

E-MENTORING IN EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Background. The Covid-19 has influenced drastically the educational process all over the world. As a response to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the necessity to disrupt face-to-face-based education hundreds of institutions moved the whole educational process online, which ended in switching to emergency remote teaching (ERT), as Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust and Bond define it (Hodges et al., 2020). One of the first initiatives to help educational agents understand the demands of new forms of e-pedagogy was a framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020 (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). To optimize the Pandemic-Based Educational Process we still need to clearly study differences between Blended Learning, Distance Education and ERT, and regard differences and similarities when developing effective strategies to minimize learning losses for students in the process of e-mentoring of an online course. iNACOL Blended Learning Teacher Competency Framework (Powell, Rabbitt, & Kennedy, 2014) can constitute a good base to promote innovation in ERT to ensure all students have access to quality blended and online learning opportunities. E-Mentoring as technology-mediated support (see Smith & Israel, 2010) could enhance technology-based solutions of ERT.

Purpose. The current study aims to describe and illustrate possibilities for e-mentoring in ERT at institutions of higher education compared to mentoring in blended or distance courses and in such a way contribute to bringing in the element of quality improvement in sustainable education. **Methodology.** The study was designed basing on the phenomenological approach (Lester, 1999), which features individual perceptions and experiences used to examine tendencies in learning mentoring in ERT as a nascent practice, in which we lack in-depth knowledge.

The term ERT has already an established meaning in the educational discourse and is used to describe a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic by Avgoustos (Avgoustos, 2020), Behre (Beer et al., 2020), Bozkurt (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020), Czerniewicz (Czerniewicz et al., 2020), Goldenberg (Goldenberg, 2020) and others. Goldenberg summarizes the distinctions between online learning and ERT (Goldenberg, 2020), which we consider to be relevant for description of possibilities for e-mentoring in ERT at institutions of higher education and cite in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the distinctions made between online learning and ERT (according to G. Goldenberg)

Online learning	ERT
A course which has deliberately been planned to take part wholly or fully online	A temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate mode during a crisis
Often involve face-to-face, blended or hybrid elements to the course	Usually takes place entirely remotely
Aims to create a robust educational ecosystem	Aims to provide temporary access and instruction
Can take time to design and set up, and can be tweaked and reiterated over time	Needs to be quick to set up and reliably available during a crisis

Is assisted by faculty support teams who may help teachers and lecturers with:	Is assisted by faculty support teams who may help teachers and lecturers with:
Can take months to develop a new course.	A temporary solution to an immediate problem – often mapping to rapidly changing learner/community needs and limitations in resources.

The summary above gives some insights, why understanding distinctions made between online learning and ERT could influence mentoring. ERT doesn't allow a mentor to give students a face-to-face feedback as it would be done in a blended or hybrid course, because ERT takes place entirely remotely. Another example is that an ERT-course would allow little support to assist students in getting the results they are working toward, because it was rapidly developed and has essential drawbacks in the instructional design and planning. Thus, the mentor cannot provide the students with all information round the course in terms of technical and content aspects, which can cause certain frustration of the students.

On the whole, a number of factors which influence the design and the decision-making process of online courses whether in ERT or not will influence the way the courses will be mentored. Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust and Bond (Hodges et al., 2020) consider the nine-dimensional model of online learning design options, developed by Means, Bakia, and Murphy (Means et al., 2014), in which modality, pacing, student-instructor ratio, pedagogy, instructor role online, student role online, online communication synchrony, role of online assessments, and source of feedback constitute moderating variables.

Let's consider how they will influence e-mentoring in a sample Moodle course in ERT. A sample Moodle course in ERT is based on a German language course held for the students of the Department of Slavic and Foreign Philology at the Sumy State Pedagogical University named after AS Makarenko in spring 2020 fully online with web-enabled F2F classes. It was class-paced with some self-paced elements, student-instructor ratio was < 35 to 1, pedagogy – collaborative, assessments provided students and the mentor with information about learning state, the role of the instructor online was active. The role of the students online was to listen and read, complete problems or answer questions, explore resources, collaborate with peers. The feedback was in some cases automated, in other cases came from the mentor and peers. Table 2 features problems descriptions and suggested solutions in different fields of e-mentoring for Blended Learning and Distance Education and ERT for the sample course.

Table 2. E-mentoring in a Moodle course in Blended Learning and Distance Education vs ERT at institutions of higher education.

Field of Mentoring	Problem description	Solution for Blended Learning and Distance Education	Solution for ERT
Learning strategies and Time management	The student does not have any learning strategies that he needs to independently control the learning process	The mentor uses a professionally designed learning environment with support offers, which could help to develop necessary strategies - checklists, portfolio, tasks etc.	The mentor has no possibility to use a professionally designed learning environment with support offers and has to develop them in response to emerging problems.

		<p>The mentor gives feedback to support a conscious confrontation of the student with the learning content and its reflection.</p> <p>The mentor informs the student about cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, cooperative and resource oriented learning strategies.</p>	
Conflict management	It comes to misunderstandings and conflicts	<p>The mentor makes use of the rules of netiquette, which have been worked out together with the students well at the beginning of the course.</p>	<p>The mentor has to work out rules of netiquette and explains the students why it is necessary to keep to them.</p>
		<p>The mentor tries to identify potential conflicts as quickly as possible to react quickly in order to avoid or de-escalate them.</p> <p>The mentor evaluates conflicts because they indicate problems the course.</p>	
Feedback and Correcting mistakes	Students have illusions as to their competences	<p>The mentor gives feedback and points out to gaps in knowledge, helps the students to recognize deviations from the standard.</p> <p>The mentor trains self-assessment skills through regular feedback.</p>	
Motivation	The group is not very motivated when it comes to cooperative tasks	<p>The mentor tries to create the Community of Inquiry through his cognitive, social and teaching presence.</p> <p>The mentor shows initiative online – greets students, asks them, suggests solutions, thanks for cooperation etc.</p> <p>The mentor uses the tactics Feedback-from-everyone as an instrument to build groups online.</p>	

Relating iNACOL Blended Learning Teacher Competency Framework (Powell, Rabbitt, & Kennedy, 2014) to ERT makes it clear, that a mentor should have Blended Teaching Competencies in four domains – mindsets, qualities, adaptive and technical skills. Crucial in ERT are adaptive skills as a mentor should continuously take note of what is or is not working (via student-level data, technology applications, pedagogical strategies, supervisor feedback, etc.) and identify a plan of action; collaboratively, transparently, and proactively seek out feedback from students, parents, and colleagues to continuously improve instruction and teaching practices; apply lessons and takeaways about their own experiences as learners, both online and offline, to their work with students; engage in problem solving through continuous planning, designing, testing, evaluation, and recalibration of teaching methods; use technology creatively and purposefully to work effectively and efficiently; connect learners to sources of information beyond the classroom teacher and textbook; establish and maintain open communication channels, online and in person, with students, educators, and other stakeholders to support student learning (see Powell, Rabbitt, & Kennedy, 2014).

Results. We have illustrated possibilities for e-mentoring in ERT at institutions of higher education compared to mentoring in blended or distance courses. As the review shows, there are differences and similarities in e-mentoring of an online course in Blended Learning and Distance Education and ERT at institutions of higher education. E-mentoring in ERT is more demanding and that results in time expenditure. The major difference is that the mentor in ERT is deprived of carefully and professionally designed learning environment and has to act under constraints. To act competently in ERT a mentor has to have Blended Teaching Competencies.

Conclusions. To enhance the Pandemic-Based Educational Process we have to realistically estimate the peculiarities of ERT and try to compensate them through efficient and competent e-mentoring based on current needs analysis.

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