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СМЕШАННОЕ ОБУЧЕНИЕ В ПОСТПАНДЕМИЙНЫЙ ПЕРИОД

Аннотация. Рассматривается проблема использования технологии смешанного обучения на занятиях по иностранному языку в постпандемийный период. Представлены возможности реализации моделей смешанного обучения в очном формате в условиях неязыковой образовательной организации высшего образования. Смешанное обучение описывается как технология, применение которой положительно влияет на развитие иноязычной коммуникативной компетенции обучающихся. Обозначаются проблемы реализации относительно новой формы обучения как со стороны преподавателя, так и со стороны обучающихся; обосновываются причины необходимости перехода от классно-урочной системы к смешанному обучению. Описывается авторский опыт применения технологии смешанного обучения на занятиях по английскому языку, демонстрируются преимущества применения отдельных моделей на различных этапах работы по одной из изучаемых тем.

Ключевые слова: смешанное обучение, модели смешанного обучения, дистанционное образование, обучение иностранному языку, очное обучение.

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BLENDED LEARNING OPTIONS IN POST PANDEMIC

Abstract. The article dwells on the problem of foreign language blended learning technology in the post-pandemic teaching. The purpose of the article is to explain the possibilities of blended learning models in a full-time format in the non-linguistic educational environment of a higher education organization. Blended learning is described as a technology positively affecting the foreign-language communicative competence development. The article reveals the problems of implementing a relatively new form of education, both on the part of a teacher and on the part of a student; the reasons for shifting from the classroom activities to mixed learning are justified. The authors summarize their own experience of using blended learning technology in English classes, demonstrate the advantages of individual models at different stages of working with learning material.

Keywords: blended learning, blended learning models, distance learning, teaching a foreign language, full-time education.

Due to the new coronavirus infection the difficult epidemiological situation has given rise to a constant change of educational forms. Within a short period of time, the teaching staff and students had to spontaneously switch to distance learning, then mastered mixed forms of cooperation and only in the 2022 academic year they managed to return to the full-time education. Although training at the most beginning of the pandemic was “trau-

matic”, educational organizations at all levels undoubtedly learned invaluable lessons. And now it would be a pity to lose this experience and just get back to pre-pandemic practice. Therefore, even today when students have returned to classroom activities, it is essential not to forget about blended learning models, which combine the advantages of face-to-face and distance learning, allowing them to compensate for the disadvantages of each other.

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The purpose of this paper is to consider the possibilities of blended learning models in full-time education in the context of a non-linguistic educational environment. Based on their own teaching experience, the authors put forward different options for the practical use of blended learning at foreign language classes, which determines its novelty. The research reveals some organizational and methodological problems of implementing blended learning, both on the part of a teacher and on the part of a student.

During the forced transition of educational organizations of all levels to distance learning, its main drawback was immediately clear, i. e. lack of teacher-student communication. Moreover, this fact was of high importance for such a subject as “Foreign Language”, the study of which is impossible without feedback, face-to-face communication, both between a teacher and students and between students themselves.

Nevertheless, blended learning is still widely used today in the foreign languages

teaching in higher educational institutions in our country [1–3] and abroad [4–7], as it allows to solve one of the main problems, i. e. lack of classroom lessons. In addition, this form allows to adapt learning materials to the individual abilities of students due to their different levels of language proficiency. Besides, it gives a real opportunity to increase the proficiency level if students do not have sufficient knowledge for various reasons. Moreover, blended learning is an excellent way to increase motivation for learning a foreign language: because of this model flexibility students can choose the time and place of completing assignments themselves. On the contrary, organizing the educational process might cause difficulties. The flexibility of blended learning requires the ability to set goals independently and therefore, the awareness of what is necessary to solve them. Consequently, the results of the work largely depend on the students themselves.

On the part of a teacher, blended learning requires some skills such as:

- psychological readiness to move from the role of a translator to the role of a consultant and assistant in the online environment;
- opposed to face-to-face learning, blended learning requires more effort and time to prepare teaching and learning materials;
- a certain degree of teacher's IT competence;
- ability to determine the individual features of each student as the training group has a heterogeneous structure (for example, a foreign language teacher should use different types of learning materials since audio files are more convenient for audio learners, a video film is more suitable for visual learners, and kinesthetic learners can be given an online test);
- designing blended learning classes in the general grid of hours allocated for mastering the discipline as a whole or its unit;

- selection of blended learning models that are the most appropriate in a particular case;
- development of tools and careful selection of material for different models that can be applied at different stages, for example, explanation of the new topic, its consolidation, current or final assessment.

Blended learning practice at Voronezh Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia has shown its effectiveness in post-pandemic situation. Different blended learning models give the teacher the possibility to diversify forms of training, to shift the emphasis and combine different approaches and methods in order to enhance the teaching process. Moreover, it allows to adapt the learning material to the individual abilities of students, which is very important due to their different language proficiency levels.

Different blended learning models are proposed in scientific and pedagogical literature [2; 3]. In general, they differ in two key areas: firstly, the ratio of full-time and distance learning; secondly, the degree of using information and computer technologies. In other words, any blended learning model involves a certain combination of electronic and face-to-face learning, as well as computer or technical support. The choice of a specific blended learning model, in our opinion, should be based on two key points: pedagogical expediency and technical capabilities available.

At the initial stage of training a particular topic, the most promising blended learning model is *Flipped classroom*. This model is gaining higher popularity in the teachers' community. There is even an international community "Flipped Learning" on the Internet, "uniting teachers, methodologists, leaders of educational organizations who are supporters of "inverted learning" [8]. The essence of the method is in the independent study of a subject by students before visiting

classroom lessons, i. e., first, there is a self-study of a new topic, and then it is explained by the teacher [9].

In relation to a foreign language, this might be a vocabulary activity on a new topic, a grammar material revision, a video watching to familiarize with some socio-cultural features. For this purpose, the teacher develops the necessary teaching and learning support. In particular, an electronic training and visual manual on the topic "Law enforcement activities in foreign language countries" was created at the Voronezh Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia. It aims to expand the students' professional horizons and is designed for independent study. For example, before attending classes cadets are invited to familiarize themselves with the history of the British police. The teacher asks to highlight the main chronological milestones in the history of the British police. Students are supposed to work with different information resources: encyclopedias, excerpts from some official papers, video clips. The efficiency of material acquisition is checked by completing several tasks in the RES Moodle. The test results allow the teacher to determine the scope of problematic issues and adjust the face-to-face activities in advance taking into account the identified difficulties.

It is worth to note that opponents of the Flipped Class argue that such a learning model worsens the traditional education due to the inability to ask questions to the teacher quickly. On the other hand, this model provides repetition and unlimited time to study learning material. You can compensate for this drawback by using the discussion in the distance learning system.

The Face-to-face model is essentially close to the traditional forms of classroom training, but within the framework of blended learning it acquires new features. Since some part of the topic training process is transferred to

a remote or a self-study mode, the teacher gets the opportunity to focus on the most important issues, to shift the focus towards the development of speech activities and ultimately concentrate on the formation of key components of communicative and professional competencies. The example of application of the electronic manual while studying the history of foreign police has been mentioned above. A classroom activity can be held in the form of a discussion (for example, a discussion of Peel's principles and their relevance at present), a team game (each team represents one of foreign countries), project work (individual or group projects on a range of issues) or a quiz for better knowledge of the history of policing in foreign countries. In the context of blended learning, the face-to-face model allows for more efficient use of classroom hours compared to the traditional education. The teacher can plan the course in advance taking into account the analysis of the problems encountered by the students, diversify the forms of classroom activities, intensify the students' work, which ultimately helps to optimize the training process and increase its effectiveness.

The Station Rotation model allows to train lexical and grammar material individually or in small groups, for example, in accordance with the language abilities of students or depending on the form of work: reading texts, making up dialogues or monologues, playing a game, and others. The authors practiced this model while studying the topic "Police duties". During the class, three stations were allocated:

1) the station of independent work ("Police Departments"), where students read the text about the patrol service and the investigation department, get acquainted with their duties and difficulties of the service, perform various exercises. At the same time, the reading and dictionary skills are improved, the vocabulary expands;

2) the station of cooperation with the teacher provides for monitoring the fulfillment of tasks, discussion of certain parts of the text, explanation of lexical and grammar difficulties;

3) the online mode station involves some gaming technologies: situations from the daily work of police officers were described, and students had to classify them by departments.

Such organization of the teaching process allows to optimize the activities in classroom, i. e. the teacher distributes tasks paying attention to the student's personal qualities and their language proficiency level; it increases the effectiveness because students have the opportunity to cooperate in different modes and, due to the change of activities in different working groups, tiredness is reduced. It also performs a motivating function: when a task is performed as a group work, even unmotivated students join the activity process, since they have specific roles. This model is convenient because the teacher can analyze the work of each student at all stations identifying the weaknesses or strengths.

The application of the *flexible blended learning (Flex) model* is widely used by the authors in organizing out-of-class activities. The idea of the method is in the constant online and

offline student support: an individual schedule is made up for each of them or they are combined into small groups. When working on out-of-class reading, cadets of the second year develop a working plan, determine the deadlines and draw up consultation schedules with the teacher. Realizing this model, students should have time management skills and a high degree of self-organization.

To sum up, the experience gained by teachers and students during the forced transition to distance and blended learning is still being applied today. The integration of blended learning into the higher educational process has allowed to solve both short-term and long-term problems and to introduce new digital technologies into the educational environment. Nowadays this form of training is getting more popular due to its tendency to increase the relative density of independent individual work of students. Different blended learning models allow the teacher to diversify forms of activities, shift the emphasis and combine different approaches and methods in order to increase the effectiveness of the training process. Thus, blended learning can be considered as a practical long-term solution, the advantages of which are convenience, effectiveness, interactivity, widened opportunities for different categories of students.

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