Blended Learning In Education: A Digital Approach Of Teaching-Learning In Twenty-First Century

Dr Seema Yadav,

Assistant Professor,

Department of Education, The Bhopal School of Social Sciences, Bhopal

Abstract

The education of the twenty-first century requires individualised, effective, and collaborative teaching-learning experiences that are anticipated to change the entire educational system from the conventional face-to-face mode to a technologically-based independent mode where the primary focus will be laid on maximising the potential and creativity of the students. A blended learning strategy based on modern digital learning environments has replaced it in recent years. Blended learning helps students develop skills like self-control, agency, and problem-solving. In addition to promoting the use of the innovative teaching technique, blended learning has been shown to be successful for teaching other crucial teamwork-related skills like creativity, innovation, team-based communication, and responsibility. The use of online instruction to facilitate independent, interactive, and collaborative learning among students is part of blended learning, which is a powerful and effective strategy for increasing competitiveness.

Keywords: *Blended learning, Collaborative teaching-learning, Digital Era, Innovative Method*

Introduction

The integration of technology-assisted teacher education and spreading knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals have received increased attention with the arrival of the digital era (SDG) (Chin et al., 2019). The foundation of the majority of nations' modern educational systems is the promise of equal educational opportunity for everyone, despite differences in ability (Yaqun, Rebrina, Sabirova, & Afanaseva, 2020). There are now more opportunities for alternative and non-traditional learning at all levels of education and training because to the Internet technologies' explosive growth in recent years.

In recent years, a blended learning approach based on fresh digital learning environments has taken its place. Almost 1.5 billion pupils in 191 nations have been affected by the COVID-19 epidemic, which has created considerable issues around the world. By implementing online or hybrid learning, faculties—and degrees in the health sciences in particular—have been challenged to be creative, adaptable, and quick (Ropero-Padilla et al., 2021). During the pandemic, teachers began offering blended learning courses online. Certain sections are on platforms, while others are zoom courses (Kamalitdinovna, 2021). Since the advent of digital media, students' traditional learning habits and levels of involvement have changed. Students' e-learning habits are impacted by the use of digital media. Also, it is accommodating in understanding

how students can use their digital media education to its fullest potential (Sharma & Gupta, 2021).

As it combines the advantages of traditional educational approaches and those of online learning technology, blended learning (BL) has been acknowledged as one of the most promising directions in educational progress in the modern world (Ye, 2020). Recently, a theoretical framework known as technological pedagogical content knowledge has arisen to help study on the use of ICT by instructors (TPACK). Early studies show that blended learning is becoming more and more popular throughout the educational system. It is thought to be a strategy to encourage participating in interactive learning activities (Qasem & Viswanathappa, 2020).

Teachers all throughout the world have been compelled to be flexible as a result of the COVID 19 outbreak. Teaching language skills in the context of foreign languages (FL) presents difficulties for teachers in terms of how to present the materials as effectively and efficiently as feasible. The purpose of the study is to outline the processes of a reading to write exercise for students composing essays in foreign language classrooms as well as how they felt about it. Telegram, Whatsapp, Google Meet, YouTube, Grammarly, and an online plagiarism checker were among the tools used (Setyowati, Sukmawan, & El-Sulukkiyah, 2021). The development of approaches based on distance learning has been influenced by the rise of information and communication technologies, which has revolutionised the educational landscape (electronic, mobile, ubiquitous and blended learning). Delivering classes online without an instructor and students meeting face to face is known as "distant learning." It results in numerous

alterations to traditional classroom instruction (Ferri, D'Andrea, Grifoni, & Guzzo, 2018). The goal of higher education institutions is to offer more flexibility and individualization, which is mostly achieved by implementing new technology in online or blended learning systems (Müller & Mildenberger, 2021).

Blended Learning in Education: Digital Approaches and Possibilities

The global pandemic situation has recently accelerated the trends in higher education towards the incorporation of various types of eLearning, hybrid learning, blended learning, etc., into university curricula. This situation forces us as educators and students as the recipients of education to spend nearly all of our time in front of screens, respectively (Kozlova & Pikhart, 2021). Blended learning is a recent online invention that has been seen in books and scientific journals, at academic conferences, in the business world, and on college and university campuses all over the world. The concept of blended learning has been around for more than a decade in its current incarnation. The development of a blended learning environment and the analysis of higher education in China and Russia both demonstrate the benefits of allowing students with limited educational opportunities to integrate into the academic and extracurricular life of the university and to carry out various forms of rehabilitation concurrently with their academic studies (Yaqun et al., 2020). The development of blended learning is still in its infancy. High-interactivity technologies, such games and simulations, have greatly influenced its growth to this point. The study is based on a blended learning (BL) intervention in teaching and developing the speaking abilities of undergraduate students

studying ESP (English for Special Purposes) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Given the current Covid 19 pandemic, which has forced countries all over the world—including KSA—to migrate to e-learning platforms, the strategy has become necessary. The findings of this study demonstrated that not only is online learning necessary today, but it also gives Saudi ESP students a higher sense of independence and learning (Almansour & Al-Ahdal, 2020).

Blended learning (BL) encourages students to be active, motivated, and self-motivated while also improving their speaking and listening abilities (Ye, 2020). The teachers' ICT knowledge was above average and there was a substantial difference on the ICT knowledge scale thanks to TPACK, which has offered an invaluable instrument for evaluating teacher knowledge in the area of technology integration (Qasem & Viswanathappa, 2020). Blended learning has been demonstrated to be effective for teaching other critical clinical or teamwork-related skills like creativity, innovation, team-based communication, and responsibility, in addition to supporting the use of this cutting-edge teaching method to lessen online fatigue and stress and raise student engagement in online courses (Ropero-Padilla et al., 2021). To improve pre-service teachers' use of IT and teaching practises, andra-heutagogy mixes blended learning with team teaching (Preece & Hamed, 2020).

Blended Learning: Digital Opportunities for Learning

Blended learning is an innovative, potent, and successful tool for raising universities' level of competition, catering to the various needs and preferences of instructional service users, enforcing the idea of continuing education, and

fusing classroom and online learning to support independent, interactive, and collaborative learning among students (Devi, Sharma, & Lepcha, 2021). Traditional face-to-face classroom instruction and online/remote learning are combined to create blended learning. Blended learning comes in a variety of styles, and each instructor and student will have a unique preference for how traditional and online learning should be combined. In a blended learning setting, it's crucial for students to manage their own learning, and they can choose where, when, and how they do some of their coursework. Students can gain from blended learning by increasing their learning experience, knowledge, variety in their learning models, and flexibility and independence in their learning. Because blended learning can boost students' interest in learning and is more contemporary, flexible, and independent, students hope that it will be maintained (Rasmitadila et al., 2020).

(Joubert, Callaghan, & Engelbrecht, 2020) named eleven factors, including technology, group, learning management system, online facilitation, technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK), mobile learning strategies, a lesson planning form, backward design, time, photos, videos, and reports, as well as reflection questions, as being crucial to the process. Institutions of higher learning are working to increase flexibility and individualization, which is mostly achieved through the use of new technology and integrated into online or blended learning designs (Müller & Mildenberger, 2021).

Both students in blended learning environments and students in online learning environments exhibited the greatest weight in the CDO dimension (Hung & Chou, 2015). In order to manage the

educational process, establish numerous kinds of communication and engagement conduct assessments and evaluate progress, and arrange team projects in blended learning, universities frequently use ICT and e-learning tools. To help students improve their language and professional skills, ICT and internet instructional resources are also used (Samoylenko, Zharko, & Glotova, 2022). Students are given the opportunity to participate in the learning process and acquire lifelong skills as active learners who co-construct knowledge.

The online conversation supported the participating students' lesson planning. After evaluating the practical teaching objectives that had been met, it was clear that the online conversation had a beneficial influence on students' perceptions of how to adjust their teachings as well as on their critical evaluation of the teachers' instruction (Plešec Gasparic & Pecar, 2016). Technology is used to demonstrate how technology is a key component of education today through the utilisation of blended learning and online education. Technology is said to be more than just a tool; rather, it should be seen as a medium that shapes culture. Hence, the incorporation of technology into education should be accompanied by ongoing reflection on the distinguishable traits of technology as a medium that is neither a dis-embedded force nor a medium that is value-neutral (Cloete, 2017).

Blended Learning: Making the Digital pedagogies Possible

Different pedagogical approaches are required for teaching in blended and online learning contexts than for teaching in face-to-face learning situations. The level of instruction in blended and online learning courses may be influenced by how well-prepared teachers are. Although prior research has mainly focused on students' perceptions of teacher presence, teaching presence is crucial to obtaining student learning outcomes (Gurley, 2018).

To reinforce the role of teachers as agents of social change in sustainable development, technology-enhanced sustainability courses should be included more frequently in both pre- and in-service teacher education (Chin et al., 2019). The concept of continuing education is imposed, and blended learning integrates classroom and distance learning to support independent, interactive, and collaborative learning among students. Blended learning is a potent and effective instrument for enhancing competitiveness (Devi et al., 2021). Information aimed at administrators and educators in higher education that supports the significance of faculty preparation for teaching in blended and online learning environments (Gurley, 2018). Both academic staff and students felt that the present pandemic makes online education valuable. Nonetheless, it is less efficient than teaching and learning in person. Online learning hurdles, according to faculty and students, include adjusting to online learning, particularly for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, a lack of motivation and interaction, technical and Internet problems, data privacy concerns, and security. They also concurred on the benefits of online education. Self-learning, low prices, convenience, and flexibility were the key advantages. Due to COVID-19, online learning can serve as a temporary solution, but it cannot take the place of in-person instruction. The study suggests that using blended learning can create a demanding learning environment (Almahasees, Mohsen, & Amin, 2021). Students' autonomy and self-agency can be increased through blended learning. Yet, a strong teacher presence is crucial to assisting in learning guidance and supporting students in their

development as reflective, engaged, and active learners.

Consideration must be given to how quickly education is undergoing digital transformation. The course concept should serve as the foundation for curriculum modification (Kuhn et al., 2021). Theory and practise are linked in order to promote and build critical, independent, responsible decision-making and active teaching, which is the foundation of professional development for aspiring teachers. With this objective in mind, we created a blended learning environment with an asynchronous online conversation to encourage cooperation and reflection even when face-to-face communication was not available (Plešec Gasparic & Pecar, 2016). The methical adoption of low-cost technologies, capacity training, and policy execution can truly herald change in higher education institutions by integrating technology into teaching and learning.

Conclusion

The education of the twenty-first century requires individualised, effective, and collaborative teaching-learning experiences that are anticipated to transform the entire educational system from the conventional face-to-face mode to a techno-based independent mode where the primary emphasis will be laid on maximising the potential and creativity of the students. To reinforce the role of teachers as agents of social change in sustainable development, technology-enhanced sustainability courses should be incorporated more frequently into teacher education. Blended learning is a potent, efficient tool for boosting competitiveness, accommodating the various needs and preferences of educational services, enforcing the idea of continuing education, and fusing in-person and online instruction to support independent, interactive, and collaborative

learning among students. Self-control, agency, and problem-solving skills are all developed through blended learning.

References

- Almahasees, Z., Mohsen, K., & Amin, M. O. (2021). Faculty's and Students' Perceptions of Online Learning During COVID-19. Frontiers in Education, 6. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.638470

- Almansour, M. I., & Al-Ahdal, A. A. M. H. (2020). Enhancing the speaking proficiency of undergraduate ESP students through the use of blended learning approach. Asian EFL Journal, 27(31).

- Chin, C. K., Munip, H., Miyadera, R., Thoe, N. K., Ch'ng, Y. S., & Promsing, N. (2019). Promoting Education for Sustainable Development in teacher education integrating blended learning and digital tools: An evaluation with exemplary cases. Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, 15(1). https://doi.org/10.29333/ejmste/99513

- Cloete, A. L. (2017). Technology and education: Challenges and opportunities. HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies, 73(3). https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4589

- Devi, B., Sharma, C., & Lepcha, N. (2021). Blended Learning - A Global Solution in the Age of COVID-19. Journal of Pharmaceutical Research International. https://doi.org/10.9734/jpri/2021/v33i41b32351

- Ferri, F., D'Andrea, A., Grifoni, P., & Guzzo, T. (2018). Distant learning: Open challenges and evolution. International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 17(8). https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.17.8.5

- Gurley, L. E. (2018). Educators' preparation to teach, perceived teaching presence, and perceived teaching presence behaviors in blended and online learning environments. Online Learning Journal, 22(2). https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v22i2.1255

- Hung, M. L., & Chou, C. (2015). Students' perceptions of instructors' roles in blended and online learning environments: A comparative study. Computers and Education, 81. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.10.022

- Joubert, J., Callaghan, R., & Engelbrecht, J. (2020). Lesson study in a blended approach to support isolated teachers in teaching with technology. ZDM - Mathematics Education, 52(5). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11858-020-01161-x

- Kamalitdinovna, D. N. (2021). Teaching Listening Skills With Online Digital Tools. Mental Enlightment Scientific_Methodological Journal, 1(4).

- Kozlova, D., & Pikhart, M. (2021). The use of ICT in higher education from the perspective of the university students. Procedia Computer Science, 192, 2309–2317. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2021.08.221

- Kuhn, S., Huettl, F., Deutsch, K., Kirchgässner, E., Huber, T., & Kneist, W. (2021). Surgical Education in the Digital Age - Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Robotics in the Medical School. Zentralblatt Fur Chirurgie - Zeitschrift Fur Allgemeine, Viszeral- Und Gefasschirurgie, 146(1), 37–43. https://doi.org/10.1055/a-1265-7259

- Müller, C., & Mildenberger, T. (2021). Facilitating flexible learning by replacing classroom time with an online learning environment: A systematic review of blended learning in higher education. Educational Research Review. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100394

- Plešec Gasparic, R., & Pecar, M. (2016). Analysis of an asynchronous online discussion as a supportive model for peer collaboration and reflection in teacher education. Journal of Information Technology Education: Research, 15, 369–393. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1110445&lang=es&site=eds-live%0Ahttp://www.jite.org/documents/Vol15/JITEv15ResearchP369-393Gasparic2457.pdf

- Preece, A. S., & Hamed, P. K. (2020). Andra-Heutagogy: a New Approach for Teacher Training. International Journal of Education and Pedagogy, 2(1), 98–105. Retrieved from http://103.8.145.246/index.php/ijeap/article/view/8488

- Qasem, A. A. A., & Viswanathappa, G. (2020). Blended Learning Approach to Develop the Teachers' TPACK. Contemporary Educational Technology, 7(3). https://doi.org/10.30935/cedtech/6176

- Rasmitadila, Widyasari, Humaira, M. A., Tambunan, A. R. S., Rachmadtullah, R., & Samsudin, A. (2020). Using blended learning approach (BLA) in inclusive education course: A study investigating teacher students' perception. International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning, 15(2). https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v15i02.9285

- Ropero-Padilla, C., Rodriguez-Arrastia, M., Martinez-Ortigosa, A., Salas-Medina, P., Folch Ayora, A., & Roman, P. (2021). A gameful blended-learning experience in nursing: A qualitative focus group study. Nurse Education Today, 106(April), 105109. https://doi.

org/10.1016/j.nedt.2021.105109

- Samoylenko, N., Zharko, L., & Glotova, A. (2022). Designing online learning environment: Ict tools and teaching strategies. Athens Journal of Education, 9(1). https://doi.org/10.30958/AJE.9-1-4

- Setyowati, L., Sukmawan, S., & El-Sulukkiyah, A. A. (2021). Learning from home during pandemic: A blended learning for reading to write activity in EFL setting. JEES (Journal of English Educators Society), 6(1). https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v6i1.662

- Sharma, D., & Gupta, S. (2021). Impact of Digital Media on Students' Engagement Via E-Learning: A Critical Literature Review using Bibliographic Analysis. Journal of Content, Community and Communication, 13(7), 27–34. https://doi.org/10.31620/JCCC.06.21/04

- Yaqun, Z., Rebrina, F. G., Sabirova, F. M., & Afanaseva, J. A. (2020). Blended Learning Environments in Inclusive Education at the University. International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning, 15(21). https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v15i21.16013

- Ye, F. (2020). The Application of Blended Learning Approach in EFL Teaching. Journal of Contemporary Educational Research, 4(5). https://doi.org/10.26689/jcer.v4i5.1245

*****