UDC 80 (82)

ГОДИШЕН ЗБОРНИК

2025

YEARBOOK

2025

ГОДИНА 16
БРОЈ 25

VOLUME XVI
NO 25

ГОДИШЕН ЗБОРНИК
2025
YEARBOOK

ГОДИШЕН ЗБОРНИК
ФИЛОЛОШКИ ФАКУЛТЕТ

YEARBOOK
FACULTY OF PHILOLOGY

С О Д Р Ж И Н А
C O N T E N T S

Јазик

Книжевност

Методика

THE TRANSFORMATIVE ROLE OF BLENDED LEARNING MODEL IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS

Neda Radosavlevikj, Ph.D
The South East European University-Tetovo
n.radosavleviq@seeu.edu.mk

Abstract: Blended learning represents a perfect combination of traditional or frontal teaching and digital learning by implementing a software management system. This is the most natural evolutionary process of developing the learning process according to the needs of individuals. At the same time, this kind of learning integrates the most modern innovative digital advances supported by interaction in the best of traditional and online environments.

One of the main principles of blended learning is the application of various resources through which the teacher communicates with students. This is a step forward in higher educational institutions because it allows the student to collaborate with their peers and be flexible in time and place. It allows students and teachers to communicate at a time and place that suits them best, as well as stimulates productivity because students receive timely notice and feedback from the teacher once it is reviewed. One of the main advantages of this learning is that students collaborate together, or work on certain tasks in groups, where if a problem arises, students help each other or consult the teacher.

Key words: *blended learning, traditional setting, online environment, software management system, transformative role, individual needs.*

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important factors when designing a blended learning models is for it to be suitable and successfully implemented in the extensive framework of institutional development. The development of the new technologies provides enhanced opportunities for students, moving from traditional to more focused teaching methodologies. By implementing the learning management system (LMC)- Google classroom, students at SEEU are both encouraged and challenged to become more autonomous in and outside the classroom. Furthermore, using the online teaching resources, discussion forums for class debates, videos, web-links, digital documents in ESP courses for Social Sciences, International Communications and Legal English help students improve their speaking skills as well as develop critical thinking skills.

There are many arguments regarding combined teaching and it is difficult to prove that the final results can improve the quality of teaching and learning in higher education. To ensure quality teaching with a combined model, it is essential to confirm the progress of the quality in the learning environment, use what we know about the needs of the students, and apply our knowledge. Furthermore, teachers need to constantly upgrade the teaching processes which will take place digitally. There are different options that define the combined learning but most often it is the simple integration of both digital and traditional activities.

Through combined teaching, participants and professors are given the opportunity to choose from several options listed below in several categories (Picciano and Dziuban, 2005:28): combined model varies in scheduled time so teaching can be conducted in both synchronous – asynchronous time; the place of instruction can be a traditional classroom or digitally on a digital platform; the pedagogical model can be communicative, applied in a group or individual work; teachers can use traditional format or multimodal courses that are from the home institution to others, combined with other universities) and participants (local and remote participants).

The E-learning process at SEEU brought important changes in its educational concept as well as how it can be successfully and efficiently established. The establishment of new educational challenges increased the progress of implementation of LMS and this advanced solution included elements of learning, teaching, communication, creation and management. The process involved competences and techniques of designing courses and course instruction, applying digital communication methods along with administrative, and organizational changes and procedures.

2. THE TRANSFORMATIVE PERSPECTIVE OF COMBINED MODEL
2.1 Blended learning the way teaching and learning should be in the 21st century

Before considering the possibilities offered by the combined learning, it is necessary to consider the ways in which people learn. Majority of people choose to have practical knowledge and learn from models, as Kolb would call it, "an active experiment". According to Kolb (in Kayle and Thorne, 2008: 19), people are divided into several categories: 1. those who prefer to talk among themselves 2. those who prefer to learn by listening 3. those who prefer to work in a group, while mentally helping each other, to explore and develop ideas by looking at different aspects. This categorization also refers to the way people prefer to learn by sharing experiences with each other rather than receiving information from a teacher. In this context, students can learn through the exchange of opinions and ideas, but it is important to receive appropriate feedback from the teacher about their progress.

Blended learning requires teachers to be trained so they can apply it effectively

in their teachingto achieve positive results. According to (Kayle and Thorne, 2008:20), people respond positively to different stimulating environments. There is much work that needs to be invested in the development of the environment where blended learning is applied, above all in higher education, to create new opportunities for improvement and application of technological innovations. Blended learning represents a step forward, enabling a different approach to improving and developing education in all spheres, while giving a real opportunity to schools, higher and higher education, leaving space and freedom to individuals in creating and building new models in the working environment.

3. CREATING A STIMULATING ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

Students should be motivated to learn and improve their skills using the combined model. In this sense, students were asked about the necessary qualifications for the development of their future career, and according to them education does not offer favorable opportunities in which they would take a leading role. Furthermore, for many students, learning is a real challenge, as well as a fantastic opportunity to improve and highlight their abilities. Combined learning helps in increasing the opportunities for "lifelong learning" because it helps in the development of new modern formalities, where students need to understand and learn what they will need during their education, as well as expand and apply this knowledge in practice. The nature of this method requires that "no one size fits all" and difficulties are faced in practical teaching situations. In conclusion, it is a fact that not all students can learn with the same method, so the knowledge gained through personal experience is much more important and will have a much greater impact on the individual in the future.

Combined learning is a modern educational model that is implemented with the help of technology. In this context, the advancement of technology enables the use of digital resources that support interactive and collaborative activities between students who are not physically present and communicate only via the Internet. Blended learning depends on the style and needs of the student and it opens new opportunities for socializing and exchanging knowledge between students and teachers in different time zones (Zang and Bonk, 2008: 110). There are differences regarding students' learning styles and strategies. The main principle of blended learning is to show students how to learn using different methods, while emphasizing that not every method works equally for everyone.

Education is a process defined as an inquiry that is much more than evaluating and assimilating information (Garrison and Vaughan, 2008 15). In this process, research takes a key place and encourages students to collaboratively research and jointly participate in solving problems and finding appropriate solutions. Research is a reflective and collaborative experience that must have an appropriate purpose and examine the cases in higher education. Students connect through a community

of inquiry to participate in the process of creating interactive, blended learning. Educational experiences fully activate students in the curriculum creation process and encourage their creative and critical abilities.

In order to achieve the goals, it is necessary for students to prepare for a lesson in the digital classroom, focus on communication in a lesson in the traditional classroom, and then in the digital environment, exchange and consolidate their knowledge and ideaswith their classmates. The connection is strengthened throughinteraction and cognitive approach. The communication that takes place in the research community is the result of the joint interaction between the students, as well as the teacher, who motivates the students to become more autonomous in the process of implementing the teaching with a combined model.

For the development of the educational process, it is necessary to elaborate ideas, as well as to diagnose problems and mistakes in order to construct a common opinion. Moreover, the development plan requires discipline as well as academic involvement of community members with the intention to meet the previously agreed goals. Focusing on the research process helps develop high-level goals and opinions, which Lipman (in Garrison and Vaughan, 2008: 17) defines as "a way to set certain goals in order to apply combined teaching in higher institutions."

The research process monitors the participants' needs and abilities in order to in order to encourage critical thinking and support continued learning beyond what formal education allows them. In addition, in order to enable critical thinking to come to the fore, it is necessary for the participants take part in the process of critically expressing their views while implementing the blended teaching model. Students are encouraged to collaborate as individuals or as a community in a systematic way in order to complete the teaching goals that will simultaneously support the progress of blended model.

4. BLENDED LEARNING: A POTENTIALLY EFFECTIVE WAY IN TRANSFORMING THE ROLE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

One of the major transformations in the 21st century is the way we communicate and access information on the Internet. Combined teaching has transformational potential that is linked to redesigning the curricula and promoting blended learning into encouraging an effective transformational process.

Graham and Robinson (2006:13) mentioned three categories of blended learning when defining the term integrated learning:
1. Learning with blended model – focusing on the interaction of the teacher with the students.
2. Blended learning – focused on increased interactivity between teacher and student that includes more information for students online, as well as a greater part of the material to be covered during instruction.

3. Combined learning – transformed and focused on improving pedagogy from more informative to more active and more productive pedagogy.

Graham and Robinson came to the conclusion that there are different perceptions regarding the combined teaching method in higher institutions. The structural and organizational potential of blended learning depends on how the course is being taught, so it can vary from digital or combined traditional face-to-face model in form of consultations. The transformative role of combined learning is to replace classroom teaching by creating an environment where students can interact and build knowledge motivated by the collaboration between teachers, peers, and course content. This means that the blended model allows students to work together either in person or at a distance, giving them the ability to communicate and interact from anywhere and at any time. In this context, blended learning has an ability to moderate and develop collaboration between teacher and student, and through the community of inquiry dialogue, debate, negotiation and decision-making are carried out (Ambrose, 2013: 77).

Asynchronous Internet communication prepares students for dynamic interaction and spontaneous face-to-face verbal communication between teachers and students. In other words, these components used in traditional and digital communication are interrelated elements and skills that stimulate students to collaborate through interesting group projects and discussion forums. It is particularly significant to implement blended learning model because it affects the collaborative process and presents a challenge for digitally trained students. The process of transforming higher education begins with the full application of the technological tools and software management system for which the teachers and students were previously trained. A Blended learning solution can achieve the optimal learning environment. It includes learners involved with authentic tasks and interacting among themselves in order to achieve progress and produce creative language. Learners should be autonomous, socially active, work in relaxed atmosphere, have enough time to complete the tasks and receive appropriate feedback. It is up to the teacher to find the right "blend solution" and provide conditions for students to enjoy in the new setting.

Graham and Robinson (in Picciano, 2005: 65) also pose a provocative question regarding whether this teaching affects institutions. The conclusions of the research carried out in more than 1000 colleges and universities indicate that from year to year there is greater growth of technological innovations applied in America, which stimulates the learning process. There is a belief that courses delivered in combination hold as much promise as courses delivered solely digitally. Of course, the evolution from face-to-face, which is completely digital, is not transparent. The point is that blended learning is very difficult to put into practice, so it is left to universities to make the transition to meet the needs of university members and university students.

The Language Center is a central part of every SEEU student's academic career, offering both required subjects and as optional elective courses. The Language Center offers classes in English starting from the basic skills up to English for specific purposes in fields such as law, computer sciences, public administration and business administration. This particular research was carried out during fall 2018.

The questionnaire was designed with the sole purpose to measure students' perception about the integration of technology in the educational process. The results showed that the overwhelming majority of students (82%) of the interviewed students believe that teachers should use technology in the classroom and that the use of technology can improve the coursework (69%).

In terms of Google classroom management system, students will preferably use it for home assignments (66%), approximately (74%) of the students believe that GC should be used for posting online lesson plans. Students showed enthusiasm and also found it useful for online discussions (70%), and (48%) of the respondents strongly agree that GC is useful for posting presentations online. Taking in consideration the successful integration and implementation of software management systems in Higher education in Republic of North Macedonia, 81% of SEEU students clearly stated that GC facilitate the teaching and learning process and should be implemented in every university.

The case study methodology yielded evidence that blended learning solution can create optimal environment for language learning and proved that most effective teaching and learning involves implementing various methods, techniques and strategies that can help maximizing knowledge acquisition and skills development. Effective implementation of blended learning is essentially making the most of the learning opportunities and tools available to achieve the "optimal" learning environment.

Blended learning has detailed specifications and requirements when redesigning the courses. It will be stimulating for the students if at the beginning of the course students meet in traditional classroom. On the other hand, conducting an asynchronous online discussion forum will help students meet and discuss multiple problems and look for reflection, feedback and solution. The communication is based on three components: interaction with the teacher, the cognitive and social element.

The critical thinking and high learning objectives can be supported by interactive dialogue. Hudson (2002: 53) argues that the way we think is a dialogue, by socializing students and creating a socially constructed context enriched with new meaningful ideas, the change to assimilate information as well as constructing meaning and confirming understanding can emphasize the role of the research community.

Blended learning provides independence and increased control that is the basis for developing critical thinking. On the other hand, this process cannot be achieved by students on their own. Being a critical thinker means taking control of your thinking process and practicing metacognitive thinking about these processes.

5. CONCLUSION

The transformative role of blended learning is not only about combining technology but also about increasing the efficiency of the teacher-student relationship. This learning represents a redesign that indicates stimulation of students anddevelopment of creative and complex cognitive skills. In addition, challenging and encouraging students to work with the teachers in order to become more autonomous in learning English as a second language.

The traditional environment allows students to communicate spontaneously, and in contrast, in the digital environment they have to react and think faster; otherwise, the opportunities to achieve their goals are lost. Both methods, face-to-face and digital contribute to balancing the quality learning environment, and when created according to the students, can be realized through blended learning.

In the socialization process, the research community has a role to observe the progress of students as they move through the stages of critical thinking. In this context, the research community helps students to build knowledge where communication takes place with a combination of digital and traditional learning. For students, this process represents a significant educational experience, enriching their knowledge by combining the two methods: digital and frontal. In this context, mutual cooperation encourages students to communicate at a higher level and develop critical thinking skills. Students that have a strong sense of community also have a higher level of cognitive learning (Rovai, 2002: 330).

In conclusion, universities are facing an increasing pressure to utilize software solutions for more practical solutions which in turn will increase the overall graduation rates at university levels. It is a fact that by the use of contemporary methods such as blended learning teachers help students use the learning time flexibly outside the classroom in order to facilitate and enhance (theoretical and practical) teaching and learning. There is a wide consensus which has more than 80% agreement by the students for the need to use more technology in the educational process. the classroom in order to facilitate and enhance (theoretical and practical) teaching and learning.

SEEU is a leader in promoting new educational programs by using digital software and in the future will have to increase the application of blended learning model in order to become the first leading higher institution in North Macedonia that catches up with the latest trends. The contemporary used methods are more effective and efficient than just the traditional learning model so students can be more motivated to study, and the university will significantly increase the access to new students who will be motivated to study and who will have a great benefit from these high-quality programs.

REFERENCES

1. Albirini, A. (2006). *Teachers' attitudes toward information and communication*
2. *technologies: the case of Syrian EFL teachers.* Computers & Education, 47(4), 373398.
3. Amaral, K. E. & Shank, J. D. (2010). *Enhancing Student Learning and Retention with Blended Learning Class Guides.* Educause Quarterly, 33(4).
4. Ambrose, G. A. & Ambrose, L.W.(2013). *The Blended Advising Model: Transforming advising with ePorfolios.* International Journal of ePorfolio, 3(1), 75-89.
5. Anderson, T. & Elloumi, F. (2003). *In Theory and Practice of Online Learning.* Athabasca University: Athabasca.
6. Anderson, T., Rourke, L., Garrison, D. R., & Archer W. (2001). *Assessing teaching presence in a computer conferencing context.* Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 5(2), 1-17.
7. Aslani, S.M., & Tabrizi, H.H.(2015). *Teaching Grammar to Iranian EFL Learners through Blended Learning Using Multimedia Software.* Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research, 2015, 2(8) 79.
8. Baer, J., & Baer, S.K**.** *Student Preferences for Types of Instructional Feedback and Discussion in Hybrid Courses: Aptitude-treatment Interactions*. Journal on Excellence in College Teaching 16(3) 83-101 (2005).
9. Banados,E. (2006). A Blended-learning Pedagogical Model for Teaching and Learning EFL Successfully Through an Online Interactive Multimedia Environment. CALICO Journal, 23(3), 533-550.
10. Bloom, B.S. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. New York: Longman.
11. Bonk, C. J., & Graham, C. R. (Eds.). (2005). Handbook of BIended learning: Global perspectives, local designs. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
12. Bonk, C.J.& Zhang,K.(2006). Introducing the R2D2 model: Online learning for diverse learners of this world. Distance Education, 27(2), 249-264.
13. Bonk, C.J. & Zhang, K. (2008). Empowering online learning: 100 activities for reading, reflecting, displaying, and doing. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
14. Bonk, C.J. & Zhang, K. (2008).Addressing diverse learner preferences and intelligences with emerging technologies: Matching models to online opportunities. Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology, 34 (2).
15. Conrad, D.(2005). Building and maintaining community in cohort-based online learning. Journal of Distance Education, 20(1), 1-20.
16. Conrad, R.M., Donaldson, J.A. (2011). Engaging the online learner. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
17. Dziuban, C.D., Hartman, J.L., & Moskal,P.D. (2004). Blended learning. ECAR Research Bulletin, 7.
18. Dziuban, C.D., Hartman, J.L., & Moskal,P.D. (2006). Higher education, blended learning and the generation: Knowledge is power no more. Proceedings of the Sloan-C Workshop on Blended Learning and Higher Education, Chicago.

19. Garrison, D.R. & Kanuka, H. " Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education" Internet and Higher Education 7 (2004) 95-105.

20. Garrison, D.R.,& Vaughan,N.D.(2008). Blended learning in Higher Education: Framework, principles, and guidelines. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

21. Glasier, S.F.,& Rhem, J**.** "Blended Learning Across the Disciplines, Across the Academy", Stylus Publishing, 2012.

22. Kenney, J., & Newcombe, E. "Adopting a Blended Learning Approach: Challenges encountered and lessons learned in an action research study", Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, Volume 15: Issue 1.

23. Knowles, M.S. (1984). Andragogy in action. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

24. Kolb, D.A. (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

25. Murphy, P. The Hybrid Strategy: Blending Face-to-Face with Virtual Instruction to Improve Large Lecture Courses. TLtC Managing Editor (December 2002). http://www.ucop.edu/tltc/news/2002/12/feature.php.

26. Parsons, R.D., & Brown, K.S., Teacher as Reflective Practitioner and Action Researcher, Wadsworth/Thomson Learning: Belmont, CA, 2002.

27. Picciano, G.A., Dzluban,D.C. (2005). Blended Learning Research Perspectives. University of Illinois – Chicago (UIC) : The Sloan Consortium.

28. Rovai, A.P. (2002). Sense of community, perceived cognitive learning, and persistence in asynchronous learning networks. The Internet and Higher Education, 5(4), 319-332.

29. Thorne, K (2008). Blended learning: How to integrate Online and Traditional Learning. Kogan Page, London.

30. Vaughan, N. Perspectives on Blended Learning in Higher Education. International Journal on ELearning(2007).http://www.thefreelibrary.com/_/print/PrintArticle.aspx?id=159594390. it Work? In: Picciano, A., and Dziuban, C. (Eds.), Blended Learning: Research Perspectives, Needham, MA: Sloan Center for Online Education (SCOLE), 37-63, 2007.

31. Watson, J., Blending Learning: The Convergence of Online and Face-to-Face Education, North American Council for Online Learning: VA, 2008.

32. Weaver, R., & Qi, J. Classroom Organization and Participation: College Students' Perceptions. Journal of Higher Education 76(5): 570-601 (2005). Professional Development Collection database.

33. Young, J. R. 'Hybrid' Teaching Seeks to End the Divide Between Traditional and Online Instruction. The Chronicle of Higher Education 48(28): 33-34 (2002).

ФИЛОЛОШКИ ФАКУЛТЕТ

ГОДИШЕН ЗБОРНИК   2025