UDC 37.057.875

TEACHING IN A DIGITAL AGE: NEW FORMATS
OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS ORGANISATION

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The paper will consider the issue of transforming the higher education teaching and learning experience with reference to an increasing movement toward application of information technology in the sphere of education. The article focuses on the approaches in higher institutions with the view of arranging educational environment, which could help to meet the requirements for graduates.

In a digital age, we are surrounded, indeed, immersed, in technology. Furthermore, the rate of technological changeshows no sign of slowing down. Technology is leading to massive changes in the economy, in the way we communicateand relate to each other, and increasingly in the way we learn. Yet our educational institutions were built largely foranother age, based around an industrial rather than a digital era.Thus teachers andinstructors are faced with a massive challenge of change. How can we ensure that we aredeveloping the kinds of graduates from our courses and programs that are fit for future? What should we continue to protect in our teaching methods (and institutions), andwhat needs to change?

Over the past twenty years, advances in the areas of web and video content delivery have aided the growth of technology-based teaching methodologies.The numerous and varied educational institutions provide a number of courses or degrees,so we need to understand what each type of learning offers.

1. Traditional (Face-to-face) learning.

Same time, same place – this is a traditional face-to-face approach where the instructor and learners are in the same geographical location at the same time. Teaching students in a face-to-face context has been and, in many institutions of education, still is the onlyform of teaching in higher education.Most teachers enjoy their face-to-face teaching in higher education learning. It has been the "tried andtrue" way of teaching for many decades, and they feel comfortable and confident in this way ofteaching. Usually the face-to-face approach for large cohorts of students comprises 1–2 h of lecturesfollowed by 1–2 h smaller tutorial classes.

2. E-learning (Distance) learning.

E-learning can refer to the situation where the interaction between the students and the teacher is done online. Basically, the students receive the training and are taught through an online medium, even though the teacher may be in the same building with them. Although distance learning is understood and is often used as a synonym of the e-learning term, it was initially introduced in order to attract students from all over the world. Universities are offering distance learning degrees dedicated to everyone, as long as they meet entry requirements and qualifications. So it became possible for students from Europe for instance, to easily attend an American college without the need to travel.

3. Blended learning.

Blended learning is a combination of learning at a distance and the traditional on-site learning (in a class-room). Basically, students will have a (more or less) fixed schedule where they will have to attend a part of the classes at the educational institution and for the rest they can make their own schedule, attend the rest of the classes and do their coursework and assignments online.

Blended learning has been definedas "a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path or pace." [2]

Intable1 below, we can see that blended learning has the most to offer students in terms of communication between teacher and students, collaboration, and demonstration of learning. [2] It should be noted that they refer to "dropboxes" in the table but any file share system could be used.

E-learning has had an interesting impact on the learning environment.Although it represents tremendous potential in the way it couldrevolutionize learning and development, it has rapidly evolved into aconcept of blended learning which, like its name suggests, blends onlinelearning with more traditional methods of learning and development.Blended learning is the most logical and natural evolution of ourlearning agenda. It suggests an elegant solution to the challenges oftailoring learning and development to the needs of individuals. Itrepresents an opportunity to integrate the innovative and technologicaladvances offered by online learning with the interaction and participation offered in the best of traditional learning. It can be supported andenhanced by using the wisdom and one-to-one contact of personaltutors.

Table – Strategies, tools and resources of different forms of learning

Goal	Face-to-Face Learning	BlendedLearning	E-Learning
Communication between teacher and students	Full group lessons Small group lessons or tutorials Individual conferences Marked assignments and rubrics	Full group lessons Small group lessons or tutorials Individual conferences Marked assignments and rubrics Digital course materials Online discussions E-mail Instant messages News announcements Online calendar Dropboxes Online grade tool Rubrics	Digital course materials Online discussions E-mail Instant messages News announcements Online calendar Dropboxes Online grade tool Rubrics Web conferences
Collaborationamongstudents	Learning centres or other room arrangements Class discussions Face-to-face group work	Learning centres or other room arrangements Class discussions Face-to-face group work Online group work Online discussions E-mail Instant messages Blogs Electronic portfolios	Online group work Online discussions Chat sessions E-mail Instant messages Blogs Electronic portfolios Webconferences
Demonstrationoflearning	Paper-and-pencil tests and assignments submitted in person Live presentations, labs, performances, or exhibits of skill Models, works of art, posters, and other physical artifacts submitted in person	Paper-and-pencil tests and assignments submitted in person Live presentations, labs, performances, or exhibits of skill Models, works of art, posters, and other physical artifacts submitted in person Blogs Electronic portfolios Online discussions Online surveys and quizzes Assignments, such as essays, worksheets, slide shows, photographs, and videos submitted to electronic dropboxes	Blogs Electronic portfolios Online discussions Online surveys and quizzes Assignments, such as essays, worksheets, slide shows, photographs, and videos submitted to electronic dropboxes Webconferences

Polotsk State University offers some blended learning models to the students of daytime and extramural departments which allow students to take the flexibility and convenience of an online course while retaining the benefits of the face-to-face classroom experience. Having analyzed the possibilities of the most popular learning management systems (LMSs) in the republic, the university working group chose Google Apps for education platform with their Google Classroom service. Since September, 2014, Google Classroom has become the major service to support blended learning and enables teachers to create an online classroom area in which they can manage all the documents that their students need. In their turn students can access high-quality course materials, course calendars and assignments at any time of the day [3].

Today students have huge amounts of information at their fingertips, which changes how knowledge is consumed and transmitted, and decreases the need for memorization. With so much information available online, the issue for teachers is less one of what knowledge to pass on, but rather how to help students understand, interpret and apply the knowledge available to them. Plutarch, a Greek historian, biographer and essayist, seemed to make the point back in AD 45 when he said that 'the mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled' [4].

The real importance and significance in blended learning lies in its potential. The potential of blended learning is almost limitless and represents a naturally evolving process from traditional forms of learning to a personalized and focused development path. Blended learning represents a real opportunity to create learning

experiences that can provide the right learning at the right time and in the right place for each and every individual, in schools, universities and even at home. It can be truly universal, crossing global boundaries and bringing groups of learners together through different cultures and time zones. In this context blended learning could become one of the most significant developments of the 21st century.

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