The usefulness of Blended Learning

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Abstract

Today's world is the world of science and technology. In each sector, technology is used. Education is the prime sector for the development of the society. In the education, sector technology is used very effectively and efficiently. Blended learning is the combination of classroom teaching as well as online teaching. In this method, there is a combination of digital learning tools with more traditional classroom (face-to-face) teaching. In Blended, learning students and teachers will elaborate in a better way. Students get the flexibility to work within their own schedules. There is transparency in group progress. There are six models of Blended learning - Face-to-face driver model, online driver model, Rotation model, Flipped classroom, Flex model, and individual rotation model. In the present stage in education sector has fully recognized the huge advantages of blended learning. This method enriches the experiences of students. Students will learn what is true and develop critical thinking among students.

Key Words - *Blended learning, Flipped Classroom, Flex Model, Driver Model, Rotational Model.*

Introduction: Today's world is world of science and technology. In each and every sector technology is used. Education is the prime sector for the development of the society. In the education, sector technology is used very effectively and efficiently. In the first period of COVID-19, the education sector suffered a lot but then there is online education. Online education is very useful in lockdown as well as now a day also. We can save time, money, and energy. Google Classroom, zoom, Visme, Dial Pad, Light Sail, Remind, and Pear Deck these tools are used for online teaching. Blended Learning, Project Based Learning, Inquiry Based Learning, Jigsaw, and Flipped Classroom are innovative teaching methods. The blended learning method is good for teaching.

Concept of Blended Learning: Blended learning is the combination of classroom teaching as well as online teaching. In this method, there is a combination of digital learning tools with more traditional classroom (face-to-face) teaching. Students and teachers are physically present in the same place. Blended learning is first developed in 1960. Initially, in Blended learning, there was a vague variety of technologies. In 2006 it became more concrete.

Classroom Teaching	**+**	Online Teaching	**=**	Blended Learning

Blended learning allows students to study their own. Due to online and offline students have more flexibility to learn new things. This type of learning creates multiple integrated classroom who fulfil needs of all types of students. Students will be engaged, stimulated and motivated to learn new things interestingly.

Definitions of Blended Learning

➤ Oxford Dictionary definition of Blended learning – "A style of education in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face-to-face teaching.

➤ Graham (2006) – "Blended learning systems combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction".

➤ Garrison and Kanuka (2004) – "The thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences".

➤ Elsenheimer (2006) – "An approach to instructional design that seeks to maximize learning potential by applying the most effective form of instruction for a given program element".

➤ Allen and Seaman (2010) – "Course that blends online and face-to-face delivery. A substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, typically uses online discussions, and typically has a reduced number of face-to-face meetings".

➤ Sloan Consortium – "Integrate online with traditional face-to-face class activities in a planned, pedagogical valuable manner".

Need and Importance of Blended Learning

➤ **Students will learn better:** The University of Iowa found that blended learning is more effective than classroom learning. Blended learning facilitates the flow of information

between students and instructors. Blended learning offers more information for the learners. There is effective communication between the teacher/ instructor and learners.

➢ **It promotes student's ownership of learning:** In this type of learning some learning responsibilities are given to the students. Blended learning promotes student freedom and some ownership of learning. Students are trained to achieve their learning goals. Blended learning promotes this type of academic responsibility while learning. Students can learn their own speed. Faster learners can learn faster as compared to slow learners. Slow learners can repeat and review as many times as they need.

➢ **Prepared students for a Tech – Cantered world:** Today's world is the world of technology. Teachers are preparing students for future and civic lives. Even employer gives jobs who know technology better. Blended learning is helping students to build these desirable skills and knowledge for the future.

It also helps students to learn how to evaluate online resources. It also teaches to identify and check reputable sources.

➢ **It cuts costs:** Blended learning is a good investment for administrators because it maximizes the cost savings gained from online learning. It will reduce costs like physical resources, building repairs, maintenance, etc. In this method, the student can learn in their homes or outside homes. Schools can use this money for co - co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

➢ **It increases collaboration:** In Blended learning, students can meet teachers as well as other students whenever and wherever. Teachers will find better ways to collaborate with students. Team teaching is better for the online environment, students can learn from subject experts from anywhere in the world. In Blended learning students and teachers will elaborate in group's better way. Students get the flexibility to work within their own schedules. There is transparency in group progress.

➢ **It keeps students more interested and engaged:** Blended learning uses technology so this can keep students more engaged in the learning process. Some students get more interesting apps rather than face-to-face approaches. Blended learning breaks the chain of traditional teaching giving more information and concepts in different contexts.

Models of Blended Learning: There are six models of Blended learning

1. Face-to-face driver model, 2) Online driver model 3) Rotation model 3) Flipped classroom 4) Flex model 5) Individual rotation model

1. **Face to face driver Model:** This model is good for students as well as teachers for meaningful interactions. In this model, the education is given traditional way or offline mode. Students must present in person. The online elements are given there and try to solve specific issues that arise from particular students. This model provides technology to progress who are struggling or increase their grade level.

In this model, students will join in webinars or meeting, and they will receive live instructions, given homework or assignments to be completed before the next lecture. Technology is used in this model as supplement learning. In this model, online resources are used for train and educate those students who require additional assistance on specific issues.

While using this model you have to do –

➢ You have to identify students who need supplemental instructions.

➢ You have to select an appropriate digital tool.

➢ You have to find appropriate time to use these tools.

➢ You have to supervise and help those students who have need.

2. **Online driver model:** This model is totally opposite of the Face-to-face model. In this, model all the instructions, programs, syllabus, course activity, assignments, etc. are given online only.

This model is works for –

➢ Handicapped or chronically ill students who have difficulties to present in the school.

➢ Students who are working. Due to working hours, these students cannot go to regular schools.

➢ Highly motivated students who want faster progress.

➢ Students who live in a remote area.

In this method, the material is provided on an online platform for those students who live in remote areas. Students will chat or contact when they have questions. This model is ideal for students who need flexibility and independence in daily routines. Now a day this model is popular in the world.

3. **Rotation model :** This model involves traditional face-to-face learning with online learning. The time schedule is divided between these two processes. Students monitor both face-to-face as well as online learning.

This model includes four sub-models -

I. **Station rotation –** In this model, the course is given and students rotate as per subject or fixed schedule or teacher's availability. It is used for group instruction, group projects, and individual tutoring.

II. **Lab-rotation model** – In this model student rotates to the computer lab for online learning.

III. **Flipped – Classroom model -** In this model student's rotation is on fixed rotation or the teacher's availability across the classroom learning and online learning after school hours. Whatever is taught in the next day's class is discussed in online learning.

IV. **Individual – rotation model –** In this model, the teacher sets student's individual timing for rotation among different learning modalities. There is no need to rotate to each available station by the students.

This model consists following components –

➢ **Personalized online instruction**

➢ **Teacher-led small group instruction**

➢ **Independent and collaborative practice.**

This model helps students to learn on their own speed.

4. **Flipped Classroom:** Jonathan Bergman and Aaron Sam invented the flipped classroom in 2007. It is a type of Blended Learning where students are given content at home and practice it in school. In school, new content is introduced, and then homework and projects are given to complete by the students independently at their home.

There are four pillars for the Flipped classroom –

➢ Flexible learning environment

➢ Learning culture

➢ International content

➢ Professional educator

Benefits of Flipped Classroom –

➢ It allows students to learn at their own pace.

➢ It is customized, active and engaging.

➢ Content videos help students to review content for exams and get a mastery over the content.

➢ Content can be richer for continuous improvement.

➢ Students will show better improvement.

➢ It is flexible.

➢ Students will take responsibility for their learning.

5. **Flex model:** In this model, students complete their work online through digital content and activities which taken in traditional classrooms. They can get guidance from the teacher. Teachers fix their time schedule as per batches of students. Most of the content will be delivered online. This model gives freedom to students to do their work freely. This model provides learning goals and tools for the students.

Types of Flex Model

➢ The student-directed Model

➢ The Remedial or Special education Model

Benefits of Flex Model

➢ Save schools and teachers money.

➢ It allows different curricula to be adapted and edited on the fly if needed.

➢ Content can be changed instantly.

➢ It helps students to make progress.

➢ It adapted curricula smoothly.

➢ Students can facilitate credit accumulation.

6. **Individual Rotation Model:** In this model teacher sets individual timing for the students for rotation among different learning modalities. Each student has his or her own timetable. There is no need to rotate on each module. The curriculum is built for each student.

Components of the Rotation Model

➢ Personalised online instruction

➢ Teacher-led small group instruction

➢ Independent and collaborative practice.

Advantages

➢ Allow students to work at their own pace.

➢ Students use the best module for each concept.

➢ It works in schedule so students get a predictable routine.

Challenges

➢ Requires transformation in various roles.

➢ Due to a fixed schedule average student cannot complete their work on time.

Important features of Blended Learning

➢ Blended Learning increases student meaningful engagement in proper learning.

- ➢ Blended Learning enhances teacher–student interactions.
- ➢ Blended learning increases the responsibility of learning among students.
- ➢ Blended learning provides time management and flexibility.
- ➢ Blended learning improves student learning outcomes
- ➢ Blended learning enhances institutional reputation.
- ➢ Blended learning is more flexible in teaching and learning environments.
- ➢ Blended learning is more amenable to self and continuous learning.
- ➢ Blende learning provides better opportunities for experimental learning.

Current Scenario of Blended Learning: Blended learning is the best option for learners because it gives face-to-face traditional teaching as well as online learning. It is flexible and easy for all learners. Aguti et al. noted that "97% of higher education institutions create one or more effective forms of blended learning and 80% of education institutes have already adopted blended learning.

UNESCO World Education Report (1998) – "Teachers and teaching in a changing world as new technologies emerge to student centred education, interactive learning environments"

National Education Policy (2020) - "to make the process of learning not only impactful but also engaging, encouraging, interesting and challenging for learners".

UNESCO and the World Health Organization (2020) report – the COVID pandemic has accelerated the use of distance learning systems around the world.

University Grants Commission (UGC, 2021) stated that all higher education institutes should teach 40% of courses online and the remaining 60% offline.

In the present stage in education sector has fully recognized the huge advantages of blended learning.

Advantages of Blended Learning

- ➢ **Flexibility:** In Blended learning, there is online as well as offline mode. Student can learn when he has time. He can use his own time and subject.
- ➢ **Interactions:** In this process, the student has to do various projects. For the study, he has to communicate with the teacher as well as his teammates or classmates.
- ➢ **Enhanced learning:** In this method, he has full freedom to learn. He can choose online as well as offline mode. He can take his own time to learn new concepts.
- ➢ **Increased Knowledge Retention:** Students interact with the teacher as well as other students. He can collect information himself. He will try to understand new concepts.

➤ **Safer Learning environment:** Blended learning is safe for students because the teacher checks all the activities of students personally. He is the mentor.

➤ **Learner Autonomy:** In this method, there is full freedom for students. He can take his own time. He can learn online as well as offline.

➤ **Cuts Costs:** Blended learning is cheaper than other methods. We can cut the costs of books and other various things also.

Disadvantages of Blended Learning

➤ **Increased workload:** Due to online and offline mode teacher and student has a lot of workload. The teacher has to make plans, lesson notes, and timetables separately.

➤ **Lack of face-to-face interactions:** This approach uses both methods but due to over work load face-to-face interactions are less than offline work.

➤ **Infrastructure facility:** Most of the students are living in remote areas. There is a lack of electricity, mobiles, and internet.

➤ **Plagiarism and credibility problem:** In projects, there is a possibility of copy and paste. All material is available on the Internet. So students will write as it is. However, there are some disadvantages of blended learning. It is useful for all the learners.

How to overcome barriers to Blended Learning

➤ **Set your goals and methods:** Student must set their goals and methods. For which content he has to use the traditional method and for which content use the online method.

➤ **Balance online and offline:** In this method, both activities are included. Students must make a balance between online and offline mode for the study.

➤ **Balance the Gadgets:** Gadgets are for us. However, we must know how to use this gadget. We have to make a proper timetable for using this tool.

➤ **Provide space for learning:** The teacher is a mentor in this process. He has to take care of all the students at a time. He has to provide good space for all the students.

➤ **Teach them to become independent:** The student is the future of all the nations. You have to provide all the information to the students. They have to do their own. The main aim of education is to become independent. This method teaches them to become independent.

Conclusion: Blended learning is a very interesting process, which combines face-to-face learning with online learning. This process is valid, effective and efficient for learning to all students. With the help of this method, the student can achieve their learning goals definitely.

This method enriches the experiences of students. Students will learn what is true and develop critical thinking among students.

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