"Blended Learning, an innovative practice for online learning –Google chrome extensions and tools that complement blended learning"

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Abstract

The classroom of today begs for the integration of technology to enhance the learning experience for every student. In today's scenario most teachers struggle to use technology successfully for student engagement in an online lesson. The question of 'How can I ensure that students are learning?' continues to persist in the online classroom. It's important to strike the right balance to meet the learning objectives of the lesson.

A 'blended approach' is the answer. 'Blended Learning' is blend of Synchronous and Asynchronous learning while introducing various digital apps and tools.

It is an instructional methodology, a teaching and learning approach that combines face to-face classroom methods with computer mediated activities to deliver instruction. This pedagogical approach means a mixture of face-to-face and online activities and the integration of synchronous and asynchronous learning tools, thus providing an optimal possibility for the arrangement of effective learning processes. Blended learning is the term given to the educational practice of combining digital learning tools with more traditional classroom face to face teaching. Despite this, the digital tools used should be able to be utilised by the students in order to enforce some control over the speed or topics of their learning. So to use this method effectively the teachers should know the tools used in this method of teaching.

Keywords: Blended learning, synchronous and asynchronous learning

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Introduction

"Blended learning, also known as hybrid learning, is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods." [1]

The educational system at present is in a transition stage. To meet the challenges of expansion and for catering individuals need it is trying to adopt new technologies and exploring new paths to reach the goal of quality educational opportunities for all, at the same time due to various factors like deficient budgets, lack of facilities, advantages of face to face interaction, it is not completely ready to leave the traditional modes of knowledge transfer. Even the students are in a state of dual mind. So the answer to all the problems is blended learning. Blended learning is a blend of two different type of teaching known as Synchronous and Asynchronous learning.

In this paper researcher would like to discuss about the blended learning, Synchronous and asynchronous learning, advantages of it and the different tools and digital apps used for the proper implementation of the blended learning for students as well as the teachers.

🔸 **Defination of key words-**

1. Blended learning

According 44 to Erdem (2014), "blended learning gives learners and teachers a potential environment to learn and teach more effectively" [2]

Procter defined blended learning in 2003 as 'the effective combination of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning' [3]

According to Chew, Jones and Turner, 'blended learning involves the combination of two fields of concern: education and educational technology' [4]

2. Synchronous learning

Synchronous learning occurs in a joint environment on a fixed schedule. This can refer to students following classes in a traditional classroom environment, though the term itself is mostly used to refer to online classes. The key component of synchronous learning is learning

at the same time. This means that a group of students is all learning about something at the same time, making it possible to interact with the teacher.[5]

3. Asynchronous learning-

With asynchronous learning, on the other hand, there's no real-time interaction between the teacher and the students. Students can choose to learn at times that differ from other students, without live teacher feedback. Students don't have to be in the same classroom nor in the same time zone to participate in your classes.

⊹ What is Synchronous learning and its benefits

Synchronicity means doing something at the same time, and with learning, it's no different. Synchronous learning refers to a learning event in which a group of participants is engaged in learning at the same time. They should be in the same physical location, such as a classroom, or at the same online environment, such as in a web conference, where they can interact with the instructor and other participants. There is real-interaction with other people.

In a corporate training scenario, this type of learning occurs when there is in-person training or live webinars where the employees or customers can participate at the same time.

The benefits of synchronous learning

- Interaction between participants.
- Exchange of knowledge and experience between participants.
- Real-time feedback for the instructor.
- Training happens on a fixed schedule.

⊹ What is asynchronous learning and its benefits

If synchronous learning takes place at the same time, asynchronous learning refers to the opposite. The instructor, the learner, and other participants are not engaged in the learning process at the same time. There is no real-time interaction with other people.

An example of this method in corporate training is creating online content with pre-recorded videos or publishing an on-demand online exam.

The benefits of asynchronous learning

- Participants can learn in their own time and schedule
- Automated tasks reduce repetitive work such as giving online classes and grading exams
- Students can learn on their own pace

⊹ What's the correct formula to achieve learning?

The ideal lesson would need a blend of both asynchronous and synchronous activities to embed learning in students. Irrespective of whichever structure you follow, you will have to consider the usual core factors while planning your lesson.

a) Content keeping your learning outcome in mind (what can be done asynchronously and synchronously for effective learning and time management)

b) Classroom Dynamics (how many students, interactive students, passive students, learner profiles/types, time available, maximizing resources)

c) Learning Tools (how content can be driven through them, what maximizes learning, etc.)

The first two are the one which all teachers can decide upon however many the third part that is learning tools is where many of the teachers lack behind because they don't know much about these tools. So in the next part of this paper researcher will discuss about different tools that can be used as asynchronous and synchronous activities in blended learning

Digital tools

1. GOOGLE CLASSROOM

Website – https://classroom.google.com

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl-tBjAM9g4&t=765s

➢ Google Classroom is a learning management system (LMS) that aims to simplify creating, distributing, and grading assignments and engaging students in learning online or remotely.

➢ Google Classroom is a free application designed to help students and teachers communicate, collaborate, organize and manage assignments, go paperless, and much more

2. GOOGLE JAMBOARD

Website - https://jamboard.google.com

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9m4HCjOkcA&t=202s

➢ Jamboard is a white board display.

➢ Allows you to add l in images from a Google search, save work to the cloud automatically, use the easy-to-read handwriting and shape recognition tool, and draw with a stylus but erase with your finger – just like a whiteboard.

3. GOOGLE FORMS

Website – https://www.google.com/forms/about/

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtoOHhA3aPQ

➢ Google form is a free online tool from Google which allows users to create forms, surveys, and quizzes as well as to collaboratively edit and share the forms with other people.

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- ➢ You can use Google forms to assess their students at the beginning of the class and gauge pre-existing knowledge.
- ➢ Google forms can be used to give feedback to and receive feedback from students and parents.

4. GOOGLE KEEP

Website - https://keep.google.com

How to use (Desktop) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKXC6nFA7z8

(Mobile) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZUcFewFTQE

- ➢ Google Keep allows you to easily save the things you care about to Keep and have them synced across all of the platforms that you use — including web, Android and iOS.
- ➢ Take notes for additional detail and add labels to quickly categorize your note for later retrieval.

5. WORDWALL

Website – https://wordwall.net/

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trZy6TlXebM

- ➢ Wordwall takes vocabulary games and reviews into the digital world, and is easy to use for teachers and learners.
- ➢ If you are looking to add a new digital tool to your teaching, this is a very good place to start.
- ➢ You can use a limited number of templates for free, and because Wordwall is web-based, with a good connection you can create activities quickly and easily in a matter of minutes.
- ➢ Once you have created an activity, it is shareable in different ways.

6. SOCRATIVE

Website - https://www.socrative.com/#login

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaaSVwq6adU&t=35s

- ➢ The application is a quiz-based, formative assessment tool with multiple features that can enrich teaching and learning.
- ➢ You can design quizzes, space races, exit tickets, and more to collect and analyze student data in real-time to make on- the-spot teaching changes and improve student learning

7. NEARPOD

Website - https://nearpod.com/

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDfmsnq9Qg0&t=258s

➢ Nearpod helps educators make any lesson interactive whether in the classroom or virtual.

➢ A teacher can create interactive presentations that can contain Quiz's, Polls, Videos, Collaborate Boards, and more.

➢ You can access thousands of pre- built K-12 standards-aligned lessons or upload your existing lessons and make them interactive.

➢ The students can access a teacher's presentation through a code and the teacher then moves the class through the presentation and lets students interact with the media as they go.

➢ Teachers can also opt for Student-Paced mode, where the student controls the flow of the lesson

8. PEARDECK

Website - https://www.peardeck.com/googleslides

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0ALtFL6HSE&t=220s

➢ Start your presentation and students will join your Session from any device with a web browser.

➢ As you advance your slides, students will be prompted to answer your questions.

➢ Students' answers can be displayed anonymously on the classroom projector, so instead of worrying about getting the right answer and feeling silly in front of peers, your students are putting ideas out there in a safe, anonymous way, discussing, and learning from each other.

9. SEESAW

Website - https://web.seesaw.me/

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l231B9sk_nI

➢ Teachers see all stages of student thinking and progress — enabling them to teach better

➢ Families gain a window into their student's learning and engage in home-to-school connections

➢ Students use built-in multimodal tools to capture what they know in Seesaw's digital portfolio

CHROME EXTENSIONS

1. GRAMMARLY

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Download from Chrome Store - https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/grammarly-for-chrome/kbfnbcaeplbcioakkpcpgfkobkghlhen

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJ_ZWAUO78s

- ➢ Grammarly helps you eliminate grammatical, spelling and writing errors
- ➢ It will also find perfect words to express yourself, the style and tone.
- ➢ Get real-time feedback from Grammarly on Gmail, Google Docs,
- ➢ Grammarly is a writing assistant that offers you specific suggestions to help you improve your writing — and it goes way beyond grammar. You can be confident that your writing is not only correct, but clear and concise.

2. SMALLPDF

Download from Chrome Store - https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/smallpdf-edit-compress-an/ohfgljdgelakfkefopgklcohadegdpjf

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WYkBFrRtQY

- ➢ Easy-to-use PDF tools to Edit, Convert, Merge, Split and Compress PDF files.
- ➢ The extension once installed get integrated with Gmail.

3. SAVE TO POCKET

Download from Chrome store - https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/save-to-pocket/niloccemoadcdkdjlinkgdfekeahmflj

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGeF5XaQ2tU

- ➢ Save to Pocket's extension is the easiest, fastest way to capture articles, videos, and anything else you find on the web.
- ➢ With one click, the content you have collected appears across all your devices in a clean, distraction-free space—there to read when you're ready, whether at home, at work, or on the go.

4. SCREENCASTIFY

Download from Chrome Store - https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/screencastify-screen-vide/mmeijimgabbpbgpdklnllpncmdofkcpn

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96fQpOqH9XE

- ➢ Screencastify allows you to capture your browser tab, desktop, and/or your webcam
- ➢ Narrate with your microphone's audio
- ➢ Embed your webcam into the recording
- ➢ Annotate with our pen tool, stickers, or mouse effects

5. MOTE

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Download from Chrome store - https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/mote-voice-notes-feedback/ajphlblkfpppdpkgokiejbjfohfohhmk

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9Z9vzoQtSs

- ➢ Mote lets you add voice comments and audio content to shared documents, assignments, emails and forms.
- ➢ Ask students questions and provide feedback, quickly and with the feeling of human connection. Whether you are at home or in the classroom, Mote helps educators and students to stay connected.
- ➢ Add voice comments within Google Classroom's Stream and Private Comments views, as well as within Google Docs, Slides and Sheets. Look for the Mote icon in comment boxes.
- ➢ Record and insert audio clips within Google Slides and Google Forms - simply click on the Mote icon within the application to insert your audio.
- ➢ Add voice notes anywhere, using our voice recorder accessed from the extension icon in the browser bar.

6. EDPUZZLE

Download from Chrome Store -

https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/edpuzzle/oligonmocnihangdjlloenpndnniikol

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8I0fV0djfJA

- ➢ As a teacher, you will be able to use our screen recording tool to record anything on your screen. Once you finish recording your video, you will be able to edit it, embed questions, and assign it to your students.
- ➢ You will also get a small unobtrusive button under all YouTube videos so that you can quickly start editing them in Edpuzzle.
- ➢ Use it anytime as you comfortably browse through your favorite educational videos on YouTube.

7. GOOGLE MEET ATTENDANCE

Download from Chrome store - https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/google-meet-attendance-v2/hhdmekoddjmghpckcgejaekaoelfbjhp

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3cCQcWWpQE&t=278s

- ➢ This extension is intended for teachers who have had to rapidly transition to online classes and need a simple way to take attendance during a Google Meet.
- ➢ The extension records which students attended, when they arrived and how long they stayed with all of the information displayed in a HTML report.

➢ One of the first features is a Safe Screen Sharing Mode that is blocking Videos from auto starting when enabled in order to avoid unwanted interruptions when presenting.

8. RECORD TO SLIDES

Download from Chrome Store - https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/record-to-slides/kopibndpljhghelmnmokfbfkgdhnihip

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm7JIxZQZ_4

➢ Record to slides allows you to record videos and automatically load them into the slide you are on.

➢ The application works only with Google Slides

9. KAMI

Download from Chrome store - https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/kami-for-google-chrome/ecnphlgnajanjnkcmbpancdjoidceilk

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8UzNWDDpWo

Kami allows you to annotate any document.

Kami provides tools to support any learning style, drive engagement, and improve learning outcomes

It allows you and your students to collaborate in real-time through live annotations, video and audio recordings, drawings, and much, much more. Kami keeps you teaching and learning

10. GOOGLE INPUT TOOLS

Download from Chrome Store - https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/google-input-tools/mclkkofklkfljcocdinagocijmpgbhab

How to use - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwODzmWHX8s

➢ Input Tools lets you type in the language of your choice.

➢ The Google Input Tools extension provides virtual keyboards for over 90 languages, full IMEs or direct transliteration for over 30 different scripts, and handwriting input for over 40 languages.

There are many more like olabs, geogebra etc which can be used in the class room.

Advantages of blended learning

➢ As part of learning is done through ICT, online or offline mode so teachers and students get more time in the classroom for creative and cooperative exercise.

➢ Students gain advantage of online learning without losing social interaction element and human touch of traditional teaching'

➢ It provides more scope for communication. Communication cycle is completed in blended learning which is not possible if we follow only traditional approach

➢ Students become more techno savvy and they gain enhanced digital fluency

➢ Students have more strengthened professionalism as they develop qualities like self-motivation, self-responsibility, discipline

Conclusion

Replacing synchronous with asynchronous frees up time for you to devote to learning development for that topic. Asynchronous activities develop independent learning and agency in students. Imagine you're at the start of the year. Begin with pushing small parts of content and activities into asynchronous mode. You can increase the level of complexity as you move ahead in the year. This way students take onus for their learning and self-study. Remedial or enrichment activities can be planned and executed separately, simplify content language, simplify instruction language, provide dual language of instruction by inserting audio in regional languages to ensure learning is within reach, and you can plan extra classes too. Engagement of students is varied and not predictable. Teacher can plan the lesson plan well in advance with the help of these tools discussed. You may see more and more students switching their Audio video on, interacting with each other and the teachers, etc.

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