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**Natalia H. FROLOVA**
**National Research University Higher School of Economics**
**Nizhny Novgorod, Russia**
**frolovanh@gmail.com**

**ФРОЛОВА Наталья Хайдаровна**
**Национальный Исследовательский Университет,**
**Высшая школа экономики**
**г. Нижний Новгород, Россия**
frolovanh@gmail.com

# E-LEARNING: TRENDS AND STEPPING STONES.

# ЭЛЕКТРОННОЕ ОБУЧЕНИЕ: ТЕНДЕНЦИИ И ПРЕПЯТСТВИЯ

**Acceleration of exchange of educational information its constant updating requires incorporating innovative educational products based on informational communications in educational system. Students who are mostly digital natives use information communication technologies more frequent and willingly compared to teaching staff. Consequently it calls for urgent measures to be taken to satisfy contemporary students' emerging needs.**

**Integration of information communication technologies, enhancing students' motivation, adding to personalized learning, into higher education is challenging but beneficial. It is particularly acute in the field of foreign language learning which requires language competence formation along with knowledge of grammar patterns, vocabulary specificity and reproductive skills in listening, reading, speaking and writing.**

**The given article reflects the current trends of e-learning of foreign languages, providing insights of teaching and learning practice, providing theoretical literature review and empirical data gained by qualitative and quantitive research methods, by students' opinion polls in NRU HSE Nizhniy Novgorod branch in particular. Both advantages and shortcomings are analyzed and the comparison of the traditional classroom education and innovative one is carried out. Recent trends in e-learning of foreign languages, use of various tools such as wiki sites, educational platforms, Massive Online Open Courses, Gamification, flipped classrooms and other inspiring techniques are considered.**

**Key words: Gamification, Wiki sites, E-learning Trends and requirements, Personalized Learning.**

**Ускорение обмена учебной информации, ее постоянное обновление требует привлечения в высшую школу инновационных образовательных продуктов, созданных с применением информационных технологий. Студенты, имея превосходные компьютерные навыки, используют информационно-коммуникационные технологии чаще и охотнее по сравнению с преподавательским составом. Следовательно, возникает необходимость создать условия для удовлетворения новых потребностей современных обучаемых и повысить компьютерную грамотность преподавателей.**

**Интеграция информационно-коммуникационных технологий, призванных повышать мотивацию учащихся, акцентируя индивидуальный подход к обучению в области высшего образования, является сложной, но перспективной задачей. Это особенно актуализирует свою значимость в области изучения иностранного языка, который требует формирования языковой компетенции наряду со знанием грамматических моделей, развития активного и пассивного словарного запаса, формирования репродуктивных навыков в различных видах речевой деятельности: аудировании, чтении, устной и письменной речи.**

**Данная статья отражает современные тенденции электронного обучения иностранным языкам, передавая особенности изучения и обучения на практике, на основе теоретического исследования научной литературы отечественных и зарубежных авторов. Также в статье представлены эмпирические данные, полученных в ходе анкетирования и с помощью опросов студентов Нижегородского филиала НИУ ВШЭ, которые позволили выявить как преимущества, так и недостатки электронного обучения. Компаративный подход к традиционному образованию в классе позволяет осветить педагогические инновации, последние тенденции в области электронного обучения, использование различных веб инструментов (вики сайты, обучающие платформ, массовые он лайн курсы) и современных методов обучения иностранным языкам таких как геймификация.**

**Ключевые слова: Игрофикация, Вики сайты, тенденции электронного обучения, личностно ориентированный подход.**

## 1.Introduction.

E-learning is a complex process of creating an educational space for people to share knowledge and acquire skills via new informational technologies. Its significance for higher education lies in implementing of information communication technologies that accelerate the process of collection, accumulation, storage, processing and transmission of various data.

Less than 15 years ago, e-learning, which implied the use of various forms of ICT as a primary means of learning and teaching (Snyder, 1998; Rosenberg, 2001; Swan, Bowman & Holmes, 2003), was an experimental way of teaching various technical subjects. Currently, educators across all fields use online training to teach in every sphere of competence forming. Almost any university or educational institution incorporates e-Learning or blended learning into its programs in this way or the other according to the statistics given on official site of U.S Department of education.

### 2.1 Trends of e-learning

Cloud computing is now a major technology trend. In relation to eLearning, cloud-based LMS services are gaining popularity and have the capacity to reduce operation costs. It provides the opportunity to provide learners with media storage, which can be instantly shared by links and found by the key word.

Another trend is gamification, which has existed for quite a long time so far, but it gained its real power has been discovered a couple years ago due to computer technologies' development boost. Gamification makes learning motivating, engaging, and inspiring. Gamification in e-learning uses exciting technologies and innovations within the gaming industry. Moreover, referring to Karl M. Kapp, even more is forthcoming with the use of virtual and augmented reality (Kapp, Karl M., 2012)

In addition, it's been foreseen by the staff of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, that in the near future universities will award degrees with 100% content on MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses). This evidently shows the popularity of MOOC, which is becoming the main stream.

Currently, students learning via MOOCs are getting certificates that will soon translate into credit. A growth area to watch for is the rise of co-branded MOOCs between corporations and established academic universities, where students would prefer paying fees to study rather than enrolling free conventional courses.

Among the recent tendencies, for flipped classrooms, discovery learning, project learning and others the student oriented learning has topped the list. It is general knowledge, that most university students often feel "out of the picture" concerning their learning and, quite frequently, uninspired or even demotivated and grades reflect it. Learners do not realize the value of knowledge they are being broadcasted to. However, personalized learning puts the learners in control, allowing them to trace the progress and acquiring the necessary information, creating their own learning track. Learners are also offered choices on ways to learn and educational media that suit their learning style and pace. The latter seems to be acute for adult learners and disabled ones in particular.

### 2.2 Requirements

When it comes to only sharing knowledge and making learners understand the material better, e-learning is definitely a better choice in contrast to the classroom training. Presenting huge information in the classroom to teach basics of any subject in today's fast paced working environments cannot be said as a preferable choice when you can easily leverage the benefit of e-learning in the form of eBooks, online manuals, Online handbooks, audio and training videos to transmit huge information. In addition, for communicating about values and vision throughout an organization or training people on change management, e-learning can be very effective. It can also ensure a consistent learning experience for learners.

If e-learning courses are developed on the basis of sound instructional designing strategies and adhere to adult learning principles as well, they can be highly beneficial and engage for the adult learners. These adult learners, who are experienced, self-directed and expected to be busy in their lives (playing multiple roles in lives), like to learn in order to just enhance their present performance in doing some work/task. They are more likely to go after such a course, which can allow them to experiment, practice, perform, and acquire required skills. Adults learn to get their existing performance problem solved. Another factor with adult learners is they like to take time and learn at their own pace, which can become possible in the case of the online training module.

In this way, e-learning courses, which are usually learner-centric, can be very useful for these adult learners. The well-chunked, need to know content along with the complimentary real-life interactive scenarios, simulations, problem-solving games, stories, case studies etc., in eLearning courses can highly engage them more than classroom training which is mainly focused on the presentation of various information, including basics and least, allows for interacting with the course. However, for learners who are not satisfied with technology or tend to lose interest in a self-paced, self-driven eLearning course, the classroom can be a better option.

### 3. E-learning experimental practice in HSE and its Methodology

The National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) is not an exception it has implemented various information and communication technologies in the educational process and is

the member of the pilot project of the Open University, which is supported by leading Russian universities.)

E-learning and blended learning are carried out be means of wiki sites, e-learning environment (LMS), and learners' groups in social networks, webinars and others. Wiki enables project-based learning in real time, when all participants distantly can cooperate in teamwork. Wiki spaces allow both formal and informal communication in different role models and dimensions like (student-student, student teacher, tutor- teacher, teacher-student groups). The authors of the article have created and used in teaching and learning practice correspondingly several wiki sites https://sites.google.com/site/frolovanh, https://sites.google.com/site/presidentprogrammeprtfolios, https://sites.google.com/site/lmsnnovgorod, https://sites.google.com/site/3rd2016)

The mentioned above web tools can cater for many learning types and are becoming much more of a must have in e -learning.

While caring out the research the fourth generation evaluation principles **were used Mason, J. (2002).** In the process of integration of learning all students groups were given opinion polls and observed. The evaluation of e- learning tools and students' feedback was arranged. Being both a teacher and an evaluator the author of this article collected and interpreted the data received. In the assessing learning activities we focused on all findings and personal discoveries of all the participants concerning advantages and disadvantages of e-learning. Besides the author used interviewing and due to qualitative approach analyzed the results comparing them with the initial ones.

**4. 2 Research findings and e-learning stepping stones.**

The author of the given article conducted a study among the 3rd students of the NRU HSE NN. The respondents (more than 40people) have been mostly positive, in response to the questionnaire on the e -learning efficiency. 87% percent of the students have confirmed that the system improves teacher-student communication. Thus, the results of the given survey prove the optimization of learning by means of web tools. Though the practice show that due to additional investments requirements and retraining policy universities authorities are reluctant to switching fully from the traditional learning system to e-learning.

Coming to the cost benefits, based on various research reports statistics, e –learning proves to be more cost- effective than conventional classroom training. Corporate and educational bodies save about 50% to 70% on training, when they replace instructor-led training with e -learning due to reduced or eliminated travel costs and more targeted training (IOMA 2002). Unlike classroom training, which requires the presence of trainers each and every time the course is supposed to be delivered, e –learning set can be developed once and used multiple times for the training requirements of the bigger audience. Furthermore, it is now very easy to develop the e –learning course in quick time following the advent of authoring tools (a 30-minute course can be developed in about 3-4 weeks of time by using such authoring tools as Lectora, Articulate etc.). In this way, e –learning development costs are significantly less compared to classroom training.

According to the statistics, not all professional teachers are very optimistic about web tools ant e-learning. Especially those, who are new to e-Learning usually resist to create online courses, usually due to lack of ICT knowledge or computer skills, and many of those who do apply eLearning tend to use the old-fashioned pedagogical methods for their online training, making the whole idea of remote education unreasonable and impractical. The following comments such as «What is the use of these technologies? I can do without them in my high quality teaching practice" are not uncommon.

**Results and Conclusions.**

Both classroom and e –learning techniques are here to empower learners with knowledge and skills. Both have their advantages and limitations. The tracking of learners' progress is usually done manually in the classroom situation, which may sometimes result in an incorrect recording of data. The process of assessing learners' progress in the classroom also consumes huge time and manpower. On the other hand e –learning courses can be delivered on any platform be it the Learning Management Systems or MOOC , for tracking and monitoring of learners' progress automatically in the course in an efficient manner.

In terms of personalization of education, the issue is controversial, as classroom training allows learners to interact face to face with the instructors or tutors and other learners in the live environment, whereas learners have to depend on electronic media to interact with the course in e –learning. There

is always somebody in the classroom to motive and access the performance of learners in the classroom, whereas learners are required to be self-driven and a self-disciplined to enjoy all benefits of e – learning.

Thus, to e-learn or not to e-learn depends on one's requirement and approach towards learning. Although online training resembles many features of classroom training, it also has some unique attributes. The role of the instructor also differs. All these mean that learning and development professionals need to alter their teaching styles, learn new skills, use different methods, master design and development tools, and move away from an instructor-centered methodology to a learner-centered environment.

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**Information about the author**

Natalia H. Frolova, Associate Professor, National Research University Higher School of Economics,
Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
frolovanh@gmail.com

**Информация об авторе**

Фролова Наталья Хайдаровна, кандидат педагогических наук, доцент, Национальный Исследовательский Университет, Высшая школа экономики
г. Нижний Новгород, Россия
frolovanh@gmail.com

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