

# A Review of Blended Learning for Education

Abd Rahman Ismail<sup>1</sup>, Tengku Shahrom Tengku Shahdan<sup>2</sup>, Astri Yulia<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sekolah Kebangsaan Putrajaya Presint 16(1), Putrajaya, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, University of Selangor (UNISEL).Malaysia

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to look at the literature review on Blended Learning. In accordance with the development of learning technology, pedagogy is also growing. Many countries through higher education and schools have implemented this Blended Learning pedagogy. Blended Learning is a combination of two teaching pedagogies which are traditional face to face and E-Learning. This paper also provides the breakdown of both modes of study to determine whether the learning is under Blended Learning or not. This study also states the Blended Learning characteristics to be observed by researchers. The main characteristics are listed as a guideline to practitioners in order to implement Blended Learning in educational practices.*

**Keywords:** blended learning, hybrid learning, higher education, characteristic.

## Introduction

Blended Learning (B-Learning) is now a 21st century learning mode. Higher education such as universities and colleges and even schools have started to apply this approach in their respective subjects. B-Learning has been considered an effective approach of delivering learning content as it is simple and flexible. B-Learning is not a new technology but rather a combination of two existing technologies in learning something. It is considered more effective as it combines two popular pedagogical modes namely traditional face-to-face and E-Learning with multimedia elements. Students in addition to learning in a controlled compound such as the classroom (face-to-face with teachers), they also have the freedom in choosing their learning experiences, such as the time and place, to which they can choose themselves. This can create interest, increase motivation and raise self-esteem for students of all levels. For example, for excellent students (higher than average performers), B-Learning can be a platform that can speed up their achievements because they do not have to wait and follow the topics that they have already mastered. Likewise, for weak students, B-Learning is a catalyst to motivate them to learn so that they can continue learning according to their own path, pace and ability without feeling inferior just because they are slower than their peers.

There is a country that puts B-Learning as one of the mandatory methods of teaching in the classroom to provide students with new learning strategies and methods as well as ensuring the education system itself is in line with the current changes in education.

## Blended Learning

B-Learning or sometimes called hybrid learning, mix mode or distributed learning is a combination of two popular approaches of learning; face to face learning and online learning. Pete Sharma (2010) divides the B-Learning definition into the 3 most popular groups of pedagogy, namely (1) face to face and online teaching (2) incorporation of technology, and (3) combination of methodology (Sharma, 2010). However, these three definitions have similarities in their attributes which is face to face and e-learning. According to Shae (2007) in Sloan-C Workshop held in 2005, B-Learning, defined, should include two main components; firstly, all courses offered should have online and face-to-face integration without compromising quality issues and both part time / face-to-face meeting times are replaced with online activities. There is a suggestion that the B-Learning approach should have between 30 to 79 percent of its contents online (Elaine Allen, 2007), while content with 80% and above of online materials is considered online learning. For those who have 1 to 29% of online content is considered to be using ICT as a tool. According to a data study by Zhou et al (2005), it has been shown that the effectiveness between online and face to face are at least at the same level (Vignare, 2007). This study shows that B-Learning can be as good as the face to face approach in providing quality learning experiences and increasing performance. There are a lot of reported studies that show B-Learning has a higher level of effectiveness in comparison to other methods; studies such as Boyle, Bradley, Chalk, Jones & Pickard, 2003; Cottrell & Robinson, 2003; Dowling, Godfrey & Gyles, 2003 (Vignare, 2007). The summary is in Table 1:

**Table 1: Distribution of electronic content**

PERCENTAGE OF ONLINE CONTENT	CATEGORY
1 – 29 %	ICT as a tool
30 -79%	Blended Learning
80% AND ABOVE	Online learning

Manjot Kaur in her paper has categorized the definition of B-Learning into five main groups (Kaur, 2013). It is presented in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Multiple Blended Learning Definition**

Category	Definition	Original Author
<b>Holistic Perspective</b>	Delivery of instruction by multiple media	Holden & Westfall, 2006
<b>Educational Perspective</b>	Integration of online and face to face	Laster, 2005
<b>Pragmatic Perspective</b>	Teaching in classroom and distance	Wikipedia, 2009
<b>Corporate Training Perspective</b>	The use of multiple instructional media	Wexler, 2008
<b>Chief Learning Officer (CLO) Perspective</b>	Execute learning by integrating multiple modalities	Peter, 2009

### B-learning's main characteristics

Below are the main B-learning characteristics according to Lalita and Kiran Lata Dagwal (2017), supported by some other opinions in their respective studies in relation to B-learning. These characteristics are chosen to be listed out as it is more comprehensive and easier to understand whilst discussing B-learning as a teaching approach in the classroom. The characteristics are as follows:

- Students have a choice of two modes
- Skilled instructors in both modes
- Students have face-to-face and virtual interactions
- Students have hands-on experience on new technology at school level
- Students can practice according to their own ability
- Development of a more comprehensive student personality
- Physical skills of students are more focused
- Students have sufficient and extensive exposure to the content of their lessons
- Human element is taken into account
- Cross-cultural and diverse approaches in delivering lesson content
- Focus on students
- Role of teachers are diversified
- Students build knowledge rather than just accepting knowledge

### Blended Learning impact for education

The UNESCO has outlined a guide to be reached by the countries member through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) program. Education is under the SDG4 (Ping & Libing, 2017), Education 2030, which underlines technology as fundamental for the development of 21st century education. Among the significant approaches in 21st century pedagogy is B-learning. There are many

studies that show B-learning give students a positive impact. According to Meltem Eryilmaz (2015), studying Turkish students taking the 'Introduction to Computer', there is a significant rise in students' perception on the effectiveness of B-Learning as opposed to traditional methods or E-learning where they are solely required to understand the topics learned. The perception that B-learning is only appropriate in urban areas alone is not accurate. This is because studies conducted by the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (INACOL, 2014) show that rural teachers agree that B-Learning is beneficial to both teachers and students. These rural teachers stated they had more time to focus on specific topics and had more time to guide their students. INACOL's findings are also supported by other studies like the ones by Abeer Abdalhalim Albhnsawy and Professor Ahmed Mahmoud Aliweh (Albhnsawy & Aliweh, 2016) on teacher trainees who were still in training. This finding shows that B-Learning can effectively improve the quality and capabilities of trainees in their willingness to become real teachers when they get out to work after completing their training.

According to Lalima and Kiran Lata Dangwal (2017), the B-learning approach which has been implemented in India have had several advantages namely (1) most teaching sessions can be made online or offline with the help of ICT with students and teachers having more time to interact for the purpose of deepening the topic more effectively; (2) students still have face-to-face social interactions as B-Learning combines both teaching modes; (3) the communication cycle (between teacher and students) will be more thorough, effective and clear in comparison to traditional methods where it can difficult in some situations. Hence, technology facilitates and complements any deficiencies inherent in the traditional way of communication; (4) students will be more aware of technological changes hence better preparation in dealing with the world of work; (5) students will become more skilled and professional because with the B-learning mode, students are more motivated and self-confident and have directed collaborative skills; (6) the content of the lessons presented are easier to update as needed and easy to have it conveyed to students.

According to Lan Umek et al (2017) a deeper study conducted at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia found a strong connection between B-learning and student performances (Umek, Tomazevic, & Kerzic, 2017). This finding was also supported by Amosa Asiaka Gambari, Ahmed Tajuddeen Shittu, O. Olufanmilola Ogunlade, and Olurotimi Rufus Osunlade (2017). They found in their study that there is a significant impact on student progress and achievement when B-learning approaches are used in universities. However, for gender differences it does not show any significant imperative evidence of students' achievements. The study also found that teachers' attitude towards computer, the effectiveness of computer usage by teachers and the school environment had a direct impact on the implementation of B-Learning (Khung Teck, Mohammad Sahandri Ghani Hamzah, & Yeop, 2016). This means that lack in any of the factors will affect the effectiveness of implementation of B-Learning in schools. The higher the optimism of the teacher/s towards the computer, the better is the implementation of B-Learning in the organization. These three factors should be at a good level to have an optimal impact on the level of acceptance and implementation of B-Learning at schools or organizations.

In conclusion, B-learning not only gives positive impact to students but also to teachers / instructors. The benefits of this approach do not only affect schools but also higher education institutions, which have also shown positive findings through use of this approach. Even more convincingly, B-learning not only focuses on urban areas but also in rural areas, which have successfully show significant changes in positive behaviour.

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### **Corresponding Author**

Tengku Shahrom Tengku Shahdan  
Faculty of Education and Social Sciences  
University of Selangor (UNISEL)  
Jalan Timur Tambahan  
45600 Bestari Jaya  
Selangor. Malaysia  
[drtengku@unisel.edu.my](mailto:drtengku@unisel.edu.my)

Astri Yulia  
Faculty of Education and Social Sciences  
University of Selangor (UNISEL)  
Jalan Timur Tambahan  
45600 Bestari Jaya  
Selangor. Malaysia  
[dr.astri@unisel.edu.my](mailto:dr.astri@unisel.edu.my)