

# The role of pedagogical management in the blended learning system of higher education in the Russian Federation

## El papel de la gestión pedagógica en el sistema de aprendizaje mixto de la enseñanza superior en la Federación Rusa

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Received 09-08-20 Revised 12-10-20

Accepted 05-12-21 On line 06-20-21

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### Abstract

*This research contributes to the study of pedagogical management in the blended learning system, which has become especially widespread within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Pedagogical management is the process of managing the pedagogical process, which creates conditions for students to acquire knowledge, skills and abilities in accordance with their qualifications. The article deals with the essence of pedagogical management in the context of teaching students of higher education institutions.*

**Keywords:** Pedagogical management, education management, higher education.

## Resumen

Esta investigación contribuye al estudio de la gestión pedagógica en el sistema de aprendizaje mixto, que se ha extendido especialmente en el contexto de la pandemia de Covid-19. La gestión pedagógica es el proceso de gestión del proceso pedagógico, que crea las condiciones para que los estudiantes adquieran conocimientos, destrezas y habilidades de acuerdo con sus calificaciones. El artículo aborda la esencia de la gestión pedagógica en el contexto de la enseñanza de los estudiantes de las instituciones de educación superior.

**Palabras clave:** Gestión pedagógica, gestión de la educación, educación superior.

## Introduction

Globalization processes covering almost all spheres of human life could not but affect the existing education system. In the context of global economic, political, cultural and religious integration and unification, education faces new goals and objectives related to rethinking the existing principles of organizing the educational process and further integration into the general European education area. The educational system can advance only using the best practices of pedagogical management. Only a system and integrative approach to the organization of the educational process in higher education will provide conditions for increasing its effectiveness.

The improvement of the educational process is closely related to the achievements in pedagogical management both in Russia and in the world. The initial goals of pedagogical management were the creation of the higher educational institutions' education system that would correspond to the goals of the global education market, the integration and internalization of educational programs, the convergence of educational standards of different countries, the introduction of education to the spheres of commercialization (attraction of external, private investments), etc.

The role and importance of pedagogical management in the development of the educational system within the context of integrative processes is beyond doubt. Special attention is paid to pedagogical management within the context of introducing online learning, distance learning and blended learning into the teaching process.

Blended learning is considered as an institution-level management model (Bensona, Andersona & Oomsb, 2011). However, the attitude to blended learning among different social groups involved in the educational process is different. Moreover, there are no established criteria for managing blended learning. However, the researchers proceed from the claim that blended learning would maximize the benefits of traditional teaching methods and online learning. Lack of resources and time needed to develop a course, as well as problems associated with underdeveloped technologies and technological skills are considered as the main issues that arise in the development of training modules for blended learning.

A number of researchers (Ehren, Madrid, Romiti, Armstrong, Fisher, & Whorter, 2021) report inequality in the transition to alternative education methods. In the context of online learning and home schooling, the role and importance of pedagogical management increases thus requiring a teacher's personal abilities as well as individual and collective will.

The aspects of group cohesion and collaboration as distinctive advantages of blended learning acquire a special importance within our study (Arbaugh, 2014).

Special attention in pedagogical management is paid to issues related to the analysis of experience in the development of management education skills in the process of problem-

based learning. A distinctive feature of this teaching method is a problematic situation to be solved by both teachers and students (Ungaretti, Thompson, Miller, & Peterson, 2015; Aleinikova, 2021).

T.V. Masterkova (2019) considered current scientific approaches focused on pedagogical management. The forms and methods of pedagogical management applied by heads of educational institutions have been analyzed.

The subject of this research is pedagogical management in the blended learning system in higher education of the Russian Federation.

## **Research methods and approaches**

Theoretical methods of studying the material and a comparative analysis of sources were used for this article. Methods and approaches of statistical analysis were used as well. The empirical part of the research was based on a questionnaire survey of students with closed- and open-ended questions.

In total, 157 students divided into two groups took part in the experiment. The expert group consisted of 25 lecturers of higher education institutions. The experimental group consisted of 132 first- and second-year students of Russian higher education institutions.

The study included two stages. At the first stage, the expert group had to determine the main criteria for pedagogical management. At the second stage, students were surveyed according to the criteria selected by experts.

## **The essence and meaning of pedagogical management**

Henry Robinson Towne was one of the first to speak about management as a labor activity that is equal to engineering work with regard to its impact (Garmash, 2016: p. 17). Further science-based definition of management was presented in the theory of F. W. Taylor. Thus, according to the industrialist, the goal of any management is to increase the level of material welfare of management objects and to satisfy capital needs (Taylor, 1991: p. 3). This concept had a great public response and was called "reasonable egoism". The concept reflected the fact that only a manager with special skills can manage an organization, and not a business owner.

According to Taylor, special attention should be paid to intellectual values. The material well-being of members of an organization depends on the manager. Management ideas were further developed in the works of H. Emerson who defined the "twelve principles of efficiency". The main ones are as follows: clearly defined ideals; following common sense, not emotions; following a collegial opinion as the most competent one; maintaining discipline in a team; impartiality to subordinates without any personal likes or dislikes; continuous monitoring of work results; standardization of work operations; following clear written standard-practice instructions; efficiency-reward (Emerson, 1992: p.216). It should be noted that the ideas of H. Emerson drew strong criticism from F. W. Taylor. Nevertheless, these principles currently are the basis of management.

H. Fayol is considered the father of the classical management system. The functions of a manager he defined are valuable for our research: planning, prediction, coordination, organization, control and leading. The advantages and disadvantages of the previous work can be demonstrated by the final results of employees` activity (Fayol, 1984: p. 13).

Despite the existing variety of studies related to organization management, the meaning of the "pedagogical management" notion is a relevant subject to study. Understanding pedagogical management is associated with the analysis of existing knowledge of management theory and practice in philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, economics, etc.

Thus, in order to reveal the meaning of "pedagogical management", it is necessary to involve studies in which this phenomenon has been studied from different points of view: the features of "pedagogical management" concept content have been established, management components have been analyzed, and prospects for further development have been outlined. The analysis of existing management definitions allows us to conclude that pedagogical management is a type of management activity in the field of education. It is a set of methods, techniques, principles and approaches aimed at improving the quality and efficiency of educational process (Simonov, 2007: 509).

From the standpoint of pedagogical management, a teacher's activity is a purposeful process, which can be defined only by revealing the essence of the teaching work.

From the standpoint of a vigorous activity approach, a teacher's professional activity includes a purposeful process associated with the influence on students in the process of teaching. In the context of teaching specialists at higher education institutions, professional and teaching activity is associated with educational and professional activities, production and training activities, educational and research activities, educational and methodological activities, as well as organizational and management activities and educational work.

The purpose of pedagogical activity relating to blended learning within pedagogical management is as follows:

1) To organize the educational process in such a way that the forces, funds and time of both organizers and teachers are effectively used.

2) To ensure that the activity of organizers corresponds to specific goals and plans. The goals of the educational process shall have no contradictions, shall be interrelated and specific, and shall also subordinate to the main goal of the educational process: to get knowledge, to educate and to develop students' personalities to be ready to work and to perform professional activities, and to form students' scientific worldview;

3) Teachers and students shall have specific learning objectives. All participants of the educational process shall understand the final result of mastering and acquiring knowledge required. They shall realize the deadline for achieving a goal and take into account the amount of time, effort and energy they can spend. Students and teachers shall know what and when should be done, what tasks should be performed in the educational process. All participants of the educational process shall clearly understand goals and responsibilities.

### **Blended learning as a new form of education**

Teaching students is a challenging task for higher education institutions. The quality of teaching depends on how well the teaching system is arranged.

The activity of higher education institutions is governed by the Federal State Educational Standard. The Federal State Educational Standard is a set of mandatory requirements to be applied in the implementation of basic educational programs of primary general, basic general, secondary (complete) general, primary vocational, secondary vocational and higher vocational education by government-accredited educational institutions.

Federal state educational standards ensure the unity of the educational space throughout Russia, create conditions for the continuity of basic educational programs: primary general, basic general, secondary (complete) primary general, basic general, secondary (complete) general, primary vocational, secondary vocational and higher vocational education.

Federal state educational standards determine the principles of relations between the main parts of the educational program and the volume of such parts. Also, the State educational standard determines the relation between a compulsory part of the educational program and a part formed directly by participants in the educational process.

The Federal educational standard determines the conditions for the implementation of educational programs — financial, personnel, material and technical etc.

In addition to the above, the educational standard contains information about the results of mastering basic educational programs.

Educational standards in the Russian Federation include education at higher educational institutions` specialist`s, bachelor`s and master`s programs. The last two forms were included into the state educational standard of the Russian Federation for the purpose of integration into the general European education system. The existing education system initially included full-time, distance and part-time forms of education. However, the Covid-19 pandemic that swept the world at the beginning of 2020 put Russian higher education institutions in new conditions when higher education institutions were forced to carry out the educational process in new forms: online learning, distance learning, education using forms of distance learning, blended (hybrid) format. Special difficulties arose in the formation of a new system of pedagogical management.

Blended (hybrid) education at a university is an educational approach that involves combining face-to-face learning with online forms of education.

A student acts as a participant of educational activity and an instructor (teacher) acts as a person organizing the educational process. In this case, the main principle is interaction, and a teacher does not just broadcast knowledge but controls the process of knowledge search and acquisition by a student.

The role of self-study and self-education is increasing in blended learning. A teacher interacts with students in order to accompany them.

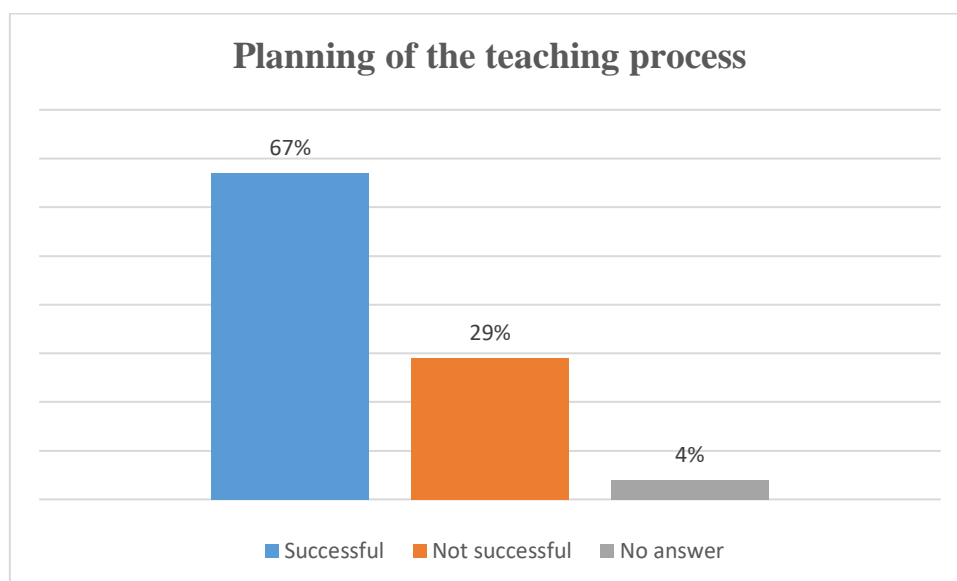
### **The results of the practical analysis of the role of pedagogical management in organizing the educational process.**

The results of the analysis of the experts` answers allowed us to define the key components of pedagogical management. Based on the selected most frequent criteria, the most typical characteristics of pedagogical management were selected.

- Skills for planning the blended learning process;
- Support of students in the process of mastering and learning educational material;
- Implementation of the knowledge acquired in practice;
- Control over the process of training, diagnostic and final work performed by students in the process of blended learning;
- Strict work evaluation criteria understandable by both teachers and students.

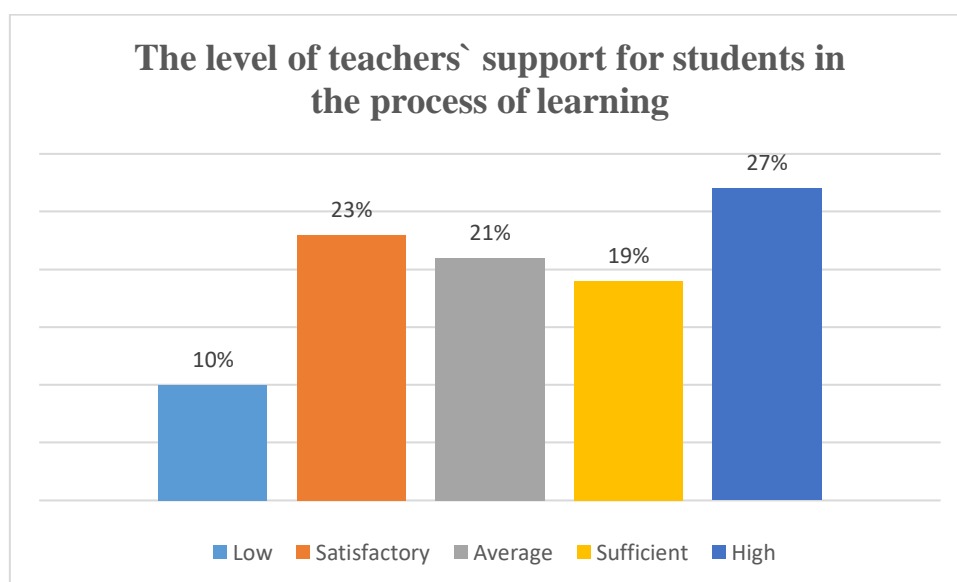
Further, using a selected group of students, we analyzed how university teachers perform the function of planning the educational process in the settings of blended learning (Figure 1).

Figure 1



As we can see, the majority of students believe that teachers successfully plan the educational process. Students note that classes are held according to a well-established plan. Insufficient quantity of accompanying methodological material is reported as a problem. Also, according to students, if the educational process in blended learning could involve individual student work plans that would determine individual learning path throughout an academic year, the pedagogical process would be managed more successful. Further, we asked the respondents to rate the degree of teachers` support in learning and mastering the educational material (Figure 2).

Figure 2



The study showed that students are generally satisfied with the quality of pedagogical support throughout the learning process (average – 21%, sufficient – 19% and high – 27%) in a blended learning environment.

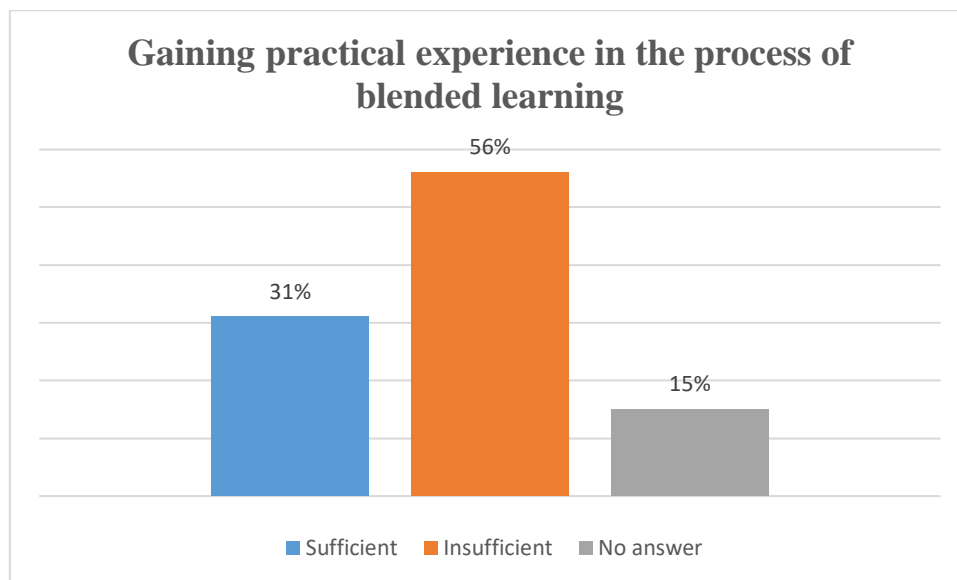
Students speak about the need to provide psychological and pedagogical support to students in the learning process. It should be noted that psychological and pedagogical support is the

most important component of the pedagogical process since it helps reveal the personal potential of a student and assists students in overcoming psychological and personal difficulties.

According to students, teachers should take into account the practical orientation of blended learning when organizing the educational process. Students would like to participate in various types of webinars with potential employers.

Blended learning, like other forms of learning, should be geared towards graduates` future practice after graduation (Figure 3).

Figure 3

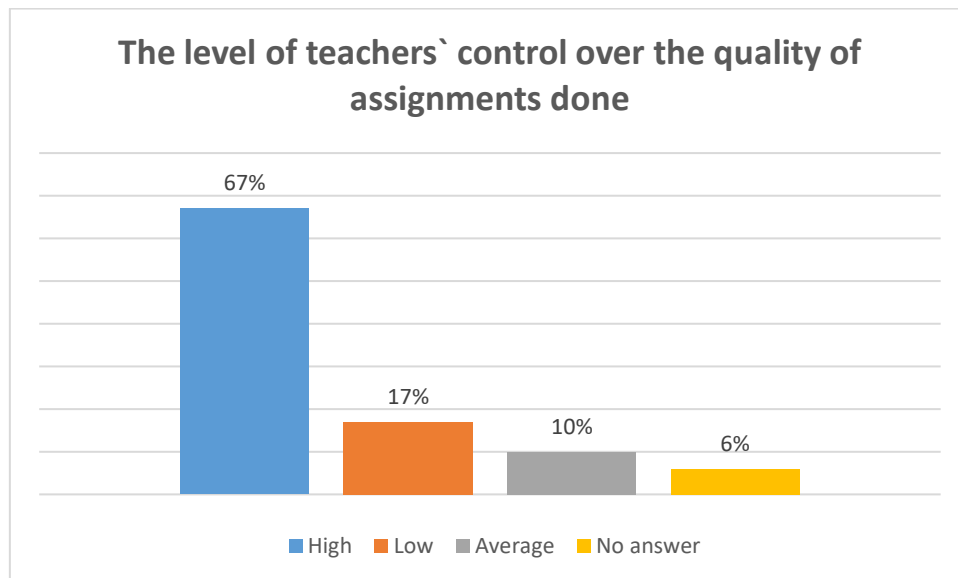


According to university graduates, blended learning is insufficiently oriented towards students` future practice.

56% of respondents believe that this area of pedagogical management needs a fundamentally new approach.

Control over the educational process is an essential element of pedagogical management. Evaluation of training, diagnostic and final works is a diagnostic stage making it possible to assess the quality of education and the achievement of educational goals. Assessing the completeness of knowledge, abilities and skills, we can evaluate a student`s achievements at each of training stages. Control makes it possible to establish a feedback mechanism. That is, a teacher receives information about the quality of students` independent work. Students receive information about learning activities through the checkpoints. A survey of students showed that teachers` control in blended learning is, in general, highly rated by students (Figure 4).

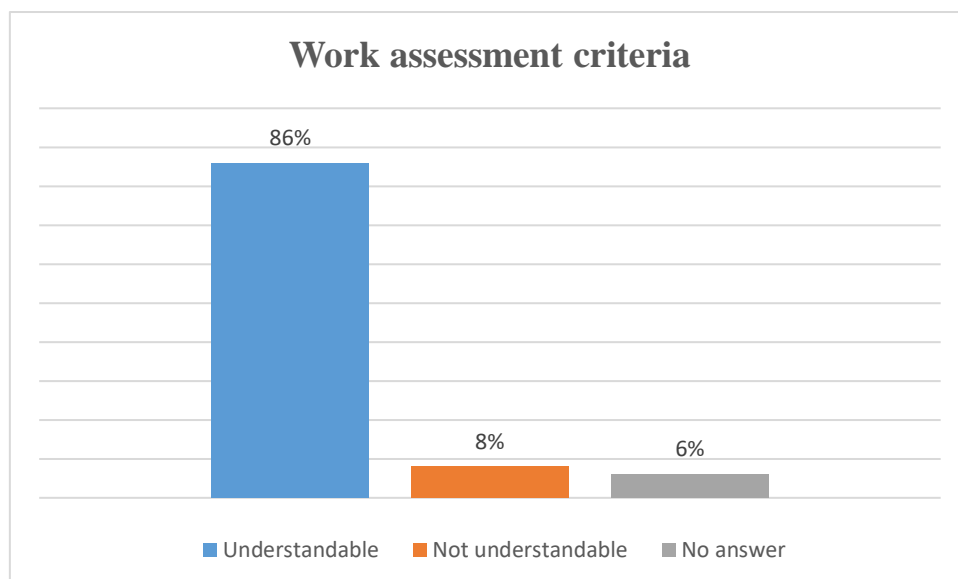
Figure 4



67% of respondents note the degree of teachers` control over the quality of assignments done in the process of blended learning is high, 10% — average, 17% — low, 6% found it difficult to answer.

Work evaluation criteria at each stage are related to the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the work done by students. Students note the importance of pre-agreed work evaluation criteria (Figure 5).

Figure 5



As we can see, in blended learning, the work evaluation criteria do not draw criticism from students. 86% of respondents say that they understand the principles of work evaluation. 8% said that they do not understand the principles of work evaluation. 6% found it difficult to answer.



## Conclusion

The research conducted has shown that pedagogical management is acquiring special significance in the new educational environment.

Despite the existing attempts to understand pedagogical management, many questions still remain open. Pedagogical management is a concept that has a deeper meaning and involves the interaction of managing (teachers) and controlled (students) systems.

The main components of pedagogical management in blended learning are as follows:

- The ability to plan the educational process;
- Socio-psychological and pedagogical support of students in the learning process;
- Creating conditions for students to gain practical experience;
- Establishment of a knowledge quality control system;
- Clear criteria pre-agreed with students and used for evaluating the knowledge they have acquired.

The combination of these criteria creates conditions for successful learning in a blended learning environment.

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