

Integrate blended learning into their teaching education essay



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1. 0 Introduction

This is the second out of three reports the author aims to write about blended learning. The first paper introduced readers to blended learning. He discussed what blended really was and the reasons why educators prefer to integrate blended learning into their teaching. He also outlined the scope, limitations and targeted user of the research. Two articles were also analyzed by the author.

The first article was written by Norm Vaughan, of the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE) Chesapeake, VA, for the International Journal on E-Learning on the Perspectives on Blended Learning in Higher Education. In the article he discussed the benefits and limitations of blended learning in institutions of higher education from the perspective of those associated with this method of learning

The second article was written by the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development at Oxford Brookes University for the Higher Education Academy. Their intention was to analyze existing research on blended learning, identify important issues and make suggestions to guide future policies and practices. The author concluded the paper by indicating that he felt blended learning is the natural evolution of e-learning.

In this report, the author aims to conduct a literature review on blended learning. The author would further explain what blended learning is. He would outline the various levels of blended learning. The advantages and disadvantages of blended learning would also be discussed in this paper. The author would then try to answer the main research question, which is, how
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does Blended Learning help in current education system? The author also aims to find out if blended learning is actually better than the traditional face to face form of learning. The author would end by giving his own views on blended learning.

2. 0 Blended Learning

Blended Learning involves the integration or blending of learning programs in various formats to achieve a common goal. Blended learning programs usually consists of a combination of lecture rooms and online programs. Blended learning could also be defined as the fusion of traditional face to face and online learning schemes to maximize the effectiveness of learning. In blended learning, the training program or course is broken into different sections and the most suitable sections are selected. The main aim is to take advantage of the best features of each method. computer-based training and CD-ROMs are examples of media that could be used in a blended course.

2. 1 Brief history of Blended learning

Blended learning is a term that has been utilized for decades by educators and organizations, despite the fact that it only gained major attention in recent years. Blended learning basically means utilizing more than one learning approach to educate students. In the past, blended learning has been viewed as a mixture of traditional face to face learning and any prevalent technology. This could include everything from calculators to personal computers to the Internet. However blended learning has evolved significantly over the last couple of years. The number of educational institutions and organizations utilizing blended learning are a testament to the fact that it is indeed an effective way of passing knowledge through.

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2. 2 Advantages of Blended Learning

Blended learning has several advantages over other forms of learning. Past studies and articles on blended learning has revealed that pacing and attendance is an advantage of blended learning. In most blended learning classrooms, there is the ability to learn whenever the student decides to do so. If a student is absent from a lesson, he or she may view some of the missed lecture materials at the same time that the rest of the class does, despite the fact that the student's not physically present in the class room. This ensures that students who might have one reason or the other that prevents them from attended lectures regularly can still be on the same page as all the other students in the class. This learning approach also ensures that students can view learning materials at any time they decide to, in case they want to revisit what they have been taught or simply move on to future topics, for those who learn at a faster pace. (Alvarez, 2005)

Another advantage of blended learning is the fact that it maximizes the effectiveness of learning. Most students indicate that the classroom can be a dull and boring place to learn sometimes, the integration of blended learning into the system adds a creative dimension to the uninteresting learning environment. Past studies have also revealed that this teaching approach encourages and improves student-teacher interaction. Furthermore , online learning enables students from different geographical locations to get quality education they normally would not have access to. .(Elearning2day. com).

2. 3 Disadvantages of Blended Learning

Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (Garnham & Kaleta, 2002) and University of Central Florida (Dziuban & Moskal, 2001) indicated that students encountered a number of issues with blended courses.

Responsibility for learning was one of the major problems students encountered with blended courses. Freshmen undergraduate, who are still used still used to the traditional face to face learning approach find it difficult to adapt their studying and learning habits to suit online learning. Although, with time they become used to the idea of being responsible for their own learning, it is still a problem they face in the initial stages.

Lack of immediate response from lecturers, was a also a problem students encountered with blended courses. In a course involving the traditional face to face method of teaching, students can pose their questions and have them answered by the lecturer or instructor, on the spot. But that is not the case when it comes to online learning. Students have to send their questions online to their lecturers and have to wait, sometimes too long before they get feedback from their lectures.

Time commitment was another challenge identified by most faculty. They claimed that the planning and development of a large enrolment blended course take much more time to develop, when compared with time taken to develop a similar course in the traditional format. (Dziuban & Moskal, 2001)

3. 0 How does Blended Learning help in current education system?

Before beginning the research, the author had a few questions which he wanted answered by the end of the research. The main question was how does Blended Learning help in current education system? The author aimed to figure out how blended learning fitted into today's higher education system and understand the views and perceptions of individuals towards the integration of blended learning into higher education.

A research was conducted by Curtis J. Bonk, Kyong-Jee Kim from Indiana University, USA and Tingting Zeng from Warwick University, UK . Their intention was to get an insight into the current status and future directions of blended learning in the learning environment.

The survey participants consisted of university instructors, majority of who were members of MERLOT. The survey-questionnaire consisted of 42 questions in total. Only 562 surveys were completed out of the 12, 000 survey requests sent. Results from the survey indicated that a majority, 93% to be specific, of the participants indicated that they currently integrating blending into their teaching approach. The authors claimed that the outcomes of the this result came as no surprise to them. The participants also indicated that they expected an increase in the use of blending, in the years to come. 40% of the participants predicted that by the year 2006, they would be utilizing blended learning in 21-40% of their courses. 37% of the participants expected this to be higher than 40%. And a majority of the participants indicated that, by the year 2013 they would be to utilizing a blended approach, in more than 40% of their courses.

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An article by Norm Vaughan, titled the Perspectives on Blended Learning in Higher Education, which the author discussed about in his last paper outlined that most faculty in institutions of higher education suggest that blended courses stimulate student-teacher interaction, and that it added an element of creativity to the sometimes uninteresting traditional learning environment.

In the author's opinion, blended learning has had and is having a positive impact in today's educational system. The results gathered from the survey discussed above, indicates that 93 percent of the individuals that responded, are already using blended learning in their teaching. This means that most individuals and higher institutions have already noticed the effectiveness of blended learning and see it as the best way to educate people.

The author feels satisfied with these findings and can conclude that blended learning has contributed positively to the way individuals are being educated today, he also feels that similarities in the results between the different articles read indicates that blended learning is proliferating across institutions of higher education and this trend will continue to increase.

4. 0 Is blended learning better than face to face learning?

Another question which the author wanted answered before the end of his research, was if blended learning was more effective than the traditional face to face way of learning.

An article titled " Blended Learning" More Effective than Face-to-Face was written by Katie Ash for Education Week Digital Directions, she stated that a report was released on June 26, 2009 by the United States of America's <https://assignbuster.com/integrate-blended-learning-into-their-teaching-education-essay/>

Department of Education. She claimed the report examined several studies, 46 to be precise, comparing the traditional face to face form of learning with online learning and concluded that blended learning was indeed more effective than the traditional face to face way of learning.

The author firmly disagrees with the conclusion reached by the US department of education. He feels that although blended learning has many advantages, there is not enough evidence to conclude that blended learning is better than the traditional face to face learning. The author searched and was unable to find any other article, book or journal that came to the same conclusion as the US department of education. In addition, the report from the US department of education stated that many of the studies were plagued by small sample sizes and possible unfairness due to the fact that the authors served as both instructors and experimenters.

5. 0 Conclusion

It is evident that blended learning holds great promise for educators. Quality and effective training will no longer be confined to the walls of a class room While blending can be highly effective and efficient way of training, it is important to remember that a successful learning experience requires high quality in all aspects of the instructional system classroom interaction. At the end of this report, the author can conclude that although blended learning has numerous advantages over other forms of learning, it still is not superior to the traditional face to face learning. Also, the author has been able to understand how blended learning helps in the current educational system and can conclude that blended learning has revolutionized the way people are educated today.

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