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Review paper

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BLENDED AND ONLINE LEARNING AS A PRECONDITION FOR BETTER TEACHING COMMUNICATION

This study aims to find out what are the impacts of Blended learning on communication. Research shows that in the higher education system there are positive outcomes of communication using Blended learning techniques. According to this research, if the system is entirely online, it will never revolutionize the mindsets of students. Blended learning and online learning help the students to explore more techniques and tools for faster acquisition of knowledge. It has a positive impact on the cognitive and interpersonal skills of the students and automatically impacts positively the concept of online learning from the student's perspective. The research showed that online learning even if it is not taken in the classroom can be a part of positive effects in communication among the students and their effectiveness and performances. Using the variety of technology in the class is improving communications skills and forcing learners to incorporate information technology and have a strong command of modern communication instruments.

Key words: education; online learning; blended learning; knowledge; communication

INTRODUCTION

In the emerging world of digital trends, technology has become part of every aspect of life. Technology has entirely changed the game for everything we do daily or occasionally. Incorporating technology in every field of life has made it very easy and accessible for everyone. Things that used to take hours or days to get done now can be done just by sitting on your couch using the technology.

There are several different definitions from different authors for Blended learning. Blended learning is a combination of face-to-face in-classroom learning methodology and web-based learning using different technological tools (Sharma 2010). Blended learning is an innovative approach to incorporate offline learning that is face-to-face learning with the online learning that is web-based. It is a combination of the methods of instructions (Driscoll 2002). It will enhance students' use of technology and improve their self-study. This technique is in use around the globe for the past few years now, but it is not very common in most regions of the world.

Blended learning is a combination of systematic and strategic tools of technology (Delialioglu and Yildirim 2007) and it helps the students to achieve instructional goals. Blended learning allows students to thoughtfully reflect on the learning. Blended learning generally allows the instructions or study material to float to a wide and diverse range of students. Blended learning is a type of learning that incorporates collaborative learning techniques and interactive sessions. It is a combination of on-line learning and classroom activities (Rovai and Jordan 2004).

Blended learning is the use of a variety of tools, techniques, software applications, and modules for learning purposes. Classroom sessions or in-person or face-to-face learning when incorporates with online use of learning techniques that become blended learning. Different platforms facilitate online learners with the course materials like e-libraries, calendars, Moodle, Google classroom, etc. Online learning is referred to as distance learning. One of the reports shows that in Europe more than eight million students were enrolled for an online course in the year 2012-2013. Similar to e-learning is mobile learning or e-learning that provides learners to interact with their learning resources if they are away from their learning places or institutions (Clark 2007). Using m-learning allows the students to use online learning resources and they can easily access the lecture from any place they are.

Learning management systems are designed by the institutions to enables the student to learn at distance. Many other tools and mediums are used for the facilitation of online learning. It is argued in some papers that online platform in 21st century is so vast that students get distracted because of some social applications. Whereas some researchers critic the argument by emphasizing the importance and accessibility of online learning techniques. Studies have shown that students take more interest when there is technology incorporated into their learning process. Because the new generation is more adaptive to change, they enjoy new techniques and ease for their learning processes. Quality of education is always questioned as to what the implications of blended learning are. Studies show also that online learning has a positive impact

on students and trainees (Osmanovic, Osmanovic 2019). Student engagement is the main point of focus for the teachers and institutions, Blended learning has made it quite easy for teachers and interesting for students. Some studies have argued that Blended learning is result-oriented only when face-to-face lectures or leg technique has no visible positive results (Delialioglu 2012). One of the main concerns that must be considered before adopting Blended learning is to get all the faculty trained for the online learning technique (Kim and Bonk 2006). Students' satisfaction with e-learning is very important, and in that way, it is requested to complete students' researches to continue e-learning and Blended learning (Puška, Osmanovic 2020). Whereas some researchers have proved from their research that it has a higher impact on overall learning technique and student performance outcome. Students have shown clear evidence that they are in favor of Blended learning highly engaged because they find it more and easily accessible (Whitelock & Jefts 2003).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Some of the previous authors have unfolded the importance of the blended learning method in their writings and researches. Most authors have emphasized that blended learning can only be effective if there exists some flexibility in the method and techniques.

Interaction, which is the main component of the learning environment plays important role in the process of learning. According to (Sethy 2008), students can be much more engaged in their online lectures compare to the physical class.

This implies that blended learning techniques can result in more effective academic outcomes for students which ultimately link student's success when they enter the corporate world. Blending the traditional face-to-face or classroom approach of learning with online web-based learning enables the student to continually learn new techniques and it not only result in one-time learning.

This blended technique will enable the students to explore after offline class, online learning is just vast. Students can reach out to the study material whenever and wherever they want by just a few clicks away. This type of flexibility enables the students to increase their mobility and make the learning more effective (Richardson and Swan 2003).

Blended learning is the idea (Seife 2000) for which the entire training has to be given otherwise it could prove a dangerous process. Dangerous process in the sense that students can be distracted with social media apps when using technology for their

learning purposes. All learning is quite a new phenomenon that has rapid growth in recent decades. That rapid adoption of new technology cause tension in the learning system of the higher education sector.

Contrary to this, the blended technique of learning is much more helpful for teachers along with students. Teachers excel in new teaching techniques and new communication methods, resulting in better course work for students and better communication outcomes by students and teachers. The teachers could give more time to the students and they can work in small groups of students with special consideration to each student (Oh & Park 2009). This type of learning allows the teachers to explore new technology where educational institutions provide different types of grants and financial support to contribute to the development of all processes (Chizmar & Williams 2001).

Blended learning helps students and teachers to explore more styles of learning and teaching which is why this technique is being adopted by every other institution, mostly higher education as mature and grown-up students can more easily use the technology to adapt to blended learning. Blended learning environments give a fresh approach to different learning styles with a focus on higher diversification of learning (Marsh 2012).

One of the benefits of Blended learning is that it eliminates all the hurdles of time, resources, and classroom because one can learn at any time anywhere conveniently. Recent studies have introduced the ICT concept that is Information Communication Technology. Information Communication Technology includes all the technological tools and gadgets like computer systems, the Internet, mobile phones, etc. It is obvious that using technology, communication hurdles have been escaped and there is a variety of communication methods that technology has introduced which are improving the communications skills of the students. Technology acts as a neutral tool that has many ways to bring together the styles of the students (Loertscher & Achterman 2002).

Blended learning effect positively on students problem-solving skills and allows enhancing the student's skills in problem-solving activity (Mulbar et al. 2017).

Blended learning has forced learners to incorporate information technology in such a way that it enables the learners to have a strong command of modern communication instruments. Web-based learning is a medium of networks through which the learning process is done and this medium includes communication and information tools.

Blended learning is widely adopted by higher education institutions mostly. As cited earlier by different researchers, Blended learning is a combination of two major

learning techniques which are classroom and online learning techniques. So, this type of technology improves not only the communication gap but is all very accessible in terms of all means. Increased satisfaction of students and teachers is because of the high accessibility of Blended learning compared to traditional classroom learning. Some of the recent studies conducted for the Blended learning technique showed very positive results in terms of academic achievement of students, high interactive results, and high satisfaction level of students (Davis 1993).

Some other researchers concluded that this new type of learning, Blended learning technique is highly resulted oriented not only in terms of student academic achievement but the satisfaction of students along with teachers and their interaction. While the student's satisfaction will depend on the teacher's presence in the classroom environment (Mahmood & Azhar 2012).

Some studies have shown that ability of the faculty and their sense of humor can vanish in the online learning environment and can produce a class with less emotional satisfaction for the teachers (Swan 2002).

Since Blended learning is a mix of different learning techniques, it does underlie different learning theories. One of the most discussed theories of learning is learning constructivism. Learning Constructivism is commonly known as individual learning. This theory says that knowledge is a human thought, which is constructed by interaction. Human interactions can be with the environment around it, with the objects that human sees, owns and different life phenomena's.

ONLINE LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION

Likewise, learning techniques have emerged as well by using and incorporating technology into it. From the literature review of many previous researchers, we concluded that there is not much of the research that has been done on the topic that mainly focuses on better communication outcomes, because of learning techniques, mainly Blended learning and online learning techniques. Communication skills of the students are very much important from their beginning stage till the stage they become successful managers and heads.

As blended learning is a mix of online and face-to-face learning, studies show that it results in better outcomes of communication for the students. Students will have a vast variety of material to gain knowledge from, to enhance their skills. Blended learning allows the student to excel in all the tools of online and in-person learning to develop skills and thinking powers thus resulting in better communication. Online

learning techniques if used solely, don't result as effective for better communication. Face-to-face interactions of students with teachers, fellow students give them the required confidence and grooming tips to enhance their actual communication skills. Appropriate and effective communication in online learning helps to reduce the obstacles of online communication (Hung et al. 2010).

Whereas some researchers mention that web-based learning enhances their skills in email writing, charts, etc. which results in strong communications skills. Most of the studies that have been inducted around the world have proven that academic achievements by the students are way above the outcome of blended learning (Tuckman 2002).

Moreover, students have been observed mostly applying the practical techniques in Blended learning instead of solely face-to-face learning. The students can have control over the instructions by taking and replacing the sections of courses according to their approach (Shyu & Brown 1992). This type of control introduces the news learning paradigm and technology.

Blended learning is comparatively a new technique of learning, it has enabled not only students but faculty members too, to learn new terms and techniques and apply them for their course work. In an online or e-learning approach, the communication that is established between the student and teacher is equally interactive as it is in face-to-face interactive class (Chih-Hsiung & Isaac 2002). Students and teachers are not together in online learning, but the high quality of tools used in e-learning enables student-teacher interaction as if it is happening at the same place just like face-to-face interaction. Online classroom enables two ways of communication, teacher student communication, that has a positive impact on the learning environment. This type of interaction occurs also outside of the classroom. Faculty or instructors could form other types of interaction among themselves (Anderson 2003).

Technology is seemingly changing the world by bringing in new and relatively easy ways to do things. Using the online resources, students can improve their knowledge and skills (Ahmar and Rahman 2017). With better techniques used, every aspect of life is emerging differently. Back in the time, when the only place for learning was a classroom, students only had access to the teachers or the learning material for a limited time of the day. Using the online methodology, students can at any time anywhere interact with their fellow learners and teachers. This has completely made the communication stronger and better. In the future, the study material available online can be beneficial for the secondary audience as well. Using technology, not only a single group gets benefit by as many students wants to, can get its benefit. When we

look only at technological tools used in online classroom activities, we need to take care that it should be acceptable by the students to use time and money inefficient way (Hanna et al. 2000).

When the barrier of time, environment and study material, etc. is placed out of context, learning is improved by improving communication. Some very recent studies have concluded that for a complete positive result or better student engagement, it is very important to have both in-class learning and online new technique of learning (Singh & Reed 2001).

Communication gap can be observed when only online; learning is implemented, teachers and students not only get distracted, but the outcomes are not satisfactory as well. Hence for effective communication, Blended learning i.e. mixed technique for learning, has been suggested by many authors and experts. Blended and online learning techniques help better communication between the students. Students now have easy access to their lectures particularly working students who previously had a lack of communication due to their working duties. All this leads to improvement in the communication between the students and teachers. Around the world, institutions are trying to adapt to a new culture of Blended learning and they are to some extent trying to get their employees and faculty members trained to use technology in the class.

TYPES OF LEARNING RESOURCES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS THAT AFFECTS COMMUNICATION AMONG THE STUDENTS

Today the world has access to a large number of different kinds of teaching materials accessible online for the students and the teachers. When we are talking about the online learning process it is necessary to mention three important phases of the learning process that later on have an impact on the student's communication. First phase belongs to the evaluation of resources. This phase depends on the student's interests, which is very much different among the students. It also depends on their social background, cultural heritage, social status, and family background. The second and very important phase that students are passing through it, is the characteristics of learning resources. Each resource is specific according to its characteristics and that resource makes students motivated for their learning and enhances their communication. When we talk about the color of the presentation and its design we are talking about the selection of pictorial learning. It can be said if the students don't like the design of that presentation, they will be less motivated to communicate and to learn a particular

topic, or if the students like the design of the presentation they will stay much longer to read and study it. When we are presenting the resources to the students, we should be very careful about the way of selection that can impact positively or negatively student's engagement in the learning process and their way of communication. Presentation of the learning resources like abstract painting and films can be interpreted in different ways, depends on the experience of students and teachers. On the other hand, some diagrams or graphs could be interpreted mostly in the same ways and these presentations leave the students less time for exaggeration in their interpretation and communication skills. However, the presentation of learning resources by itself is the longest process in online learning resources. It can be observed through several steps: the first step is the one when the presentation of the learning resources is followed by the determination of the sources. The second step in this process is a classification of important information needed for online education. In the third step, we can talk about the synthesis of all previously collected data. This phase is very important when we want to evaluate all previous learning phases in the process of online learning, and students' interaction and communication.

When we talk about online learning usually, we don't think about the skills that this process can impact positively. Online learning has a positive impact on cognitive skills in the sense of the development of knowledge and its concepts. By applying different types of methodology in problem-solving situations and interpersonal contacts, students are developing their cognitive skills. The development of This cognitive skill leads to the improvement of better student and teacher communication inside and outside the online learning process.

CONCLUSION

This research paper has addressed the important aspect of today's learning technique. Blended learning is a very dynamic learning technique. The outcomes of the study showed that Blended learning has a significant impact on better future communication. Furthermore, outcomes or results have shown that Blended learning gives all the students equal rights to gain information and study material. However, few aspects can be neglected in online learning techniques like the disciple, face-to-face interaction, and public dealing. That is the main reason why entirely online technique cannot be effective compared to the Blended learning technique. Most of the studies have shown that Blended learning can be effective only when the faculty is trained for technology usage along with the students. Furthermore, primary level or secondary

level students need proper attention and proper check and balance, for which Blended learning cannot show any satisfactory outcomes for better communication. Moreover, if higher education is completely moved to online and web-based learning, students' academic outcomes might not show what they will lack. In practical life, in the corporate world, students will show better communication or management skills because of their easy access to online learning resources. This is the reason that even in higher education systems, learning techniques should always be at least mixed and blended to give the students easy access to their learning platform. Using online learning and its technology has a positive impact on the student's communication.

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HIBRIDNO I UČENJE NA DALJINU KAO PREDUSLOV ZA BOLJU NASTAVNU KOMUNIKACIJU

Sažetak:

Ova studija ima za cilj otkriti koji su utjecaji kombiniranog učenja na komunikaciju. Istraživanja pokazuju da u sistemu visokog obrazovanja postoje pozitivni ishodi komunikacije korištenjem tehnika kombiniranog učenja. Prema ovom istraživanju, ako je sistem u potpunosti na mreži, nikada neće revolucionirati mentalni sklop učenika. Kombinirano učenje i učenje na daljinu pomažu studentima da istraže više tehnika i alata za brže usvajanje znanja. Ima pozitivan utjecaj na kognitivne i međuljudske vještine učenika i pozitivno utječe na koncept učenja putem interneta iz perspektive učenika. Istraživanje je pokazalo da učenje na daljinu, čak i ako se ne izvodi u učionici, može biti dio pozitivnih efekata u komunikaciji među učenicima i njihove efikasnosti i performansi. Korištenje različitih tehnologija u obrazovnom sistemu jasno poboljšava komunikacijske vještine i tjera učenike da uključe informacionu tehnologiju i snažno vladaju savremenim komunikacijskim instrumentima.

Ključne riječi: obrazovanje; učenje na daljinu; mješovito učenje; znanje; komunikacija

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