adaptability to the individual needs and characteristics of students;
- innovation - constant changes and development of the educational process;
- removal of distance and time constraints;
- methodical diversity of forms, means, modes, methods of training;
- ease in the organization of repetition of the studied material;
- sociocultural interactions;
- reduction of the cost of the organization of the educational process;
- high motivation of students;
- real professional activity;
- interactivity;
- self-control, mutual control and control of the student's progress on the part of the lecturer, and dean's office;
- self-education and self-development.

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