

A Review of Blended Learning: An Innovative Hybrid Teaching and Learning

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Abstract: *Blended learning is a method that offers creative educational solutions by combining traditional classroom instruction with technology and online activities for all students. This approach keeps in-person connections with students while integrating technology and digital resources into the classroom. Blended learning is the use of technology to facilitate in-person interactions between students and teachers. Blended learning has developed into a dynamic, adaptable, and changing process. In the educational system, hybrid or blended learning approaches have both benefits and drawbacks.*

Keywords: Blended learning, Educational Solutions, Hybrid learning, Technology, Traditional Classroom

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Introduction

Blended learning (or hybrid learning), sometimes referred to as technology-mediated instruction, web-enhanced training, or mixed-mode instruction, is a method of teaching. It blends traditional classroom approaches with online learning resources and online interaction opportunities. Both the teacher and the student must be present in person for blended learning to take place. It is also utilized in training and professional development environments.

Teachers, at the moment are constantly looking for new and creative ways to teach their students. As a result, one of the most recent ideas being used is blended learning. In order to achieve the goal of providing high-quality educational opportunities for the demands of current times, the educational system continuously faces issues related to expansion, meeting individual needs, adopting new technology, and exploring new avenues. The phrase "blended learning" is being used more and more to refer to the new hybrid teaching approach that combines e-learning with traditional classroom techniques and individual study. Blended learning is a method that offers creative educational solutions by combining traditional classroom instruction with technology and online activities for all students.

In particular, hybrid teaching offers a flexible and adaptive approach to education by concurrently combining traditional in-person instruction with online or remote instruction. This approach keeps in-person connections with students while integrating technology and digital resources into the classroom. Although there are many different ways to define hybrid learning, common elements involve:

- the technologies needed to support hybrid teaching and learning;
- synchronous teaching via learning online in the present;
- the blending of virtual and in-person training.

In educational discourse, the idea of hybrid teaching has garnered a lot of attention as researchers work to define and improve its application in various learning situations. For instance, hybrid pedagogy is described as a "method of teaching that uses technology to create a variety of learning environments for students" by Linder (2017). Teachers that use hybrid pedagogies purposefully use digital resources to improve student learning and accommodate a variety of learning styles.

Ulla and Perales (2022) define hybrid education as "synchronous teaching of students in the classroom and online using an online platform," but conceding that research in the literature does not provide a precise description. While asynchronous learning enables participants to communicate in the virtual environment at different times and from different locations, synchronous learning requires real-time communication. In addition to using distinct types of engagement, these modes employ different strategies, approaches, and aims.

It is the Technology that makes it possible for learning to take place outside of the classroom and improves access to educational materials. In practicality, blended learning is not a novel idea in the process of teaching

and learning. One version of this is "tele-classes," in which students view lectures on closed-circuit television. This also applies to self-paced learning.

Significance of Blended Learning

Blended learning, sometimes referred to as hybrid learning, is a teaching strategy that blends online learning resources with conventional in-person classroom techniques. This approach makes use of the benefits of both face-to-face instruction and digital technology to give students a more adaptable and successful educational experience. Blended learning allows students to learn at their own pace by providing variable time frames that may be tailored to each individual.

Blended learning is the use of technology to facilitate in-person interactions between students and teachers. Both teachers and students can be flexible with this kind of learning. With blended learning, students can benefit from individualized instruction that fits their study schedule. By keeping an eye on their progress and providing immediate feedback, teachers can engage with students more effectively.

Through the use of extra resources outside of the classroom, blended learning enables students to customize their educational experiences. Students are able to pinpoint areas that require additional focus and adjust their study schedule accordingly. Teachers can improve their classes by utilizing blended learning techniques. A student's training experience may benefit from this updated method of instruction.

The significance of blended learning is found in its capacity to adjust to the various demands of students and the changing educational environment.

The Idea of Blended Learning

The literature offers a wide range of definitions for mixed learning. Additionally, the phrase needs to be explained in relation to other related terms like online learning, hybrid courses, e-learning, in-person learning, interactive learning, and collaborative learning.

Drawing from a variety of sources, Graham (2004) characterizes blended learning as a blend of instructional or delivery media, a blend of instructional techniques, and a blend of computer-mediated and in-person training. In the field of blended learning, this term is now the most popular. As stated in the research on blended learning, blended learning integrates both in-person and online methods.

In the long run, blended learning has developed into a dynamic, adaptable, and changing process. Its adaptability enables collaborative organizations and particular institutions to customize the idea to optimize its potential while being sensitive to a new generation of students. While preserving or improving quality, blended learning can expand access within the constraints of current resources. This method expands learning much beyond the confines of conventional classrooms and has the potential to cultivate a much more thoughtful student body.

Definitions of Blended Learning

- *In 2003, the American Society for Training and Development identified 'blended learning' as one of the top ten trends to emerge in the knowledge delivery industry (cited by Rooney, 2003).*
- *The concept of blended learning is rooted in the idea that learning is not just a one-time event—learning is a continuous process. Blending provides various benefits over using any single learning delivery medium alone- Singh (2003)*
- *Blended learning should be viewed as a pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialisation opportunities of the classroom with the technologically enhanced active learning possibilities of the online environment, rather than a ratio of delivery modalities- Dziuban, Hartman and Moskal (2004)*
- *Blended learning designates the range of possibilities presented by combining Internet and digital media with established classroom forms that require the physical co-presence of teacher and students- Norm Friesen (2012)*
- *Blended learning methodologies accommodate the student's active life schedule while still providing the social connections that are necessary for clear communication to exist, ultimately supporting retention and success- (Hijazi et al., 2006)*

(the definitions cited as in Rao, C S, 2019)

The above cited definitions reveal that blended learning entails combining two areas of focus: education and educational technology. It is a combination of technologies, pedagogies, and even work duties that make use of web-based technology. It is also the successful fusion of many delivery methods, instructional paradigms, and learning styles.

Key Features of Blended Learning

The following are the key features of blended learning:

- Students who participate in blended learning have two options; they can choose ICT-supported instruction or the traditional classroom setting, which allows them to connect directly with teachers and peers. This is mostly dependent on the type of content and goals being pursued.
- Teachers are thoroughly prepared to operate effectively in both the traditional classroom format and the ICT-supported format. This is a key component of blended learning. Teachers are highly dynamic, proficient in technology, and familiar with both modes. They will be proficient in both conventional techniques and other contemporary technologies.
- Students gain extensive exposure utilizing new technology. Technology is the century we live in. These days, being illiterate involves more than just not being able to read and write; it also includes not being familiar with contemporary technology. Digital literacy is now required for all vocations; therefore, blended learning enhances students' ICT experiences. Students who participate in blended learning acquire the skills necessary to fully utilize the technology at their disposal.
- Students have plenty of time to engage with other students enrolled in the same course, both in person and virtually. They can communicate with them both virtually and on college campuses. As a result, their group grows in size and diversity, which broadens the students' knowledge and fosters empathy, compassion, and harmony among peers from different cultures and nations.
- Students receive instruction in a variety of life skills, which are those necessary for leading a contented, successful, and peaceful life. Empathy, the ability to make decisions, love, patience, communication, self-management, and critical thinking are the main life skills. Students are able to practice these skills thanks to blended learning. A few abilities, such as love, empathy, and patience, are introduced to students in the classroom by their teachers and peers, while others, such as self-management, decision-making, critical thinking, and communication, are introduced through online activities.
- The goal is the holistic development of personality. Students that participate in blended learning have the opportunity to fully develop their personalities. All three facets of personality—cognitive, physical, and emotional—are developed through blended learning, which is challenging to accomplish through traditional methods or ICT approaches alone. While online encounters support reflective learning, traditional classroom instruction is beneficial for memory and comprehension levels.
- Students gain extensive exposure to and fresh insights into the course material. Students are exposed to a wide range of experiences, which enhances their content understanding and allows them to see new aspects of the material and acquire meaningful, practical knowledge.
- It offers a multicultural and multidimensional way of teaching and learning. The blended learning approach gives students the chance to interact and share their opinions with students worldwide, making the teaching and learning process multicultural and multidimensional.
- It has an element of humanity because of the teacher's physical presence. Students receive this personal touch through the traditional approach, which is crucial for balanced student emotional quotients up to the secondary level.
- Constructivism is another component of blended learning. Students create information instead than merely absorbing it. Instead of relying on others to create teaching-learning strategies for them, students create their own knowledge.

- Teachers play a variety of roles in blended learning. In addition to their usual roles in the classroom, teachers also serve as motivators, resource people, organizers, developers, and advisors when creating content to be delivered via Technology. As a result, teachers are freed from the tedious traditional tasks and are able to experiment in a variety of fields that are beneficial to their professional development.

Blended Learning: Pros & Cons

In the educational system, hybrid or blended learning approaches have both benefits and drawbacks. Everyone has heard of blended learning, and whole feeds explain how to manage it, why it works, and where it stalls. However, the phrase is confused with flipped classrooms, hybrid delivery, or just eLearning, so many teams discuss it before they even begin.

Advantages

- High levels of student achievement are achieved through blended learning, which is more successful than either in-person or online training.
- Through a combination of digital training and one-on-one face-to-face interaction, students can work independently on new topics without the guidance of teachers.
- As in a typical classroom, teachers can now simplify their lessons to assist every student realize their full potential.
- It gives college and university students the opportunity to learn both independently and collaboratively at the same time.
- Students' learning attitudes have been developed through the use of information and communication technology.
- Using computer-based qualitative and quantitative assessment modules, it fosters and enhances communication between instructors and students to more accurately gauge their comprehension of the course material.
- By placing courses online and effectively substituting expensive textbooks with electronic devices, it lowers training and educational expenditures.
- Two main advantages of this strategy are the potential for data collecting and the ability to customize education and assessment.
- In order to improve student achievement outcomes, it assists schools in making resource reallocation decisions.
- It makes it easier for pupils with unique capabilities or interests outside of the curricula to use instructional technology to improve their abilities or surpass grade limitations.
- It replaces the concept in which a teacher stands in front of the class and everyone is expected to follow the same pace by enabling personalized education.
- By allowing students to work at their own pace, it ensures that they completely grasp new ideas before proceeding.

Drawbacks

The fact that its heavy reliance on the technical resources or tools used to offer the blended learning experience, blended learning may have technical drawbacks if it is not properly planned and implemented. The disadvantages that students might encounter are listed below:

- If blended learning is not adequately planned and implemented, it may have technical drawbacks because it relies on technology or technological resources.
- The availability of excellent technical support is crucial because IT literacy can be a major obstacle for students trying to access the course materials.

- Group work may be difficult due to management issues in an online environment.
- Students may fall behind on the curriculum if lecture recording devices are used.
- Effective feedback has been found to be more costly and time-consuming.
- Another major problem is access to network infrastructure.
- Resources might be wasted when learning technology tools are used inefficiently.
- Students must be willing to learn or possess a basic understanding of technology.
- high setup and maintenance costs for technology.
- Insufficient motivation.

Furthermore, in-person instruction continues to be the cornerstone of clinical skills education in educational fields where interprofessional simulation and clinical-based placement are essential components. Teaching via online discourse alone is insufficient to fully replace and produce learning outcomes that are comparable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, blended learning (or hybrid learning), sometimes referred to as technology-mediated instruction, web-enhanced training, or mixed-mode instruction, is a method of teaching. The phrase "blended learning" is being used more and more to refer to the new hybrid teaching approach that combines e-learning with traditional classroom techniques and individual study. Hybrid teaching offers a flexible and adaptive approach to education by concurrently combining traditional in-person instruction with online or remote instruction. This approach keeps in-person connections with students while integrating technology and digital resources into the classroom. In educational discourse, the idea of hybrid teaching has garnered a lot of attention as researchers work to define and improve its application in various learning situations.

Therefore, teachers can improve their classes by utilizing blended learning techniques. A student's training experience may benefit from this updated method of instruction. Blended learning entails combining two areas of focus: education and educational technology. It is a combination of technologies, pedagogies, and even work duties that make use of web-based technology.

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