Chapter 6

Didactic Opportunities of Applying Blended Learning Technology in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The chapter presents the research results highlighting didactic opportunities of applying the learning technology, which combines classroom activities and e-learning. The authors outline the issues related to the development of e-learning and emphasize its relationship with the technology of programmed learning. The maximum learning effect is provided by the combination of distance learning based on digital technologies and contact learning, which brings forth the advantages of direct interpersonal interaction. The research was conducted at five universities located in Moscow. The surveyed students showed their overall positive attitude towards enhancing learning and cognitive activities in the classroom and increasing

the share of debate-based activities. However, the surveyed teachers showed low motivation for introducing blended learning due to considerable efforts required to use digital technologies and the need to revise conventional classroom teaching methods by adding interactive elements. This problem can be solved by developing teachers' digital and methodological competence.

1. INTRODUCTION

The new digital reality is rapidly taking over various spheres of society, including education. Modernization of education based on modern digital technologies, which has recently been called the digital transformation of education, requires teachers to use new tools, technologies, and teaching methods (Le et al., 2022; Rooney, 2003). Moreover, the relevance of digital transformation of education has increased significantly since spring 2020 due to the pandemic and the global transition of education to the distance learning format. After this "crash test," education will apparently no longer be the same.

On the one hand, many problems have been revealed, associated with technical unpreparedness of educational organizations for distance learning, insufficient digital competence of the educational process participants, and material factors. On the other hand, this stressful situation with the transition to distance learning can be seen as stepping out of the comfort zone, which is known to be a source of development.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

What positive conclusions for the development of the education system can we draw from the experience of the two "pandemic" years?

First of all, teachers and heads of educational institutions have realized the importance of preventive measures concerning the development of electronic information and the education environment of universities and increasing the digital competence of all participants in the educational process (Konopko et al., 2019; Kubrushko et al., 2020; Zanfirova et al., 2021). In addition, educational technologies aimed at optimizing students' independent work (its organization, sequencing, and monitoring) and enhancing learning and cognitive activity in the process of training sessions (both face-to-face and e-learning – synchronous and asynchronous ones) have gained particular importance (Alipichev et al., 2020; Alipichev & Sergeeva, 2020; Vaganova et al., 2019). Today searching for effective ways of implementing e-learning in various formats to meet students' educational needs and improve the training quality has become an urgent scientific and pedagogical problem.

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