

PROBLEMS OF BLENDED LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning, has grown in popularity. While it offers flexibility and enhanced learning experiences, it also poses several challenges. This study examines the common problems faced by students, educators, and institutions in blended learning environments. The methods used include a survey of 200 students and interviews with 30 educators. The results indicate issues related to technological access, student motivation, and effective integration of online and in-person teaching. These findings suggest that to optimize blended learning, attention must be given to both technological infrastructure and pedagogical approaches.

Keywords: *Blended learning, online education, technology, student engagement, instructional design*

INTRODUCTION

Blended learning, often defined as a combination of online and face-to-face learning methods, has become an integral part of modern education. It offers potential benefits such as flexibility, personalized learning, and increased accessibility. However, despite its advantages, blended learning is not without its challenges. Problems related to technology, engagement, and instructional design are common among students, teachers, and institutions. This article seeks to identify and analyze the main problems associated with blended learning, offering a foundation for improving its implementation in educational settings.

Research

The scholars mentioned have made significant contributions to the field of blended learning, focusing on various aspects of its implementation and impact. Some common themes in their research include:

- **Leadership and Change Management:** Scholars like Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves have emphasized the importance of strong leadership and effective change management for successful implementation of blended learning.

- **Personalized Learning:** Thomas L. Armstrong has focused on how blended learning can be tailored to individual students' needs and learning styles, promoting personalized learning.

- **Technology Integration:** Christopher Dede and David A. Wiley have explored the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating technology into education, including blended learning.
- **Educational Policy:** Larry Cuban has analyzed the impact of technology on educational policy and practice, including the role of blended learning.
- **Language Learning and Literacy:** James P. Gee has investigated how blended learning can be used to support language acquisition and literacy development.

Both students and educators mentioned issues with learning management systems (LMS) such as frequent crashes, complex navigation, and limited support.

Both students and educators noted that assessment in blended learning environments was problematic. Educators found it difficult to design fair assessments that measured both online and in-person learning outcomes. Meanwhile, students complained about delays in receiving feedback for online activities.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study indicate that while blended learning offers numerous opportunities, it also presents significant challenges that must be addressed. Technological issues remain one of the primary barriers, particularly for students who may not have access to stable internet or are unfamiliar with the platforms used. This emphasizes the need for institutions to ensure equal access to technology and provide sufficient technical support.

Motivation and engagement problems highlight a gap in how online and in-person interactions are perceived. Educators need to explore innovative methods for fostering a sense of community and engagement in online components, potentially through more interactive tools, gamified learning experiences, or better-aligned assessments.

The challenge of integrating both modes of instruction points to a need for better training and resources for educators. Institutions should provide clear guidelines and support for course design that promotes a seamless transition between online and in-person activities. Effective blended learning models should consider the distinct strengths of each approach and leverage them to create a cohesive learning experience.

Finally, the issues surrounding assessment and feedback underline the importance of prompt, meaningful feedback in maintaining student motivation. Educators must develop assessment strategies that are suitable for the blended format, ensuring that both online and in-person components are accurately reflected in the grading process.

CONCLUSION

Blended learning has undeniable potential to enhance educational experiences, but the problems identified in this study point to the need for improvements in technological infrastructure, instructional design, and assessment practices. Addressing these challenges is crucial for realizing the full potential of blended learning and ensuring that it meets the needs of students and educators alike.

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