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BLENDED LEARNING FOR ESP TEACHING

The digital era we live in has changed completely our world and interconnections in all the spheres. Nowadays professional activity needs high intellectual potential and, at the same time, becomes multi-functional - it requires from professionals nonstandard way of thinking. Thus, contemporary society realities, like never before, need constant knowledge and competences updating as lifelong learning becomes the part of professional activity. Namely, competences, not the usual triad "knowledge, skills, sub-skills", acquire paramount importance [1, c. 5]. The most important competences presuppose the availability of the following *skills*:

- to structure and comprehend analytically large amounts of heterogeneous information;
- to process information in a short time;
- to generate one's own ideas, turning them into innovations;
- to act in a situation of changes and uncertainty;
- to "complete" the information picture of the world;
- to adapt to changes;
- to change oneself in a changing situation.

The above listed abilities (creativity, self-support, initiative), that learners should possess, change radically all the components of educational process as well as form new requirements to teaching and the ways of getting information, providing learners' professionally-oriented communicative competence having been defined as "acquiring foreign language proficiency at the level enabling to proceed professional communication [2, c. 9].

Scholars nowadays consider the use of computer technology and Internet resources to be the best approach for practical mastering a foreign language due to their didactic potential for training University students [3, c. 487]. Such an opinion seems reasonable, if to take into account the fact, that current students since their childhood are being

involved in the process of "informatization" and most of them used to get information from computer screens and gadgets, not from books.

No doubt, the information and communications technology (ICT) use in the learning process has the potential to activate cognitive, intellectual and independent students' activities. ICT becomes an integral part and effective assistant, enabling to improve the quality of training and its control efficiency. In recent years most educational institutions have undergone transformations and introduced innovations, but authoritarian model of management along with linear learning model is still alive in many of them.

Information technologies in this respect may change the situation for better in terms of involving students into cognitive activity, feeling complicity and reflection, self-support and responsibility for the results of their learning. The search of didactic toolkit for realizing the goal set has brought most educators to the method of blended learning, that, in the opinion of some scholars, enable to provide gradual transition both to modular principle of educational process organization and creating conditions for students' autonomous learning [4, c. 406].

According to Encyclopedia of Educational Technology (undated), the concept of blended learning grew out of the practical experience in e-learning. Blended learning combines "…e-learning with a variety of other delivery methods for a superior learning experience" [5, p 1].

And blended learning itself is defined by Tarnopolsky O.B. as " a synergetic learning structure, dynamically and organically combining into an invisible unity traditional classroom learning with online learning for creating a more flexible learning environment with the purpose of intensifying and facilitating the practical training process " [6, p 14].

The advantage of the above mentioned technology is that the process of knowledge mastering does not require learner's obligatory presence in the class under instructor's supervision. It enables to learn online by just listening to audio and video lectures with subsequent homework and getting certificate in case of successful completing the course. The efficiency of learning in this case depends on the ratio of time allotted for

auditory lessons and online learning as well as on the properly presenting material and its content. Traditionally, blended learning combines both synchronous and asynchronous learning technologies.

With a synchronous form of work learners and instructor interact in real time, while with asynchronous one both instructor and students enter the electronic environment at convenient time for them.

Thus, it should be concluded, that one of the greatest advantages of blended learning is its ability to create nonlinear learning model, not being both so rigidly programmed, limited in time, content and technologies being used. Besides, there is no authoritarian teacher's guidance as his function is in creating favorable conditions for successful learning activities under which a person-oriented approach to learning is being realized. The primary task of language instructor is in stimulating interest, motivation for mastering the language as well as granting aid in students' creative search. What is more important is that the students are given possibilities to form themselves their learning trajectory according to their educational perspectives [7, p 17].

Current education is impossible without various automation tools. The most efficient of all it could be considered the blended learning as its essence is in students' independent cognitive activity based on competence approach.

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