



New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences



Issue 5 (2016) 93-97

Selected paper of 4th Cyprus International Conference on Educational Research (CYICER-2015) March 19 – 21, 2015, Girne American University in Kyrenia, CYPRUS

Blended Learning in the Study of Czech Students and Foreign Students

Sarka Hubackova^{a*}, University of Hradec Kralove, Rokitanskeho 62, 50003 Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic

Suggested Citation:

Hubackova, S. (2016). Blended learning in the study of Czech students and foreign students. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. [Online]. 05, pp 93-97. Available from: www.prosoc.eu

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Cigdem Hursen, Near East University
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Abstract

The online courses are a very good motivation tool. They surely support all education, foreign language teaching inclusive. As for use of blended learning in foreign language teaching, it is a case of very progressive and useful way. Learning on our praxis and experience we regard blended learning as a very suitable means of teaching German and we count on its extension into other education fields. The researchers constantly enrich their created courses by using new technical possibilities. And also for this reason they are popular with our students. An anonymous evaluation of the courses takes place usually place in the end of a term. All students say that the teaching by means of supporting courses suits them.

Keywords: Blended learning; Comparison; Foreign students; German language

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Sarka Hubackova**, University of Hradec Kralove, Rokitanskeho 62, 50003 Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic

E-mail address: Sarka.hubackova@uhk.cz / Tel.: +420 493 332 302

1. Introduction

Contemporary pedagogy takes advantage of the most modern methodologies. Without a doubt, blended learning is one of them. We regard it as a combination of standard contact teaching and e-learning. Contemporary theory differentiates two basic types of teaching. They may be linked and combined in blended learning: it is a synchronous teaching and an asynchronous one. The synchronous teaching is realized in real time. During this time, all partners, who are taught, are presented with material that is gone over at the same time and they can react mutually. The asynchronous teaching is usually held at different time. Students may choose their own tempo and mood in which they accept information, but they cannot react mutually at the same real time. Printed handbooks and course books, audio or video records or electronic learning courses, for example, use this mood of teaching.

There is no accurate and sole definition of the term blended learning. There are lots of definitions and approaches to that conception. The combination in question means several elements of teaching – tools, methods, time, place, technology, people and so on.

eLearning as a new form of education is used in the whole learning process in many secondary schools and universities in these days. It is used very often in combined forms of learning process: in the attendance process as so called blended learning, in a combination of eLearning and contact learning process. The eLearning form of teaching supposes good computer equipment with an access to the Internet.

The term of blended learning encompasses many methods. They influence the teaching process very effectively and present learning contents through suitable internet collaboration software or through web-based courses to a learner. The term blended learning is often used also as a description of a teaching process combining a lot of activities. Among them many be the teaching at face-to-face classrooms, live e-learning, self-paced learning. Blended learning is often characterised as a distant learning supported by e-learning. The term boundary is not given clearly with that conception.

Many specialists introduce blended learning as an ideal form of teaching, because it combines classical teaching methods with the usage of electronic tools. The effectiveness of teaching is of crucial importance to teachers. Any teaching is effective in the case when the teacher earns the given teaching goals through the programme he had chosen.

There exists measurement of hard and soft skills. The difference between them draws on the difficulty of measurement. Hard skills may be measured very easily by means of a classical test. As for the soft skills the situation is more complicated.

Basic blended learning models

Blended learning is often categorized into three models:

1. Skill-driven learning

The model combines the individual learning with the support of a teacher or facilitator who backs the skill development of a learner.

2. Attitude-driven learning

The model operates with selected events and with mass media. In this way it influences learner's behaviour.

3. Competence-driven learning

The model combines several methods that can influence the development of learner's competence.

2. Blended Learning in the Study of Czech Students and Foreign Students

In our study we have tried to compare our students' approach and foreign students' approach to blended learning. Using questionnaire the researchers have found out their experience with blended learning, with usage of various parts of on-line courses, the work frequency is on-line courses etc.

The researchers graph the finding results in follow-up figures. The groups compared consisted of Czech second year students and of foreign students who have studied at their faculty one or two terms. We know that those often are of different age groups. The response to the question how often do you work in an on-line course were as follows:

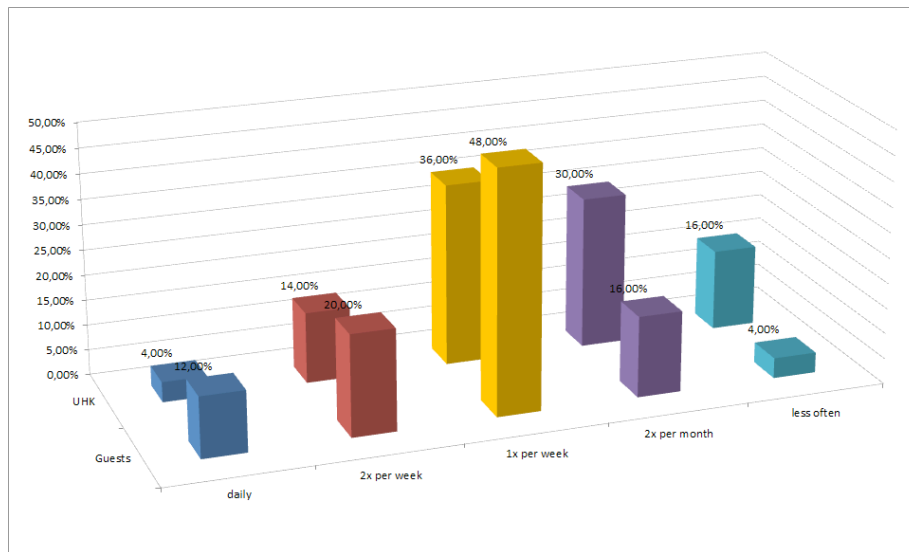


Figure 1. The work frequency in on-line courses

The next question was: More suitable for you is contact learning or teaching supported by an online course, that is blended learning? The method of blended learning pivoted in both groups in a single-minded way.

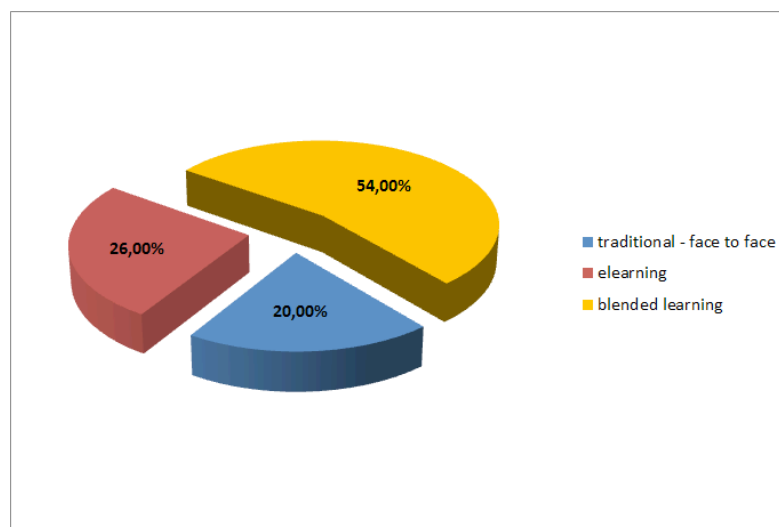


Figure 2. The more suitable method for students

The foreign students have been asked about their experience with blended learning at their home universities. Most students have met the teaching by means of ICT already. It was so even despite of the fact, that they were not students of informatics in all cases.

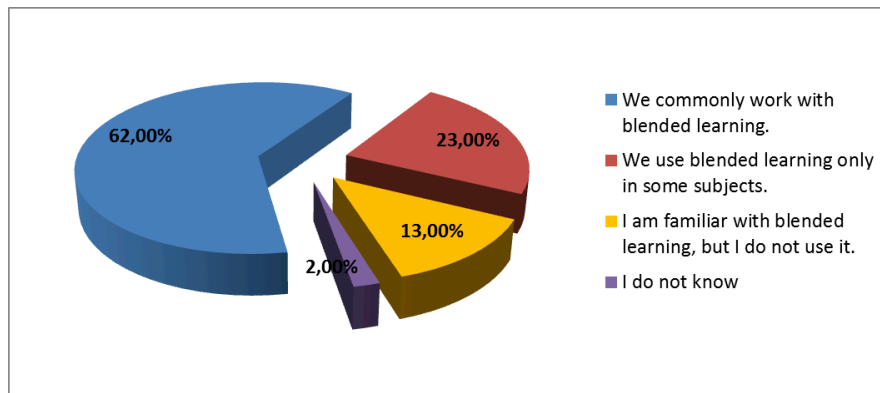


Figure 3. Experience with blended learning

The responses to the question how important do you find personal contact with the teacher were as follows:

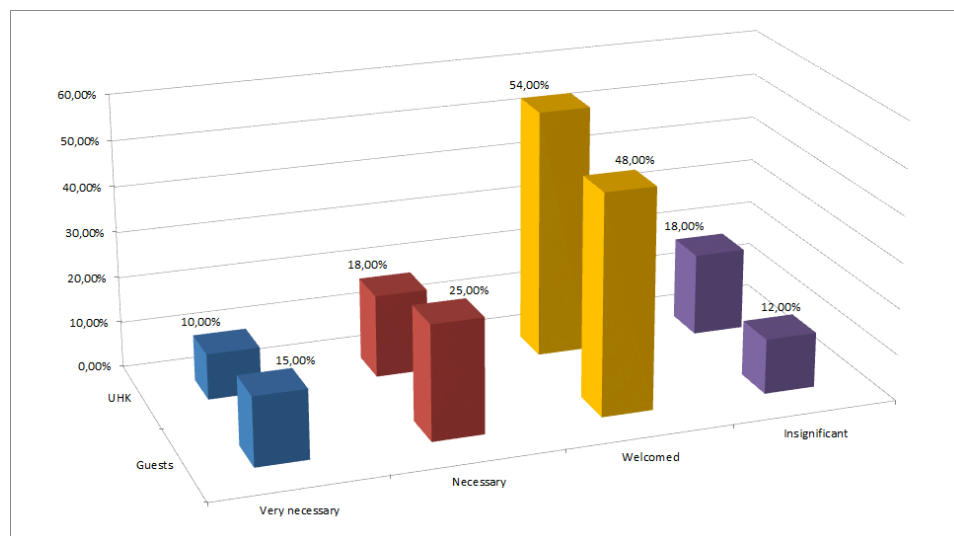


Figure 4. Personal contact with the teacher

3. Conclusion

The online courses are a very good motivation tool. They surely support all education, foreign language teaching inclusive. Blended learning method is very popular among the Czech and foreign students. The researchers constantly complete the current materials from the foreign Web pages. We have prepared the language on-line courses for beginners or advanced students of German and

English. We can offer the courses of ordinary, business, and banking languages. On the basis of their praxis, they consider the form of combined education as a very suitable one and they count on its further extension to other fields.

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