

## BLENDED LEARNING: A NEED OF PRESENT HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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### ABSTRACT

*Blended learning is broad enough to encompass a variety of modifications relevant to the particular demands and settings of a school or course. Blended learning is the combining of in-person classroom instruction with online learning within a course or program. Classroom teaching time can be replaced or strengthened by online learning experiences. This online learning might differ in the independent study, degrees of interaction and also learning activities. In blended learning, activities and the content of both face-to-face and online learning are intervene with each other and work towards the same learning results by using the same content. Different learning experiences are incorporated, to augmentation of each other and are also planned or integrated to run in the same direction. Blended learning is an important and quickly developing type of education with a focus on the benefits it offers for both instructors and pupils, including as a greater degree of adaptability and convenience as well as potential advancements in students' creativity and independence. Blended learning is an integrated technique that makes the most of online as well as in-person training, as opposed to merely adding technological elements to an already established course. The earliest frameworks for the purposeful structuring of blended learning to enhance learning outcomes are the interaction model, blended presentation, the blended block model and the totally digital model.*

**Keywords:** *Blended Learning, Need of Blended Learning, Higher Education System.*

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### Introduction

The meaning of blended learning is the practice of conventional classroom teaching practices well organized with the usage of online instruction for the students who are dealing the same course content within the same program. It is a "thoughtful fusion of face-to-face and online learning experiences" (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). In blended programs, students do some programs in the face-to-face study and some other programs are taught fully online.

'Blended learning' is a word enforced to the practice of transferring instruction and learning exposure through some amalgamation of both the face-to-face and also technology-integrated learning. In the course of technology-integrated components of the particular instructional experiences, students are not desired to present physically in a place but they can be hooked on digitally through networked communities. In Blended learning courses, students are taught by a teacher not only in a traditional classroom and also use online components for the completion of the course on the online learning platform away from the classroom.

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Classroom teaching time can be replaced or strengthened by online learning experiences. This online learning can vary in the independent study, degrees of interaction and also learning activities. In blended learning, activities and the content of both face-to-face and online learning are intervene with each other and work towards the same learning results by using the same content. Different learning experiences are incorporated, to augmentation of each other and are also planned or integrated to run in the same direction.

Blended learning is also called as hybrid or mixed-mode type learning. These structures of pedagogical forms use various forms of teaching and learning practices and diversify in the form and implementation by the schools, teachers and programs.

#### **Blended Learning Vs Traditional Learning**

For obvious reasons, the blended mode of learning has so far acquired an important advantage over traditional modes of learning. A continuous learning experience for students is ensured by blended learning, which is the ideal combination of traditional learning and online instruction.

#### **Blended Learning: An Integration of the Old and the New**

Blended learning, sometimes referred to as hybrid learning, is the seamless blending of digital, online learning and traditional, face-to-face classroom training. It is a pedagogical strategy designed to bring the best aspects of both worlds together. Blended learning's key attributes include:

- **Online and Offline Components**

Online exercises are combined with in-person classroom activities in blended learning. This combination gives students a diverse learning experience that includes both in-person encounters and online participation.

- **Modularity in Scheduling**

Blended learning gives students more control over their learning speed than traditional learning, which has set schedules. A customized learning experience is made possible by the ease with which they can access online materials and tasks.

- **Use a Student-Centered Strategy**

Students are encouraged to participate actively in their education through blended learning. Self-directed tasks are a common feature of online components, encouraging learners to be independent and responsible.

- **A Range of Educational Resources**

The tools available to students engaged in blended learning programs are numerous and include digital resources, multimedia content, and interactive online platforms. This variety accommodates different learning preferences and styles.

- **Individualization**

With blended learning, teachers can modify their pedagogical strategies to meet the unique needs of each student. Students can work through the content at their own pace and go over subjects again as needed.

- **Traditional Education: The Proven Method**

The time-tested educational approach is known as traditional learning, sometimes known as in-person or face-to-face learning. In this model, students actually attend classes, interact with teachers face-to-face, and socialize with classmates. The main characteristics of conventional education include:

- **Direct Communication**

Direct, in-person interaction between students and teachers defines traditional learning. Instant feedback, clarifications, and the development of a lively learning environment are all made possible by this immediateness.

- **Organized Planning**

Traditional education follows a set schedule with predetermined class schedules and lengths. Classes start and end at particular times, and students must be present.

- **Educator-Focused**

In a conventional classroom, the teacher is in charge of delivering the material, delineating concepts, and facilitating conversations.

- **Constrained Adaptability**

Traditional education students frequently have little latitude in terms of how quickly they may learn. They must follow the class time table, which might not accommodate their unique learning requirements.

- **Constrained Resources**

With the exception of textbooks and tangible resources found in the school or library, learning materials are normally supplied in the classroom.

- **Why Use Blended Learning?**

The advantages of blended learning above the traditional teaching methods that have been popular since the dawn of time are listed below.

- **Learning Is More Flexible and Effective**

Because the blended learning curriculum is so effectively designed, students can access their course content "anytime." Students will be in a position to maximize their study time and learn at their own speed. Blended learning is a promising and practical method since it gives you the freedom to learn at your own pace and convenience.

Additionally, when students utilize class time effectively, learning effectiveness is significantly increased. There won't be any time wasted on lessons or topics that the students have previously received instruction on. Students will consequently be encouraged to master the subjects they can learn independently and maximizing learning in the blended learning setting.

- **Excellent Motivation**

In contrary to traditional learning, blended learning offers pupils immediate feedback on their academic achievement. Regularly tracking student assessments allows teacher, as a blended learning student, to identify the areas of strength and weakness. This self-awareness keeps students spirits up and inspires them to always go beyond the boundaries a teacher has set for themselves. Every session, students are pushed to do better, which will eventually result in better knowledge retention.

- **Learning with Customized Content**

The "one size fits all" principle is often demonstrated in a traditional learning environment when all students are taught the same subjects in the same way. Compare this to a classroom setting for integrated learning. Here, skilled tutors seriously consider the unique demands of each learner. The concept that there cannot be a learning process that is in tune with the demands of many pupils is firmly refuted by this type of learning. As a result, blended learning provides the adaptability of instructional content that is tailored to the various demands of various pupils.

- **No Apprehension of Judging**

While focusing on the academic session in a blended learning environment, students are able to ask tutors any questions. Combine this independence with the tailored material that blended learning aims to deliver. Students now have a friendly learning atmosphere free from concern about criticism from others. The most focused learners are those who have no fear in the classroom.

Thus, the idea of passing or failing is meaningless in integrated learning. Students do not feel under pressure from their teachers and perform well in whatever they do in class that is when they try their hardest.

- **An Air of Liberation**

Before being paired with a knowledgeable instructor, online learning software helps as a blended learning learner hone vocabulary and understands the complexities of grammar. This learning mechanism can provide students from all over the world with a wide range of options owing to technology. To enjoy the advantages of blended learning while relaxing at the desk at work, all we need is a smart phone or a personal computer that is linked to the internet.

In traditional education, it is required that students show up to tutor-led lessons on time and on the scheduled dates. On the other hand, modern technology enables students to absorb knowledge through real-time instructions provided by online tutors. So students can enroll in online courses whenever it's convenient for them, and they can finish them whenever they have time.

- **Budget-Friendly**

Blended learning allows for significant financial savings for organizations because it eliminates the need for travel expenses while also allowing employees to continue with their regular work schedules. Students can learn what their online tutor is teaching them while sitting comfortably at their workstation. These advantages are not possible with conventional education.

- **An Ideal Blending of Several Learning Styles**

It is usually recommended that all the learning styles that can be incorporated into the training program given the circumstances that are seeking to instruct folks. Students may maximize their learning through various learning media and methodologies, results in a perfect blending of learning styles that can be made available under a single umbrella.

- **Seven Benefits of Blended Learning**

Here are seven of the most significant advantages of using a blended learning strategy for students and learners.

- **Advantages of Both In-Person and Online Learning Techniques**

We can benefit from both offline and online training methods by combining them. Comparatively speaking to a single-method approach, blended learning is much more versatile and adaptable. No student is left behind since it accommodates all learning styles, whether they prefer face-to-face instruction, online courses, or a combination of both.

Through a variety of training modes, such as presentations, classroom workshops, multimedia, real-life projects, instructor-led training, and more, the correct blended learning model lets him/her break the monotony of the training and increase professionals/students' engagement levels.

- **Reduces Costs & Boosts ROI**

Due to the fact that blended learning uses fewer trainers for shorter periods of time, we can save money on travel and lodging. Additionally, it contributes to a decrease in the amount of time professionals/students spend traveling, which significantly boosts productivity.

Online training is naturally not free because it needs a lot of resources and qualified trainers to create high-quality training materials. By choosing one of the many free instructional technologies accessible today, we can keep the expense down.

Overall, the blended learning strategy can greatly boost the return on investment (ROI) of our training by cutting traditional training expenditures and raising worker productivity.

- **Facilitates Feedback from Professionals/Students Training**

Professionals/students feedback is analyzed to determine how well they are performing. However, using conventional training techniques makes it difficult to consistently gather professionals/students feedback. Most of the time, self-reporting surveys are unreliable, which could have an impact on how well professionals/students perform inside an organization.

An efficient blended learning technology saves you important time by gathering training feedback in a physical setting and enables employees to monitor their performance via recurring online assessments and quizzes. The amount of time it takes a worker to accomplish a task, how many times learners take a lesson and understand the effectiveness of blended learning may all be tracked with the aid of online platforms.

Organizations may more easily track and gauge the success of their blended training program thanks to the collaboration of numerous learning modules. You may get employee feedback in manageable, non-intrusive pieces thanks to the segmentation into modules.

- **Enables Employees to Pick their Own Pace for Learning**

A great training program accommodates each person's schedule. The professionals/students should have access to the training program whenever they're prepared to learn.

Every professional/student can progress through the online section of the program at their own pace and ask questions in person with the experts during live meetings thanks to an efficient blended learning technology. It strikes a good balance between crammed schedules, professionals/students' preferences, and learning speed.

The face-to-face and technologically enhanced methodologies used in blended learning make professionals/students more engaged and aid in the development of critical thinking.

- **Blended Education can be Tailored**

The ability to tailor training is to meet employees where they are in terms of skills and knowledge is made possible by fusing instructor-led instruction with online courses.

Organizations can build up various channels for blended learning that are tailored to the needs and learning preferences of each professional/student. Depending on an professionals/students' learning preferences and goals, information in customized training programs may be given in a variety of formats.

Professionals/students can find information through online resources, seminars, booklets, and other formats thanks to the customized learning program. With this strategy, students can benefit from traditional classroom advantages as well as e-learning flexibility.

- **Offers the greatest flexibility**

Whatever requirements of professionals/students have, blended learning can accommodate them. Blended learning allows students to learn at their own pace in the convenience of their own home, giving them a great deal of learning flexibility. Additionally, blended learning provides the warmth of human interaction that is sorely lacking, allowing students to speak with a subject matter expert and get their questions answered before they hinder their development.

- **Better Memory Retention**

We can reach all of the professionals/students, regardless of whether they learn best visually, aurally or kinesthetically by using a blended learning strategy. It seems to reason that training that is reinforced by engaging more senses will aid in improving memory retention.

- **Different Blended Learning Models**

Blended learning commonly referred to as "hybrid learning," combines the advantages of the online learning with the classroom's well-established effectiveness. Blended learning approaches provide flexibility without losing technical innovation, just as more organizations are changing their workforce to blended learning or a hybrid structure.

The six blended learning models and the focus on the features that each model offers, emphasizing their similarities, distinctions and advantages.

- **Face-to-face Driver Model**

The most resemblance to a typical classroom setting is provided by this style. After participating in a live webinar or meeting (like Google Meet or Zoom), students receives live training and they are given homework or assignments to finish before the following session.

**The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Face-to-Face Driver Education Model**

The face-to-face driver learning style obviously demands more time and effort from the instructor than some of the other models, but it may be quite beneficial for students who require more extrinsic motivation or are more recent graduates in their particular jobs or careers. The model can also be an excellent choice for folks who are less technically savvy because it closely resembles a regular classroom.

- **Flipped Model**

The flipped paradigm is comparable to the face-to-face driver model outlined above, with the exception that before each virtual classroom encounter, learners are given access to learning tools and materials (typically transmitted via an LMS).

**The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Flipped Classroom Model**

The flipped model provides an alternative for a learning cohort that would benefit from active, live education in the classroom; yet, it also demands more time and effort from the instructor. However, the flipped model's supporters recognize that it has the ability to raise students' engagement and readiness levels.

- **Enriched Virtual Model**

With this strategy, students may control how quickly they acquire new material and finish the majority of their schoolwork online. Although learners have the option to participate in instructor-led webinars at their convenience, in the end, the learner decides how much of their education will involve direct interaction with the instructor.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of the Enriched Virtual Learning Model**

The enriched virtual learning paradigm might be excellent for learners who are self-motivated and value autonomy. They appreciate the balance between feeling supported and not feeling constrained by having to participate in live teaching at a specific time and date by having the opportunity to communicate with the instructor.

- **Flex Model**

The flex learning concept gives students the freedom to design their education in a way that suits them best. They can switch between group learning, individual assignments, and both synchronous and asynchronous education. Although instructors are accessible to answer queries and offer criticism, it is up to each participant to decide when and how to make use of their resources.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of the Flex Learning Model**

The flex learning approach is ideal for self-driven students who are aware of (or eager to try out) how various teaching strategies affect their learning. The need that instructors be "on call" is a drawback, even though a large portion of this time is probably not spent providing actual training. Another drawback is that unmotivated students could simply continue with the teaching strategy that is most comfortable for them, or that seems to be the quickest or easiest, rather than embracing the personalization this learning style offers.

- **Rotation model**

The rotation learning paradigm resembles a grab bag in several ways. Then, participants alternate between receiving individual training, live group instruction and self-directed assignments. The rotation learning approach gives a comparable level of flexibility, but is chosen by the instructor instead of allowing learners to finally choose which learning methods are most effective.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of Rotation Learning Model**

When it comes to students who like various types of learning experiences, the rotation approach can be very beneficial. Participants will be able to maximize their preferred teaching style because they receive a mix of instructor-led and self-guided learning. The level of organization required by the rotation model, however, is where it can be difficult. Because of this, a lot of teachers rely largely on a learning management system to deliver a practical and simple learning experience.

- **Online Driver Model**

The most learner autonomy is provided by the online driving education model. The learning models are completed by participants at their own pace and in accordance with their individual motivation and drive. Although there is still the option for learners to contact instructors as needed, doing so is not necessary in order to pass the course.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Driver Learning Model**

The online driver learning model required the least amount of instructor's time and energy. If unmotivated or tentative learners, however, may find themselves confused or simply going on through the motions without achieving a clear understanding of the course material.

**How to design a Blended Learning Program**

- **Define Our Goals**

As with any training program, it must begin with an objective: What are the training's aims and intended outcomes? This will not only provide students more clarity, but it will also help to develop a more targeted course that will equip students with the skills and information they require.

- **Build it Interactive**

We can make our blended learning classes as interactive as we like. We get to choose how much of our education will be self-paced learning and how much of it will be online training. For instance, before a live webinar training session, we must assign students a task to do. We should talk about the task and share solutions throughout the webinar.

- **Assessments**

At the conclusion of the program, we need to track and evaluate students' development. This will help us to determine the effectiveness of the training and whether there are any knowledge gaps that need to be filled. We may quickly set tests or evaluations to be finished at the conclusion of training with an LMS.

#### **Why Blended Learning is ideal for Professional/Corporate Training?**

- **Return on Investment (ROI)**

Costs associated with in-person training, including as travel, lodging, and printed training materials, are decreased with blended learning. If we want to train people all over the world, blended learning can make it simple for us to do so because it has the added benefits of allowing us to do so on a wide scale.

- **Flexibility**

We must find a balance while educating employees in a corporate setting and take into an account of their other obligations. Blended learning methods provide learners the freedom to learn whenever it's convenient for them and more control over their learning and development by combining online training and assignments.

- **Engagement**

We can record training sessions for later use by using a variety of online learning techniques, such as webinars. Gamification and certifications can increase rewards and friendly competition in training, if we have access to an LMS, which can improve student engagement.

#### **How to Launch Blended Learning**

Blended learning is the best option for our educational needs. For implementing blended learning in the organization, we follow the steps below:

- **Step 1: Make goals for blended learning**

Establish the aims and goals to achieve through blended learning. We may, for instance, want students to take a more active and independent role in their education. We want to give students or staff members' additional chances to work together so they can hone their social skills.

- **Step 2: Select a blended learning model**

Select the blended learning model that meets our objectives. We may implement more than one model, but better be ready to continue maintaining them all. Keep in mind that different models can need for different equipment and classroom layouts.

- **Step 3: Obtain the appropriate tools for content creation and delivery**

To launch the online component of blended learning, we need a specialized software. Every organization and institution has different requirements, but all of them will require two tools: an authoring tool is to produce online content but a learning management system is to deliver it and monitor student progress.

#### **Authoring Tool**

The authoring tool should make it possible to produce and update e-Learning materials rapidly given the adaptable and adjustable nature of blended learning. If we want to develop learning materials without any effort and we don't have any background with instructional design. Since it functions as a Power Point add-in, we may be comfortable with the interface and can start creating material straight away without any specialized training.

We can able to:

- Record and edit video tutorials
- Improve theoretical materials with readymade interactions
- Create dialogue simulations
- Create engaging slide-based online courses
- Build interactive quizzes and tests

### Learning Management System (LMS)

LMSs are used to store training materials, deliver them to learners and produce reports that show whether or not training is effective. Asynchronous learning is the exclusive capability of certain LMSs, but live online training sessions are supported by other platforms. Additionally, some LMSs let us schedule and track attendance for offline sessions. These multipurpose LMSs are ideal for blended learning. The key characteristics of an LMS for blended learning should have:

- Access to learning materials via any device
- Learner communication
- Both synchronous and asynchronous learning options
- Smooth integration with an authoring tool
- Gamification
- Convenient learner enrollment
- Detailed analytics on learner progress
- **Step 4: Upgrade the setting where you learn**

We may need to restructure our classroom depending on the blended learning strategy we select. Additionally, guarantee that the general classroom layout will inspire kids to participate in learning and maintain their positive attitudes.

- **Step 5: Start blended learning and take it slowly**

Let the students in; they're prepared! Their current job is to manage and coordinate the learning process. Be patient as well. At least a few weeks will pass before blended learning starts to provide any results

### Conclusion

In order to implement cutting-edge pedagogical approaches through the use of technology in teaching and learning, a successful blended learning environment is required. Design elements, learning outcomes, and student traits and backgrounds can all be taken into consideration when creating a successful learning environment that includes both in-person and online components. The majority of the students' attributes and blended learning design elements are crucial components for its success.

We are aware of the implications posed by the design and ultimate implementation of blended learning as we prepare to create and implement it. Universities need to be aware of the interaction between learner characteristics, design elements, and learning outcomes, which serve as measures of the efficacy of blended learning.

Particularly in the area of shown student self-regulation, students indicate a significant aptitude for blended learning. Blended learning aims to increase students' levels of knowledge creation and foster the development of their analytical abilities. This establishes the learner's capacity for critical assessment of information sources. This has the potential to significantly increase the number of competent learners who will graduate as creative and innovative workers capable of meeting the needs of the labor market. Universities and other educational institutions should keep promoting blended learning strategies by installing learning management systems and reliable internet to allow for efficient learning using technology, especially in developing nations.

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