Blended Learning Enhances Teaching-Learning

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Abstract

The recent appearance of books, trade magazine and journal articles, conferences, and campus initiatives focusing on "blended learning" would lead one to believe that a new educational phenomenon has been discovered. In actuality, the blending of face-to-face instruction with various types of non-classroom technology-mediated delivery has been practiced within the academy for more than four decades. the confluence of new pedagogies(for example, the change in emphasis from teaching-centered to student-centered learning paradigms), new technologies (for example, the rapid spread of the Internet, World Wide Web, and personal computers), and new theories of learning (for example, brain-based learning and social constructivism) are enabling entirely new models of teaching and learning and that this change is of sufficient magnitude to be described as an educational transformation or paradigm shift. A nexus for the development of these new models has been the online environment. Previous educational technologies, such as instructional television, have tended to replicate the classroom environment and its traditional teaching methods. Web-based learning environments invite—and may even require— reconceptualization of the learning paradigm.

Introduction

"Blended Learning" refers to courses that combine face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning and reduced classroom contact hours (reduced seat time).blended learning should be approached not merely as a temporal construct, but rather as a fundamental redesign of the instructional model with the following characteristics:

➢ a shift from lecture- to student-centered instruction in which students become
active and interactive learners (this shift should apply to the entire course, including the face-to-face contact sessions);

➢ increases in interaction between student-instructor, student-student, student-content, and student-outside resources; and

➢ integrated formative and summative assessment mechanisms for students and instructor.

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"Life Long Meaning Making"

One more strategic advantage is that Blending traditional f2f learning with Online Distance Learning provides the learner with a real chance to experience independent learning, moreover, Blended Learning is a sure step towards Life Long Learners, and Life Long Meaning Making (Arafatmy, 2011).

Blended Learning described as "integrative Learning", "hybrid learning", "multi-method learning" (Node, 2001). "The term "blended learning" is being used with increasing frequency in both academic and corporate circles. 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 in Rooney, 2003) (Graham, 2004)

Mixing synchronous learning and asynchronous learning

A blended learning approach can combine face-to-face facilitation with computer-mediated instruction and/or discovery learning opportunities. It also applies science or IT activities with the assistance of educational technologies using computer, cellular or Smartphones, Satellite Television channels, Video Conferencing and other emerging electronic media. Learners and teachers work together to improve the quality of learning and teaching, the ultimate aim of blended learning being to provide realistic practical opportunities for learners and teachers to make learning independent, useful, sustainable and ever growing.

Blended learning increases the options for greater quality and quantity of human interaction in a learning environment. Blended learning offers learners the opportunity "to be both together and apart." A community of learners can interact at anytime and anywhere because of the benefits that computer-mediated educational tools provide. Blended learning provides a 'good' mix of technologies and interactions, resulting in a socially supported, constructive, learning experience; this is especially significant given the profound effect that it could have on distance learning.

Advantages of blended learning

One clear advantage of blended learning in education is its connection with differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction involves "custom-designing instruction based on student needs."In differentiated instruction, educators look at students' learning styles, interests, and abilities. Once these factors have been determined, educators decide which curriculum content, learning activities, products, and learning environments will best serve those individual students' needs. Blended learning can fit into a number of these areas. By using blended learning, educators are definitely altering the learning environment when students work collaboratively in learning communities online, for example. Teachers could also add relevant curriculum content that would be unavailable or difficult to comprehend outside of the internet. Learning activities and products can also be changed to use technologies in a classroom that uses blended learning.

Another advantage of blended learning is pacing and attendance**.** In most blended learning classrooms, there is the ability to study whenever the student chooses to do so. If a student is absent, she/he may view some of the missed materials at the same time that the rest of the class does, even though the student cannot be physically in the classroom. This helps students stay on track and not fall behind, which is especially helpful for students with prolonged sicknesses or injuries that prevent them from attending school. These "self-study modules" also allow learners to review certain content at any time for help in understanding a concept or to work ahead for those students who learn at a faster pace. (Alvarez, 2005)

Effective use of blended learning materials

The novelty of online learning is apparent in the diversity of names given to the phenomenon: Web-based learning, e-learning, and asynchronous learning networks, among others. These efforts have been focused primarily on off-campus student populations. With the more recent on-campus emphasis, yet another set of labels has appeared, including hybrid learning, blended learning, and mixed-mode instruction. The mere existence of so many names for what is essentially a single concept suggests that no dominant model has yet been accepted as a definition

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of standard practice.

Technology provides teachers with the instructional technology tools they need to operate more efficiently and to be more responsive to the individual needs of their students. Selecting appropriate technology tools give teachers an opportunity to build students' conceptual knowledge and connect their learning to problem found in the world. The technology tools such as Inspiration technology, Starry Night, A Web Quest and Portaportal allow students to employ a variety of strategies such as inquiry, problem-solving, creative thinking, visual imagery, critical thinking, and hands-on activity.

Various technologies can be made a part of everyday teaching and learning, teachers using technology in ways that enable students to conduct inquiries and engage in collaborative activities. In traditional or teacher-centered approaches, computer technology is used more for drill, practice and mastery of basic skills.

The instructional strategies employed in such classrooms are teacher centered because of the way they supplement teacher-controlled activities and because the software used to provide the drill and practice is teacher selected and teacher assigned. The relevancy of technology in the lives of young learners and the capacity of technology to enhance teachers' efficiency are helping to raise students' achievement in new and exciting ways.

Students need grade-level appropriate classroom experiences, enabling them to learn and to be able to do science in an active, inquiry-based fashion where technological tools, resources, methods and processes are readily available and extensively used. As students integrate technology into learning about and doing science, emphasis should be placed on how to think through problems and projects, not just what to think.

Technological tools and resources may range from hand lenses and pendulums, to electronic balances and up-to-date online computers (with software), to methods and processes for planning and doing a project. Students can learn by observing, designing, communicating, calculating,

researching, building, testing, assessing risks and benefits, and modifying structures, devices and processes – while applying their developing knowledge of science and technology.

Students build scientific and technological knowledge, as well as the skill required to design and construct devices. In addition, they develop the processes to solve problems and understand that problems may be solved in several ways through blended learning.

Conclusion

Blended Learning is starting to become vastly well – liked. This kind of training refers to studying by utilizing two or even more kinds of training. This may be numerous kinds of e-learning or on- line studying or numerous kinds of off- line studying. The most typical in addition to hottest type of blended learning is mixing classroom studying with on – line studying. This blended learning requires the very best characteristics of instructor – led studying and length studying and integrates it into one magnificent method to get a training. On – line studying is excellent simply because if a pupil is having difficulties they are able to get much more individualized assist without using absent essential classroom time. This truly caters towards the require of various learners using the capability to tailor the content material particularly towards the learner.

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