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## **Blended learning: A much faster and effective way for student's progress**

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### **Abstract**

A successful blended classroom includes the important essentials of both traditional and online education; creating a new approach to instructional learning. With the steadily increasing number of blended classes offered at community colleges, an opportunity exists to inform the purposeful planning of blended classes to best meet students' needs through identifying and comparing both faculty and students perceived course effectiveness factors and challenges. The specific problem is that faculty and students perceived factors for possible increased course effectiveness and their perceived challenges for decreased course effectiveness have not been previously identified then compared and contrasted. Filling the gap with this specific perception knowledge allows educators to more purposefully and strategically plan curriculum, thus increase student success. Themes that emerged from the open-ended responses included the focus on flexibility, technology, self-efficacy, and communication. Many of the factors identified, if addressed, could increase the course effectiveness, satisfaction, retention and completion, and ultimately, successful student learning in the blended class modality.

**Keywords:** Blended learning, instructional learning, blended class modality

### **Introduction**

Blended learning is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student, with some elements of student control over time, place, path, or pace. While students still attend "brick-and-mortar" schools with a teacher present, face-to-face classroom practices are combined with computer-mediated activities regarding content and delivery. Blended learning is also used in professional development and training settings.

Blended learning is highly context-dependent therefore a universal conception of it is hard to come by. Some reports have claimed that a lack of consensus on a hard definition of blended learning had led to difficulties in research on its effectiveness. The terms "blended learning", "hybrid learning", "technology-mediated instruction", "web-enhanced instruction", and "mixed-mode instruction" are often used interchangeably in research literature. Although the concepts behind blended learning first developed in the 1960s, the formal terminology to describe it did not take its current form until the late 1990s.

### **Models of blended learning**

There are distinct blended learning models suggested by some researchers and educational think-tanks. These models include:

#### **1) Station Rotation Blended Learning**

Station-Rotation blended learning is a model (that) allows students to rotate through stations on a fixed schedule, where at least one of the stations is an online learning station. This model is most common in elementary schools because teachers are already familiar rotating in "centers" or stations."

#### **2) Lab Rotation Blended Learning**

'The Lab Rotation' model of blended learning, similar to "Station Rotation," works by "allowing students to rotate through stations on a fixed schedule in a dedicated computer lab

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Allowing for flexible scheduling arrangements with teacher enabling schools to make use of existing computer labs.”

### **3) Remote Blended Learning (also referred to as *Enriched Virtual*)**

In Enriched Virtual blended learning, the student’s focus is on completing online coursework while only meeting with the teacher intermittently/as-needed.

This approach differs from the Flipped Classroom model in the balance of online to face-to-face instructional time. In an Enriched Virtual blended learning model, students wouldn’t see/work with/learning from a teacher on a daily basis face-to-face but would in a ‘flipped’ setting.

### **4) Flex Blended Learning**

The ‘Flex’ is included in types of Blended Learning and its model is one in which “a course or subject in which online learning is the backbone of student learning, even if it directs students to offline activities at times.

Students move on an individually customized, fluid schedule among learning modalities. The teacher of record is on-site, and students learn mostly on the brick-and-mortar campus, except for any homework assignments. The teacher of record or other adults provide face-to-face support on a flexible and adaptive as-needed basis through activities such as small-group instruction, group projects, and individual tutoring.”

### **5) ‘Flipped Classroom’ Blended Learning**

Perhaps the most widely known version of blended learning, a ‘Flipped Classroom’ is one where students are introduced to content at home, and practice working through it at school supported by a teacher and/or peers. In this way, traditional roles for each space are ‘flipped.’

### **6) Individual Rotation Blended Learning**

The Individual Rotation model allows students to rotate through stations, but on individual schedules set by a teacher or software algorithm. Unlike other rotation models, students do not necessarily rotate to every station; they rotate only to the activities scheduled on their playlists.”

### **7) Project-Based Blended Learning**

Blended Project-Based Learning is a model in which the student uses both online learning—either in the form of courses or self-directed access—and face-to-face instruction and collaboration to design, iterate, and publish project-based learning assignments, products, and related artifacts.

### **8) Self-Directed Blended Learning**

In Self-Directed blended learning, students use a combination of online and face-to-face learning to guide their own personalized inquiry, achieve formal learning goals, connect with mentors physically and digitally, etc. As the learning is self-directed, the roles of ‘online learning’ and physical teachers change, and there are no formal online courses to complete.

In Self-Directed blended learning, one challenge for teachers is to be able to judge the and (somehow) success of the learning experience without de-authenticating it.

For students, the challenge is to seek out models of products, processes, and potential that can provide the kind

of spark that can sustain learning while being self-aware enough to know what’s working and why, and to make adjustments accordingly. Some students need very little to soar, while others need support through very clear pathways that they can guide themselves through with autonomy and self-criticism.

### **9) Inside-Out Blended Learning**

In Inside-Out blended learning, experiences are planned to ‘finish’ or ‘end up’ beyond the physical classroom, but still require and benefit from the unique advantages of both physical and digital spaces.

In both the Outside-In and Inside-Out models, the nature of the ‘online learning’ is less critical than the focus on platforms, spaces, people, and opportunity beyond the school walls. (The ‘online’ components could be self-directed inquiry and/or formal eLearning courses and curriculum.)

Because the learning pattern is ‘outward,’ Project-Based blended learning is an excellent example of the Inside-Out model.

As with Outside-In blended learning, there is a need for expert guidance, learning feedback, content teaching, and psychological and moral support from face-to-face interactions on a daily basis.

Well-designed, each of the three ‘areas’ plays to its strengths and complements the other two.

### **10) Outside-In Blended Learning**

In Outside-In blended learning, experiences are planned to ‘start’ in the non-academic physical and digital environments students use on a daily basis, but finish inside a classroom.

This could mean traditional letter grades and assessments forms, or less traditional teaching and learning that simply use the classroom as a ‘closed-circuit’ publishing ‘platform’—a safe space to share, be creative, collaborate, and give and receive feedback that grows student work.

Well-designed, each of the three ‘areas’ plays to its strengths and complements the other two. While the pattern is Outside-In, unlike Remote blended learning there is still a need for guidance, teaching, and support from face-to-face interactions on a daily basis.

### **11) Supplemental Blended Learning**

In this model, students complete either entirely online work to supplement their day-to-day face-to-face learning, or entirely face-to-face learning experiences to supplement the learning gained in online courses and activities.

The big idea here is *supplementing*—critical learning objectives are met entirely in one space while the ‘opposite’ space provides the student with specific supplementing experiences that the other did not or could not provide.

### **12) Mastery-Based Blended Learning**

Students rotate between online and face-to-face learning (activities, assessments, projects, etc.) based on the completion mastery-based learning objectives.

Assessment design is crucial in any mastery-based learning experience; the ability to use face-to-face and digital assessment tools is either powerful or ‘complicated’ depending on the mindset of the learning designer.

## **Benefits of deep learning for students**

### **1). Increase student interest**

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. Subjects that might be monotonous for some – like math and science, while also increasing information retention.

### **2). Keep students focused for longer**

The use of computers to look up information & data is a tremendous lifesaver, combined with access to resources such as the internet to conduct research. This engagement and interaction with the resources keeps students focused for longer periods than they would be with books or paper resources, this engagement also helps develop learning through exploration and research.

### **3). Provides student autonomy**

The use of eLearning materials increases a student's ability to set appropriate learning goals and take charge of his or her own learning, which develops an ability that will be translatable across all subjects.

### **4). Instill a disposition of self-advocacy**

Students become self-driven and responsible, tracking their individual achievements, which helps develop the ability to find the resources or get the help they need, self-advocating so they can reach their goals.

### **5). Promote student ownership**

Blended learning instills a sense of 'student ownership over learning' which can be a powerful force propelling the learning. It's this feeling of responsibility that helps the feeling of ownership.

### **6). Allow instant diagnostic information and student feedback**

The ability to rapidly analyze, review and give feedback to student work, gives the teacher the ability to tailor his teaching methods and feedback for each student while improving time efficiency.

### **7). Enables students to learn at their own pace:**

Due to the flexibility of blended learning and the ability to access internet resources allows students to learn at their own pace, meaning a teacher can help speed up the learning process or give more advanced resources if necessary.

### **8). Prepares students for the future**

Blended learning offers a multitude of real-world skills, that directly translate into life skills, from: Research skills, Self-learning, Self-engagement, Helps to develop a 'self-driving force', Better decision making, offers a larger sense of responsibility, Computer literacy

### **9). Ensures Effective Mix of learning Methods**

The term "blended learning" represents a formal education program that brings together the best of classroom and online learning. Learners and educators like blended learning because it complements classroom learning in the right way.

To be more precise, when a student engages in an online program supported by blended learning, he or she is

assigned a teacher who will establish a pace based on the student's progress and capabilities.

### **10). Flexibility in terms of availability-Smart phones and Apps**

Mobile device ownership is rising at a rapid pace. Research predicts that in the growing number of smart phone users, learners account for a large number of this. Mobile technology brings many benefits to the e-learning space. In fact, many feel that since mobile learning came along, online course creators are now better positioned to create customized blended learning courses. Thanks to the robustness of today's mobile devices, many of the barriers to successful blended learning solutions are easy to address now.

Since mobile devices can make learning easy to access, educational systems should not discourage students from using their smart phones. Blended e-learning benefits from the use of a smart phone; anyone can navigate through courses without previous training. This is thanks to the intuitiveness of today's young learners and the accessibility of modern devices. You can study during the weekdays or weekends, as per your schedule.

Apart from this, there are more and more apps popping up every day that have an educational purpose. U.S. Geography by Discovery Education is developing an app that will not only be a regular learning medium but an app that takes the location of a user into consideration and provides them with contextual content about nearby monuments, museums, etc.

### **11). Engaging Interaction**

For most students, having discipline in their routine can be an issue as well as organizing their schedules around education. That is why a student/teacher relationship is considered necessary here. Depending on a student and their learning habits, a trained mentor can create a schedule for them.

An individual approach such as this one is exactly what a regular school fails to offer. In a physical classroom, everyone has to participate in the same program and teachers in charge of those classes can't tend to each person in the group with such specific attention. But with blended learning, a student will be provided with an engaging experience right from the comfort of their home.

### **12). Supports Self-Directed Education**

Physical classrooms can't always support self-directed learning. Dropouts are high in physical classrooms because students lose interest in their program when they are compelled to attend a group of classes bounded by time and space.

When a person enrolls in a blended learning program, they can direct their education according to their interests. Moreover, it also enables participants to acquire expertise in their field of choice at a faster pace.

### **13). Spending Quality Hours Online**

Blended learning aids in solving one of the most common problems students have—spending too much time online. It's obviously impossible for young people and everyone else, as a matter of fact, to stay away from social platforms because that's exactly where their friends and family are.

E-Learning courses are slowly but efficiently overtaking social networks. Considering the nature of this learning

method and the fact that it's done online, support groups are created simultaneously with learning groups. So, when a student takes up a blended learning course, they will have a Face book group or a Twitter list to turn to for additional guidance or probably to share their user experience. Such peer guided learning adds to engagement and value derived from the course.

#### **14). It is Cost-Efficient**

Another issue which many students face is monetary support or the burden of student loans. Even if they do manage to pay for their education during the school year, many of them are still stuck later paying off loans.

Considering the fact that blended learning enables students to select their own courses and direct their education, it's definitely less time-consuming for them to become working professionals. E-Learning is, either way, less expensive, but if you also count the number of courses which is smaller, the overall price decreases significantly.

#### **15). Keeps students focused & improves knowledge retention**

It's true that all students, irrespective of their age, learn differently. And blended learning is the best approach because it can support both offline and online teaching methods. It allows the instructor to create a course that reaches visual, auditory and kinetic learners alike.

If you are using a learning management system (LMS) for blended learning, educators can evaluate the efficiency of training content by judging students based on test/quiz results. If a learner continues to face difficulties, it indicates they need additional support. All in all, a blended learning design supports the needs of students while ensuring overall knowledge retention.

#### **16). Improved Teaching Conditions**

Blended learning is capable of tearing down the conventional brick and mortar approach to teaching and helps to improve conditions like—curtailed isolation, enhanced collaboration opportunities and professional development that is meaningful.

#### **Conclusion**

All students no matter their age learn differently and teaching methods should reflect this, by designing teaching programmes in a way that reaches visual, auditory and kinetic learners alike. With the heavy integration of technologies, we'll be able to improve teaching, information retention, engagement, responsibility and enjoyment. Students never outgrow their learning styles, meaning blended learning is more important than ever, no matter what the industry is, from schools to corporations, in all walks of life.

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