

BLENDDED LEARNING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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The paper dwells on the organizing blended learning (BL) in Professional English teaching at the higher professional educational institutions. The following elements of BL technology: strategy of organizing which includes resource provision; solution of administrative issues as well as regulatory guidelines development; information and communication technology (ICT) and supplementary facilities ensuring continuity of e-learning; methods and content of electronic learning have been investigated. The article collates various approaches to BL in Professional English teaching throughout the domestic and foreign references, emphasizes its organizing issues.

Keywords: *e-learning, blended learning, Professional English, distributed educational system, information and communication technology, LMS, content of education.*

The value of e-learning in the higher professional education is increasing. Educational institutions introduce e-learning due to the following reasons:

- meets the needs of today's students, existing in the digital world;
- encourages pedagogical innovation;
- promotes knowledge sharing and collaboration at the university and inter-university levels;
- extends the capabilities of distance learning and facilitates access to education for different categories of students.

ICTs provide an opportunity to meet global education trends and adapt to rapidly changing conditions of the modern world. In domestic education relevance of e-learning is recognized at the state level. Law «On Education in the Russian Federation» dated 29 December 2012 defines e-learning as an organization of educational activities with the use of information technology, technical resources, information and telecommunication networks providing transfer of information, interaction of students and faculty [1].

Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Vocational Education (FSSES HVE) for Bachelor's degree assigns the objective of developing

competencies that are directly related to ICT: possession of computer skills as a means of information management; ability to analyze information stored in computer networks and corporate information systems; understanding of the role and value of information and information technology in modern society.

Subject to the degree of the e-learning integration in the educational process as a whole and Professional English teaching in particular, experts single out online learning and blended learning. Online learning is a way of organizing self-study using educational environment based on Internet technologies. Blended learning is a combination of online and full-time learning, integration of traditional modes of electronic technology. As to the blended learning, ICT tools not only complement the traditional teaching but reduce the share of face-to-face learning. E-learning is an integral part of the educational process as a whole and Professional English teaching in particular, that rolls in a qualitatively new state by the mutual influence and integration of traditional and e-learning.

The purpose of this paper is to study on the basis of domestic and foreign experience of BL in Professional English teaching as a system consisting of certain elements and organization of the work of students, faculty and facilitators of the learning process.

BL is more common in the practice of e-learning due to the following reasons:

- online learning suits more advanced students willing to combine work and training;
- national education system regulating number of contact hours and organizing intermediate and final certification for remote students restricts the possibility of learning, carried out entirely online, but does not prevent the implementation of BL.

Foreign and domestic references consider the problem of blended learning in a different way. Foreign authors pay attention to the elements of BL and experience of its implementation in different countries. The study notes that BL takes its origin from two historically separate educational systems: traditional (face-to-face) learning and distributed learning, both centered on technology. Implementation of blended learning performs a convergence of the systems: traditional, characterized by simultaneous interaction of personalities and distributed, which is characterized by asynchronous action – interaction of individuals, regardless of time and place [2].

According to foreign authors, faculty uses the term «blended learning» because it promotes rethinking the traditional model of education, emergence of various training courses in the educational process to overcome «barriers»

of space and time. Researchers point to the advantages of BL over traditional learning as a whole and Professional English teaching in particular: saving space, use of LMS (Learning Management System) to keep track of assignments and grading, the use of ICT tools in the classroom to conduct examinations, testing, collaboration [3].

In contrast to the systematic approach to the problem of blended learning by foreign experts, domestic authors focus on the individual aspects of the problem. Researchers consider blended learning within the implementing distance learning technologies in the educational process of the university, indicate the peculiarities of e-learning implementation, allocate blended learning as the type of organizing learning process in the electronic distributed university [4].

Blended and traditional learning in Professional English teaching provides for contact hours in accordance with FSES and curricula in areas of training. At the same time, in BL as a set of elements, combined by regular interaction to perform the functions of the educational process, the main aspects come to the fore: institutional – availability of e-strategies in the organization; management and technology – organization and management of the educational process; pedagogical – development of methods, models, methodological support of educational [5].

The main elements of blended learning are shown in Table 1.

Tomsk Polytechnic University students' attitudes toward BL showed that majority of respondents studying Professional English prefer blended learning to traditional one (30 %), online classes are not rejected by most students (60 %), satisfaction with a BL has resulted in the following data: 42 % of respondents do more proactively the courses, organized by means of ICT and 74 % of respondents confirmed that electronic resources and software in the university are highly-available. Study of the problem of blended learning in higher education leads to the following conclusion:

1. Blended learning as a whole and Professional English teaching in particular is able to solve objectives assigned by FSES HVE in order to develop competencies related to ICT and implement e-learning as educational activities with the use of information technology, facilities, information and telecommunication networks, ensuring collaboration of students and teaching staff.

2. The model of blended learning in the university is formed as a system, including specific elements: development strategy of university e-learning, organization of educational process by ICT supported by special services that accompany training, implementing, facilitating and cooperating with faculty and students by methods and content of e-learning.

Table 1

The main elements of blended learning

BL aspects	Elements of blended learning
Institutional	<p>The organization's strategy for e-learning development, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resourcing and operation of blended learning infrastructure – mission, vision, educational, administrative, scientific, financial, international goals and objectives are set and implemented based on the fact that the university is an electronic, geographically distributed, international scientific, educational, innovation and entrepreneurial university complex. • issues management, academic and student servicing – financing, governance, developing a distributed environment, implementing e-learning in accordance with the requirements of the time. • internal documents regulating the process of blended learning – educational and methodical documentation, work instructions, regulations, guidelines, developed in accordance with ISO 9001: 2008
Management and technology – implementation of the educational process in the e-learning environment	<p>LMS, ICT tools that enable the process of blended learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivery of information, knowledge evaluation, synchronous and asynchronous interaction between faculty, students and staff by means of Moodle, wiki or cloud technologies. • control service of blended learning: providing software, technical support and organizational support of educational process: placing courses, software, management portal; organizing educational process – receiving and processing data, forming groups, monitoring the faculty work, organizational issues of interaction with students, monitoring and control of the learning process, learning to work in an electronic environment
Pedagogical – implementing the educational process as a joint activity of faculty and students	<p>University and specific methods of blended learning. Content that includes didactic and created in the process of learning resources: foreign experts single out 6 models of blended learning (Face-to-face driver, Rotation, Flex, Online lab, Self-blend, Online driver) according to the ratio of face-to-face and independent studies, including synchronous and asynchronous online interaction</p>

3. Promising directions in research of blended learning organization are as follows:

- study and analysis of individual e-learning techniques offered by faculty members;
- study of learning potential of social networking, cloud computing, mobile technologies, massive open online courses and development of methods of their use in the educational process;
- identification of labor efforts and criteria of faculty work, organizing and facilitating educational process with the use of new ICTs.

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