Blended Learning: A Promising Approach for Inclusive Classroom

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Abstract

The companionship of technology and education has widen the opportunity doors in various educational domains. And Blended Learning Approach (BLA) in educational scenario is the product of multiple experimentations with technology and learning. This abstract summarizes the key aspects of blended learning, its usefulness, and its effectiveness based on recent studies. By combining traditional classroom instruction with online resources and technology, blended learning fosters increased student engagement, enhances accessibility, and allows for personalized learning experiences. However, challenges such as digital divide, the need for teacher training, and the adaptation of content for various needs must be addressed.

Keywords: Educational Technology, Inclusive Education, Blended Learning, Online Learning, Face-To-Face Learning.

I. Introduction

Blended Learning may be defined as an integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online experiences (**Kanuka & Garrison, 2004**). This Learning Approach constitutes the usefulness of both modes- online learning and face-to-face learning. The merits of traditional face-to-face learning includes development of social skills, communication skills, etc., among all students, whereas the merits of online learning lead to increase in academic engagement, promoting self-paced learning, improving learning outcomes, and catering to the diverse needs of all students. Thus, the prime objective of integrating both modes is to make learning more flexible, enjoyable, and students friendly and these are the salient aspects in the context of **NEP 2020**.

II. Objectives

1. To investigate the efficacy of blended learning as an inclusive pedagogical approach in educational contexts.
2. To understand how the integration of face-to-face and online learning components can contribute to inclusive practices that cater to diverse learner needs.
3. To examine the extent to which hybrid learning can provide equitable access to educational resources.
4. To analyse the role of teachers and or instructors in facilitating this inclusive approach for the benefit of all learners regardless of their abilities and backgrounds.

III. Review Of Literature

The review aimed to analyse existing research focused on blended learning and its significant implications for fostering inclusion within various educational settings. Despite the differing findings in the literature, the inherent flexibility and interactive potential of blended learning generally support a more personalized and inclusive learning environment.

➤ Blended learning formats can significantly enhance student outcomes, particularly when they effectively leverage technology to support cognitive processes and facilitate peer interaction **(Bernard et al., 2014)**.

➤ Challenges such as reduced in-person interaction can hinder some students, potentially leading to feelings of isolation and disengagement from the learning community **(Crowther, 2014)**.

➤ The integration of online components with traditional instruction fosters greater interaction and participation among students and educations **(Kanuka & Garrison, 2004)**.

➤ The Hybrid Learning Approach contributes itself in integrating the diversity among the students and making the classroom more inclusive rather than segregating the students and having individual sessions later **(Lim & Graham, 2021)**.

➤ Blended learning not only helps diverse students in their diverse learning pattern, but also boosts the moral and self-esteem of special learners by providing the equitable learning environment and opportunities like their other peers **(Rivera, 2017)**.

➤ This promising approach allows students to engage with the material at their own pace and access content in diverse ways, which is crucial for catering to the different learning needs and preferences of all students **(Westermann,2014)**.

IV. Methodology

The methodology employed in this research article is grounded in a comprehensive literature review of studies that have been published over the recent years. These studies were sourced from academic databases and critical analysis of the findings from various studies, while also integrating insights derived from the researcher's own understanding and professional interpretation of the subject matter. The outcome is a narrative explorationthat effectively highlights key themes, indicating the usefulness associated with hybrid learning, and discusses the evolving role of teachersin facilitating blended learning environments.

V. Findings And Discussion

Various studies found that the Hybrid Learning Approach produces a conducive learning conditions to support all students in inclusive educational settings as discussed below-

1) **Self-paced Learning**

This is a type of education where learners have the autonomy to progress through the course material at their own speed, without the compulsion of a fixed schedule or deadlines set by a teacher. This style of instruction allows students to start and finish courses according to their schedules, making it a flexible and customizable learning approach.

2 **Personalized Instruction**

This is a teaching method that customizes learning to meet the needs of each student. It involves developing individualized education plans for students with disabilities, adapting the curriculum, pace, and learning environment to the student's strengths, weaknesses, and goals. In this way, it is ensured that all students are able

to access the curriculum and make development at their own pace. Thus, technology plays a vital role in personalizing the learning experience.

3 **Increase student motivation, engagement and self-confidence**

Hybrid learning is linked to better achievement. Students in blended programs do better academically because they are more motivated. They learn at their own speed, which helps them to understand the material deeply. Motivation is key to successful learning in blended environments. Innovative strategies can effectively boost student motivation. Building strong relationships is essential for enhancing motivation. Studies by **Means et al. (2013)** reveal that blended learning environment promote student motivation, engagement, and self-confidence compared to traditional classroom settings. Blended learning can increase motivation by mixing digital learning with face-to-face teaching and allowing students to take a more active role in their learning.

4 **Assistance to diverse needs of all learners**

By the use of different online platforms, application of varioussoftwares, and assistive technologies, it enables the teacher to address the diverse needs of all learners and thus, an effective and meaningful learning atmosphere is created.

5 **Caters to students with specific learning disabilities**

This hybrid learning assists the students with specific learning disabilities like dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia etc., in their meaningful learning and skill development by providing them with various student-centric activities for their memory and repetition.

6 **Caters to specially-abled students**

Assistive Technology which includes a wide range of tools, devices, software, and equipment can assist students with various impairments, including physical, sensory, cognitive, and communication disabilities. Text-to-speech software like JAWS (Job Access With Speech) converts written text into speech, aiding students with reading difficulties. Speech to text software, on the other hand, converts spoken language into text, assisting students with writing and communication challenges. Assistive Technology like Optical Braille Recognition (OBR) is used to capture and process images of braille characters into natural language characters. It is used for people who cannot read them into text.

VI. Conclusion

The blend of the technology into the classroom is a tool that can aid the students to explore full of their potential. And the role of teacher is to effectively integrate technology and online media with the teaching methodology, thereby providing students with ample scope for improvement and in refining their skills and knowledge. The effectiveness of hybrid learning upon the students' learning greatly depends on the capability of the teacher to assimilate the elements of face-to-face classroom with online education. From the analysis of literatures, it is quite clear that blended learning significantly enhances student engagement in inclusive educational settings. Additionally, this hybrid approach has a huge potential to enhance our current teaching and learning process upto a great height. Thus, blending learning is a sophisticated approach to education that creates more engaging, inclusive, and effective educational experiences.

VII. References

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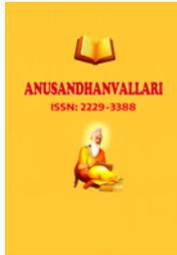
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