

# PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES

## BLENDED LEARNING ONE OF THE TOOLS TO INCREASE INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENT AND CREATE SOFT SKILLS

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### Abstract

The article by Polumeeva I.N. considers the issue of increasing student involvement in the educational process through blended learning, the impact of blended learning on the development of soft skills, indicates student satisfaction with blended learning, the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning from the perspective of students are noticed, draws attention to the models of blended learning that can improve the effectiveness of subject learning.

**Keywords:** blended learning, traditional learning, soft skills, ECTS system, feedback, educational portal.

The challenges of today's rapidly changing society, where skills become obsolete every 3-5 years, increase the requirements for graduates in terms of their academic achievements and competencies. The use of blended learning technologies can contribute to improving the system of professional and personal competencies of graduates. [1, p. 240] Every graduate requires both hard skills (professional skills) and soft skills (non-professional skills) that help them in their work, communication, decision-making, and adaptation to new conditions. Blended learning promotes the formation of soft skills, as this approach combines traditional learning methods with distance and online

methods, which allows you to develop creativity, critical thinking, communication, self-discipline, and time management.

The combination of traditional teaching methods with digital technologies provides an opportunity to increase students' involvement in the educational process. A survey on the satisfaction of the blended learning was conducted among first-year students (who were studied in a blended learning) at the end of the first semester. A total of 75 students participated in the survey. As shown in Figure 1, 92% of the respondents expressed their satisfaction with the blended format of education, while 5% were dissatisfied and 3% found it difficult to answer.

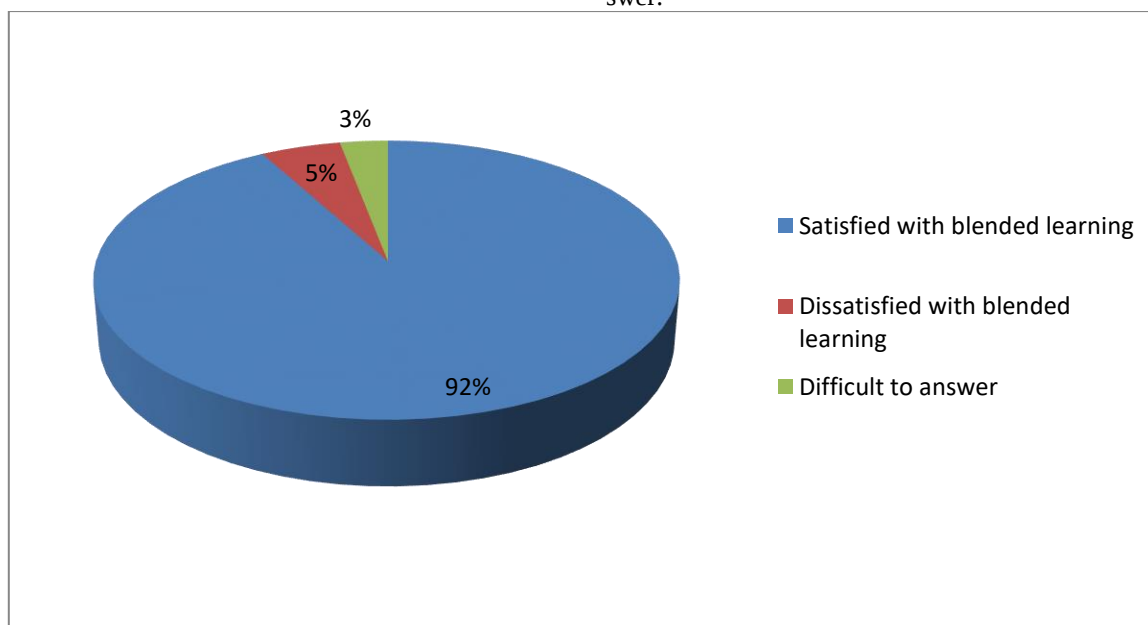


Figure 1. Satisfaction with blended learning among first-year students.

The same group of recipients was asked to fill out a questionnaire, where they could select several points, with the choice of the pros and cons of blended learning. It should be noted that the pros and cons of blended learning were compiled, according to the first-year students in the last academic year. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out why the students showed

a high level of satisfaction with this learning format. As can be seen from Figure 2, the most frequently selected point is the ability to monitor progress – 50 appeals and control deadlines 35 appeals. And this is not surprising in the conditions of the ECTS system, when it is important for a student to be aware of his/her rating not only at the end of the semester, as a result of work on

the subject, but also during the semester, in order to be able to control the mastery of the subject. As we can see here, it is important for students to be informed during

their studies, to be independent and self-disciplined in following deadlines.

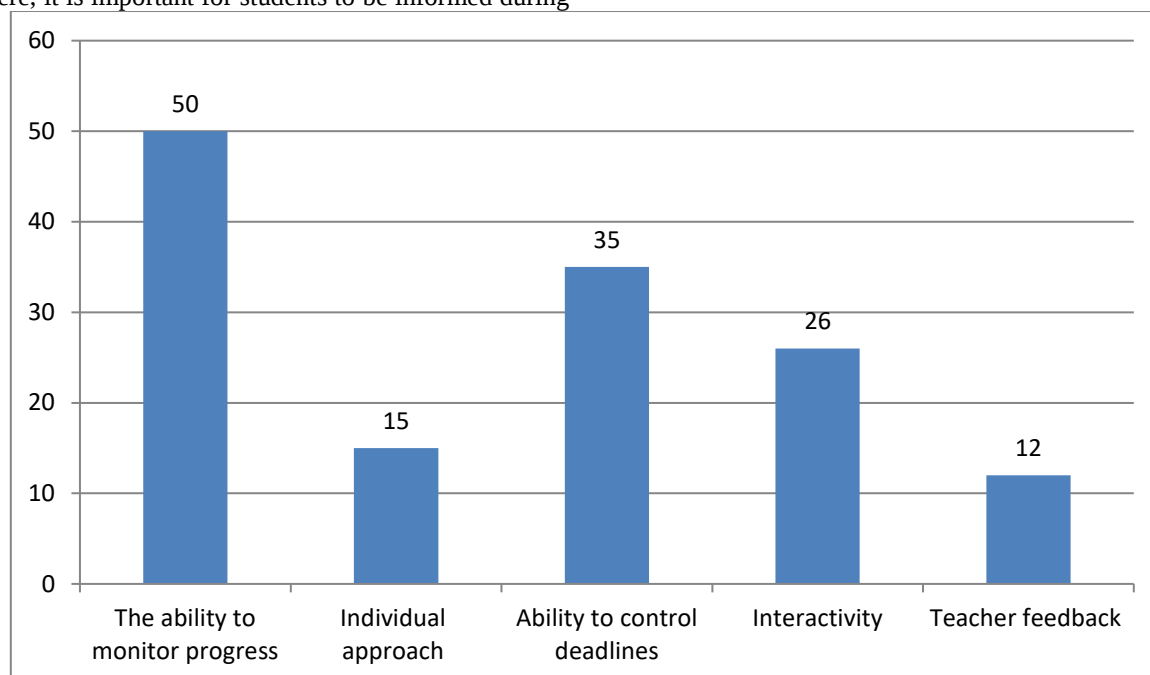


Figure 2: Benefits of blended learning.

It should be noted that an electronic course on the discipline "Foreign Language" was created for students studying in a mixed format on the university's educational portal, where topics were specified and study materials were provided. The portal also features an electronic attendance log for classroom sessions. The course includes homework assignments, such as completing tests and exercises, preparing presentations on specified topics, and following a minimum number of slides and a presentation plan provided by the teacher. Students are responsible for preparing their own information and questions for the audience. In the classroom the teacher explained the material and answered the questions that arose during self-study, conducted online testing, followed by analysis, and so on. Here we see the use of two mixed learning models - the Face-to-Face driver model and the Flipped classroom model. One more model should be mentioned, which received a wide response from students and was used in 100% of cases – this is the Flex Model. If a student misses classes for a valid reason (such as illness), they may lose points, and if the absences are prolonged, they may fall behind the rest of the class in terms of learning the subject. To prevent this, such students have the opportunity to complete assignments and tests alongside the rest of the class in the course on the educational portal, and if they have any questions, they can contact the teacher by sending a message on the educational portal.

The presence of a electronic course on the educational portal contributes to improving the effectiveness of the discipline, as all stakeholders have the opportunity to view the material at any time, monitor the students' ratings, and check the attendance of classroom sessions. [2] The blended format allows students being not in the classroom to receive feedback from the teacher. This was also indicated by the recipients in the questionnaire, with 12 responses (Figure 2). A mixed format is also an individual approach that allows students to learn at their own pace, for example, some students may need one hour to prepare a presentation, while others may need one day. In the questionnaire, the individual approach was selected 15 times. In the online communication format, the teacher adjusts the level and intensity of the workload for individual students, which allows the entire group to participate in the organization of time and level of learning, and increases student motivation [3, p. 601-602].

The questionnaire also asked the recipients to select the disadvantages of blended learning. As can be seen in Figure 3, the most common issue was low internet speed, with 15 responses, followed by additional time and increased computer usage, with 9 and 8 responses, respectively. Additionally, 5 respondents indicated that they found it inconvenient to work on a phone screen, and only 3 respondents expressed dissatisfaction with electronic textbooks.

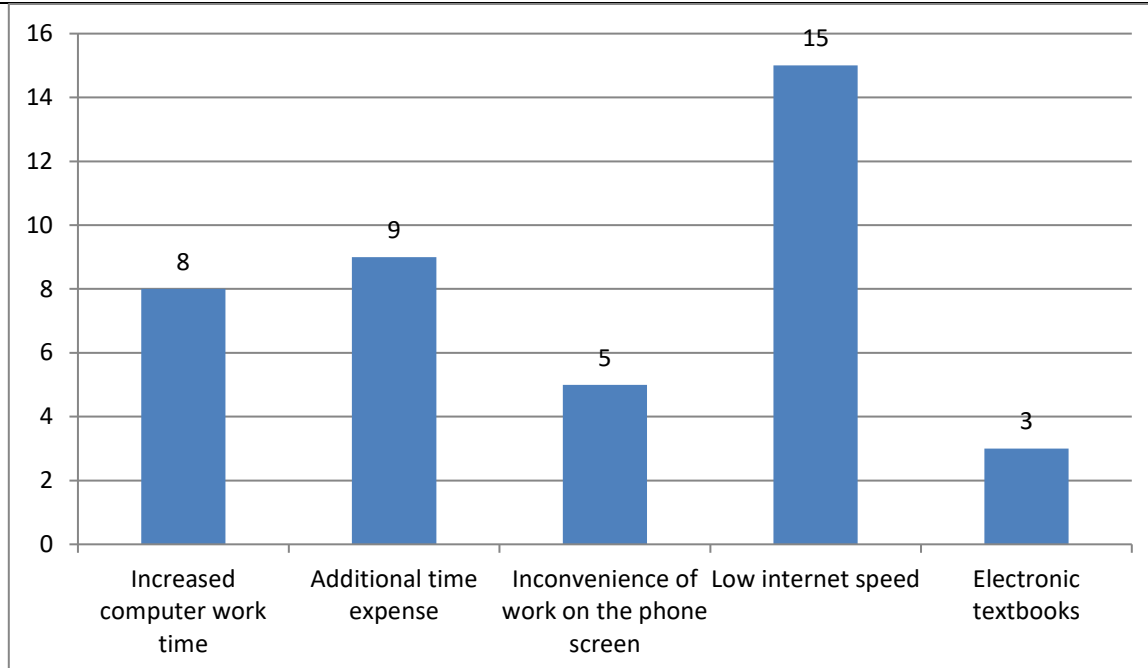


Figure 3. Student-perceived disadvantages of blended learning.

#### Conclusion

With the use of blended learning models, students' motivation to study the subject increases, the educational trajectory and assessment of results are clear, and there is a personal-oriented aspect and increased degree of responsibility of the participants in the educational process.[4] Thus, students have to use also soft skills to study the subject.

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