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Blended Learning: An Approach that changes Students Perspectives

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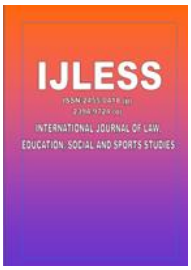


ABSTRACT

Education is no longer just about putting pen to paper and memorizing facts. Today, innovative educators in both higher education and corporate learning & development are improving learning through technology, as evidenced by the rapid adoption of technology-assisted teaching methods and blended learning models. Blended learning is definitely a more beneficial approach than old-school educational methods. It works for the students since it helps them learn more through practical implementation o f knowledge they gain.

Blended learning combines the best aspects of face-to-face teaching and online instruction in ways that enable students to learn at their own pace. This Paper addressed several outcomes, methods and implications, and possible future directions for blended learning in education field, where information communication technologies (ICTs) increasingly communicate with each other.

Blended learning allows students to learn at their own pace and their own ability level. By including a virtual environment, learning is not limited to a physical classroom. Learning can happen in long periods, in bits and pieces, from home, from a coffee shop, or during a lunch break, depending on what works for your schedule. Blended learning effectiveness has quite a number of underlying factors that pose challenges. One big challenge is about how users can successfully use the technology and ensuring participants' commitment given the individual learner characteristics and encounters with technology.

It also works for the teachers, since it makes their job more enjoyable. Make an effort to introduce this learning in your classroom , and you'll soon witness the results. Blended learning is suitable for all educational levels form preschool to the postgraduate level. In the present digital world, our education system has to have the sufficient input of Blended learning to change the perspectives of students and thinking of teachers at every level of education.

Keywords: Online, Face-to- Face, Rotation, Flipped Learning, Autonomy, Team Teaching.

Introduction

Blended Learning is the effective integration of various learning techniques, technologies and delivery modalities to meet specific communication, knowledge sharing and informational needs (Finn & Bucceri,2006). It is a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through delivery of content and instruction via digital and online media with some element of student control over time, place and pace.

Blended Learning is a mixture of learning methods that incorporate multiple teaching models– most frequently e-learning and traditional face-to-face learning.

Blended learning is a natural development to the growing accessibility of e-learning, online resources, and the continued need for a human component in the learning experience. A blended learning approach ensures that the learner is engaged and driving his or her individual learning experience. This approach also helps cater to the individual needs of the learner, most students have unique learning styles and a blended approach is more likely to cater to those needs than a traditional classroom teaching experience. Blended learning takes learning outside the walls of the classroom, making it possible to access resources both online and offline. This helps engage all types of learners – both those who learn better in a traditional classroom environment as well as those who work best with semi-autonomous, computer-based training. While classroom learning offers an opportunity for immediate face-to-face interaction, online learning offers self-paced personalized learning with interactive media such as games, videos, tutorials, quizzes, etc. all accessible from the learner's home page in a learning management system .

Blended learning (also known as hybrid or mixed learning) is a method of teaching that integrates technology and digital media with traditional instructor-led classroom activities, giving students more flexibility to customize their learning experiences.

Blended learning or the integration of face-to-face and online instruction (Graham 2013), is widely adopted across higher education with some scholars referring to it as the "new traditional model" (Ross and Gage 2006, p. 167) or the "new normal" in course delivery (Norberg et al. 2011, p. 207).

"There is such thing as Quality, but that as soon as you try to define it, something goes haywire. You can't do it".

The concept of blended learning, generally three main delivery modes exist: face-to-face, flexible and distance learning. Importantly, learning technology applies to all three modes; technology can be used to:

- enrich traditional face-to-face teaching
- enhance existing flexible forms of delivery
- Increase the level of engagement and social presence of students studying at a distance. In each delivery mode, technology can be used to blend the best of conventional teaching with online forms of learning

Review of Literature

This review presents research about blended learning effectiveness from the perspective of learner characteristics/background, design features and learning outcomes. It also gives the factors that are considered to be significant for blended learning effectiveness. The selected elements are as a result of the researcher's experiences at a Ugandan university where student learning faces challenges with

regard to learner characteristics and blended learning features in adopting the use of technology in teaching and learning. We have made use of Loukis, Georgiou, and Pazalo (2007) value flow model for evaluating an e-learning and blended learning service specifically considering the effectiveness evaluation layer. This evaluates the extent of an e-learning system usage and the educational effectiveness. In addition, studies by Leidner, Jarvenpaa, Dillon and Gunawardena as cited in Selim (2007) have noted three main factors that affect e-learning and blended learning effectiveness as instructor characteristics, technology and student characteristics. Heinich, Molenda, Russell, and Smaldino (2001) showed the need for examining learner characteristics for effective instructional technology use and showed that user characteristics do impact on behavioral intention to use technology. Research has dealt with learner characteristics that contribute to learner performance outcomes. They have dealt with emotional intelligence, resilience, personality type and success in an online learning context (Berenson, Boyles, & Weaver, 2008). Dealing with the characteristics identified in this study will give another dimension, especially for blended learning in learning environment designs and add to specific debate on learning using technology. Lin and Vassar, (2009) indicated that learner success is dependent on ability to cope with technical difficulty as well as technical skills in computer operations and internet navigation. This justifies our approach in dealing with the design features of blended learning in this study.

Horn & Staker (2011) define blended learning as "any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick and mortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace" (p.3).

Jaggars (2012) conducted a qualitative study on student preferences related to enrollment in online courses and found that students preferred "difficult" courses, such as math, to be delivered traditionally in f2f formats, preferring courses perceived to be "easy" in online formats. Among subjects that were rated as poorly suited to online context were lab sciences and foreign language (Jaggars, 2012). The researcher also called for further study into the relationship between academic content areas and suitability to online learning, and as reported by Xu & Jaggars (2013) ₸ "the field has no information regarding which subject areas may be more or less effectively taught online" (p.5). The instructional platform requires changing skillsets and attitudes, Lane (2013) suggests "the goal of professional development [in this arena] should be transformative learning" (p.3). In order to achieve this transformation, professional development should include reflective examination of practice (McQuiggan,2007) to discourage contiued traditional pedagogies in the new delivery format (Lane, 2013)

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY :

The objective of the present study is to review the following:

i. The importance and role of Blended Learning in classroom and

ii. Analyze the Concept, Need, Challenge and Trends of Blended Learning in present

Education System.

Different approaches of blended learning:

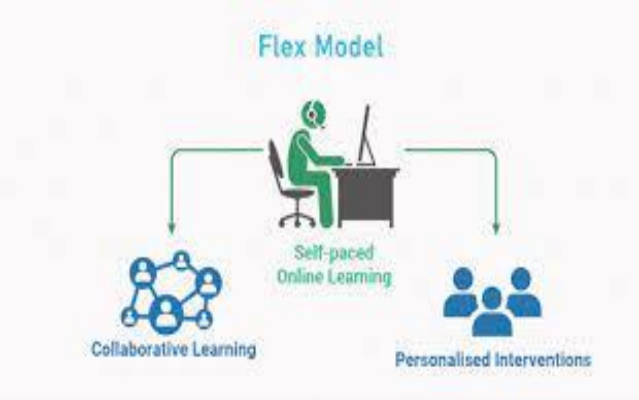
You can read more about the **different kinds of blended learning approaches** in more depth here. As a quick overview, know that due to its modular design, blended learning can come in numerous shapes and sizes and be personalized to fit the individual. These types of approaches can include:

Face to face- Where the teacher drives the instruction and augments with digital tools in a digital classroom.

Online – Instruction occurs via an online platform, with periodic face-to-face meetings.

Rotation: Student rotates between self-paced online learning and face-to-face instruction. Schedules are fixed but flexible. Most of the curriculum is delivered via a digital platform and teachers are available for face-to-face consultation and support.

Flex: Most instruction is delivered online, with teachers providing as needed support in small-group settings. The teacher of record is on-site, and students learn mostly on the brick-and-mortar campus, except for any homework assignments. The teacher of record or other adults provide face-to-face support on a flexible and adaptive as-needed basis through activities such as small-group instruction, group projects, and individual tutoring. This model has become increasingly popular in this era of remote work. However, unlike the flex model, learners must go through a scheduled Instructor-led classroom session, either in physical or virtual classrooms.



Personalized blend: Teacher designs face-to-face and anywhere, anytime learning options that straddle the physical classroom and virtual spaces. Learning is the constant and time is the variable.

Online lab: Instructions takes place in a brick and mortar lab. Delivered by an online teacher and supervised onsite by paraprofessionals. All of the curriculum is delivered via a digital platform but in a consistent physical location. Students usually take physical classes in this model as well

Self-blend: Students take online courses to supplement their tradition schools face to face course catalog. Students choose to augment their physical learning with online course work.

MODELS OF BLENDED-LEARNING

While there are many blended-learning models, over the coming weeks, this collection will explore the five most common. These are also the five that are most flexible and can be applied to traditional or remote learning spaces

1. Whole-Group Rotation Model :

In whole-group rotation, the entire class rotates between face-to-face and online learning at the same time. For instance, the students might all participate in a full-class, face-to-face activity together, and when the class is finished, be directed to simultaneously take out their digital devices and log in to an eLearning website.

2.The Station Rotation Model:

In this model, the classroom is divided into workstations and each one has a specific function, but as a whole, they achieve a common goal.

In the station rotation model, each student (or group of students) works at different stations. After a while, the students switch places and work at each station for the entire process. (that) allows students to rotate through stations on a fixed schedule, where at least one of the stations is an online learning

station. This model is most common in elementary schools because teachers are already familiar with rotating in centers and stations.

3. Lab Rotation Model:

This proposed model is carried out as follows:

The study group is divided into two categories:

1. Students who will study the practical material first;
2. Students who will study the theoretical part first.

Afterwards, both groups do the tasks to which they were assigned.

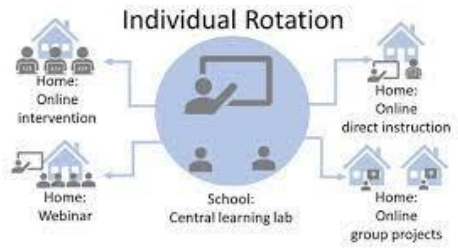
After a while, each group switches functions and those who studied the theoretical part will study the practical part and vice versa.

This way, everyone learns in the same way, always aiming at different modes of reaching the same conclusion. Therefore, the same topic becomes clear to both groups of students.

4. Individual rotation model

Individual rotation is a model in which an individual student works alone without necessarily working at all study stations.

For example: If you are doing a course in electromechanics, you can choose only the areas focused on electricity. Therefore, the script is customized by the student, making the **blended learning** method even more independent.

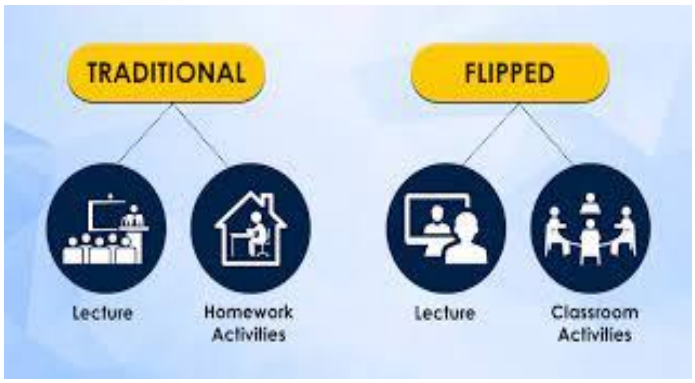


5. Flipped classroom:

The inverted classroom is a widely used method in universities. Students study the subject that will be covered before the face-to-face classes. This way, they are better prepared when the professor presents the ideas of the topic to be studied.

The professor, on the other hand, questions some of the content's preconceptions, observes if they are correct or not, and always offers information that is not included in the material that the students have read. In this Learners consume the prescribed content on their own time – either at home or before the class – and in-class time is devoted to active learning and applying your newly learned skills. This can be done in the form of discussions, case studies, or group projects.

Thus, it's possible for students to choose the best way for them to learn.



ADVANTAGES OF BLENDED LEARNING FOR TEACHERS:

Teachers who teach many classes a day might end up not having enough time to prepare as well as possible or even be unable to teach a class to a large number of students, since physical space is limited.

Since teachers will be creating the online classes, they can be used more than once, and therefore, teachers will have more time to devote to other activities or even to study and prepare new materials. Teaching is less expensive to deliver, more affordable, and saves time. Self-pacing for slow or quick learners reduces stress, increases satisfaction, and information retention. Blended learning also improves other factors for the teacher including:

- More engaged students
- Better information and feedback on work
- Team teaching
- Extended time with students
- More leadership roles
- Focus on deeper learning
- Motivate hard to reach kids
- New options to teach at home
- It decreases the educational expenditure

ADVANTAGES OF BLENDED LEARNING FOR STUDENTS

- Student learn with freedom and greater flexibility
- Student explore online resources
- It helps to students to self evaluate
- Increase student interest
- Keep students focused for longer
- Students get more feedback
- Instill a disposition of self-advocacy
- Promote student ownership
- Allow instant diagnostic information and student feedback
- Enables students to learn at their own pace

NEED FOR BLENDED LEARNING IN THE INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM;

The impact of Union Budget 2017 over the education sector has made the higher education to be multidimensional. Everyone is willing to have modernized education along with the personality

development which gives an open way for employment. Government's Vision of Education System The digitization is one of the trendy norms of the government and it has released the following measures to support the online education.

- **Swayam-**Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds
- **MOOC**- Massive Open Online Course
- **NEP –** National Education Policy
- **HEERA –** Higher Education Empowerment Regulation Agency
- **UGC –** University Grants Commission

The ultimate aim of all the above schemes is to groom the students to face the challenges of the digital India. The potentials of the students should be efficient enough to meet the fast changing and vibrant technologies.

LIMITATIONS OF BLENDED LEARNING :

- this type of learning does offer students the ability to go online when necessary, or learn from anywhere, there is no guarantee that each student will have access to the tools that they need to learn on the computer.

- unreliable internet problem and Many times, the internet may be down

- it creates a learning gap within classrooms.

- students falling behind on the materials and learners with low motivation

- lack of network infrastructure and the learning process is less efficient.

- teaching via online discourse alone is not sufficient to completely replace and provide comparable learning outcomes.

- It providing effective feedback is more time-consuming (and therefore more expensive) when electronic media are used, in comparison to traditional (e.g. paper-based) assessments.

Abusing internet privileges for non-school related activities a. Of course, as with anything, there are also some perceived negative aspects to using technology in the classroom, such as abusing internet privileges for non- school related activities. b. However, in most cases, the pros largely outweigh the cons. c. The best way to guard against any negative effects of technology integration and implementation is to make sure teachers and students are trained on d. Teachers should always understand how and why each piece of technology is being used by their students, and they should monitor student activities to the best of their abilities. e. Nothing is perfect, and we certainly shouldn't diminish the roles of traditional learning processes – such as handwriting – but when used correctly, technology can help both teachers and students soar to success.

CONCLUSION:

All students no matter their age learn differently and teaching methods should reflect this, by designing teaching programs in a way that reaches visual, auditory, and kinetic learners alike. With the heavy integration of technologies, we'll be able to improve teaching, information retention, engagement, responsibility, and enjoyment. It provides student with time flexibility and improved learning outcomes. Students never outgrow their learning styles, meaning blended learning is more important than ever, no matter what the industry is, from schools to corporations, from all walks of life.

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