BLENDED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: ADVANTAGES, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutes have embraced a blended learning perspective to strengthen the nature of learning and teaching in their organizations. Presently, the trend of e-learning is expanding gradually and blended learning is one of the appliances to execute this idea. Fruitful execution of blended learning initiatives requires cautious planning and deliberation of multidimensional components. For the plan of professional development initiatives (PDIs),pointing on assessment and responsibility is the subsequent stage towards making productive and successful PDIs. This is particularly required since the Coronavirus pandemic has seen a substantial shift towards utilizing and preparing for incorporation of digital teaching devices in higher education. The motive behind this subjective exploration is to consolidate how proficient improvement initiatives for blended learning educational organizations can be assessed.

Keywords: Blended learning, Higher Education Institutes, Professional Development.

INTRODUCTION

Learning is an intrinsically friendly interaction, where various methodologies for constructive learning can be carried out (Strobl, 2007). The utilization of new advancements in educating and learning, for example e-learning, can accommodate in the strengthening of conventional teaching methods and the improvement of students'specialized abilities. Blended learning is supplied by the adequate mixture of various methods of conveyance, models of educating and styles of realizing which are

practiced in an intuitively significant learning climate. At the present time, there are many e-learning technologies accessible (Garrison, 2011). Large numbers of these address versatility of student realizing, which empowers students to assimilate at every place, every moment and with different gadgets (Herrington et al. 2012). These incorporate learning management frameworks subjected to a virtual forum for students to approach teaching assets and communicate with peers and other students, electronic adaptable learning conditions, and media to energize cooperative learning among students. With reference to mechanical abilities, extent of innovations can be utilized to help students. These can range from recordings for presentation, recording and intelligent investigation reason to simulation based e-learning systems. The quick innovation change can unfavorably bring about a shift from advanced education towards preparing(Burtch,2005), for example while attempting to carry on new innovation, more spotlight might be placed on skill development instead of learning hypothetical principles. Hence, equilibrium of the two parts must be maintained consistently. To confront this challenge, a blended learning approach, where learning training consolidates face to face classroom techniques with computer activities (Strauss, 2012), can be utilized to merge innovation with instructive standards to support learning of students (Garrison and Kanuka, 2004).Blended Learning can be characterized as the natural combination of prudently chosen and integral face - to-confront and online methodologies and innovations (Graham, 2006).

CONSTITUENTS OF BLENDED LEARNING MODEL

A model can be interpretation of a framework that accounts for its known or derived properties and can be utilized for additional investigation of its attributes. In this way, a blended learning model can be utilized as an adviser in assessing and coordinating separate parts that would result in educationally sound learning circumstance.

- *Learning atmosphere components*

A learning atmosphere can either be contemporary or non-contemporary. Each learning atmosphere has definite arrangement of strengths and weaknesses. The objective of

blended learning is to use the particular positive aspect of every atmosphere to guarantee the ideal utilization of assets to achieve the educational objective and learning goals. (Holden and Westfall, 2006)

- *Media component*

Media attributes to vehicles that essentially distribute content. A few educational media, in any case, might be more convenient than others in supporting either a contemporary or non-contemporary learning climate, yet no single medium is intrinsically preferable or worse over some other. Though a given delivery medium probably won't modify the convenient content, the determination of a specific medium might influence how you plan the substance to exploit one of a kind properties of that particular medium. Nonetheless, when the most relevant media are chosen, learning results won't be impacted — it is the educational procedures utilized (Holden & Westfall, 2006).

- *Informational component*

This part is utilized to choose the most suitable educational methodologies that help the learning goals. Such schemes are the results of learning goals and effectively guarantee the learning targets and promote the exchange of learning. While creating blended learning, it is principal to maintain the informative quality. Thus, learning goals need not be compromised while fostering a blended learning arrangement. (Holden & Westfall, 2006)

BLENDED LEARNING POLICY IN ANALYZING EDUCATION

Education in observing has to cover a wide range of elementary topics in mathematics, physical science, engineering and law (Greenfeld, 2011). Besides better understanding of proposal, an observer must be capable in the assortment, handling, analyzing and demonstration of spatial information. Conventionally, the utilization of technology has consistently played a significant impact in observing and subsequently observing education. It is set to have a perpetually significant impact in studying schooling in the future given the growing utilization of satellite-based estimations, laser scanner gadgets,

online information move, and so forth. In such a climate, understudies need to have a strong comprehension of the hypothetical standards supporting studying as well as fostering the mechanical abilities that depend vigorously on credible pragmatic learning. This viable expertise improvement puts exceptionally appeal on mentors and assets, for example, overview instruments and money (for example profoundly specific and expensive instruments). In this manner, reviewing educating and learning procedures need to take on additional reasonable strategies to both improve understudy learning and fulfill the need of the business and the occupation.

With increase in popularity, innovations in education such as Blended learning have taken of in higher education because of advancement in educational technology and becoming accessible and more convenient (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Although, the incorporation into the computerized period, as an immediate consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, has made educational institutions to move forward for taking advanced devices to handle the requirement for online teaching (Scherer et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2020). Usually, successful execution of initiatives of blended learning requires deliberate strategy and contemplation of multidimensional components (Philipsen et al., 2019). Although, the estimation of this achievement should be cautiously and completely assessed (Guskey, 2000).

There is an extraordinary requirement for clarity in assessing proficient improvement drives in higher education, where many partners' inclinations are at stake, as well as portion of institutional financing. With blended learning turning out to be to an ever-increasing extent of a rising pattern in institutes and being applied as the remedy for "redesigning" institute's educational framework (Becker et al., 2017), these drives should be executed in an orderly and context- suitable way. Subsequently, assessment of these drives can't be applied irregularly as reconstruction, yet rather should be coordinated as a component of the execution cycle (Philipsen et al., 2019).

The Coronavirus pandemic affected education worldwide definitely. The switching towards online learning has placed execution of educational advancements in higher

education on a quick forward track, compelling those teaching staff that were precedently suspicious or reluctant, to deal with the real factors of online and blended learning. Practice and reinforcement needed to go ahead, moving forward, foremost lessons learnt during this hard time shouldn't get lost. Assessment is a significant part of professional development for blended learning that will guarantee transparency, continuity and proficient allotment of resources of institution.

BLENDED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

While there are different definitions and ways to deal with blended learning, the focal point of changing courses into a mixed configuration is on upgrading student learning, instead of substituting face-to-face lectures or utilizing additional learning stage (Bohle Carbonell et al., 2013). Blended learning has been commended as a methodology, considering flexibility which exploits the best online teaching appliances can provide while enhancing conventional material lectures (Kose, 2010). The cases to the viability of blended learning have been the subject of endless studies, a number of which highlighting an assortment of proof that students accomplish better academic outcomes in blended learning conditions when compared to online or offline designs (Siemens et al., 2015).

Blended learning is a perspective that requires development and the conscious design of mixture of teaching and evaluation. Consequently, the perspective takes into account the constructive arrangement between hypothesis, practice and work experience, with deliberation for the abilities that youth experts need while entering the work market (Bohle Carbonell et al., 2013). Instructive innovation permits organizations to remain cutthroat as instructive patterns change. Garrison and Kanuka (2004) anticipated that young students will require "flexibility of time and place and the truth of unbounded instructive discourse".

Various possible benefits of blended learning are arising. A portion of these swing around availability, educational adequacy, decrease in drop-out rate and course cooperation. A significant number of the present college is contemporary, endeavoring to balance family,

job and college life. Attending college is frequently challenging for the majority of them and diminishing mandatory hours can assist students to manage. Colleges and staff members are searching for ways to handle and control these students. Students can access the material online at any moment and analyse it depending on the situation, gaining expanded adaptability. Busy students don't need to spend time in travelling, so blended courses can accumulate to eloquent time saving. Students like the skill to get course materials any time, any spot and value convenience and adaptability. Since some students are more established and working, blended courses assist in furnishing them with the adaptability they need to shuffle jobs, school and family. By reducing space and time dedication, access is simpler and accordingly numerous students have come to favor the blended courses to offline courses.

Rovai and Jordan (2004) analyzed three training graduate courses conventional, blended and completely online and examined that the students in blended course estimated most elevated social connections like those in offline section, however higher than those in completely online section: As students in the blended course displayed comparative feeling of social connection and changeability as students in the conventional course, offering the comfort of completely online courses without the total loss of offline contact might be sufficient to sustain in students who might feel disengaged in a completely online course. Students in the blended courses applauded the advantages of online part of the course which permitted them the opportunity to carry out a portion of the course activity at their own caution, adaptability significant for these students, a number of whom expected to work. Although, a large number of them likewise referenced the value of face-to-face part which they felt might assist them both scholastically and in building proficient connections and a solid feeling of community.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES FOR BLENDED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

PDIs involve all learning potentials either deliberately or officially coordinated to casual inherently occurring exercises that can be unnoticed. Workshops related to skills, explicit courses, networks of training and instructing, coaching arranged inside the workplace are examples of such events. The objective of all PDIs in instructive settings is better teaching aspect and student learning results (Evans, 2014). Concerning the methodology of planning blended courses, PDI are purposely and insightfully planned, efficiently carried out, and require deliberate and continuous effort of the members and pioneers (Guskey, 2000). PDIs including college staff, nonetheless, need to consider a novel setting that differs from teacher training and teacher professional development. Teaching staff of college typically includes teachers, their assistants and other research staff, who other than instructing, are frequently additionally burdened with other executive duties along with project management and research (Teixeira Antunes et al., 2021). Reliant upon the nation and instructive regulations, college educating staff has a diverse foundation in showing skills, going from comprehensive preparation and certification, to basically no preparation by any means (Díaz et al., 2010).

Professional development for blended learning as an instructive development consequently ought to address the conceivable requirement for change in teaching methods, as well as change in institutional approach and administration structures (Garrison & Vaughan, 2013). Research on institutional drivers for blended learning has demonstrated that one of the dominant factors for blended learning and change management is robust provoking event for institute (Vaughan, 2010). Provoking events on institutional or even full scale incorporate acknowledge about fulfillment of students, changes in requirements of labor market, internationalization and portability. Eventually, college teaching staff needs to feel a sense of insistence get that expects them to resolve the issue with change through development (Vaughan, 2010).

An educational shift is related with blended learning approaches on micro level where teaching staff figure out how to create and coordinate their knowledge of content as well as academic and mechanical information (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). Brinkley (2018) found that after a PDI for blended learning, change was seen in that workforce embraced to a greater extent an educational job, however the assimilation of teaching method and technology is still a challenge. A conceivable justification for this challenge is that instructive innovation is quick changing and developing, with each new device waiting be re-gained all along.

ADVANTAGES OF BLENDED LEARNING

- *More commitment of staff*

Staff members have more chances to learn and engage through blended learning. They can learn

face to face from mentors and if there is demand to work on new approach, they have access to consistently use material online and fortify their comprehension by themselves and furthermore meet with mentors to discuss issues.

- *More Competent*

There is dependence on mentors in face-to-face learning. Blended learning empowers staff to learn through various styles. It is enabling and propelling for workers. Likewise, it permits mentors to handle training sessions productively, particularly for large groups.

- *Cost-effective and time saving*

Online training sessions can save adequate time and money. Workshops, seminars, training sessions conducted by different organizations and multinational companies are very expensive as it needs venue, travelling of employees from different places and other services. Subsequently, blended learning limits functional expenses fundamentally.

Likewise, it saves the time that organizations need to put resources into sorting out preparing occasions for a huge scope.

- *Increased adaptability*

Representatives have more chances to learn by their own, at their desired speed and time. Besides, training educators are not generally bound to cover everything in offline meetings. They can separate the course for increased effectiveness and have the opportunity to conclude what they need to get strengthen in instructional courses. If all representatives are not at same level, utilizing online learning stage implies that each individual can be assessed and offered the consideration they need to learn and get progress. Blended learning overcomes any barrier between the material taught and material learnt inclusively.

- *Significantly exact examination of learning*

It tends to be hard for the trainer to decide if everybody is at same level or not, in offline training session. A few workers retain the material rapidly, while others may be struggling. Alternately, online platforms stage that include different kinds of learning material, such as lectures, videos, presentations, e books can be utilized to These devices consolidate work in examination that can assess and introduce a more exact investigation of individual learning. In this manner, in a mixed situation, procuring turns out to be more unsurprising, exact and quantifiable.

- *Better correspondence and cooperative learning*

Despite the fact that with blended learning system, a candidate can access the assets without the teacher, it actually works on the correspondence and communication among the members and furthermore with the educators. Such online learning appliances offer an extraordinary assortment of specialized instruments, such as email, news bulletin, texting, online evaluating device, online conversation or more. These specialized devices offer extraordinary adaptability to ensure convenient correspondence. It may be any worry or

assessment; this is all now conceivable quickly and with next to no time restriction. Essentially, unlike conventional classrooms, blended learning provides a decent cooperative climate for members. This considerably expands cooperation among the students and between the teacher and the student, which makes blended learning methodology one of the most outstanding tutoring platforms. As the students use numerous cooperative devices, for example, online conversations, messages, blogs etc., they can work together with one another in a superior manner.

CHALLENGES INCORPORATING IN BLENDED LEARNING

- *High maintenance cost*

Realization of progressive technology in blended learning tasks, for example, framework arrangement and gadgets are expensive. In a corporate arrangement, this is particularly valid for bigger associations having different agencies or an enormous manpower. When this cost is compared with benefits of blended learning, it will be very beneficial.

- *Dependence on Technology*

To accomplish the learning goals of blended learning program, the innovative apparatuses and assets used by content developers are not difficult to use. This is all conceivable if candidates have strong connectivity of internet as it has a significant effect regarding experience and overall learning situations. That is the reason consolidating this learning system relies upon feasibility of technology and in case of technical complications or insufficient technical availability, the goal of this cutting-edge learning methodology is impossible. Likewise, since blended learning is dependent on technology, there is constraint with respect to specialized abilities of both the teachers and the students. Students and educators who are not technically adequate can confront an extraordinary hindrance regarding smooth communications. The members will confront trouble in retrieving the course material; hence, this learning system should accompany sufficient practical help.

- *Adverse consequence on teachers*

It is difficult to challenge that there is a lot of additional educator's work engaged with the essential stages. Dealing with blended learning opportunity for growth can surely be tedious. The paradigm shift is not precisely a triviality. An educator employing blended learning needs to pick the right prospectus, the right proportion between offline learning and online learning. Online learning can put redundant stress on instructors and prompt a lot of overwork.

- *Adverse effect on students*

The main thing that strikes in our when we mind considers the drawbacks of blended learning is the mental burden. New to blended learning model, a few educators might begin over delivering content and instructive exercises. The new blended learning project may turn into a companion whenever tailored to needs of individual student and an enemy whenever applied to mass, as is normally the situation with conventional classroom teaching.

- *Plagiarism and reliability issue*

Normally, when your class is precisely internet friendly, enduring the allurement of seeking out things on the web or getting contemporary tips from individual students is hard. This may influence fair evaluation and nature of online course work. Likewise, the instructor needs to make students familiar of the dangers of unconfirmed internet based assets,

- *Time consuming*

If a blended learning course is well developed, it will normally take a longer time to plan than a course which is simply founded on e-learning. Making the e-learning modules includes scheduling of the in-person meetings such as making a schedule, tracking down a room, recruiting a mentor, figuring in movement and convenience costs for workers, and so on. Most importantly, to guarantee that the blended learning program is powerful and

feasible, an organization needs to put resources into informative plan. This includes evaluating and making preparing plans based on scope of variables, including neuroscience, student profiles and the organization biological system among others. An instructional course implanted in educational plan needs to meet the obviously determined aim underlying instructing goals. This guarantees that instructional classes are genuinely adjusted to the needs of representatives. Accordingly, more representatives completed the training and they foster new abilities more rapidly.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO ADMINISTRATION

The accompanying organization related issues are of foremost significance and must be handled efficiently for competent blended learning.

- *Adjustment with institutional objectives and needs*

Twigg (1999) recommended that blended learning can only be really executed if an association is resolved to work on the nature of the students' growth in a practical way. This suggests that organization must be committed for completely computer integrating in campus. Barone (2001) explained that this objective can be accomplished only if leaders of organization can take step amicably with essential revision of policy and resource allotment.

- *Protection from Hierarchical change*

Protection from authoritative change in advanced education is a reliable phenomenon (Twigg, 1999; Barone, 2001). Institutional administration and stagnation can prevent changes in the educational program, course designs, plans and new systems which are basic to the progress of blended learning.

- *Scarcity of involvement in partnership and cooperation*

Absence of a cooperative hierarchical construction and domestic associations can represent a considerable hindrance to blended learning action (Dziuban et al., 2004) For a blended

learning approach to be successful, decisions should be made in a consultative manner and communicated broadly (Barone, 2001). There should be critical participation through associations with students, teachers, informative innovation staff and authority to succeed (Twigg, 1999)

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATION

In the analysis of exploration into blended learning, Bluic (2007) contend that exploration so far has been centered on various parts of mixed learning, particularly the innovation, and they contend for a more comprehensive methodology which attempts to figure out the complications of blended settings and approaches as a feature of entire framework. On the bases of above discussion there is recommendation for extra approaches for future exploration into bended learning.

- Academic structures to help mixed learning for educators and students.
- More experiences into the variables and approaches which can further develop associations between the virtual and actual components of blended courses inside colleges.
- Similar exploration into the qualities and shortcomings of various ICTs, particularly the new technology coordinated with face-to-face conditions, to explore the attributes of ideal mixes for learning.
- More consideration concerning effective models of professional development and assistance for teachers who take on this new method of instructing.

Blended learning gives adaptability in understanding for teachers and students. Coordination of the virtual and actual scenes empowers both teachers and students to become learners, yet this is most adequate when there is institutional help through the arrangement of expert learning and the chance for updating courses for the most suitable combination (Bliuc, 2007).Confronting the difficulties of a fast technology change in education, a blended learning approach can moderate a portion of these difficulties. Blended learning will consolidate conventional classroom learning with online and mobile

learning to expand the comprehension of hypothetical concepts, acquiring information and improvement of specialized, functional and professional abilities

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