Digital Teaching: The Effectiveness of Blended Learning Approach for Teaching and Learning English

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Abstract

Human life has improved tremendously as a result of the growth in science and technology. Education is a social institution that has also been influenced by technological developments. The impact of technology on education has been so profound that a new branch in the field of education called "educational technology" has been developed. Education aims at the highest level of acquisition of knowledge. There are various methods and techniques used to attain this goal. Blended Learning is a term that encompasses a number of different approaches to teaching and learning process and learning through online resources blended with a face-to-face component. This paper examines the study of blended learning as an approach to English language teaching and learning. It also provides insight to the understanding of current and future trends in how web-based computer-supported learning influences conventional face to face instruction in English.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Technology, Education, Online, Computer.

Introduction:

Man is a highly ingenious. He always lookout for inventing innovations an all walks of life. Technology has an impact on all aspects of our lives. There is no exception to the classroom. Education goals are the highest level of knowledge acquisition. There are various methods and techniques used to attain this goal. Blended Learning is a term that encompasses a number of different approaches to teaching and learning process access to and learning through online resources blended with a face- to- face component. Therefore, Internet education also allows the individual to balance his or her time according to his or her own needs, as there is no fixed time for the lectures. This also empowers the lower class to study and work on the internet at the same time. Blended learning enables students to access learning materials, lectures, notes, assignments, grades, readings, audio and video materials anytime and anywhere, while enhancing the opportunities for peer-to-peer and student- to-instructor interaction, as well student engagement and learning.

Historical overview of Blended Learning:

The concept of blended learning has been around for a long time, but its terminology was not firmly established until the beginning of the 21st century. Technology-based training developed as a replacement to instructor-led training on mainframes and mini-computers. The major advantage that blended learning offers is scale, whereas one instructor can only teach so many pupils. The meaning of blended learning widely diverged to encompass a wide variety of synthesis in learning methods until 2006, when the first *Handbook of Blended Learning* by Bonk and Graham was published. Graham challenged the breath and ambiguity of the term's definition, and defined 'blended learning systems as learning systems that "combine face-to-face instruction with computer mediated instruction". Currently, use of the term *blended learning* mostly involves *"*combining Internet and Digital media with established classroom forms that require the physical co-presence of teacher and students".

One example of blended learning is PLATO. Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations (PLATO), a system developed by the University of Illinois and Control Data. PLATO in particular had a long history of innovations and offered coursework. CD-ROMs emerged as a dominant form of providing technology-based learning as bandwidth through 56k modems weren't able to support very high-quality sound and video. Modern blended learning is delivered online, although CD-ROMs could feasibly still be used if a learning management system meets an institutions standard.

Six phases involved in Blended Learning:

- ❖ Identify the learning Objectives.

- ❖ Look at the curriculum to decide what is best face-to-face and what is best online.

- ❖ Consider the integration and relationship between the face-to-face and e-Learning.

- ❖ Develop the most appropriate e-Learning activities to achieve the learning objectives.

- ❖ Decide how to assess these activities.

- ❖ Choose the most appropriate technology.

Models of Blended Learning:

Blended learning can be generally be classified into six models:

- ❖ **Face to face driver** – where the teacher drives the instruction and augments with digital tools.

- ❖ **Rotation** – students cycle through a schedule pf independent online study and face-to-face classroom.

- ❖ **Flex –** most of the curriculum is delivered via digital platform and teachers are available for face -to-face consultation and support.

- ❖ **Labs** – the entire curriculum is delivered via a digital platform but in a consistent physical location. Students usually take traditional classes in this model as well.

- ❖ **Self-Blend** – students choose to augment their traditional learning with online course work.

- ❖ **Online Driver** – all curriculum and teaching are delivered via a digital platform and face-to-face meetings are scheduled or made available if necessary.

Methodology:

Teaching methods in recent times have been moved from predominantly teacher oriented and teacher-controlled approach to learners' interactive system. Such a system requires a number of changes in the instruction procedure and the material used for effective teaching. The use of multimedia helps to create a dynamic learning environment by shifting the emphasis from the speech to a multiple instructional pedagogy.

Computer can employ and take the advantages of all other writing surfaces and audio-visuals. It is the substantial innovation in the teaching technology. It offers the opportunity to change the role that teachers and students have traditionally played. Blended Learning is a formal education program in which student learns at least in part through delivery of content an instruction via digital and online media with some elements of students control over time, place and path or pace.

This paper is intended to employ blended learning as an approach in order to infuse innovative method in the teaching learning process for the maximum gain of knowledge in the learners and involve.

Research Question:

Learning difficulty faced by the learners is prompted to find ways and means of making the learning process a simple one so as to reach out all the students. Blended Learning refers to the combination of traditional learning and online learning with the use of computers and internet in the following model:

➢ Student – to – Student Interaction

➢ Student – to – Teacher Interaction

➢ Student – to – Community Interaction

➢ Student – to – Material Interaction

➢ Student – to – Technology Interaction

This is a study that analyzes how teachers in blended classrooms use some version of a course management system application to connect with students online. The research question states the following:

✓ How Blended Learning aims to find better ways to help students achieve their learning goals?

✓ In what way today's digital students expect their learning environment to include technology?

This paper intends to response the question above.

Findings and Results:

Blended Learning is natural evolution of e-learning towards a complete program of various multimedia applied in an ideal way to solve problems, taking into account the individual differences and achieving a distinguished teaching. It is considered one of the modern trends based upon employing information technology in designing new learning situations which increase active learning and learner-centered strategies. Bersin and Associate examines that "Blended Learning combines the advantages of face-to-face and e-learning to satisfy individual differences". Bonk and Graham points out that Blended Learning is not just about using technology because it is available; blended learning is about finding better ways of supporting students in achieving the learning objectives and providing them with the best possible learning and teaching experiences, as well as supporting teachers in their role.

Suhan states that "Rapid and easy access to the wide dissemination of information has resulted in information access technology developments that will provide the circulation of this information". One of the innovations of technology is the Internet. Odabasi & et al says that

> The educational system has benefited from the advantages brought by the Internet. The Internet, which offers learner access to information and the opportunity of written, audio and video communication, has entered into a very rapid development process all over the world. This has caused Internet-based education to expand rapidly.

Sahan states that Web-based education is a new education model which can be used to support the acquisition of new information skills and for the enrichment of students learning habits and experiences. Simsek explains that

Many education techniques such as presentations, discussions, demonstration, answer-question, brainstorming, case studies, information hunt, cooperative learning, problem centered learning can be conducted in a Web-based environment. This way, it is possible for the learners to gain experiences such as reading, writing, observing, listening, and performing tasks.

However, Korkmaz & Karakus states that "Online learning is deprived of many advantages that traditional learning embodies". The biggest deficiency of these new approaches is that they cannot provide the students with social and face- to-face interaction opportunities with other learners and with the instructor. On the other hand, Laurillard has stated that technological tools should be used to a certain extent in order for learning and teaching to be more effective. He also emphasizes that information and technology tools along with multimedia tools cannot guarantee complete success of teaching and learning.

Blended Learning as a Teaching/Learning Medium:

As we advanced further into 21st century, technology is becoming more and more integrated into our society. Smart phones are now common, tablets are replacing or substituting for computers and laptops, and social media has become second nature. The rapid and widespread adoption of these technological innovations has completely changed the way we conduct our daily lives, including how knowledge is digested and taught in our classroom.

Integrating technology into the classroom helps prepare students for the elaborate world they will face going forward, but there are also four specific benefits to using technology in the classroom.

It can help students focused for longer periods of time: the use of computers to look up information is a tremendous time saver, especially when used to access a

comprehensive resource like the Internet to conduct research. This time-saving aspect can keep students focused on a project much longer than they would with books and paper resources, and it helps them develop better learning through exploration and research.

It makes students more excited to learn: when technology is integrated into school lessons, learners are more likely to be interested in, focused on, and excited about the subjects they are studying.

It enables students to learn at their own pace: with the integration of technology, learners are able to get direct, individualized instruction from the computer. This allows them to engage with the information at times that are most convenient for them and helps them become more self- directed in the learning process. It also gives the teacher more time and accomplish classroom objectives, while freeing them up to help the students who might be struggling with certain lessons.

It prepares students for the future: By learning to use technology in the classroom, both instructor and learners will develop skills essential for this modern era. Education is no longer just about learning and memorizing facts and figures; its about collaborating with others, solving complex problems, developing different forms of communication and leadership skills, and improving motivation and productivity.

Conclusion:

In the blended learning approach, a student's day typically includes a combination of online learning and small group instruction time with teachers. This learning shifts teacher's focus away from more traditional curricular and administrative tasks in the direction of working with data and providing more individualized support to students. It helps teacher to learn their new roles and to understand online learning. They can able to maximize learning time and manage a classroom effectively, inspite of this instructor have more individual time

with students and can give them the attention and support they need. Technology can also give teachers crucial information to understand individual needs of students to support and strengthen their learning. When instructors use good technology effectively, it provides them the power to become even greater experts in the content areas they teach.

The blended learning instructor helps students move beyond simply not to response to learning but to apply a content to a new situation. Just as, the teacher must interpret and analyze the information, as like students need to learn reason beyond the concept, integrate information and demonstrate knowledge through application. Through platforms like this, students can access video of lectures, track assignments and progress, interact with professors and peers, and review other supporting materials like PowerPoint presentations or scholarly articles.

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