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ELECTRONIC PLATFORMS IN THE PROCESS OF DISTANCE LEARNING

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Blended learning forces us to consider the characteristics of digital technologies in General and information and communication technologies (ICTs) in particular. According to James Curran, a researcher at the University of Sydney, Australia, such a critical approach to the introduction of electronic, computer technologies allows students to independently navigate the ever-changing world of modern technologies [1]. At the same time, the format for presenting information has changed. Today, most of the information is presented in multimedia format: the text is constantly updated with audio, images, infographics, videos, and animations. Obviously, this trend is caused by a large amount of information. Messages in text form can quickly disappear in an intense news feed if other media formats do not have units of measurement. Modern universities are equipped with the latest technologies that contribute to the successful acquisition of knowledge by students.

As noted by Kudysheva A. A. the purpose of the blended method is to form students' ability to plan and organize their activities, focusing on the final result. Students learn to make informed choices, make decisions, and take responsibility for them. They form skills and abilities to work in the information space, independently search, select and analyze information, present the result using various modern technologies, i.e. the necessary speech and socio-cultural competencies are formed.

The blended learning model fits into the holistic concept of modern education, which is based on the introduction of new educational standards and joining the Bologna process and other international agreements. However, due to the fact that the level of information technology provision and the General level of computer literacy in most Kazakh educational institutions leaves much to be desired, it cannot be said that this model is widely used in the teaching process.

There are several reasons. One of the main problems is the fear of teachers to use modern computer technologies in their work. This characteristic can be attributed to people who are afraid to use new technological developments. As the role of teachers in the use of blended learning increases, we can say that motivation and the desire for self-education are absolutely necessary for a modern teacher in working with students. Another rather serious problem is the lack of time. Developing new

technologies and creating e-learning, searching for information, preparing resource cards, presentations, checking students' assignments-all this takes a lot of time and also requires teachers to develop new technologies [2].

Online resources for education and computer-based teaching methods are as diverse as the Internet itself. The purpose of this article is to focus on using the Miro online interactive platform and prove its effectiveness in blended learning.

In the course of the research, we used methods of studying the literature and an experiment on using the Miro Board. To identify the knowledge and attitudes of teachers and students in Kazakhstan, we adopted a quantitative study design and developed a questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of 9 questions regarding the place of work or study of students and teachers, the field of education, location and attitude to the Miro Board. The questionnaire included both multiple choice and open-ended questions that helped us analyze the data in more detail.

An interactive whiteboard is a learning space where both teachers and students can write, add, and complete tasks, as well as communicate in real time via the Internet. The Miro team of creators claims that their product is a visual collaboration platform: not just another interactive whiteboard, but rather an interactive tool that lets people create, share, collaborate, and present. Let's assume that you are in a real physical classroom with all your workbooks, worksheets, markers, flashcards, and slides, and videos, but now all in one digital, not physical space.

From the very beginning, Miro developers aimed to help distributed teams work as if they were sitting in the same room. During their journey, they discovered that the Board was the center of many team ceremonies–a place where people gathered around, shared their ideas, expressed themselves, and solved big problems. They named their product the Realtime Board–a straightforward name that defined a whole new category of collaboration tools that help teams come together around a common vision in real time.

They found that the digital, virtual, infinite whiteboard space opened up incredible potential for teams–and fundamentally changed the way they worked. Inspired by their customers, the developers decided it was time to grow their brand into something that would help their vibrant community come together around a bigger aspiration. Therefore, today they are introduced as Miro. Miro stands for visual expression, experimentation, and work that transcends boundaries and affects many. [3]

Miro, formerly known as Realtime Board and named after the Spanish artist, is an interactive, rebranded collaboration tool used by innovative companies such as Netflix, Cisco, Skyscanner, with approximately 5 million users worldwide. Originally created as a tool for project management and team collaboration, the platform boasts creativity, experimentation, and flexibility, and provides virtually limitless opportunities for implementation in online language classes.

As, more and more language classes are translated online, we need ways for teachers and students to collaborate digitally. Miro allows teachers to present material while students can interact and contribute in the same shared space. It is an ideal platform for language practice, as students can write dialogues and texts together, create stories or videos. Miro can be used to play virtual Board games, or even to complete homework assignments and get detailed feedback. [4]

Miro is widely used in education as an important component of the paperless classroom. In Miro, students and teachers work together on a whiteboard that can accommodate various types of files (Word documents, P& point slides, PDFs, spreadsheets, video, audio files, web links, etc.) and interactive objects (text, memory cards, storyboards, timelines). Students can be invited to the Miro Board via a direct link. On the blackboard, students can add their own ideas, comments, questions, complete assignments and exercises in class, and view and comment on each other's work. [5]

Students can work on the whiteboards synchronously and asynchronously. Outside of "online sessions", students can work on their assignments on the board, and then teachers mark whether students have questions or want the teacher to check their work in the process. The whiteboard can be

expanded "infinitely", which means that we can create different spaces for different activities in one session, and then students can "move" around the whiteboard to complete their class assignments. [6].

Miro is an interactive whiteboard that can be accessed via the Internet. This means that we can endlessly write, draw, add files to it, and all this will be visible not from the last Desk, but from anywhere in the world. The online whiteboard is a great tool for mixing online and offline learning, while maintaining the advantages of each format.

We conducted a study on the use of Miro by Kazakhstani teachers and students using the Google Forms platform. The purpose of our research is to analyze and justify the effectiveness of using the Miro interactive whiteboard in the blended learning format. A total of 80 participants took part in the survey. The majority of participants were University teachers (41.3%), bachelor's (21.2%), master's (16.3%), and there were responses from school teachers (15%), doctoral students (6.3%), and individual teachers (1.3%). The highest percentage of participants works or studies in the field of foreign languages (71.3%). Then there are the humanities (21.3%), science (5%) and exact sciences (2.4%).

Responses from teachers and students were received from different cities of Kazakhstan. Most of the survey participants were from Nur-Sultan, Kostanay and Karaganda (see Diagram 1).
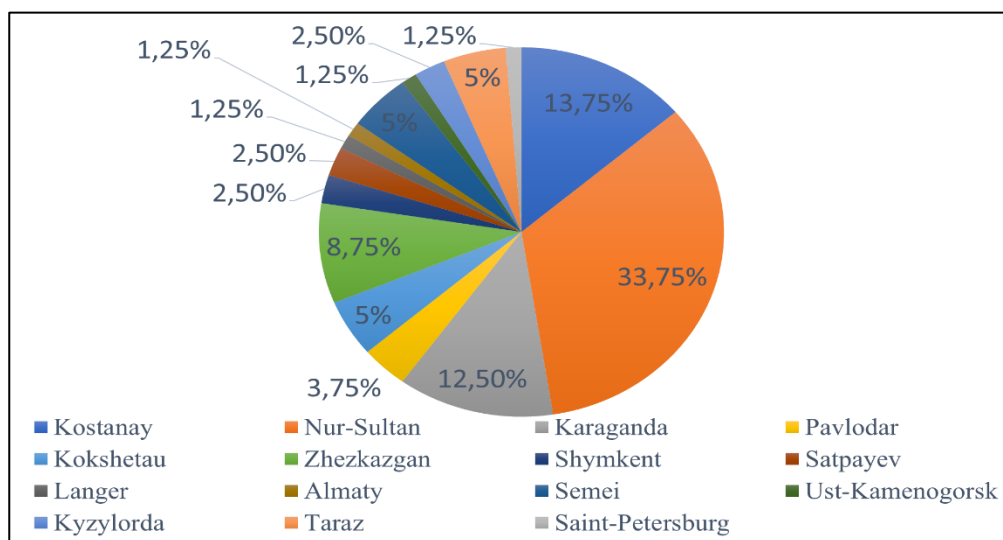

Diagram 1. Locations of respondents

The source of familiarity for survey participants was mainly recommendations from their colleagues (45%) or online resources (25%). Several participants also mentioned that they learned about the Miro Board at August's Garnsey seminars (American teacher) (14%), some of them learned through our questionnaire (10%), as well as through educational conferences (6%).

The Miro whiteboard is quickly becoming a popular and frequently used interactive whiteboard among many others. Many teachers and students actively use it in their practice over different time periods. At the same time, there are still a considerable number of representatives of educational activities who are not yet familiar with it. To see the percentage of time spent using the Miro whiteboard by respondents, we asked them to mark their answer option. The results revealed that there are some teachers and students who did not know about this board before, so they did not use it (45%). The majority of respondents are familiar with the Board and actively use it, from a week to a month (25%), from 2 months to six months (16.25%), and there is also a percentage of participants who use Miro for more than six months or even a year in their practice (13.75%).

Miro has a large selection of functions for specific tasks and activities. We have presented a number of them and identified that the most frequently used functions are a choice of templates or of mind maps (45%), followed upload files from a computer or Google drive (36,3%), another popular feature is the use of stickers (30%), cards (27.5%) and presentation mode (22,5%), screensharing (18,8%), chat mode (11,3%), timer(11,3%), the chat mode (12,5%) and voting (8,8%).

The aim of the presented exercises was to improve listening and speaking skills. We chose the average level of English proficiency of University students. In order to thoroughly study and try out the use of this Board, we conducted several classes with students, which allowed us to identify the most effective and necessary Miro functions based on our own observations of Miro.

Miro has control panels with various options. To make the presentation look and feel consistent, we use the frames that you can find in the left control panel. We can create them, choose their size, position, insert texts, images, diagrams, and so on. After that, we can enable the demo function in the bottom panel and the slides will be shown in the presentation in the order they were created. This is a very convenient option that can be used not only in lessons, but also at various meetings and conferences.

The Miro Board is almost infinite, which means we can create a large number of objects on a single Board. To move around the Board, in the lower-right corner there is a special map that shows all the objects on the board. This greatly speeds up your work, as you can get lost in the search for any small detail. We can also use the hand function for moving, which is also located in the left panel, and if you need to select a specific item, we can change it to a pointer. In the upper-right corner there is a control panel with settings that include the "Share" function and add notes. They can be used to demonstrate the stages or objectives of a lesson.

Usually, the lesson begins with an organizational moment and a warm-up session for students, which helps them prepare for the main part of the lesson. In the panel on the left, you can find various shapes or an option to add text. To complete the first task on the blackboard, students had to create complex compound words using stickers. It looks very colorful, which motivates them to work with words. To make it easier for students to follow the steps of the lesson, we used arrows that they followed during the lesson. In addition, for a wider selection and saving time, we can use already created templates, which are also located in the left panel and present a large selection for any activity.

The next task for students was to guess the topic of the lesson using stickers with words related to the new topic and pictures. You can upload images either from your computer or using links and saved files, or even easier, just open Google search in the taskbar and download the images directly to the Board. Since the purpose of the lesson was to improve listening skills, students had to complete a preparatory task before listening to audio. The exercise was aimed at matching words and their definitions. Students can use a pen, felt-tip pen, insert letters in the missing space, or use arrows to match words and definitions. After completing the task, we checked their responses. The next exercise was listening comprehension. And since we can't add audio to the Board, we can find it on the Internet, copy the link, and paste it on the Board. The student clicks on the link and listens to the dialog. While they were listening, they were asked to complete another task.

After listening, students solved the test. Here, we asked them to leave their comments on certain possible responses. After students added them, they could see the authors. There is also a separate window in the lower panel where all comments are collected with the names and time of addition.

Then there was a speaking task, using the Zoom video conference program, we discussed issues related to the dialogue they listened to. An additional task for students was the following: they were divided into pairs, after which we opened a link that led to the site with the platform Wheel of names. By showing the screen through Zoom, students received one specific TV show. Each subtracting picture would be removed so that they don't get the same option. After the tasks were assigned, students reviewed the TV shows in pairs and then shared them with others.

In the lower panel, there is another useful feature – a chat window where everyone can write a message, and you can see the time of adding, as well as the author. In addition, there is also a history of the Board, where we can find out who deleted or added which objects. You will receive messages to your email about actions performed on your Board. This is a great feature for tracking individual or homework assignments.

Conclusion

In the age of virtual collaboration, the main – thing is to keep track of new ideas and technologies. The tool we use should organize the information in such a way that it is clear, easy to find, and concise. Everyone should be able to achieve the same understanding while maintaining their own unique approach to interpretation.

The teacher should constantly monitor new tools that allow optimizing the distance learning course. Another important task is to write a lesson scenario that would allow teacher to consistently convey the educational material, enliven the entire course of the lesson and at the same time keep students' attention on studying the topic under consideration.

The Miro virtual whiteboard is a simple and convenient platform where people can collaborate without feeling that they lack any knowledge. I really enjoyed experimenting with Miro, as this platform provides very useful features, it is attractive, interesting and, more importantly, easy to use in online – practice, performing individual and group work on time or outside of classes.

The Miro Board is good for generating ideas on flashcards, brainstorming, and the advantage of this format is that it allows participants to focus on the content, rather than being influenced by the leaders. It is important to conduct a training workshop with students before classes and give them the opportunity to test Miro's features. This will make learning more fun and motivating for them. Thus, the Miro whiteboard is a universal platform that is ideal for use in blended learning, both online and offline.

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LANGUAGE LEARNING AND VERSATILE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN THROUGH THE USE OF ROLE-PLAYING GAMES IN ENGLISH LESSONS

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