



The role of instructor in classroom management for blended learning

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Abstract

The study was designed to explore certain determinants of instructor effectiveness regarding blended learning. A sample of five hundred students of Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad participated in the study. The researcher developed a questionnaire to seek the perceptions of the students on certain competencies/skills for better classroom management besides their good personal traits. The collected data was entered into SPSS and the results were found using descriptive statistics. The results showed that the instructors must be enriched with good 'personality traits' for face to face interaction with the students. Next for web based online learning, creating a data driven environment was highly ranked followed by setting higher expectations, teaching meta cognitive & self regulation skills, planning off line activities, making learning relevant & interesting, encouraging online discussion, providing positive feedback to students and celebrating success. On the basis of findings, some potent recommendations were made to see the instructors more effective in this regard.

Keywords: blended learning, student, classroom management, instructor, personality traits, instructional skills, creating a data driven environment, instructional ratings

Introduction

Blended Learning is an easy and attractive phenomenon of the present era to meet the educational needs of the students. Here we find the authentic answer of each and every question in the blended learning environment. It is a beautiful combination of online and offline activities being performed with the help of an instructor in a classroom. It may be highly useful as the student is more satisfied and interested when face to face classroom practices are blended with computer mediated activities. Now the information and communication technologies are seen as revolution transforming the teaching-learning process. This transformation is due to the emergence and convergence of modern digital technologies. The technologies tend to solve our problems regarding the human needs in a more productive way (Rohrer, 2010) [1,3]. Through information technology a lot of activities are better done, like better education, better teaching and learning, improved means of communication and service delivery etc. Information and communication technologies cover broad range of activities and equipments including all the tools, applications and information, which are available and accessible via computers. Information technology in its fully convergent form compasses various forms of information delivery system such as television, radio, newspapers, books, computer and internet in one integrated environment.

It has been observed that a single mode of instructional delivery system may not provide sufficient choices, engagement, social contact, relevance and environment needed to facilitate booming learning and presentation (Heui, 2005; Dean, 2015) [5]. That is why organization and institutions continue to explore strategies for effective learning for improved performance in a joyful environment. In doing

this, with bold brainstorming and seeing the live world, we may find better pedagogical skills and educational technologies to accelerate student interest teacher effectiveness. Our instructors must employ different teaching strategies and pedagogical skills blended with their personality traits to develop the interest of students enabling them to cover the contents so easily (Frieson, 2015; Harvey, 2016; Ansar, 2012; Bonk, 2016; Caner, 2010) [10, 1, 2, 3].

Blended learning combines multiple delivery media that are designed to complement each other and promote learning through online and offline activities. Blended learning is learning systems that combine face-to-face instruction with computer mediated instruction. Currently, the use of the term blended learning mostly involves combining Internet and digital media with established classroom forms that require the physical co-presence of teacher and students. Blended learning, also known as hybrid learning is just defined as a combination of electronic learning and the traditional face-to-face learning or instructor-led training (ILT), where the students complete their courses and assignments in a data driven environment under the supervision of an instructor. Blended learning is a beautiful combination of face-to-face (offline) and online practices. Therefore, the online activities and oral communication are blended to have a unique, attractive and joyful system conducive to teaching and learning process. The accessibility of telecommunication technology such as worldwide web and cell phone services has produced a increasing interest in the students towards blended learning in our classroom (Feldman, 2007; Garrison, 2013; Chui, 2014) [6, 8, 4].

In the blended learning classroom, the student may acquire all the required details to satisfy him in an environment so

conducive to student retention. It is the duty of organizations and instructors to provide sufficient covering the syllabus also having the solution and answers of some problems as an example to push the students to solve exercises with self-confidence. The value of self-paced learning is not only that it can reach everyone at anytime and anywhere, but that it can teach the learner appropriately, providing the right skills at the right time. Live e-learning takes place in a virtual classroom at a scheduled time at which learner undertakes to attend. This enables learners to collaborate with one another, share ideas, and ask questions in real time.

The self-paced learning and live e-learning facets of blended learning have bold properties as getting experts online, the best sources and fast access to information for quick reaction, ability to get what you need, when you need it, ability to connect students .

Technology alone is no surety to the success of the students. It requires the instructions of skilled teacher who leverage best of the technology and face to face coaching to reply any question that might arise from the students. Teachers have access to an astonishing amount of data for their students. It is the duty of teacher to select the content per according to the syllabus and recommended activities. Keeping the data organized, coherent and useful is the key to success in computer assisted learning. Setting higher expectations for the all students has a strong upshot on the student achievement. All students necessitate confidence and support to be successful in their learning and this is equally pragmatic for the students in blended learning programs. Setting higher expectation creates a friendly, responsive environment for both learners and teachers. Here the instructor may define studious rules, roles and responsibilities for the all students. It has been revealed from different research studies (Tanveer, 2018; Headman, 2017) ^[1] in blended learning courses, the students are engaged in online activities parallel by face to face activities. Enjoying the supervision of teachers in these offline activities, the students are more motivated and ready to face the challenges. Teaching meta-cognitive skills and self-regulation enables the student to question, monitor and explain his own success. Possessing these skills, monitor their own progress and set the goals to be achieved. Now they consider themselves as self-regulated and doing better than before. It is the classroom management that determines the teacher effectiveness besides the academic achievement of the students. To this end, a lot of effort should be tailored towards solving the classroom troubles. This clarifies the fact that management and instruction go simultaneously in the classroom. The teacher also directs and creates environment under which instructions and learning can take place successfully.

Teachers are the main focus of accountability in classroom as they are held responsible for instructional expertise in blended learning classroom. The students are the unique respondents to mark the instructional rating for their teacher in classroom. The students give the highest rating to the teachers from whom they learn the most (Graham, 2016) ^[2]. For his good rating, it is assumed that the instructor must possess the following personality traits

- Integrity
- Dominance

- Self-Satisfaction
- Gallantry
- Stress Tolerance
- Humor Orientation
- Attractive Looks

Possessing the good personality traits liked by the public makes you bold and self-excited to win their hearts. The individuals blessed with ever liked personal traits prove more dominant and effective in each field of their living life. It also influences positively towards the academic achievements of the students. In blended learning, information technology provides powerful learning tools that demand new skills and personal traits of the instructor. So it is imperative to explore certain instructional skills and personality traits of the instructor regarding his overall effectiveness in blended learning classroom.

Statement of the Problem

This study is necessitated need out of the felt need to see the instructors more effective in blended learning environment. Across the country, the instructors of Allama Iqbal Open University are busy to guide the students with the help of potent strategies in blended learning classroom. The main statement of the problem is 'how do the students perceive the importance and use of instructor's personality traits (face to face interaction) and his instructional/motivational strategies to manage the blended learning classroom?

Research Questions

The following research questions were generated to be answered parallel to the objectives of the study

- What is the level of importance of instructor's personality traits and motivational strategies as perceived by the students?
- What is the individual contribution of each of the seven personality traits towards the instructor effectiveness in blended learning environment?
- What is the joint contribution of the personality traits towards overall instructional rating of the instructor?

Research Methodology

Population and Sample of the Study

The target population of the study was all the students enrolled in graduation programs of AIOU. A sample of five hundred students (randomly selected) participated in the study.

Research Instrument

Two questionnaires were developed and administered on the sample parallel to the research questions of the study

- a) Questionnaire to measure seven personality traits (14-items) of the instructor
- b) Questionnaire to measure instructional/motivational strategies of the instructor (20- items) seeking the perceptions of students to what extent these strategies are useful for them in a blended learning classroom

Data Analysis

The collected data was entered into SPSS and the results were found by descriptive statistics, linear and multiple

regression analysis

Results and Interpretation

Research Question No.1 What is the level of importance of instructor’s personality traits and motivational strategies as perceived by the students?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for perceptions of the students regarding the importance/usefulness of instructional skills and Personality Traits N=500

Predictor	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
Creating a data driven environment	4.11	0.72	Very Important
Setting higher expectations	3.96	0.45	Fairly Important
Teaching meta-cognitive and self-regulation skills	3.67	0.31	Important
Planning off-line activities	3.55	0.39	Important
Making learning relevant and interesting	3.21	0.67	Important
Encouraging online discussions	3.15	0.52	Important
Providing positive feedback to students	2.99	0.41	Slightly Important
Celebrating Success	2.14	0.51	Slightly Important
Possessing better personality Traits	4.65	0.55	Very Important

Table 1 shows that the students consider all the instructional strategies/skills so important for their blended learning besides the personality traits of the instructor. Creating data driven environment and personality traits were marked very important towards the instructional effectiveness.

Research Question No. 2. What is the individual contribution of each of the seven personality traits towards the instructor effectiveness in blended learning environment?

Table 2: Linear Regression Analysis of the seven personal traits of the instructor with his overall effectiveness as perceived by the students

Model	Standardized coefficients β	R ²	significant
Self-Satisfaction	.445	0.198	.009*
Gallantry	.321	0.103	.005*
Integrity	.229	0.052	.000*
Dominance	.462	0.213	.000*
Attractive Looks	.412	0.169	.000*
Stress Tolerance	.512	0.262	.000*
Humor Orientation	.299	0.089	.001*

*significant p< 0.05

It is clear from the above table that all of the seven personality traits are the bold determinants (with significant predictive powers R²) of the overall effectiveness of the instructor. Here Self-Satisfaction, gallantry, integrity, dominance, attractive looks, stress tolerance and humor orientation of the instructor contributed 19% (R²= .198), 10% (R²= .103), 5% (R²= .052), 21% (R²=.213), 16% (R²=.169), 26% (R²=.262) and 8% (R²=.089) respectively to the variance of overall effectiveness of the instructor. It implies that the instructor must be enriched with these personality traits parallel to his instructional strategies in this regard.

Research Question No. 3: What is the joint contribution of the personality traits towards overall instructional rating of the instructor?

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis of all the SEVEN personality with the instructional effectiveness

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
1	.717	.512	.514

Table 3 shows that all the seven personality traits taken together accounted 51% (R²= .512) to the variance of instructional rating of the instructor. It means the personality traits is the dominant predictor of instructional effectiveness.

Conclusions

Based on the results of data analysis, it was concluded that holding the eight instructional skills, creating data driven environment for blended learning is very important as perceived by the students. ‘Setting higher expectation’ was shown as fairly important. Next four skills of the instructor, teaching meta-cognitive and self regulation practices, planning offline activities and making learning interesting were found important. Two instructional strategies ‘providing positive feedback’ and ‘celebrating success’ were marked as slightly important by the students. The students also opined that personality traits are very important to see the instructive more effective for face to face interaction with the students in classroom. Having the results of data analysis regarding the level of importance, it is concluded that there is dominant role of instructor in classroom for blended learning of the students regarding his instructional skills and personality traits. Next in regression analysis, all of the seven personal traits well determined the instructional effectiveness with significant predictive powers (R²). Here Self -Satisfaction, gallantry, integrity, dominance, attractive looks, stress tolerance and humor orientation of contributed 19%, 10%, 5%, 21%, 16%, 26% and 8% respectively to the variance of overall instructional effectiveness. Self tolerance proved to be best predictor of the teacher effectiveness followed by his dominance, self-satisfaction, attractive looks, gallantry, humor orientation and integrity. In multiple regression analysis, all of the seven personality traits jointly contributed 51% to the variance of instructional rating. It is easily revealed that personality is the best determinant of instructional effectiveness. Thus role of instructor regarding his pedagogical skills and personality traits is too important in classroom for blended learning.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the

findings of this study:

- The government should provide infrastructure and trained personnel in all universities of Pakistan to accelerate the blended learning activities.
- Allama Iqbal Open University (having more than eighty thousands students enrolled in different programs) should take potent measures by establishing blended learning centers in each district of Pakistan under the supervision of skilled instructors.
- University administration should establish computer labs in all study centers for web based learning besides traditional classroom activities.
- The instructor should concentrate on classroom management by creating a blended learning environment with his due interest and pleasure.
- The students should be provided content and data of blended learning program by setting higher expectation and threshold dynamism to pass the examinations.
- The instructor should teach meta-cognitive and self-regulation skills to students to make up their cognitive potential and self-efficacy.
- He should plan offline activities for better results to see the system more attractive and joyful in his living life.
- No extra work should be imposed on students by making learning relevant and interesting.
- The instructor should encourage online discussions as supplement for his instructional rating and professional excellence
- He should provide positive feedback to students well in time.
- The instructor must celebrate the success on his good rating by the student as well as impelling the students to do better than before.
- The instructor must be enriched with the most wanted personality likes like self satisfaction, integrity, dominance, attractive looks, gallantry, stress tolerance and good sense of humor.

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