

**INNOVATIVE  
AND TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED  
TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**HYBRID/BLENDED  
LEARNING**



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ERASMUS+ PRINTEL PROJECT “CHANGE IN CLASSROOM: PROMOTING INNOVATIVE TEACHING  
& LEARNING TO ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES”

# INNOVATIVE AND TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING: HYBRID/BLENDED LEARNING

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# PART 1

## DESCRIPTION OF THE METHOD



All teaching scenarios that are not exclusively face-to-face or online can be described as blended learning or hybrid learning, i.e. a combination of virtual and non-virtual learning settings and methods. It also proves to be the most effective one because it combines the best elements of traditional and online teaching. The combination of classroom and online offerings in blended learning scenarios makes it possible to take advantage of the benefits of the respective settings and methods or to avoid their disadvantages.

Blended Learning means nothing else than “mixed learning”. The idea is certainly not new. As early as the 1970s, people were talking about “hybrid forms of learning” when it came to combining the then new media audio and video with conventional forms of learning. “Blended Learning” has become the standard term for the use of a wide range of learning technologies and methods in the workplace. Examples include the traditional classroom, web-based tutorials, web-based simulations, online-collaboration, online-coaching, video conferencing, phone conferencing, knowledge management systems.<sup>1</sup>



There are many definitions and concepts of blended learning, but it is certainly not just a simple method of linking classroom learning and e-learning.

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1. Davis, J. (2001): Implementing Blended-Learning. Forum Knowledge. Financial Times. November 2001.

Dziuban, Hartman, and Moskal<sup>2</sup> for example describe blended learning as a “pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialization opportunities of the classroom with the technologically enhanced active learning possibilities of the online environment.”

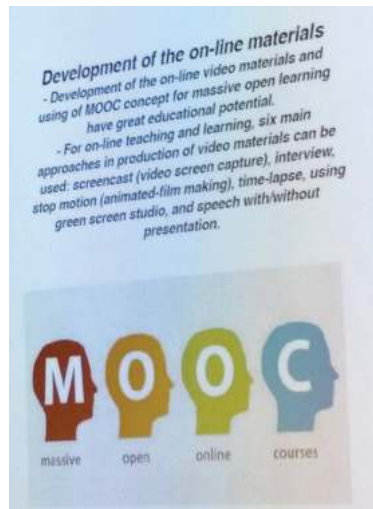
Hybrid blended learning presents a more flexible option in which self-paced e-learning (web-based learning activities) and traditional classrooms methods (face-to-face lecturing) and the use of various internet based technologies (audio, video, etc.) are combined in order to deliver the learning content and create a new methodology. This means that a significant amount of the learning activity will be moved online, making it possible to reduce the amount of time spent in the classroom. Traditional face-to-face instruction is reduced but not eliminated. If the learning content is conveyed digitally (by means of video recordings, slides, podcasts, etc.), students can access it flexibly and according to their own needs - whenever and how often they want. In the face-to-face sessions, interaction and exchange with the students can then be the focus of attention.

The concept of blended learning is rooted in the idea that learning is not just a one-time event, learning is more or less a continuous process. Furthermore, it's an innovative approach regarding how this two parts can be interconnected in the teaching process. The crucial thing in applying this method is to take advantage of the best features of both face-to-face and online so that they complement one another instead of treating the online part as an add-on of what is thought in the classroom.

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2. Dziuban, Hartman, and Moskal Blended Learning Research Perspectives Volume 2 (2004, p3).





Hybrid teaching is therefore not just a matter of transferring a part of the traditional course to the Web. Instead it involves developing challenging and engaging online learning activities that complement your face-to-face activities. It is instead about developing challenging and engaging online learning activities that complement the face-to-face activities.

The blended/hybrid teaching & learning method represents a fundamental change in the way teachers and students approach the learning experience, much greater than just adding computers to the classroom. The essence of blended learning lies in an increased sensitivity to learners' needs and a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of different media and communication technologies that can be used in the teaching and learning process on a specific topic.

In blended learning scenarios, three forms of activity can be distinguished or combined with one another (vgl. Alonso, López, Manrique & Viñes, 2007)<sup>3</sup> as follows:

- Self-directed e-learning: here learners can determine the time, intervals, pace and location of their learning activities themselves (“learning anytime and anywhere”).
- Live e-learning: synchronous forms of e-learning, e.g. lectures as webcasts or working in a virtual classroom at a set time. This enables learners to ask questions to the lecturers in real time or to exchange information with other course participants.
- Traditional classroom teaching: lecture, seminar, exercise, discussion and exchange take place in the class, laboratory or seminar room and open up face-to-face interaction with lecturers and fellow students.

There is controversy over how much or how little online teaching belongs in the blend. Various authors agree that the percentage of online/offline content is not as important as the pedagogical design, timing and sequencing of activities to create a cohesive learning experience.<sup>4</sup>

Traditional and online teaching includes advantages and disadvantages, well summarized in the following table:

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3. Alonso, López, Manrique, Viñes,; An instructional model for web-based e-learning education with a blended learning process approach, 2007.

4. Dziuban, Moskal, Hartman: Higher education, blended learning, and the generations: Knowledge is power: No more (2005).

### *Traditional Classroom:*

#### **Advantages:**

- Direct face-to-face interaction
- Tutor-led instruction
- Peer collaboration
- Hands-on experience
- Group socialization

#### **Disadvantages:**

- A limited number of students in a group
- Fixed scheduling options, curriculum, and programme
- Strictly specified times of study
- Operational and logistics costs

### *Self-paced online learning:*

#### **Advantages:**

- Flexibility terms of time and location
- Cost-effective
- Convenient
- Personalized learning experience
- Access to any subject or information

#### **Disadvantages:**

- Less interactive
- High drop-out rates
- Limited options for direct and timely feedback
- Lower control over assessments
- Requires a high level of self-regulation

Source: <https://ethinkeducation.com/blog/step-by-step-guide-designing-blended-online-courses/>

## **1.1. Advantages of blended learning**

- From the **students' perspective**, the advantages of a blended learning arrangement can be broken down into two categories: flexibility and learning experience. Students appreciate the virtual learning components, which allow them to determine the place and time of learning themselves. Learning from home is particularly advantageous. Several case studies

also show positive effects on learning success, both in comparison to exclusively virtual settings<sup>5</sup> and to traditional mass lectures.<sup>6</sup> Positive learning effects can also be achieved through the text orientation of asynchronous discussion environments or a writing-intensive learning environment (Sands, 2002)<sup>7</sup>.

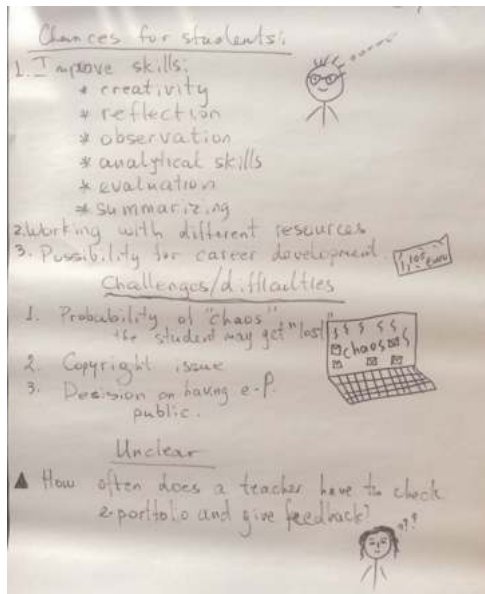
- Blended learning offers **teachers** an opportunity to explore new forms of interaction with course participants. It is experienced as beneficial when there are effects on the learning process, for example when learners form an online community, argue and discuss better in face-to-face lessons and delve deeper into the course material. In addition, the flexibility in the timing is experienced as positive.
- On the level of the **university management**, positive effects of blended learning scenarios are expected, ranging from positioning as an innovative educational institution to addressing new target groups, especially in continuing vocational education and training, to more effective use of resources and cost savings.

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5. Rovai & Jordan: Blended Learning and Sense of Community: A comparative analysis with traditional and fully online graduate courses, 2004.

6. Graves & Twigg: The future of course re-design and the national center for academic transformation, 2006.

7. Sands: Inside outside, upside downside: strategies for connecting online and face-to-face instruction in hybrid courses, 2002.



## 1.2. Disadvantages of Blended Learning

- For **students**, the main problems with blended learning courses relate to the expectation that reduced attendance times will also require less work, deficits in time and self-management, difficulties in terms of accepting one's own responsibility for learning success, and technical problems, especially when dealing with unfamiliar communication and cooperation tools.
- **Teachers** need both methodological and technical support and advice when redesigning their didactic design. Risks result from the loss of control and the potentially poorer evaluation by students. Experience also shows that a course that includes online components requires significantly more time for preparation and implementation; this can be even higher if multimedia learning content has to be created. In addition, there is still a

lack of clarity about the extent to which online activities are recognised in the classical teaching regulations.

- At the level of **university management**, the use of technology must be related to the long-term goals of the institution. Appropriate resource allocation and investments in infrastructure and support units are necessary. There is also often resistance to changes and innovations. The change of curricular structures is time-consuming and requires internal coordination processes.

Hybrid/blended courses allow students and teachers to take advantage of the flexibility and convenience of an online course while taking advantage of the classroom experience.

The challenges coming along with this innovative T&L method are as follows: The teacher is acting as a coach and the student are in charge of their own learning. This requires the approval or agreement of both parties.

The method offers countless opportunities and challenges in the course development process. The opportunities and possibilities inherent in a didactically and content-wise well-founded combination of e-learning and face-to-face learning are basically regarded as highly positive. However, a well-designed blended course is not as simple as dividing your course into face-to-face and online components. Some main principles to guide the development of a blended course:

- It is obvious, that successful blended courses have higher rates of student-to-student and lecturer-to-student interactions.<sup>8</sup> Therefore it is recommended to focus on interaction rather than the delivery mode of the course. Activities, that require students to engage in the course content and with other students should be aimed at.
- The course goals and objectives should guide the design of the course, not the technology.

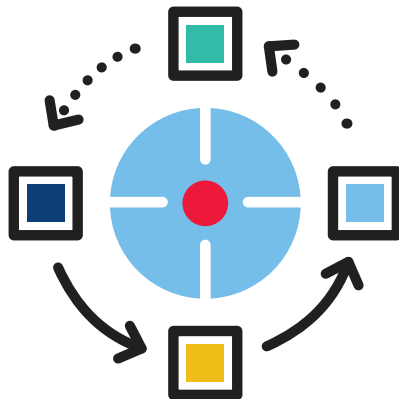
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8. Aycock, Garnham, & Kaleta: Perspectives on blended learning in higher education, 2002.

When developing blended learning models for continuing education, the focus is primarily to integrate and combine the advantages of the online and face-to-face teaching-learning forms in the best possible way. In this context it is helpful to consider the perspective of the participants more than in the past.

## PART 2

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES





In the second half of the 20th century, new problems were raised in the field of education, related to increasing the degree of independence of students and independent acquisition of knowledge by students. At the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries, the problem of increasing students' independence required an urgent solution. Students' independent learning is when pupils set goals, monitor and evaluate their own academic development, so they can manage their own motivation towards learning. The rapidly developing information society before the educational process posed the problem of development of a person, which could independently guide in various situations, manage not only its own, but also the cognitive activities of people around and its environment, distinguish between the essence of information flows and choose provable information, create effective interactions with the environment for the sake of more developed society.

From this point of view, the scope of the problems of the educational process expanded, and the modern educational process could no longer be satisfied only with the transfer of knowledge and the ability to formulate skills in multiple repetitions of this knowledge with their simple thinking. Moreover, this function was somewhat attributed to computer hardware.

Within the context of contemporary education, Benjamin Bloom presents ways of implementing innovative learning in his well-known taxonomy of goals and stages of education, which guide educational specialists.

In accordance with the Bloom's taxonomy<sup>1</sup> of goals, stages and organization of the learning process, the cognitive process includes the following key stages:

1. Knowledge: to remember, distinguish, find information in the form of facts, rules, formulas, figures, definitions.

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1. Bloom, B. S.; Engelhart, M. D.; Furst, E. J.; Hill, W. H.; Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain. New York: David McKay Company.

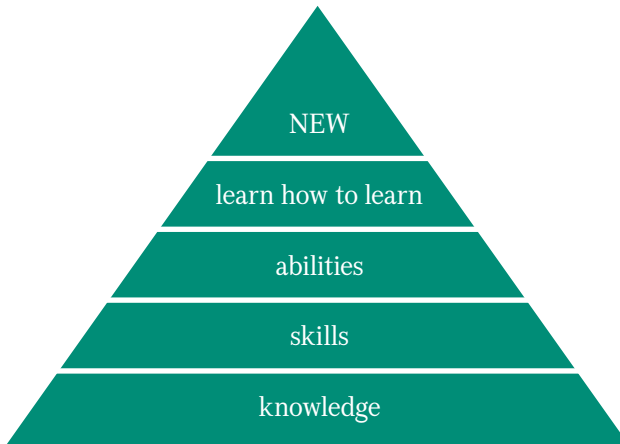
2. Comprehension: verbal explanation, generalization, examples, interpretation.
3. Application: application of information during a specific operation.
4. Analysis: identify the relationship between the structural components of information.
5. Synthesis: obtaining information from other sources based on existing knowledge.
6. Evaluation: judgments and choice of criteria, as well as the ability to evaluate various evidences, realities.

New tasks were supplemented by the already formed traditional issues of learning. The introduction of innovative forms of learning does not imply a denial of traditional, successful experience. “Innovative” or “current” learning does not replace traditional but supplements it and makes it more relevant to modern requirements and problems. Contemporary pedagogy theory and practice are designed to identify ways of maximizing learner active engagement in the process of learning so that the learner can quickly find a way to learn and learn independently and to form their own opinions and new approaches that will lead to creativity and new knowledge.

One of the main reasons for this is that the innovative paradigm of education, on which is based the modern education system, is called “personality-oriented.” In modern textbooks of pedagogy, the objectives of the traditional learning process, three of which are the *knowledge*, the formation of *skills* and *abilities*, in addition are two more objectives of the modern educational process - to learn how to learn and create new knowledge.

As a result, current objectives of the learning process are as follows:

- knowledge,
- skills,
- abilities,
- learn how to learn,
- creation of new knowledge.



*Figure 1. Current objectives of the learning process*

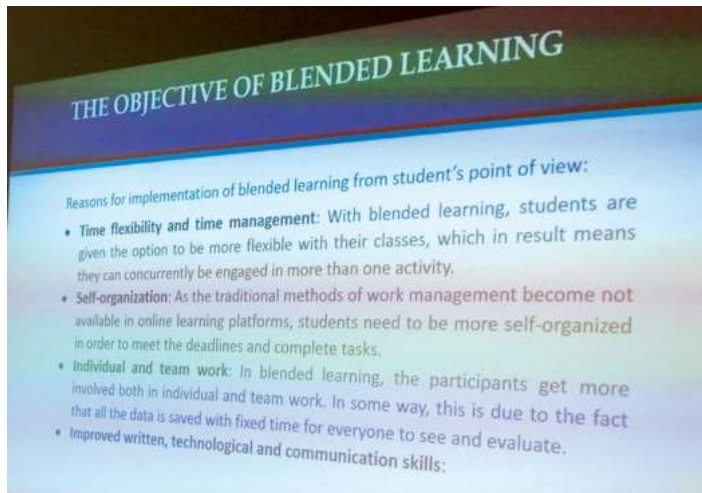
Summarizing, it is important to note that in the current learning process, a significant role is played by both the teacher and the learner. And only the realization of the role of each and the scope of the function of this role can provide a training process that meets modern requirements and successful results.

Consistently, “Hybrid/Blended Teaching and Learning”, is increasingly used to describe how e-learning/e-learning/self-learning methods are used in a mixed way with traditional classroom methods. This contributed to the creation of new educational technologies in teaching methods. It represents the fundamental changes in the traditional teaching and learning experience offered by teachers and learners.

Hybrid pedagogy is a broader phenomenon than just the use of traditional computers and electronic methods. A wide range of approaches is also available along with technical infrastructure. The pedagogical aspects will naturally consider the specific aspects of learning so that learners can work in groups and

present their final design work. The idea is to make learners more active, improve the quality of instruction and inspire them to develop new tools and new materials.

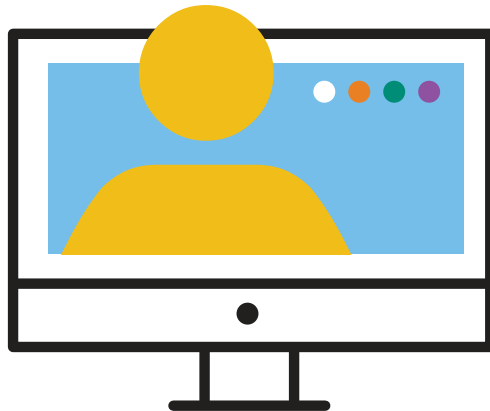
Speaking about modern innovative teaching technologies we mean interactive technologies over the past decade, then the third decade of the 21st century is aimed at making learning involved, not only expecting active feedback from learners, but they participate spontaneously in each stage of the learning process.





## PART 3

# ROLE OF THE TEACHER



Nowadays greater attention is paid to the importance of developing of students' personal qualities, the formation of their skills in applying knowledge to successful activities in the professional field.

However, the construction of the educational process, taking into account one innovative technology, one method does not provide an improvement in the quality of teaching of graduates. To ensure the quality of teaching, it is necessary to use a set of methods and technologies that interact in the educational process.

Among them are the following:

- activation of cognitive activity of students;
- the use of modern systems and training tools;
- the use of technologies aimed at personal-development learning;
- timely control of the assimilation of knowledge and skills;
- the presence of teachers who are able to properly organize the independent work of students to form their competencies.

To enhance the cognitive activity of students, the teacher must be fluent in these activities.

Hybrid/blended learning is a student-centered approach to creating a learning experience in which a student interacts with other students, with an instructor, as well as with content through a thoughtful combination of the Internet and face-to-face interaction. A well-designed hybrid/blended learning course systematically organizes content, supporting materials and activities through synchronous and asynchronous training events. Communication and collaboration are essential features of a hybrid/blended approach. Particular attention is paid to discussion methods (group discussion, brainstorming, analysis of specific situations, etc.)

Discussion methods develop students' communicative competence (the ability to speak briefly and to the point, the ability to listen, formulate questions, speak

publicly, the ability to perceive constructive criticism, generate a lot of ideas and solutions), form the ability to generalize, think productively, contribute to the formation of personal and business qualities, etc.

With hybrid/blended learning, a special atmosphere of creativity, mutual assistance is created, interpersonal relationships are built. Here, the role of the teacher consists not only in the transfer of knowledge, skills, but also in the organization of such an educational environment that allowed the student to rely on their potential and the corresponding learning technology. The teacher and student create a joint educational activity, which is aimed at the individual self-realization of the student and the development of his/her personal qualities.



### 3.1. The Role of the Teacher

It seems that the greatest effect in the organization of students' independent work and the development of their creative abilities can be achieved as a result of applying of innovative methods, namely hybrid/blended learning, while maintaining the traditional learning system. In this sense, discussion as a learning method can contribute to enhancing students' cognitive activity.



In order to apply a student-centered approach, for teacher it is not only enough to have knowledge of the appropriate material, it is necessary to change the approach to the learning process, the attitude towards the student, to realize that the student is the central figure in the pedagogical process, and not teacher.

In the conditions of student-centered learning, the teacher acquires a different role and function in the educational process, no less significant than with the traditional teaching system, but different.

### 3.2. Teacher as a Facilitator

The teacher needs to:

- demonstrate effective facilitation practice and how the process is managed by the facilitator;
- use a flip chart and demonstrate how notes are captured/for working in an online environment, can be used Moodle platform.

Facilitation is about creating and providing space for learners to try out something new, to reflect on their experiences, to arrive at new conclusions and to think about how they would apply these conclusions in their work and life. In this view people learn for themselves with a bit of help and assistance, rather than have it done to or for them.

A facilitator is a person who organizes successful communication, discussion. The person who helps students understand the common goal, helps participants of the discussion to concentrate on the goals and content, supports positive dynamics of the group during the discussion. It contributes to creating a comfortable atmosphere and fruitful discussion, maintaining a neutral position.

The task of the teacher is to help each student build their own educational path. A group of students together with a teacher turns into a research team.

### 3.3. The Teacher as Discussion Context-Setter

The context in this case is the background for the discussion topic and the questions that should be the focus of the discussion.

A discussion-oriented lesson begins with a short presentation by the facilitator in which he gives a general description of the proposed topic of discussion, then students are given the opportunity to express their opinion.

It is desirable that various approaches to the issues discussed be reflected, the latest material on the topic of the lesson be used. A discussion will only be complete if it is based on different points of view, an exchange of views, alternative approaches.

### 3.4. The Teacher as an Evaluator/Expert

The discussion helps students to streamline and consolidate the studied material, and the teacher - not only to determine the level of students' preparing, but also to correct the shortcomings of their behavior and communication (temper, lack of respect for the other party, etc.). This form of organization of classes leads to the refusal of the teacher to divide students into "strong" and "weak", as well as providing control and evaluation of not only the result, but mainly the learning process, i.e. those transformations that the student carries out, during the study of the educational material. Encouraging the success achieved in relation to the results previously obtained by the student is much more effective than encouraging students in comparison with each other - this means that the student begins to understand that it is worth striving to improve their own results for the benefit of the whole group.



Medium and weak students can bring their team an equal number of points, which allows them to feel like full members of the team.

### 3.5. The Teacher as Coach

Coaching in this context refers to teaching students what is expected of them, giving them feedback on their performance, and creating the environment for students to succeed through the motivation of each student. Coaching is a process of helping students succeed in situations where they must make real time responses by providing immediate feedback. It is very convenient by using hybrid/blended learning environment because in that case teacher uses both state of the art technologies and traditional classroom activities.



### 3.6. Teacher as Integrator of the Course Content

The role of the teacher consists not only in transferring knowledge, skills, but also in organizing such an educational environment, namely, creating an environment for the student's natural expression, where the student, taking into account his/her potential and individual experience, manifests the initiative and independence. The emphasis is on teaching the student to think, argue and justify his/her point of view independently, to activate the students' creative potential.

### 3.7. The Teacher as Mentor

The teacher as mentor can support a student in many ways:

- Networking support – the teacher may be able to find persons who do extensive facilitating to help advise the student.
- Opportunity creation – faculty often have professional activities where they work with groups to explore an issue. These are great opportunities for students to observe and participate.
- Continued education – the teacher may help the student evaluate different graduate opportunities to identify those that can be supportive of increased facilitator development.
- Career support – after a student graduates the teacher can continue to be a support in providing career advice and perhaps connections that lead to greater facilitation opportunities.

Obviously, the spread of hybrid/blended learning involves revising the traditional concept of a teacher, creating a number of competencies based on a unique combination of certain professional skills and personal qualities. It can also be argued that the success of the transition to hybrid/blended learning depends not only on existing information technologies and access to them, but

the readiness of teachers, who are the main guides in the educational process, to lead students to successful mastery of knowledge in the context of hybrid/blended learning.

### The competencies of the teacher in hybrid/blended learning

Phase	Basic Competencies	Acquired Competencies
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a lesson plan in accordance with educational standards.</li> <li>• Define the tasks for achieving learning goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skill of short-term and long-term planning.</li> <li>• Competency of individualization of teaching.</li> </ul>
Conducting Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting focused, entertaining classes.</li> <li>• Logical completion of one task before switching to the next.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability of students to manage their learning process.</li> <li>• The ability to harmoniously form student groups and individual educational environments.</li> </ul>
Collection, Analysis and Effective Use of Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to understand basic data and use them in the learning process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to evaluate process and present new data.</li> <li>• Competence of interaction with the team to expand the possibilities of collecting, interpreting and effectively applying data.</li> </ul>
Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange of experience and the introduction of lessons learned in the teaching process.</li> <li>• Constructive criticism and desire to learn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variation of models of collective cooperation, effective management of planned and free time and space for working with colleagues and sharing experience.</li> </ul>

Phase	Basic Competencies	Acquired Competencies
Risk Taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to accept uncertainty.</li> <li>• The desire to use new technologies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to quickly resume the educational process in case of failure due to various kinds of malfunctions.</li> </ul>
Course Content Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good knowledge of the subject.</li> <li>• The ability to rigorously select educational information to present to students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of new methods for presenting educational information.</li> <li>• Exploring Interdisciplinary relations.</li> </ul>

In turn, the transition to hybrid/blended learning certainly contributes to the formation of the following teacher competencies:

- Competence of integration;
- Competencies of self-improvement, self-regulation, self-development, personal and objective reflection;
- Competencies of social interaction with society;
- Competencies in communication;
- Competence of cognitive activity;
- Professional competence;
- Competencies of information management.

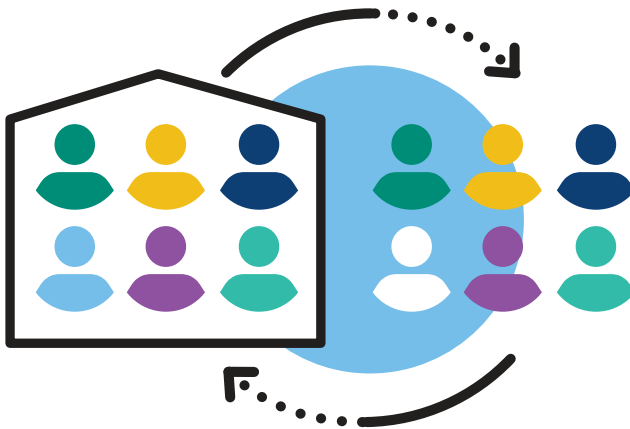
Organization of the educational process by using e-learning technologies according to a hybrid/blended learning model (based on LMS Moodle or other e-learning tools and services) involves the use of electronic educational environment by teachers to optimize the educational process by transferring some types of educational interaction from the classroom environment to electronic.

## The skills of the teacher in hybrid/blended learning

- Knowledge of educational process design technologies and skill in designing the educational process, taking into account the principles of hybrid/blended learning;
- Knowledge of electronic tools, services and the ability to use them for creating an electronic course on the discipline (for example LMS Moodle);
- The ability to combine the most effective teaching methods with their implementation in traditional and electronic environments;
- The ability to build an effective mechanism of students' interaction by type "student-student", "student-teacher", "student-content" in a hybrid/blended environment.

## PART 4

# BEFORE AND DURING THE CLASS





Blended learning is the integration of face-to-face classes with a virtual component where students have a practice opportunity to go beyond what is taught in the classroom. So far, the research done on this field had shown that this hybrid and blended learning offers students a lot of materials, resources offline and online activities, the integration of what they learn in the classroom with what they learn on their own through the use of a virtual platform.

Blended learning is not new. However, in the past, blended learning was comprised of physical classroom formats, such as lectures, labs, books or handouts. Today, organizations have a myriad of learning approaches and choices. The concept of blended learning is rooted in the idea that learning is not just a one-time event-learning is a continuous process Blending provide various benefits over using any single learning delivery.



A single delivery mode limits the reach of a learning programme or critical knowledge transfer in some form or fashion. For example, a physical classroom-training programme limits the access to only those who can participate at a fixed time and location, whereas a virtual classroom event is inclusive of remote audiences and, when followed up with recorded knowledge objects (ability to playback a recorded live event), can extend the reach to those who could not attend at a specific time. Optimizing Development Cost and Time Combining different delivery modes has the potential to balance out and optimize the learning programme development and deployment costs and time.

A totally online, self-paced, media-rich, Web-based training content may be too expensive to produce (requiring multiple resources and skills), but combining virtual collaborative and coaching sessions with simpler self-paced materials, such as documents, case studies, recorded e-learning events, text assignments, and PowerPoint presentations (requiring quicker turn-around time and lower skill to produce) may be just as effective or even more effective.

We are so early into the evolution of blended learning that little formal research exists on how to construct the most effective blended programme designs. However, research from institutions have given us valuable insight into some of the mechanisms by which blended learning is better than both traditional methods and individual forms of e-learning technology alone. This research gives us confidence that blending not only offers us the ability to be more efficient in delivering learning, but more effective.

Blended learning method gives the student opportunity to engage learning process at a convenient time. The online component of blended learning allows students to learn when and where they want. These methods offer students the complete flexibility to choose the time they study with no constraints of fixed classroom hours. This means that students will need to get used to working independently, making their own decisions and taking responsibility for their own learning.

What are benefits of blended learning, during the class, are:

- Blended learning enables teachers to make better use of the limited time they have with their students. By moving some traditional classroom activities into the online world, you end up spending less time talking in front of the class and more time working with individual students.
- With more time to work with individual students in class, teachers find they can better differentiate their teaching to suit individual needs, answering student questions and giving individual feedback. Many online resources also differentiate automatically: math exercises can be set to get

progressively harder the more answers a student gets right, for example.

- Blended models such as the flipped classroom use online videos and resources to prepare students before they come to class. This way, the students have already learned the theory and can use the classroom time to put that theory into practice. In this model, the classroom teacher takes the role of guide and mentor. It's also possible for you to assess the work done by students before class – so you know exactly what your students need help with.
- There are hundreds of online resources that enable students to create videos, animations and etc. This gives students' new ways to engage with the work and express that they have learned.
- When the online work is done to prepare students in advance, students arrival in class better prepared.

Blended learning opportunities incorporate both face-to-face and online learning opportunities. Online learning has potential to improve education productivity by accelerating the rate of learning, taking advantage of learning time outside and better utilizing teacher time in the classroom.

The teacher's role has always been central to providing a structured and engaging teaching and learning environment. Blended methodes makes teacher to be motiveted and organized.

During the class teacher:

- Helps to guide students;
- Managers their activities;
- Directs their learning;
- Helps students develop skills.

During the class students:

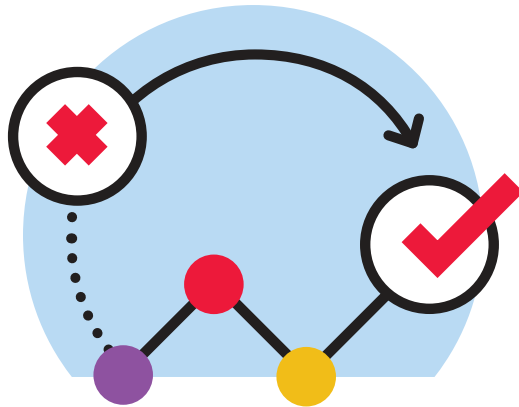
- Are involved in the learning process;
- Don't depend on their teacher all the time;

- Communicate with each other in pairs and with small groups;
- Learn from each other;
- Help each other.



## PART 5

# ASSESSMENT





As in face to face class, in blended learning assessment is also a key tool to measure the student's outcomes and the understanding of the subject. As usual, it is up to the course instructor to design the assessment activities based on the course objectives, content and aims. Riley and others state that instructors should think about: "How well does your course make connections between learning objectives, course activities, and selection of site tools to accomplish the assignments?"<sup>1</sup>

Into the blended learning both formal and informal assessment can be used. As the instructor is using at least any learning management system this gives the opportunity to create different types of activities to assess the student's performance. Some professors wish to give points in each and every activity student need to accomplish, while others might use assignment (without grading) to make sure that students are reading course materials. Informal assessment can be also used when teachers gives the chance to students to practice on the quizzes and make self-assessment. Hoffman and

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1. Riley, J.E., Gardner, C., Cosgrove, S., Olitsky, N., O'Neil, C., and Du, C. (2014). Implementation of blended learning for the improvement of student learning, In A. Picciano, C. Dziuban, and C. Graham (Eds.), *Blended learning: Research perspectives*, volume 2. NY: Routledge.pg.164.

Lowe state that once developing an assessment strategy the “focus must be on student learning, not student control.”<sup>2</sup>

Quizzes are widely used nowadays, especially in the classes with large groups of students. Quizzes can be created in many different platforms (Kahoot; Moodle, Google Form), but the idea in almost each of them is that the instructor first creates questions with multiple choice answers, indicated the correct answers and once the students make assignment the system automatically grade them and calculates the points. This doesn't happen if the question type is “short answer”, when students have to type a text. The question types vary, for example, there are almost fifteen different types of question, that can be used in different study discipline. Quizzes require some time to devote at first, but once the question bank is ready the process is easy to navigate (instructor doesn't have to create question once again). Quizzes can be used in both formal and informal assessment, for example, instructors from language department, or mathematics often create quizzes and ask students to make them at home without giving points in it. The idea in this case is that students can practice by themselves at home, try several times, see the mistakes and work on it. Although there are some aspects (randomization of the questions; different set of questions for each student; different time limits;) which can be enabled to avoid academic dishonesty in students while working on quizzes, but still if only multiple choice questions are used, there is always a chance that students might get correct answers by chance.

In some courses, professors use writing assignments in order to assess student's ability how well they can apply the theories they have learned into the course. This type of assignments can be final papers, short essays, case analyses and etc. The idea is that students on the one hand can demonstrate

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2. Hoffman, B. and Lowe, D. (2011, January). Effective online assessment: Scalable success strategies. In Faculty Seminars in Online Teaching. Seminar series conducted at the University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL. Retrieved from <https://online.ucf.edu/faculty-seminar01/>.



that they have read the reading materials and on another hand are now able to use it to discuss or state new ideas. This kind of assessment is more difficult than quizzes, as it requires students to write their own concepts, and from the professor's perspective it also needs more time to be assessed. In writing assignment several skills can be assessed at the same time, as the final papers/mid-term exams allocate different topics.

In a face to face class discussions in large groups might not be an appropriate format (let's say with 80-100 students), while in blended method it can be used to assess the critical/analytical skills in students. The instructor is able to create discussion forum in learning management system and ask students to reply to the main topic and/or write at least two/three replies to others. Using this method, the instructor can assess how well students are prepared for specific topic, how they can express their own ideas with arguments and etc.

Peer review assignment can also be done in learning management system. Instructor asks students to submit the papers and later he/she makes couples out of these students and asks them to grade their classmate's paper. The instructor evaluates how adequate was the feedback from the reviewer, what were the mistake they pointed out and if they offered solutions with this mistakes (if the feedback was developmental). Using this activity as an assessment method is highly recommended in higher education, as students are taught the way they can provide argumentative feedback to their pairs (that is crucially important in the academia). From their comments, it is easy to understand how deep they know subject.

As we have already mentioned the assessment activities can vary from system to system, but there are few things that has to be taken into consideration. When using blended learning method students are alone with their smartphones and computers, they can't ask questions immediately, thus the instruction of the assignment has to be clear and concrete. The instructor should give a brief

description of the task, with the deadlines and any reading material that is connected to this assignment. In addition to this, it's also important to remind what are the technical requirements (for example: is this individual assignment or a group one; which academic style should they refer; how should they submit the paper etc.) and what is grading rubrics. As a rule, the rubrics are given in the course syllabi, but it's highly recommended to state them in the assignment again. Some of the tools make it possible to grade student's papers directly with using grades, so that the students see in which criteria they are good and in which they need to improve their performance.

As we have mentioned, when using learning management system learners shouldn't have feeling that they are alone with the assignments. Instructor should provide detailed and individual feedback in a timely manner. Nowadays, different digital tools make it possible for the instructors to make comments in many different format (written, audio, inline). These tools also guarantee that the comments will only visible for the author of the paper with accordance to ethical norms. The time frame is also key in feedback. If teacher provides comments only by the end of the course, it seems to be ineffective, as the whole activities are already done and student can't reflect to teacher's comments. But when student is getting feedback right after each assignment he/she tries to take it into consideration for the next assignment and improve their learning outcomes.

The diagram below shows the comparison between Bloom's taxonomy and the most usable learning management system – Moodle's activities. Depended on their needs instructors can decide which type of activity they create to assess their student's outcomes.

## BLOOM'S DIGITAL TAXONOMY AND MOODLE

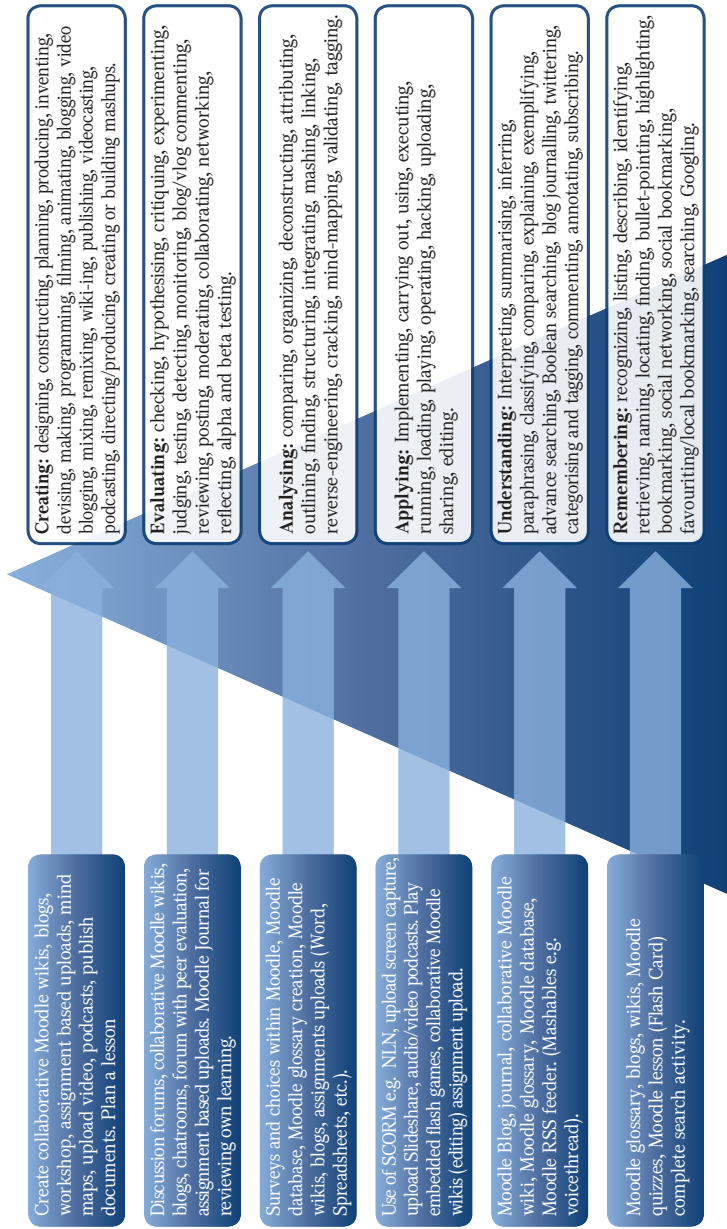
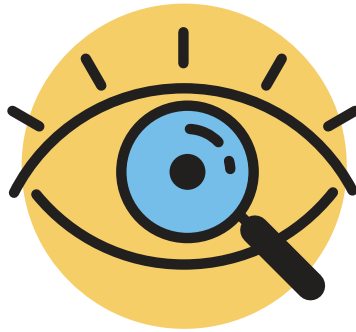


Figure 1. Source: <https://bit.ly/2Rbi7ie>

## PART 6

# PRACTICAL ASPECTS



A hybrid/blended course, by definition, reduces face-to-face “seat time” so that students can pursue additional teaching and learning activities online. To be successful, a hybrid/blended course requires careful pedagogical redesign in order to find the most effective mix. There is no magic formula that will suddenly reveal this mixture. It is part of the teaching job to test and revise the course materials.

Thus, when developing blended learning concepts, a meaningful and a well-founded combination of face-to-face learning and e-learning is highly respected. Any wider blended learning system should be seen as an environment in which learners staying and moving for a long time. Therefore, this environment should be planned in a way that the students feel comfortable in it, be able to work effectively and get in contact with others.

By using a learning management system, face-to-face classes can enhance without losing the energy and contact that class meetings provide. Furthermore, promoting of collaborative learning should be taken into consideration: presence lessons gain an important significance when group learning processes are stimulated and group work is carried out. The possibility to get in direct contact to get to know each other makes it easier to find learning groups. When it comes to online communication, it is important for participants to get to know each other in order to communicate well online and not to get the feeling of isolated learning. When real people are associated with the names, this often also contributes to a significant improvement in online communication. The face-to-face courses have positive and important effects on motivation and persistence of students as well. Particularly in the case of longer e-learning courses, the exchange of experiences and reflection is important and helps to reduce dropouts.

For not experienced online learners and for longer online-based training courses, classroom courses can provide a joint introduction to offer organizational and communicative processes of the entire further education and

especially fears of technologies can be reduced in that way. The longer a blended course takes place, the more important it is that face-to-face events prove to be for the motivation and stamina of the participants. For participants who are inexperienced online, face-to-face events prove to be particularly important, especially for exchanging information about the previously unfamiliar form of learning.

In addition, a few practical aspects of running hybrid/blended courses:

- Hybrid teaching is not just a matter of transferring a part of the traditional course to online activities. Alternatively, it involves developing challenging and engaging online learning activities that complement the face-to-face activities.
- Course-Redesign is a step-by-step process. First try not to include too many new activities. Start small and build it up step by step.
- Start early with the redesign of your course and produce actual learning modules that meet specific learning goals and are relatively easy to manage and grade.
- Keep the use of technology simple to avoid the course becoming a disaster for the students and gradually add more advanced technology. By significantly increasing the number of tasks and opportunities for feedback, the workload could also be increased.
- One should focus on the development of new learning activities that capitalize on the strengths of the online and face-to-face learning environments. Avoid covering too much material and including too many activities in the redesigned course leading to “one and a half courses”.
- The blended course should not be overloaded: online courses took much more time than originally planned.
- Provide timely and positive feedback (to increase their motivation) to the students and communicate with them on a regular basis.

- Facilitate online discussions and group activities.
- Provide a clear schedule of activities, specify any requirements and improve the content of your course based on the student.
- Have fun – jokes and laughter in the virtual classroom foster the sense of belonging to the entire learning community.

## PART 7

# DEBRIEFING





Blended/hybrid teaching and learning is a combination of traditional forms of classroom teaching with various elements of e-learning or IT, such as video, computer graphics, audio snippets, interactive elements, etc. This type of training includes elements of independent management of the student's educational route, the ability to choose place, time and pace of education, as well as the combination of learning experience with the teacher and education using IT.

At the same time, debriefing is becoming one of the most important points. Debriefing is the process of analysis of interactive training participants' views or opinions, as well as comparing their solutions to the problem+ with alternative ones. Debriefing is, in some way, the reverse of a briefing: the one who is asked questions returns those questions to those who ask. During the process of communication, a person who, by his role, has answers to questions, interviews another person so that he independently arrives at conclusions about his behavior. This process of returning the question to the audience, the transfer of the role of "knowing" to the person himself is called debriefing. The purpose of debriefing is not to admit the students' judgments as true or false, but to help them extract information from the analysis of their answers, to make the students approach to the problem from different points of view, and thereby give them more opportunities to choose actions.



Debriefing is widely used in the field of education. Debriefing is a discussion with the trainee of what has been done and in what ways, what can be

improved and what needs to be deepened and expanded in the learning process. Debriefing can be carried out both individually and in a group after the student completes one or another task.

Debriefing is useful for consolidating the results of theoretical and practical exercises. In this case, it is necessary to discuss the views of the trainees regarding the possibilities of using the information received and new skills. Debriefing not only helps to improve the ability (knowledge, skill), but is also useful for working with the attitudes of students regarding the application of these abilities, knowledge, and skills.

Debriefing can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of training. In this process, the teacher changes roles with the trainees, feedback is provided from students to the teacher, and the topic of debriefing is the course (topic) studied by the student, its results.

Debriefing is at the core of blended and hybrid learning. Since the training takes place not only in class, but interactively, which often does not give the learner a sense of how correctly he interprets the information received, whether he is moving in the right direction or mistakenly interprets certain concepts. In the case of group exercises (when hybrid learning is used for a whole group of students), debriefing is the only way to reconsider the completed exercise with a discussion of the basic skills that the participants learned.

**The purpose of debriefing** is to bring the participants (students) of blended and hybrid learning to ways to solve the problem from different points of view, and thereby give them more opportunities to act in situations similar to those demonstrated during online training. Both a single student and a group of students taking this course take part in the debriefing. Naturally, a teacher is involved in the debriefing as a process controlling person.

Debriefing as an element of blended and hybrid learning allows to implement a modern understanding of feedback. Since introspection is the

basis of debriefing, the student (trainee) himself becomes both a feedback communicator and its recipient. At the same time, the teacher is also a feedback communicator, but indirectly - through questions that he asks the recipient. Other participants (students) are also indirect recipients, as they mentally answer the questions posed to the participant mentally.

**Feedback, submitted in the traditional way**, is a component of monologic communication, which, although presented in the training, is not as much as in communication-dialogue. The monologic, or subject-object, approach to communication is characterized by the assumption of recipient passivity, the presence of a manipulative attitude, and the lack of willingness of conversationalists to self-disclosure.

**Let's consider debriefing as a way to provide feedback in the context of a blended/hybrid learning:**

## **7.1. Equal Psychological Positions of Dialogue Participants**

During the debriefing, the equal position of the teacher and student is ensured by the fact that the teacher is equal with the others (students), he adds and summarizes the information received from them. In their turn, these others do not wait for ready answers from the teacher, but actively participate in the process of analyzing the situation and finding the right solution.

## **7.2. Acceptance of a Communication Partner**

In this context, the orientation towards acceptance and trust is the teacher's inner confidence in the abilities and abilities of each student. When conducting a debriefing, to the forefront comes not an evaluation of the experience gained

by the participant, but the participants' own opinion about how this experience relates to his life guidelines and his idea of the correct performance of the skill.

### 7.3. Orientation Towards Partnership



When submitting feedback using debriefing, the efforts of the students and the teacher are combined to achieve a common result - understanding the nature of the skill performance. In the traditional presentation, it is understood that the teacher already owns the knowledge and the students act as “partners” only if they agree with the feedback and use the information provided to them. In debriefing, partnership begins at the stage of “**creating knowledge**” (a variant of effective behavior appropriate to the situation), and continues at the stage of its use. In the debriefing, both the teacher and the student have no manipulative attitudes; students do not have the need to argue with the teacher (which often happens in the traditional presentation of feedback), since they themselves are the authors of most of the judgments. The teacher also does not need to prove anything to the students, because the focus of the discussion is their experience, their perception of this experience and its consequences, the conclusions that they can draw.

## **7.4. Initiating the Work of Participants on Self-Knowledge**

The debriefing procedure, based on the questions' formulation, launches not only interpersonal dialogue in the group, but also the intrapersonal dialogue of each participant. The traditional presentation of feedback, which provides information, contributes little to thinking about his behavior and his experience in self-analysis. During the debriefing, participants gain experience in behavioral analysis, which becomes an important skill used in situations outside the learning process.

## **7.5. A New Understanding of the Communication Subject as a Dialogue Result**

During discussing complex communication skills in debriefing, there often emerges new understanding of an aspect both for the teacher and for the students.

Ways of debriefing implementation in blended/hybrid teaching and learning:

1. Questionnaire (feedback);
2. Creating a topic for general discussion;
3. Discussion of issues evaluating knowledge in a group of students;
4. Creating a chat room to discuss topics among students.
5. Quiz.

The traditional way of presenting lies in the teacher's evaluation of the demonstrated behavior (analysis of the degree of materials' assimilation) by students and provision of specific examples that justify it. Debriefing consists of questions for the learner himself with the aim of self-assessment of his knowledge (skills, learning outcomes and degree of involvement of the process), feedback from the teacher and students.

With the development of complex skills, debriefing gives more positive emotional, cognitive and motivational effects than the traditional feedback. During the debriefing, feedback is often accepted, i.e. a person is more willing to work with the information received in the absence of activation of protective psychological mechanisms.

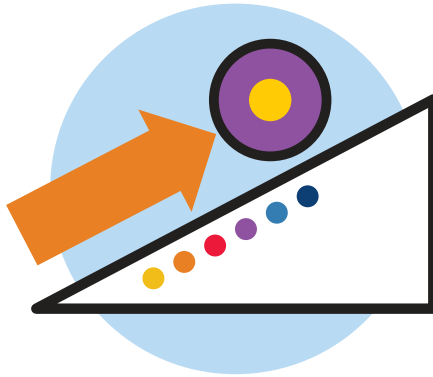
So, debriefing has several advantages over the traditional way of feedback submitting: 1) increases the motivation for participation in the learning process; 2) is associated with positive feedback effects; 3) promotes the adoption of feedback, reducing the activation of protective mechanisms; 4) reduces the impact of the communicator on the feedback effect; 5) allows to work with the motivation of participants.

In the process of debriefing, the participants of the lesson gain knowledge of each other's practical experience, i.e. get the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others. Therefore, a debriefing session is the most important part of the lesson using interactive technologies. The teacher can use the feedback technology both at one of the stages of collaboration and on the final results of the lesson. The teacher must certainly give a clear assessment of what is happening and express their professional opinion. This is important for the trainees to understand - what they have already learned (what needs to be fixed) and what should be learned in the future (what to correct).



## PART 8

# POTENTIAL CHALLENGES





Blended learning technologies provide an opportunity to work with a different student audience (students working in parallel with studies, students with special psychophysical development, students of different levels of background and basic knowledge), allowing the student to independently determine the time and amount of access to the materials of the taught discipline, the degree to which they need to fulfill tasks of a basic and advanced level, shifting the emphasis from the active role of the teacher to the student's independent responsibility.



Teachers prefer blended learning, because it increases the quantity and quality of interaction between participants in the educational process, expands opportunities for active joint learning, promotes the diversity of the use of media for presenting course content, adds new types of interactive learning activities to training, and allows most of the time to be used for active learning by shifting the course content to the online environment. It allows students to access and master course materials at a convenient time, in a convenient place, at your own pace.

At the same time, when implementing the techniques and methods of blended learning, one can single out a number of difficulties and disadvantages that both teachers and students face.

- 1) When placing materials in electronic form, there is no activity component of training, communication with the teacher and fellow students, the interactive is limited to tête-à-tête communication, therefore, options for working in small groups “here and now” are practically excluded;
- 2) To develop a textual version of classroom lectures and assignments for working in the classroom, the teacher is not required to have special competencies in the field of information and communication; it is enough just to be fluent in the subject. At the same time, for organizing interactive classes, such knowledge at a sufficiently high level is necessary primarily for the teacher, or you need to attract a fairly high-paid programmer, and with specific experience in the preparation of didactic materials;
- 3) The ability to copy information on electronic media, audio-video-infographic materials and actual textual information actualizes the problem of copyright protection. Creating unique content of his/her discipline, the teacher must be sure that he/she will not face the problem of plagiarism;
- 4) For the introduction of innovative practices in the learning process, a certain level of technical equipment is necessary both in the audience and at the student’s potential workplace - the presence of gadgets with which you can not only get acquainted with the materials of the discipline online, but also quickly and efficiently complete tasks, for example, posting video content, commenting on the work of classmates, interacting interactively with the teacher;
- 5) The reluctance of teachers to abandon traditional teaching methods and introduce new models leads to passivity of older teachers, unwillingness to learn new methods, increases the age and social gap with the student audience and ultimately leads to a critical assessment of the level of education received by university graduates;

- 6) The time spent on the initial preparation of the course involves a fairly in-depth work on each discipline. In order to create and upload video elements, supplement them with hyperlinks to the necessary external resources, expanding the context of understanding of the taught discipline, think over and place the task system on the electronic platform, and also structure assessment and feedback criteria, a significant time resource is needed, which teachers do not always have;
- 7) It is important to have a preliminary clear understanding of the effectiveness of the tools used and the results that the teacher and student come to as a result of their application. It is necessary to initially determine the most correct techniques, methods and types of tasks that meet the teacher's needs in teaching the course, and also relate them to the potential financial and time costs for its development;
- 8) The lack of students' self-organization skills of study and motivation for independent work leads to their inability to independently allocate time to familiarize themselves with the course materials, their understanding and assignments. Setting deadlines does not always contribute to a clearer orientation of the student, sometimes the teacher is forced to do additional work to check tasks after the fact, assigning additional time to work with the student;
- 9) Students should also have basic knowledge of technology and have the motivation to learn in a mixed approach. It is thus necessary to teach and help students, especially rigid, poorly responsive to changes in the educational environment. For this, it is also necessary to develop a system of training seminars and master classes that help students get an initial idea of the phenomenon of blended learning, about the resources used and the possibilities of combining online training with traditional classroom forms.

Nevertheless, despite the difficulties and challenges that the philosophy and paradigm of blended learning demonstrate at the initial stage, the advantages of using such a concept in the modern world are obvious. In conditions of active interaction of real and virtual reality, the emergence of a huge number of sources of diverse spectrum and quality of information, the active dissemination of social media as the main sources of news and authoritative views of the opinion leaders, blended learning allows you to optimize the learning process as a whole. The student becomes an active participant in the educational process, able to build an individual educational path based on their own needs, which contributes to the formation of a competent specialist, competitive in modern conditions.



## PART 9

# TIPS FOR USING THE METHOD





## Blended learning in distance education

Blended learning is an ideal form for distance education, as it allows students to independently study the necessary sources during the semester, to complete tasks according to the schedule that is most convenient for them, and they are not required to constantly attend lectures in classes. At the same time, they have the opportunity of operational interactive feedback with the teacher, which they were deprived of in the classical forms of distance education.



## Blended learning tools

The most relevant tools in modern conditions are electronic portfolio and project-oriented training. They allow you to maximize the student's potential, his/her strong characteristics, contribute to teamwork, improve presentation skills and provide an opportunity to declare oneself as a competitive professional.



## Redefine instructor's role in the classroom

In traditional teaching methods teacher is the person who owns some knowledge and is in the center of the class and tries to pass the expertise. In this model, the students had passive role, they could only listen and try to study from it. Some changes are being introduced nowadays, active participation from students is the key to improve their learning outcomes. Teachers should try to move from the role of someone being the provider to someone who tries to support students in discovering new things.



## Use technology to support face to face activities

As the technological development brought new challenges, we need to integrate them in the teaching process as well. There is no need to transform face to face course into a digital one, but using some technologies might increase the course outcomes and raise student's satisfaction. Teacher can use the simplest webinar tools, or discussion forums to promote student's participation. In addition to classroom activities teacher can create assignment that can be done home. This gives possibility to students to work on the course materials outside of the classroom in any location they feel comfortable with.



## Develop a classroom culture that embraces blended learning

Blended learning combines the benefits of both traditional and distance learning. Teachers are occupied by teaching, evaluating and receiving feedback from students. Learning is becoming more effective thanks to the close interaction of teachers and students. Face-to-face traditional learning encourages interaction not only between the teacher and students, but also between students. Students have the opportunity to learn and share their knowledge with others.

Blended learning gives the teacher and student many opportunities to interact in the classroom and online. In addition to traditional teaching blended learning provides many teaching opportunities. This intense interaction creates an enabling environment for development. Blended learning increases the pace of learning and develops cognitive, communication abilities.





## Encourage collaboration

Blended learning involves collaboration both in the classroom and online. In case of discussion in an online environment, each student connects to a common virtual learning environment, through a personal computer. During the discussion, the student facilitator or teacher organizes a general discussion of the topic. The teacher, on the other hand, controls the discussion process, the nature of students' communication with each other.

The productivity of the classes, in the form of a discussion, is manifested in the fact that usually silent students also join in the discussion. The discussion of the problem in the online environment leaves no one indifferent, since in this case students feel comfortable in expressing their ideas, there is no embarrassment factor in speaking to an audience.

For effective collaboration, the capabilities of LMS systems can be used, namely such tools as Blogs and Forums, where students, in the form of comments, can exchange their ideas and discuss issues related to the topic.



## Collegial process

Find experienced blended faculty members who are willing to share their experiences with you. Discuss your problems and progress with colleagues, whether they are using the hybrid or not and get feedback and support from faculty and experienced instructors who have taught hybrid courses. The exchange of ideas brings benefits for both sides and for the students as well.



## Keep it simple starting the course

Start your blended-learning course with a few technology tools that integrate well into your course. Use the tools appropriately in order to not create extra work for you and for your students. Identify and develop plans, materials, and activities to help students with the technology and time management challenges.

Things will occasionally go wrong; plan carefully and be flexible about making adjustments where needed. Develop a plan for conducting course activities when technology fails. For example, keep a backup copy of files on a home computer so you can e-mail important information to students.



## Focus on the design of the course (not technology)

Focus on the integration of the online and face-to-face parts of the blended course. Connecting what occurs in class with what is studied online is critical so teachers do not end up teaching two parallel but unconnected courses.



## Manage student's expectations

Try to explain and justify the course format and assignments clearly and repeatedly to your students and make sure that they understand the similarity

between the amount of work in face-to-face classes and in a hybrid classes. Try to make all assignments right from the start and make sure that the schedule of present time and online work is clear to the students. In case, provide time management tips for students. Finally, ask for feedback from your students often and take their responses seriously.



## Classroom versus homework

Some students need help to understand the concept of “reduced seat time.” They do not consider time in the classroom to be “work”. However, time spent online outside the classroom is “work” and they have more “work” at home in a blended course.

Some students are not sufficiently mature to understand their responsibility for active learning strategies. They need to define their responsibility and the follow-up of their failure.



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Innovative teaching is a proactive approach to integrate new teaching and learning (T&L) strategies and methods into a classroom. New technology plays a key role in innovative T&L to offer students a more interactive and attractive experience. Innovative T&L also involves creativity on the part of the teacher who reorganizes the educational process by transforming from “being a lecturer” to “being a designer” of learning methods and environments. Here the teacher serves as a guide or consultant while students participate. A primary motive of innovative T&L is to encourage the students’ broad engagement in the learning process. When students interact with teachers and peers, they gain more practical experience and retain more information from a class.

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