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Blended Models of Online Learning in Post Graduate students in Management

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Abstract

"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." This paper talks about blended learning and its 6 models and looks at the advantages and disadvantages of them. It also talks about how blended learning can be adopted in post graduate learning in Management. The biggest advantage with blended learning is that it takes the best of both offline and online learning models. It is very flexible and the learner can learn at his/her own pace. It is a very flexible system which can be customised according to the needs of the individual. Most of the data collected is secondary data. The cost of administering blended learning is slightly less compared to the conventional style of education.

Introduction

Successful blended learning models often combine in-person and online elements for a comprehensive educational experience. The Rotation Model, Flipped Classroom, and Flex Model have shown efficacy. Rotation involves students moving between learning modalities, Flipped Classroom reverses traditional teaching methods, and Flex allows personalised, self-paced learning. Adaptive learning technology, multimedia resources, and continuous assessment enhance these models, catering to diverse learning styles and promoting student engagement.

To make this blended learning work we have to look at how these models can be adapted to the current post graduate students in Management. Because every organisation has different needs and resources, it's impossible to conclude that one blending learning model is outright preferable to another. It's up to Learning &Development (L&D) teams to draw upon their experience, Learning Management Services (LMS) metrics and Learner Feedback to choose a learning model that best fulfils the purpose of the organisation's training goals without overburdening trainers unnecessarily. And to look at how this can be adapted for post graduate learners in Management.

When using a blended learning model, keep in mind that its aim is to combine the strengths of both traditional and online learning methods in order to give your learners a more engaging learning experience. Through blended learning training, you'll take advantage of the best of both worlds, benefitting both learners and instructors. Blended learning models makes it simple to set up blended courses that contain any combination of face-to-face and online training components for post graduate learners in Management.

Keywords: Blended learning, blended learning models, Flipped model, Face to face driver model, Rotational model, Flex model, Enriched Virtual model, Online driver Model, advantages and disadvantages of these 6 models, best model for post graduate students in Management.

Face to face Driver Model

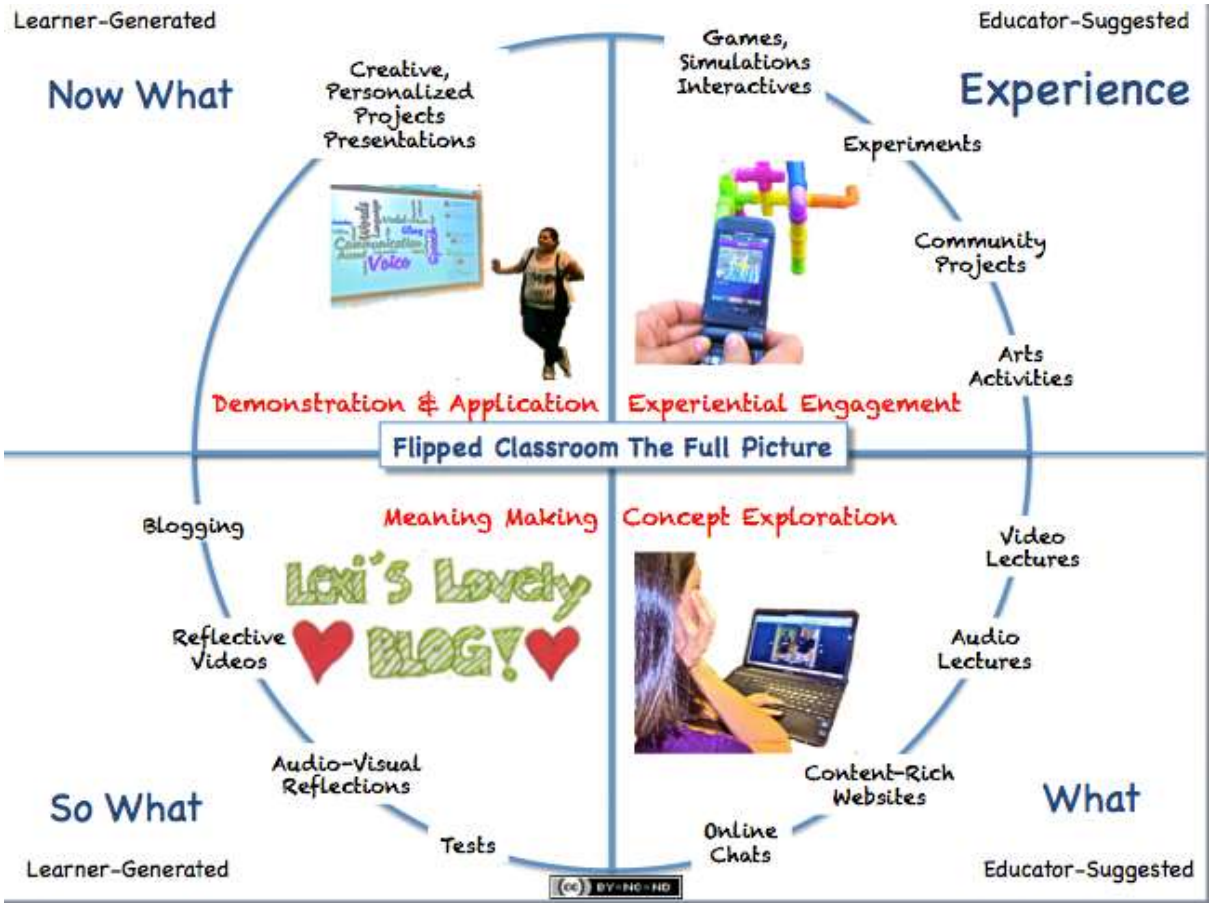
This model offers what is the most similar to a traditional classroom experience. Learners join a live webinar or meeting (like Zoom or Google Meet), receive live instruction, and at the conclusion of each session are given homework or assignments to be completed before the next session.[1]

Benefits and drawbacks of the face-to-face driver learning model

The face-to-face driver learning model obviously requires more instructor time and energy than some of the other models, but it can be extremely effective for learners who need more extrinsic motivation, or are earlier in their specific roles/career. Because the model mirrors a traditional classroom in many ways, it can also be a good option for those who are less technically adept.[2]

2.What is the flipped learning model?

The flipped model is similar to the face-to-face driver model discussed above, except that learners are provided with learning materials and resources (often distributed via an LMS) before each virtual classroom experience.[3]



Benefits and drawbacks of the flipped learning model

The flipped model is another option for a learning cohort that would benefit from active, live classroom instruction, and thus it also requires more instructor time and energy. What proponents of the flipped model appreciate, however, is that it has the potential to increase the level of preparedness and interaction among learners.[4]

3.What is the enriched virtual learning model?

This model allows learners to set the pace of their learning, and complete most of their coursework virtually. Learners are given the opportunity to attend webinars with the instructor at their convenience, but ultimately, it's the learner that determines how much of their learning includes live interaction with the instructor.[5]

Benefits and drawbacks of the enriched virtual learning model

The enriched virtual learning model can be great for self-motivated learners that appreciate autonomous learning. In having the option to interface with the instructor, they enjoy the balance between feeling supported, without feeling hindered by mandatory live instruction at a set date and time.[6]

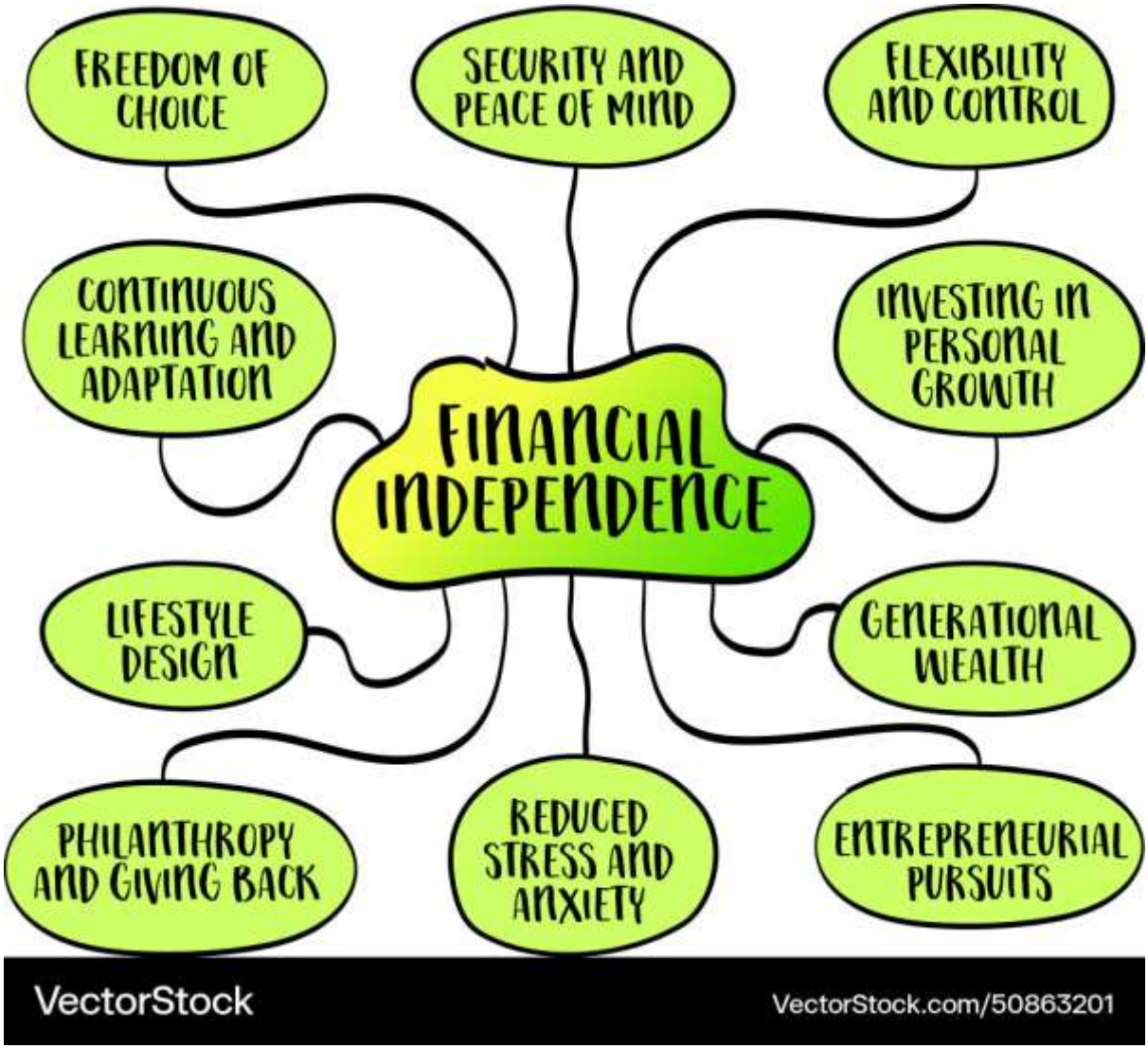
4.What is the flex learning model?

The flex learning model offers learners the opportunity to direct their learning according to what works best for them. They are able to jump between synchronous and asynchronous instruction, individual assignments, and even group learning. Instructors are available to answer questions and provide feedback, but it's up to each participant how and when they utilize instructor resources.[7]

With the flex model of blended learning, all of the education students receive is delivered through a computer. Students will typically come to a classroom where there are computers on offer for each individual. Because there is no set times when a lesson or lecture will begin, students are free to come and go as they please to complete their work. In other words, the computer equipment and any educational software that might be provided allows students to direct their own learning. Crucially, this will mean education runs at the pace of each student as an individual, despite the fact that they will often be in the same physical space as their classmates.[8]

In this sense, the flex model of blended learning is an up-to-date and digital version of what non-traditional learning environments have always offered. In such models, students may have historically had access to library resources and educational equipment as well as teaching staff, but they were under no obligation to attend formal lectures, practical demonstrations, or lessons. The flex model replicates this approach in a digital format. A teacher will still be present in the computer lab – or converted classroom – to assist students one-on-one and even to suggest which online resources might be appropriate. However, in this blended learning model, teachers do not stand up in front of a class to present, nor do they set work that is expected to be completed within a specific attendance timescale.[9]

Much of the educational content of a curriculum delivered by the flex model of blended learning will be online. This could include online learning resources, such as video presentations, documentaries, online quizzes, and even streamed educational events from elsewhere in the world. However, the flex model does not need to be solely delivered via online resources. If there is no internet connection at the place of education, then educational resources can still be delivered through computers over the school's local area network – perhaps from a central server or from the teacher's own computer terminal. The current reliance on online resources reflects the simple fact that there are so many to choose from that this assists the student-led approach much better in most settings.[10]



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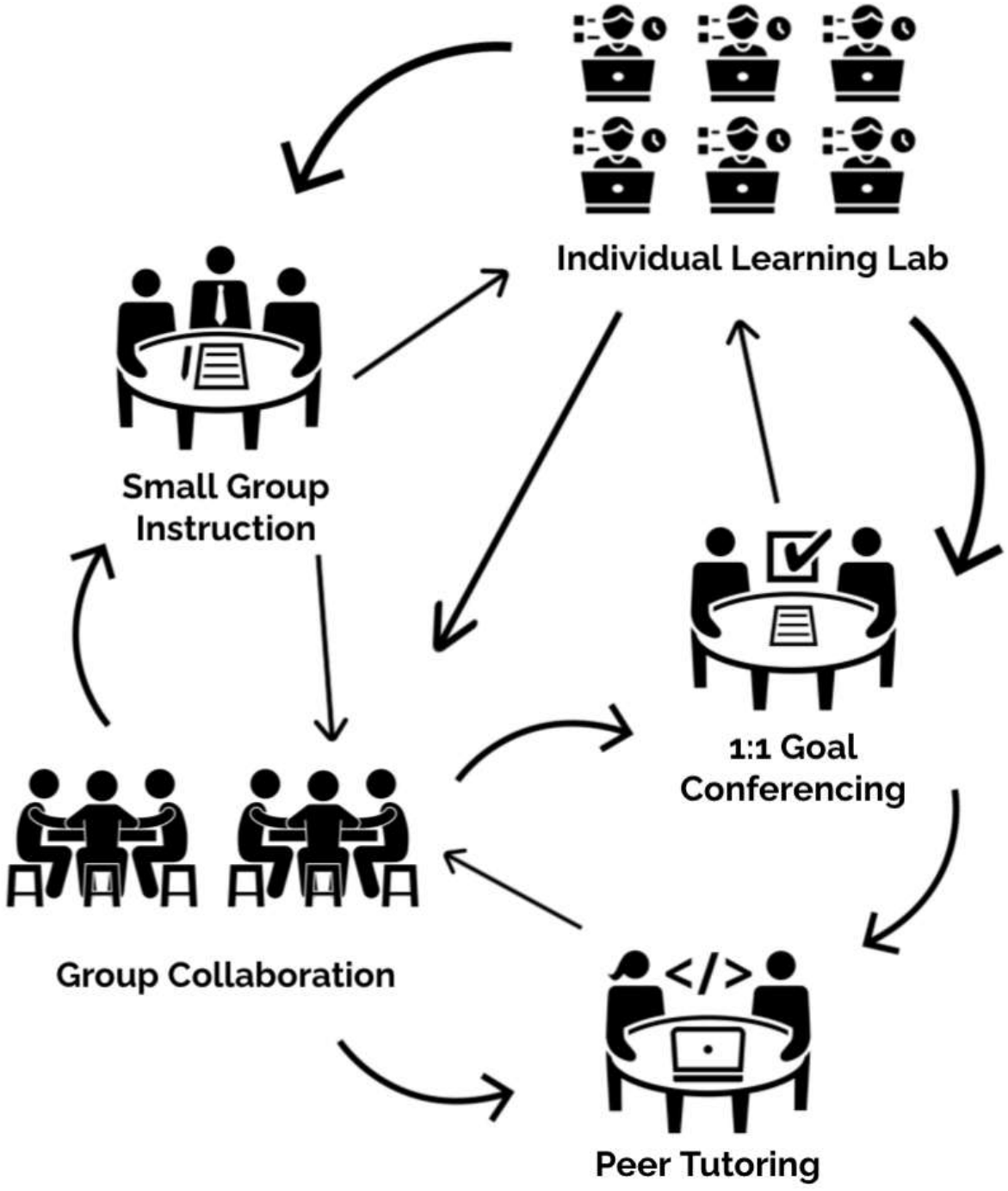
Benefits and drawbacks of the flex learning model

The flex learning model is great for self-motivated learners who understand (or are willing to experiment with) how different instructional methods impact their learning. One downside to this, however, is that instructors must be "on call" (although much of this time is likely not spent engaging in active instruction). One other potential downside is that unmotivated learners may simply stick with the method of instruction that is most familiar to them, or seems the easiest or fastest, rather than embracing the personalisation this learning model offers.[12]

5.What is the rotation learning model?

The rotation learning model is something of a grab bag. Learners are divided into smaller groups, and then they rotate between individual instruction (typically via a pre-recorded webinar), live group instruction (via Zoom or another webinar tool), and self-guided assignments. Where the flex learning model allows learners to ultimately decide which methods of learning are most effective, the rotation learning model offers a similar level of flexibility, but determined by the instructor.[13]



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Benefits and drawbacks of the rotation learning model

The rotation model can be highly effective across learners that prefer different learning experiences. Because they get a combination of self-guided and instructor-led learning, participants will be able to make the most of their preferred method of instruction. Where the rotation model can be demanding, however, is in the level of organization that it requires. Because

of this reason, many instructors rely heavily on a learning management system in order to provide a learning experience that's applicable and easy to understand.[15]

6.What is the online driver learning model?

The online driver learning model offers the maximum amount of learner autonomy. Participants make their way through the learning models at their own pace, and according to their own drive and motivation. While learners are still given the opportunity to communicate with trainers as needed, such communication is not a requirement of completing the training. [16]

It is important to note that the online driver model makes use of two primary types of online teaching content for students, some of which may be delivered by a teacher, albeit over a live streaming platform, such as Zoom, for instance. This type of synchronous teaching means that an entirely virtual class of students receive the same instructor or teacher-led education, all at the same time. Although live webinars are the most common way to offer this, text-based question and answer sessions following a video presentation or podcast may also be utilised.[17]

In addition to synchronous course content, teachers may also set work that students conduct at their own pace and by finding their own online educational resources. Studying e-courses, reading scholarly journals online or simply collaborating with other students via instant messaging apps all contribute to this part of the online driver model in something that is referred to as asynchronous learning.[18]

Benefits and drawbacks of the online driver learning model

Just as the enriched virtual learning model can be effective for experienced, self-motivated learners, the online driver learning model takes this level of autonomy and turns it to the maximum level. Because of this, the online driver learning model requires the least amount of instructor time and energy. Unmotivated or tentative learners, however, might find themselves confused or simply going through the motions without achieving a deep understanding of the course material.[19]

Benefits of Blended Learning

Recent research identifies the following key benefits of BL:

Opportunity for collaboration at a distance: Individual students work together virtually in an intellectual endeavour as a learning practice.

Increased flexibility: Technology-enabled learning allows for learning anytime and anywhere, letting students learn without the barriers of time and location but with the possible support of in-person engagement. (Any speed, any mode, any language)

Increased interaction: BL offers a platform to facilitate greater interactivity between students, as well as between students and teachers.

Enhanced learning: Additional types of learning activities improve engagement and can help students achieve higher and more meaningful levels of learning.

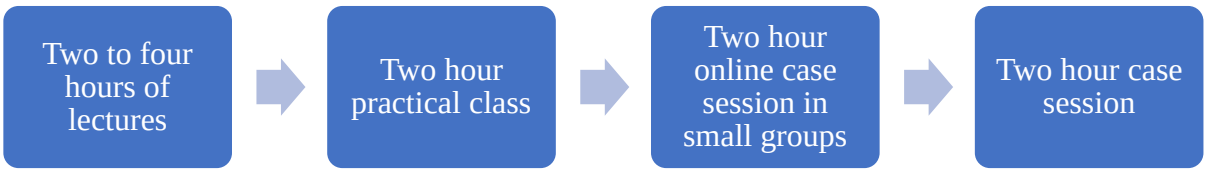
Learning to be virtual citizens: Learners practice the ability to project themselves socially and academically in an online community of inquiry. Digital learning skills are becoming essential to be a lifelong learner, and blended courses help learners master the skills for using a variety of technologies.

Making BL Work Technology integration in itself is not necessarily BL.

BL provides making learning resources and experiences repeatable, reliable and reproducible.[20]

Blended learning represents a fundamental shift in instruction methods. It has the potential to optimize outcomes for individual students in ways that traditional instruction can't. Blended delivery modes allow for each aspect to be taught using the most appropriate medium for the topic at that particular stage in the training.[21]

Extensively studied and practiced in K–12 and university education, blended learning also offers an ideal solution for improving corporate training, especially when it comes to upskilling employees for the quickly evolving digital economy. Here are five advantages of blended learning.[22]



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1. Different people learn different things in different ways

It's pretty common knowledge that different people learn differently. In 1992, researchers Fleming and Mills developed a popular model of learning styles called VARK: Visual (when people learn best by sight), Aural or Auditory (when people learn by hearing or speaking), Read/Written (when people learn when things are displayed as words) and Kinesthetic (when people learn by physical use or practice). [23]

Other researchers have broken these modalities into even more distinct learning styles, adding Logical (when people prefer using logic or reasoning to understand concepts), Social (when people learn through interaction with other people) and Solitary (when people learn best alone through self-study).[24]

With so many different learning styles to address, a blended learning solution makes sense. For people who learn visually or through reading and ideally alone, online self-paced video delivery would be the best mode. Social and aural learners would gain most from live instructor-led classrooms. Meanwhile, hands-on practice from engaging in applied learning projects would satisfy kinesthetic and logical learners.[25]

2. Using multiple modalities dramatically reinforces engagement, learning and retention

Numerous studies show how for most people, learning is improved by combining different activities alongside more passive study. Ideally, these could include the "human" element of interaction, such as threaded discussions, video conferencing and internal social media forums to share and compare knowledge and to encourage and demonstrate the effective application of newly learned skills to the workplace.[26]

By utilizing as many learning delivery methods as possible (video, live instructor, social and practical), you can fill in any knowledge gaps left by modes that were less than optimal for the specific topic or learner. [27]

3. Learners can control the pace of their learning

People learn best when they have some control over their learning. Choice reduces learner apathy, relieves some of the stress of the learning process and motivates people to engage with the material. Corporate learners differ from traditional students. Most employees deal with time constraints, as they have to balance heavy workloads and their personal lives. Also, their coworkers come to the table with a wide range of knowledge and experience with the course topic.[28]

Blended learning enables employees to study online, as quickly as they can manage, instead of having the pace set by the fastest or slowest learner in the group. They can skip ahead past familiar information or pause, rewatch and seek additional resources. They can also access the content when they are most alert and even take breaks as necessary. This "flipped" blended approach enables learners to start with the knowledge they gained on their own and then supplement it with the

personal attention of instructor-led classroom training (either virtual or on-premises), plus the group interaction of social learning and finally, the hands-on practice of applied learning projects.[29]

As noted by Clifford Maxwell, an education researcher at the Clayton Christensen Institute, "some element of student control is critical; otherwise, blended learning is no different from a teacher beaming online curriculum to a classroom of students through an electronic whiteboard."[30]

4. Blended learning saves money

Organizations of any size can optimise return on investment by saving costs while increasing engagement and retention by integrating eLearning into instructor-led programs. Blended learning reduces instructor fees, company travel expenses and training materials; enables distance learning at a global scale; and can greatly soften the impact training has on daily operations and the employees themselves. For example, "Ernst & Young cut its training costs by 35 percent while improving consistency and scalability with eLearning," says Mark Rose, director and founder of Creative edge Training and Development. "They condensed about 2,900 hours of classroom training into 700 hours of web-based learning, 200 hours of distance learning and 500 hours of classroom instruction, a cut of 53 percent." [31]

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