

BLENDDED LEARNING IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Dr.A.Gracy

Associate Professor

Pope John Paul II College of Education, Pondicherry, India.

Abstract: With digital transformation sweeping throughout the education system today, it's more crucial for educational organizations to utilize them in the teaching process. At present a smart approach to teach students with diverse needs is using blended learning in the classrooms. Blended learning is also called as "flipped classroom," "hybrid learning" or "mixed learning," and this is an approach that mixes the traditional classroom teaching with online content, so that learners can learn and review at their own pace. Blended learning represents a fundamental shift in instructional methods which has the potential to optimize outcomes for individual students rather than the traditional instruction. Distance learning is the process of creating an educational experience of equal qualitative value for the learner to best suit their needs outside the classroom.

Keywords: digital transformation, flipped classroom, students, distance learning, etc.,

INTRODUCTION

In blended learning teachers use technology, frequently in the form of Web-Based instruction, in concert with and as a supplement to live instruction that needs the mentor presence and guidance. The strength of this approach is that it provides a means to ensure learners as they undertake independent learning tasks and provides many affordances for the teacher and students in the form of communication channels, information sources and management tools.

Blended learning commonly refers to a learning that combines traditional teaching and learning approaches with information and communication technologies. It is anticipated that blended learning will enhance the student learning experience, at the same time it also demands that the teachers should be trained as online facilitator. This can be done using e- learning materials, Virtual labs, webinars, role-play in classroom teaching.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance Education "is a process to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both". In other words, distance learning is the process of creating an educational experience of equal qualitative value for the learner to best suit their needs outside the classroom.

Distance education courses require a physical and online mode it can be done using the present day ICT Tools. This emerging technology is becoming widely used in universities and institutions around the globe. With the recent trend of technological advance, distance learning is becoming more recognized for its potential in providing individualized attention and communication with students internationally.

BENEFITS OF BLENDED LEARNING

Blended learning represents a fundamental shift in instructional methods which has the potential to optimize outcomes for individual students rather than the traditional instruction. Extensively studied and practiced in distance education, blended learning also offers an ideal solution for improving training, especially when it comes to up skilling students to achieve digital economy. And with digital assets such as videos and recordings and eBooks, the potential for re-use is huge, reinforces engagement, learning and retention. The benefits of blended learning are discussed below

1. Different people learn different things in different ways.

With so many different learning styles to address, a blended learning solution makes sense. For people who learn visually or through reading and ideally alone, online self-paced video delivery would be the best mode. Social and aural learners would gain most from live instructor-led classrooms. Meanwhile, hands-on practice from engaging in applied learning projects would satisfy kinesthetic and logical learners.

2. Reinforces engagement, learning and retention.

Numerous studies show how for most people, learning is improved by combining different activities alongside more passive study. Ideally, these could include the "human" element of interaction, such as threaded discussions, video conferencing and internal social media forums to share and compare knowledge and to encourage and demonstrate the effective application of newly learned skills to the workplace. By utilizing as many learning delivery methods as possible (video, live instructor, social and practical), we can fill in any knowledge gaps left by modes that were less than optimal for the specific topic or learner.

3. Learners can control the pace of their learning.

People learn best when they have some control over their learning. Choice reduces learner apathy, relieves some of the stress of the learning process and motivates people to engage with the material. It makes the learners to come to the table with a wide range of knowledge and experience with the course topic.

This "flipped" blended approach enables learners to start with the knowledge they gained on their own and then supplement it with the personal attention of instructor-led classroom training (either virtual or on-premises), plus the group interaction of social learning and finally, the hands-on practice of applied learning projects

4. Blended learning saves money.

Organizations of any size can optimize return on investment by saving costs while increasing engagement and retention by integrating eLearning into instructor-led programs. Blended learning reduces instructor fees, expenses on training materials; enables distance learning at a global scale.

5. Blended learning is modular and scalable.

Dedicated classroom training takes a lot of time to set up and participate in, making it not economical on an ad hoc basis. However, online learning libraries alone lack the engagement, practical exercise and personal feedback that optimize learning. In contrast, by providing easily accessible training, a blended learning program enables students to upskill quickly in a specific technology or subject.

6. Flexibility and Effectiveness

A blended learning approach provides ultimate flexibility in presenting content, potential to enhance both the effectiveness and efficiency of meaningful learning experiences. Complex topics can be presented in the classroom, while other subject matter can be available online with a convenience over how and when the learners participate in learning.

7. Cost-effectiveness

Mostly blended learning is cost effective method when educational institutions telecast online events to the learners.

8. Personalization

A well-crafted blended learning can provide a seamless transition from classroom to computer or vice-versa through designing the ways of continuing discussion themes and personalizing content to learners' interests.

9. Extended reach

A blended learning strategy reduces classroom teaching time, by digitizing the expertise of talented instructors or subject-matter experts, reach more people with high-quality content at a fraction of the cost. That frees up knowledgeable instructors to offer more classes, or create more training content, or work on other things.

10. Covers all learning styles

Effective blended learning is a best way to cater to different learning styles of varied learners' community through distance mode.

11. Virtual Labs

Human Resource Development would certainly be the key for it to happen through the virtual labs where Knowledge modules, E-learning contents, and Blogs depending on the personalized needs of the learner would need to be delivered to him /her at the right time with the right content interactively to take care of his / her aspirations. The gravitational attraction of the present generation learners towards technological gadgets can be used to make them as part of the blended learning process in distance education system.

CONCLUSION

Blended learning combines the best of traditional teaching techniques with new ones. Technological innovation in higher education has a significant impact on the formation of the future society who are going to be the makers of the future. Technological integration has a major influence on learning and teaching process but will not the online blended learning tools cannot replace teachers but aids in increasing the effectiveness of the teaching process in distance education mode.

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