HYBRID LEARNING: NEW PATHWAY FOR MIXING ONLINE AND OFFLINE LEARNING

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Abstract

The educational structure at present is in an evolving stage and to meet the upcoming challenges of development and for providing the necessities, we must try to accept new technologies and explore new paths to reach the goal of quality educational opportunities. To compete with the current situation, education system needs to embrace changes in technology developments. Even the students and teachers are in a state of dual mind when they are thinking about the technology incorporation. The traditional mode of face-to-face teaching despite of its few shortcomings provides a much-needed human touch to the teaching learning process.. Traditional face to face interaction meets the affective objectives along with cognitive and psychomotor which helps in developing a strong value system. Traditional mode of teaching helps greatly in developing social skills among the taught. During this pandemic like Covid 19, students are missing the physical presence of teachers and peer. The necessity of the combination of both face-to-face and online learning raised there. The unpredicted outbreak of the pandemic calls for the importance and need of the technological involvement in the field of education. To deal with the lack of student–instructor face-to-face contact that arises in online learning, a new learning modality known as hybrid learning or blended learning has been introduced. The present study was intended to understand the term Hybrid Learning and its effectiveness.

Keywords: *Technology, Hybrid Learning , Blended Learning.*

Introduction

Technology plays a vital role in every facet of day-to-day life in mankind. Today a classroom without technology is unimaginable. Technology is at its peak in current century. To compete with the current situation, education system needs to embrace changes in technology developments. For accomplishing the necessary goal, our traditional way of education system must undergo a massive upgradation towards latest technological developments around education. Learning must be organized in such a

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way that learners can learn how to become architects of their own learning processes (UNESCO, 2003). It is the power of Information Technology which has created new and different types of learning communities in which students can share expertise, understanding and common values (Parsons & Ross, 2002).

Information Communication Technology widens the range of material that can be used in teaching and learning to include text, still and moving images and increases the variety of ways that the material can be used for whole class and individual learning **(Eggert, Meyvant & Allyson, 2008).** A substantial effort is needed to understand the underlying dynamics of teaching and learning principles of students of the recent time. **(Kanten & Ulker, 2013)**. The paradigm shift is from teacher dominated classroom practices to that of partnership between the teacher and the learners and their peers **(Singh, 2014).** Educational technology is not, and never will be, transformative on its own – it requires teachers who can integrate technology into the curriculum and use it to improve student learning. In other words, computers cannot replace teachers –teachers play a vital role to determine whether technology is used appropriately and effectively **(Carlson, 2002).** Present generation that are defined by their use of technology; has become an extension of their consciousness and they do not know a world without it. The future of education will find no room to ignore the utilization of technology since it may be the best platform to empower learning in an age that is integrating technology as way of life.

The unpredicted outbreak of the pandemic (Covid-19) calls for the importance and need of the technological involvement in the field of education. The Covid-19 pandemic has sparked a global realization that our current way of life does not work. One such critical area, where the need for change has become evident, is education. The effects of the corona virus and there by its preventive measures, has influenced the life of students, teachers, and of parents. The course of learning and the way curriculums are taught may change. Aspects that were once considered fundamental to education may be revised to largely accommodate life skills of the future. Aside from the disruption faced due to the novel corona virus, education in the developing world has experienced some major changes. Yet, even in the face of rapid innovation, we have yet to shift the way in which we impart education. Learning is the acquisition of knowledge; however, it does not have to solely occur through age-old methods that do not utilize the highest potential of the brain. Instead of being taught, the students can be

given an experience that influences their learning. Adapting technology in the classroom improves engagement, knowledge retention, encourages individual learning, collaboration and students can learn useful life skills through technology.

Approaches like Hybrid (Blended) and Online learning with a greater implementation of technology will power the future of education in Schools. In the face of a crippling pandemic, technology has emerged as a major life saver. For education, that means creating content and delivery systems that harness and utilize technology to its fullest. Perhaps, education may become more flexible and accessible, relinquishing its over- reliance on rigid structures that we currently consider necessary. *Hybrid learning* has become a common practice that brings together traditional and modern technology-based teaching procedures to achieve in-depth learning **(Yehuda et al.,2015).**To deal with the lack of student–instructor face-to-face contact that arises in online learning, a new learning modality known as hybrid learning or blended learning has been introduced. **Dodero, Fernandez and Sanz (2003)** conclude that hybrid learning encourages more student participation, when compared with pure virtual online learning. Concurrently, traditional face-to-face courses are increasingly using the Internet to support some course activities. The pure online course where the instructor is absent physically may prove to be non-beneficial to students, particularly to those who are used to a traditional instructional approach **(Awadh, Al-Qahtani & Higgins, 2012)**.

Need and Significance of the Study

The biggest challenge a teacher facing at the technological era is to make latest innovative strategy-based teaching method. For making classroom interaction effective, the necessary thing is to implement the creative ways of teaching method as the situation demands. Creative teaching method requires the stimulated and activated classroom interaction, which needs the knowledge of latest technological innovations. This must be taken to change the traditional way of teaching method to latest accepted one. It is needed to get start to combine with the emerging digital technology for teaching and learning to fulfil the changing needs of the future. Thus, one can make positive impact on learning in the digital world. There has been an expanding requirement to change and improve the teaching learning environment so that students can be prepared to make adjustment in the competitive world **(Yam et al., 2002)**. In the research conducted by **UNICEF(2014)** on demand for education innovation, it

stressed on the use of interactive and engaging teaching methods, create an occasion for learner to get more practical and innovative learning, provide righteous environment to learn computer and technology skills. For this, there is a great need of changing the focus from traditional teaching and learning methods to some innovative teaching-learning methods such as online learning or e-learning, hybrid or blended learning, cooperative learning etc. Online learning and hybrid learning are the brand-new methods in educational field.

With the onset and proliferation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), there arises a demand of technology inclusion in education system. Today students are not acting like mere audience to receive the information, but they are like active participants who are ready to communicate with peer group and teachers.The rapid emergence of technological innovations has had a huge impact on the possibilities for learning in the distributed learning environment. The widespread adoption and availability of digital learning technologies has led to increased levels of integration of online learning elements into the traditional face to face learning experience. Advances in technologies have explored the way to deliver instruction to learners in remote locations. Due to web enhanced communication systems and newer formats of media, various innovative instructional methods have provided learning solutions meeting the diverse needs of instructors and learners in schools.

This pandemic has made all the educational institutions across the world to adopt teaching online. Courses are conducted online, examinations are conducted online, assignments are submitted through email. For countries like India, this is good opportunity to strengthen the internet connectivity across rural India. Every village and towns in India should be digitally connected for better interaction between the students and teachers.

With the rising population and newer inventions in the field of education, the instructional methods adopted has been moved from basic online approach towards a combination of online and face-to-face approach. Hybrid learning moves ahead of obstacles of time, space, and culture and has generated more and better opportunities for learners and instructors. Research of **University of Central Florida (UCF, 2013)** has found that hybrid courses have the capacity to increase students' learning outcomes. Students taught in a hybrid-learning environment composed of online and traditional instruction performed task with 30 % more accuracy and 41 % faster than

the online only group **(Martyn, 2003).**Therefore, it is necessary to understand how to create effective hybrid learning experiences that incorporate both face to face and computer-mediated (CM) elements. Hybrid learning allows the instructional designer the opportunity to utilize the strengths of instructional media with the efficacy of the instructional components. A major concern in adopting the new technologies is whether educators utilize new technologies for the convenience and efficiency in the delivery of educational content. Newer ways to make hybrid by combining traditional instruction with technology mediated instructional methods have emerged to meet the diverse needs of learner satisfaction and improve their learning levels. Hybrid learning provides more personalized training experience and reduces training costs. Therefore, it is imperative to create effective Hybrid learning experiences that incorporate both face to face and online learning elements.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the concept of Hybrid Learning and its effectiveness
2. To adopt latest innovative Hybrid Learning Strategies which can facilitate teaching -learning during the pandemic era situation.

Theoretical Overview

The educational structure at present is in an evolving stage. To meet the upcoming challenges of development and for providing the necessities we must try to accept new technologies and exploring new paths to reach the goal of quality educational opportunities. The technological, financial and facility wise constraints are the factors which does not allow to leave the traditional modes of knowledge transfer. Even the students and teachers are in a state of dual mind when they are thinking about the technology incorporation. The traditional mode of face-to-face teaching despite of its few shortcomings provides a much-needed human touch to the teaching learning process. Personality and behaviour of the teachers immensely influences the blooming personality of the students.

Traditional face to face interaction meets the affective objectives along with cognitive and psychomotor which helps in developing a strong value system. Traditional mode of teaching helps greatly in developing social skills in kids. During this pandemic like Covid 19, students are missing the physical presence of teachers and peer group students. Students learn not only from the boundaries of the classroom but also from their peer group interactions, playground, canteen and so on. All this is necessary for an overall personality development. The necessity of the combination of

both face-to-face and online learning raised there. We are living in an era where preferences are given to technology so the teachers and students must be well-equipped for the ICT based classrooms. For getting the physical meetings with the kids, it is necessary to adopt face-to-face teaching also. So, the combination of both the methods will work out fruitfully. Hybrid Learning is a suitable method for mixing both online and offline teaching methods.

Hybrid Learning

Hybrid learning is known as a mixed mode of instruction, combining both face-to-face instruction and pure online learning. Hybrid learning means any format of learning combining dynamically both technology and human components to maximize respective advantages, but excluding the passive co-presence of both **(Park, 2000)**. Hybrid learning offers half of the class sessions on-campus, while the other half online. Systematic planning is needed to ensure the proper working of hybrid models. Many people tend to interchange "**hybrid**" and "**blended**" however they are different. The difference mainly focused on the proportion of face-to-face and online sessions in each course. In blended course, more content delivered in the traditional offline mode and the rest in online mode whereas in Hybrid, equal balance is kept in both online and offline. Thus, the concept of hybrid learning refers to the blend of various instructional strategies which incorporates face-to-face learning and distance learning by utilizing technology to boost the learning process. Educators could ultimately create learning experiences to minimize the shortcomings of, or at least to complement, traditional classroom teaching" **(International Conference on Hybrid Learning, 2011)**. Hybrid learning course model originally comprises face-to-face classroom interaction and online computer assisted communication **(Mitchell & Honore, 2007).** The hybrid mode of face-to-face interaction and computer assisted teaching and learning come in different terms. According to **Smith and Kurthen (2007)**, the computer assisted instructions include "web-enhanced", "hybrid" and "fully online". Web-enhanced courses are focused on face-to-face interaction, with online course outlines and course announcements whereas hybrid courses are focused on e-learning activities, including online content and synchronous or asynchronous discussions. Online courses usually refer to distance education through e-learning or online media. **Young (2002)** defined hybrid learning as a developing mode of instruction where online education is mixed with conventional classroom-based instruction. To impart better learning, the possible way is to combine the best features of both online and face to face method of instruction.

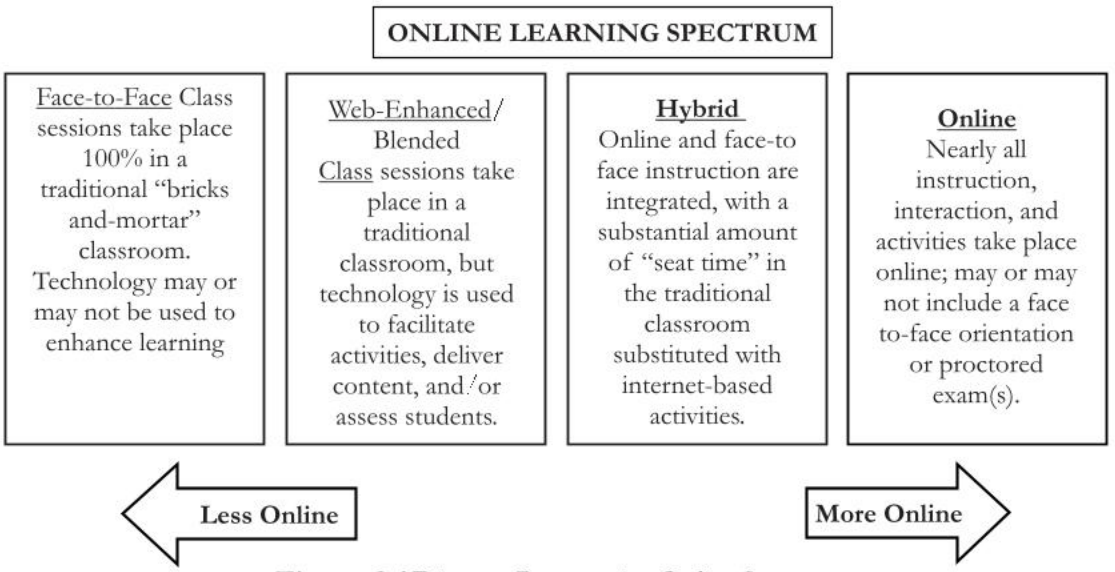

Figure 2.1*Diagram Representing Online Spectrum*

Review of Related Literature

For any Investigator, the study of literature related to their field of investigation is essential. After having referred several journals, periodicals, books, abstracts, web resources, Investigator had collected a few studies related to the study. Hence the present study may be considered as one that builds up on a sound background.

After reviewing the literature available and citing the research studies, the major findings that have emerged regarding hybrid learning and achievement are summarized below: **Utami (2018),Ceylan and Kesici (2017)**, **Josephine and Sreekala, E (2016)**, **Lacatan (2013)and Fakhir (2015)**, termed Blended or Hybrid learning strategy as a highly effective instructional strategy. **Chitra and Singaravelu (2016)** revealed that Blended learning is more effective than other traditional methods in learning Chemistry at standard IX and **Akhila (2013)** revealed that Blended Learning is effective for learning physics of secondary school students. **Adidoye (2015) and Dikmenli and Unaldi (2013)** showed that the hybrid teaching method had a statistically significant influence on the achievement of the students in geography and their attitudes towards the geography course contrasted to face-to-face expository method. **Akgunduz and Akinoglu (2016)** Krishnan **(2015), Wai and Seng (2015)** and **Cobanoglu and Yurdakul (2014)** revealed the fact that hybrid learning is more effective than conventional method in enhancing science process skills, self-directed learning skills and science achievement among secondary school students more

significantly than the control group. **Nair (2014)** and **Yapici and Akbayin (2012)** revealed that the hybrid learning model contributed more to the student's achievement in Biology than traditional teaching method. **Wichadee (2014)** indicated a positive correlation between achievement in English language course and hybrid learning technique. **Ismail et al. (2014)Obiedat et al. (2014) Almasaeid (2014)and Kuo et al. (2012)**, **Vanicharaoenchai and Tosulkaew (2010)Kumar (2010) and Sivasankar (2010)** proved that there was a significant and positive influence of hybrid learning on academic achievement.

Hung et al. (2016) concluded from the study that Hybrid Learning Style Identification (HLSI) technique had a positive effect on the student's learning performance. **Nakamori et al. (2016)** indicated us that access, flexibility, cost effectiveness, improving interaction, formation of teacher network and involvement of administrators, instructors and school leaders were elements which caused the success of blended learning model. **McCullen and Childers (2016)** commended retention of learned facts. **Alruwaih (2015)** indicated that HLI approach might be a superior option for undergraduate students with learning of physical education course. **Cracraft (2015)** showed that there was not a significant change in students' achievement when a hybrid learning model is added in the classroom. **Gambari et al. (2017)** revealed that the performance of undergraduates was enhanced when they are exposed to Blended learning mode of instruction. **Gyamfi and Gyaase (2015)** recommended the Improvement in ICT infrastructure and capacity building for lecturers to adopt blended learning approach. **Ghahari and Ameri-Golestan (2014)** indicated that participants of the Hybrid Learning group significantly outpaced the ones in the Classroom Learning group in their writing performances. **Wu et al. (2014) and Xin et al. (2014)** revealed that individual characteristics, web-facilitated learning technological factors, and training experience might have a significant influence on instructors in implementing cloud-based hybrid learning into their courses in vocational education. **Zhang and Zhu (2017)** concluded from their research that MOODLE is the most popular online tool for blended learning. **Shams (2013)** observed that the autonomy level and vocabulary knowledge of the participant's improved after attending the Hybrid learning course.

All research works mentioned here came on a common agreement that hybrid or blended learning is an effective strategy with broad capabilities. This fact had encouraged the Investigator to study on the topic Hybrid Learning.

Educational Implications of the Study

Any research endeavour realizes its goal only if it has implications in the concerned field of research. The present study possesses importance from lower primary to the higher level and the teacher community at large. The findings of the study revealed the effectiveness of the implementation of Hybrid Learning in various learning outcomes of learners.

- Hybrid Learning is not fully a technology dependent environment. Here, the teacher gets adequate opportunities to meet students directly and combine abundant e-resources available in the web world with his or her class. This will ensure the balance of human touch and technical punch.
- Cross media navigation is an integral part of Hybrid Learning. This will make the learners transform the abstract ideas into concrete learning to enable the teacher to cover the syllabus in time.
- Along with teachers, learners are also having due importance to become motivated online learners and self-regulated learners to attain mastery in learning.
- Through Hybrid Learning, Students get opportunities to practice works at their own pace under the supervision of a teacher and this will help them to develop their technological skills.
- Hybrid Learning helps teachers to deliver the content in an effective way, thereby helping learners to understand the content area thoroughly.
- Hybrid Learning demands more effort from the teachers to update with the latest technological innovations to improve their classroom interactions.
- Hybrid Learning equips student teachers with skills needed for the effective use of technological innovations in teaching and learning.

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