

THE BENEFITS OF BLENDED EDUCATION

NataLiia Lazarenko,

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor,

Daria Korovii,

Postgraduate student,

Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, Ukraine

Annotation. *The article considers the content and essence of the concept of blended form of education. Education, which has undergone some changes in recent years, has been driven by the Covid-19 pandemic, with a shift from a common classroom learning system, face-to-face (offline), to e-learning (distance). New approaches of learning are emerging with the advent of the World Wide Web and the ability to transcend space and time. We must say that the new learning models improve individual work, stimulate teamwork and are more comfortable.*

In the process of teaching and learning, teachers strive to discover the latest and most innovative methods or approaches to their students. Among them is blended learning. Today, the education system is trying to adapt new technologies and find new ways to solve problems and achieve a quality level of learning. Blended learning is an approach that provides innovative educational solutions through the effective combination of traditional classroom learning with e-learning and online activities for teachers, tutors and students.

Keywords: *pandemic Covid-19, innovative technologies, educational process, mixed form of education, classroom, institution of higher education, work, student.*

Introduction. The modern learning process has undergone many changes compared to previous decades. Of course, we are moving forward, improving our knowledge, but there are many objective factors that influence changes in the process of acquiring knowledge, including the Covid-19 pandemic. Coronavirus has globally and irreversibly affected all countries and it is needlessly to hope that society will return to the previous structure of all processes within each state. Despite significant efforts by the country's leadership over the past two years, the pandemic is still limiting our capabilities and gradually changing all life processes. Various institutions, enterprises, including universities are adapting approaches to solving the problems caused by Covid-19. The pandemic era has witnessed changes in the education system, in which students acquire knowledge in a flexible online mode, which has replaced traditional learning in classrooms. However, it should be mentioned that further improvement of the educational system, the experience gained during the pandemic will benefit both students and teachers. This is a significant impetus to change the traditional way of providing educational services.

Due to the abrupt changes, some higher education institutions have found it difficult to move to online learning in a hurry. Universities have faced difficulties in establishing an information technology structure and providing both parties with instructions on how to carry out responsibilities and assignments, organizing the learning process, creating course plans for online learning, creating and supplementing resources such as printed

materials, creating and updating an evaluation system. Therefore, the challenge is to overcome the incomplete understanding and perception of online learning, that are new opportunities, and to restore "normal" traditional learning with elements of online learning, given the limitations imposed by the pandemic. In our opinion, the modern learning process is a unique opportunity for universities to start a new mode of operation, move away from old systems, break stereotypes and start working with other universities to share experiences. After all, the experience of learning in the pandemic era is exceptional, it provided an opportunity for all participants in the educational process: students, teachers and leadership to analyze the online component in education, assess its feasibility, such experience can become a constant practice in the new "normal" blended learning process.

Methods. Blended learning is a so-called trend in modern education that will remain popular and debated in academia for decades to come. The analysis of scientific works has shown that the practical problem of application and analysis of mixed forms of education in higher education institutions is of interest to scientists and a significant amount of research is devoted to it, both theoretical and practical. Among native researchers Shelestova L., Fandeeva A., Tkachuk G., Mizyuk A., Bystrova Y., Krivonos O., Kukhareno V. and a group of authors of textbooks for vocational (technical) education Pasichnyk O., Elfimova Yu., Chushak H., Shinarovska O., Donets A., who helps to organize high-quality blended learning in educational institutions, based on the needs and interests of students. Taking into consideration, the fact that changes in the learning process have affected not only Ukraine but also the world, a number of scholars are working on research in the field of blended learning, including Gafurov I., Amaal Al Masri, Gupta V., Greenberg B. and other scientists who share experience in implementing and researching the latest learning process, its advantages and disadvantages, the system and general characteristics, the process of restructuring the internal structures of higher educational institutions and the content of educational materials.

The purpose of the article is to substantiate the essence of the mixed form of education, its features and benefits and analysis of awareness and attitude to the new organization of education by students of the Higher Education Institution.

Results. To sum it up, blended learning is a sure step forward, the education system will no longer be the same – traditional, students will no longer return to desks with only a book in hand, they are more progressive, open, conscious and erudite. There are no more barriers and boundaries in their worldview, they are ready for cooperation, collaborations and new discoveries.

Therefore, we can conclude that the blended form of learning is our future, it expands horizons and provides new opportunities. At the same time, we are in a transition phase that requires a lot of organizational and informative work. The survey showed that students are not very well aware of the essence of a mixed form of education, its benefits, and most importantly, that they are not sufficiently motivated to self-discipline and self-learning. It should be remembered that the teaching staff needs significant assistance due to the high cost of multimedia digital devices and applications, significant costs for the

maintenance of educational platforms. Moreover, educators are obliged to constantly improve their skills and abilities, to understand new inventions and discoveries in information technology.

The prospect of further research is to develop theoretical lectures to further acquaint students with the process of blended learning, involve them in such activities and develop educational activities to create and implement blended learning courses.

Discussion. The process of modernizing education began long before the pandemic, and was influenced by certain objective factors, namely technological progress, which in turn played a crucial role in shaping a new generation of young people who "grew up with gadgets in their hands." Thus, we must understand that the modern student requires modern approaches to the organization of learning, which are directly related to the achievements of technological progress. This is the so-called vicious circle, in which all the links are closely connected. As for the Covid-19 pandemic, it has only accelerated the process of transition from the traditional to the newest – blended learning system.

Blended learning does not have a specific author, it is a consequence of the processes that took place in accordance with the requests of students and many attempts to change existing methods and principles of learning. That is why there is no single explanation for this process, we offer a number of definitions for better understanding. In 2006, Bonk K. and Graham K. proposed the following interpretation: "Blended learning is a learning system based on a combination of full-time learning (learning in classrooms) and learning with the help of computer technology" [2, p. 6]. The Clayton Christensen Institute provides a more specific definition: "Blended learning is an initial approach that combines teacher-centered learning with online learning, which offers elements of self-monitoring of students' path, time, place and pace, and integration of teacher experience. in the audience and online "[3]. It is important to note that with the expansion of computer technology, the term "e-learning" (2015) has emerged, a learning system that more clearly outlines the online learning process.

Summarizing the above, we formulate the following definition of blended education – a form of knowledge organization that uses both face-to-face and e-learning to achieve the best results and meet the needs of students – a mix of approaches to the organization of the educational process, which expands the opportunities and compensates for the shortcomings of individual learning systems.

Is it possible to identify the concept of blended learning with distance learning? Of course not, a mixed form of learning involves communication with teachers in classrooms, personally. In a mixed form of learning, you need skillfully plan the time spent in classrooms with teachers and e-learning and ultimately meet the needs of students. There is no generally accepted rule for dividing time into different forms of learning, it all depends on the purpose and objectives of the course. In our opinion, it is most rational to conduct theory classes remotely, and to devote time to practical and laboratory classes in classrooms. Allocation of time is the task of educational institutions, which are obliged to take a strategic approach to solving any tasks.

The introduction of new pedagogical technologies in the educational process has

a positive effect on the development of students' cognitive activity, creative activity, consciousness and development of motivation, which changes the attitude of students to learning – there is a transition to independent conscious learning.

We believe that this has a positive effect on the process of formation of students' personality, their awareness, responsibility, competence, purposefulness, awareness of the choice of profession and goals for the future. Future specialists are professionally competent and motivated. Students have knowledge, skills, moral qualities and values, the ability to think critically and self-analysis, they are ready for change. Applicants are involved in the learning process, they understand the essence of learning, where the emphasis is shifted from the result ending to the process, their attention is focused on making efforts, on self-assessment of achievements. That is, blended learning is characterized by individualization [4], it is focused on personality. That means that the focus is not on the learning process in the center with the teacher, but on the student, there is a movement towards "student-centeredness" [5]. The consequence of these changes is that students have more control over the time, place and duration of tasks. That is, the teacher acts as a coordinator and tutor, he does not dominate the learning process.

But the most important aspect, in our opinion, is that students are not so critically limited in time to complete tasks, they have so-called "deadlines", adjust their workload and work, study at a comfortable pace at a convenient time. Individualization is to take into consideration the cognitive needs and interests of each student.

We agree with the statement of the scientist Dolgova T., that the use of digital learning resources is an integral and very important component of blended learning [1]. These resources have certain didactic properties: multimedia, redundancy, variety of forms of educational content, diversity, variability, interactivity, flexibility. But the traditional properties remain unchanged: scientific, structured, clear, systematic.

To successfully implement a blended form of learning, participants in the learning process use a variety of digital resources, including:

- tools for planning learning activities (Google Calendar, ezines, etc.);
- tools for collaboration (Google Docs, Forms, etc.);
- tools for communication and community building (social networks, ZOOM, Skype, Google Meet, Hangouts, etc.);
- tools for creating educational content (Padlet, Quizlet, Prezi, Kahoot!, Microsoft PowerPoint, ClassMarker, QuizWhizzer, etc.).

Blended learning can take place synchronously and asynchronously. The process of synchronous learning is similar to learning in classrooms, but the participants in the learning process are virtually in the same place at a certain time. Asynchronous learning requires flexibility, coordination and individual learning schedule, arrangements, scheduling, mutual respect and preparation for meetings.

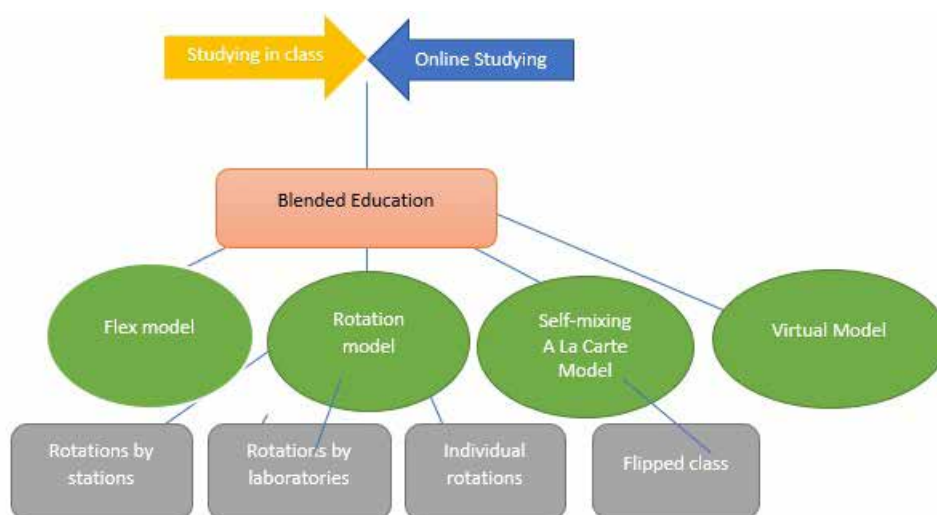
There are several options for blended learning. For a more detailed understanding of the process of blended learning, we chose the classification of Michael Horn and Geiser Stacker [6, p. 8-11].

The rotation model is the most popular, it involves alternating work online and

offline according to the instructions of the teacher or a specific work plan. These parts may include working in small groups or working with the whole class, group projects, individual work with teachers and written assignments.

The rotational model includes four subspecies:

- rotations by stations – students work in classrooms and pass stations according to a certain schedule;
- rotations by laboratories – the model is similar to the previous one, but students do not move within the classroom, but within the school;
- individual rotations – the student has his own individual schedule of studying the subject;
- flipped class – students work on a schedule online from home and present their project and practical activities in classrooms.



In the flex model, the teacher acts as a consultant, the work can take place both in the classroom and remotely, but only in the digital environment.

Self-mixing model– involves supplementing the face-to-face program with separate online courses.

According to the virtual model, students divide their time between attending classes and distance learning, they do not visit the educational institution every day, moreover, it is not just a method of studying the course, but a model of the whole educational institution.

Summing up, we highlight the following features of a mixed form of education:

- change the relationship between teacher and student, support, motivation and coordination of the teacher, a conscious attitude to learning - the student's task;
- focus on individualization of learning, a student at the center of the educational process, he is a full participant and organizer of educational activities;

- motivation for independence in learning;
- advantage of group work - projects, discussions, forums, seminars, conferences;
- use of digital resources - work can be done through any device in any place with the ability to track performance and use interactive learning tools.

Like any approach, method or form in the process of acquiring knowledge, blended form of learning has a number of advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, we consider it necessary to list the benefits of this form of education to begin with.

- Combined methods provide a high level of student achievement, they are more effective than full-time or completely distance learning.

- Students have the opportunity to work independently, using a combination of instructions and calculation of personal time, which will further provide them with better understanding with the employer.

- Teachers have the opportunity to work with each student personally, assess their potential and identify gaps. Unfortunately, in traditional classroom teaching, the teacher does not have this opportunity due to lack of time.

- This form of learning simultaneously ensures the development of independent learning and encourages collaborations, cooperation for projects, tasks and problem solving.

- Modern information and communication technologies are used to develop and improve student awareness of the learning process.

- This form of learning promotes and improves communication between teachers and students to better understand the learning material using interactive learning tools to assess students' knowledge.

- It should be mentioned that training costs are reduced. If teaching takes place online, it is possible to use electronic textbooks.

- Blended learning promotes the development of skills and knowledge in students who have certain talents. Access to the curricula of other educational institutions or platforms for courses to improve certain knowledge are available.

- There is a personalization of learning, now not the teacher in the center of the class, but there is interaction between all parties to the learning process.

- A very important advantage is the student's own pace, ie only after fully understanding and mastering all the material, the student can move on.

- A learning environment is created without physical presence. That is, there is a combination of teacher-student or students, so to speak, 24/7, but personal space and free time is preserved.

Blended learning has a number of benefits that contribute to higher education, improve students' knowledge, prepare them for work and provide individualization, which is a key element in our time. Blended learning introduces innovative solutions, restructures the process of information perception, analysis and reproduction. Our future is changing, but it is worth skillfully combining them with existing and proven forms of learning.

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