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Education



Modern Dimensions of Learning: Blended and Learner-Centered Education**Dr.S.Wilson**

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Abstract

Learning shapes who we are and how we act. Both direct and indirect experiences deeply influence how someone develops, right from the start. Imagine a child touching a hot pan. They're quick to pull their hand back, learning to be careful with things like that. They quickly grasp that hot vessels burn. Daily life brings countless similar lessons, always adjusting how we act. An effective learner develops powerful habits of mind that let them think critically, act creatively, and manage their own behavior. Critical thinking means being accurate and clear, keeping an open mind, and exercising self-control. It also involves knowing when to take a stand and considering others' feelings and knowledge. Creative thinking, meanwhile, challenges what one knows and can do, sparking new ideas and trusting one's own judgment. Self-regulated thinking requires monitoring one's thoughts, planning well, finding and using resources, responding to feedback, and evaluating how effective actions are. These five learning dimensions don't work alone; they're interconnected. How well someone learns always depends on their attitudes, perceptions, and how they use these productive habits. Positive attitudes and perceptions, when combined with good habits, simplify learning and help people learn more. With these foundations, learners can really engage with the three other vital aspects of learning: taking in new knowledge, expanding and sharpening it, and putting it to good use.

Keywords: Blended learning, Child-centered education, Formative evaluation, Maturation vs. learning and Programmed instruction

Introduction

Programmed Instruction Programmed instruction is a teaching system that divides subject matter into small, distinct steps. These steps are carefully organized in a logical sequence, helping students learn quickly. Each step builds on the last. Students get feedback or confirmation right after each step, letting them check their progress. If an answer is correct, they move forward; if not, they learn the right answer before continuing. This highly individualized teaching strategy has been a successful approach in education, working well in classrooms and for those studying on their own.

We call these experience-driven changes "learning," a continuous process of gaining knowledge, forming ideas, and adapting behavior throughout life. Hurlock (1942) described maturation as the natural unfolding of a person's inherent genetic characteristics, unlike learning, which comes

from effort and practice. Biggie and Hunt (1968) viewed maturation as a developmental process where someone periodically shows traits whose “blueprints” have been in their cells since conception. So, maturation is a natural process of changes linked to normal growth. These changes don’t depend on activity, practice, or experience. Behavior from maturation, then, isn’t considered acquired or learned. Still, maturation closely connects with learning.

All educational processes work to help students gain specific skills. Learning itself means acquiring these skills and attitudes, which then changes behavior. That behavioral change, after all, is what education aims for. Learning is central to psychology, and educational psychologists. This field looks at how we learn and what that process involves. It covers principles, laws, and theories of learning, plus topics like memory, perception, how we form concepts, thinking, reasoning, problem solving, skill transfer, and strategies for effective learning. It also examines environmental factors and learning situations that shape the relationship between students and teachers. Other areas include classroom atmosphere, group interactions, learning tools, evaluation methods, and guidance and counseling. All these elements help make teaching and learning successful.

Teachers should know that a child grows and develops in an organized, connected way. They need to engage with the whole child, not just their mental or emotional side. Growth includes intellectual, physical, and emotional aspects. Instead of just having them master subject matter, teachers should focus on helping the whole child grow. People have different traits; that’s a basic idea in psychology. Teachers shouldn’t expect every student to achieve equally in all school subjects and activities. When schools group students by ability, it goes against this idea of individual trait differences, unless each subject gets its own separate grouping.

Teachers also need to remember that students naturally want to create and express themselves. Every student has some creative ability, though they show it differently. We can help creativity grow in the classroom by giving students freedom. Let them express themselves without strict standards or criteria. The school curriculum should be organized to actively encourage this creative expression. Learning is central to human behavior; in fact, all living involves learning. Think about a child’s simple behaviors and feelings compared to an adult’s complex skills, habits, thoughts, and sentiments.

More recently, we’ve also seen the opposite: better performance doesn’t always mean real learning has happened. In fact, many experiments in perceptual-motor and verbal-conceptual learning show that certain strategies, like spreading out practice, changing practice conditions, getting less feedback, and testing or generating answers, can actually have opposite effects on what someone learns and how they perform. The conditions that cause the most errors while you’re learning are often the exact ones that lead to the deepest understanding! What’s more, performance is often fleeting and a poor indicator of true learning. Learners and instructors often don’t seem to grasp this, frequently mistaking short-term performance for a reliable guide to long-term knowledge. These points, along with

others discussed, really show how vital it is to tell learning and performance apart. This difference has big implications, both in practice and in theory.

Blended learning combines traditional classroom teaching with computer-based activities. It mixes in-person and online activities, using both live (synchronous) and self-paced (asynchronous) tools to help students learn. In a blended setup, students and teachers are physically together. Even so, students can use digital tools to manage their learning pace or choose topics. The flipped classroom model offers a similar approach. It uses technology to change how students learn and make the most of class time. In a flipped classroom, students get digital learning materials, like video lectures, podcasts, recordings, and articles, from a cloud platform on their own time before each class. This way, students learn the main concepts outside class. Teachers then have class time free to support students with activities, lead discussions, and encourage engagement.

Many factors must be considered when choosing how to blend in-person and online teaching and learning activities. In some cases, most interactions between students and the teacher, as well as the direct delivery of instruction, take place in person in the classroom, while materials and possibly some additional activities are delivered online. In other cases, most of the class activities occur online, with infrequent meetings in person to solve problems and support community building. In some blended arrangements, students may choose which activities to complete online and which to complete in a classroom. Ideally, blends are personalised so individual students have the blend that best fits their age, life circumstances and learning needs. These are called à la carte models.

Students choose what to take fully online, what to take fully in person and, when the design is available, blended courses where they choose when to go to inperson classes and when to watch videos, download readings and complete assignments online. This kind of personalisation is not always available. Most important is ensuring that students are able to function well as learners with any delivery method, single-mode or blended, even if it is not their preference or the best situation for them. Teachers are valuable coaches for helping students manage in any learning situation; it is up to teachers and learning designers to offer blended activities that best suit the subject, the learners' needs and the curriculum requirements. Not all unique and interesting BL designs are one-size-fits-all model. Below are seven sample configurations of BL activities to consider for BL teaching situation. These examples of BL are drawn from higher education but can be shaped to fit any teaching and learning situation.

Learner-centered activities involve various cognitive processes that help students become communicative, confident, creative, and cooperative. In blended learning (BL) environments, students aren't passive recipients; they actively generate ideas and build knowledge, both individually and in teams. Once learning materials are available online, students in the classroom don't need to hear the instructor lecture again. This frees up class time for engaging activities. Even their online time can be used creatively to make virtual sessions more effective and engaging.

Higher education students are adults. They bring rich life experience, prior academic knowledge, and exposure to diverse information. Lecturing that assumes students are “empty boxes” isn’t a favored teaching method anymore. Instead, students can contribute by sharing their knowledge, ideas, and perspectives in class or on online platforms. Even pre-session resources suggested by teachers give them a valuable head start.

To keep students engaged, whether online or in person, education at any level or subject should cultivate creative thinking. For instance, microbiology or sociology students might present concepts by creating cartoon strips. Story-creation tools help higher education students present their subject knowledge in ways that go beyond simple classroom presentations. Infographics, short videos, and podcasts offer opportunities to express knowledge of any topic creatively. This helps them express themselves and present ideas creatively, even after they enter the workforce.

Universities and colleges should promote Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). The new national education policy emphasizes learner-centered education systems. Summative evaluation alone can’t assess all levels of learning outcomes. A modular curriculum needs assessments at various points throughout and after each module’s specified learning outcomes. Cognitive skills like logical thinking, applying knowledge and skills, and analyzing and synthesizing concepts and rules need evaluation strategies beyond traditional summative paper-and-pencil tests.

Teachers should use innovative evaluation strategies throughout the semester. Internal evaluation should carry more weight, with innovative assessment and evaluation methods included. With innovative teaching and the right tech tools, students can create original work, whether on their own or in groups. At first, these pieces are just for learning. But students always need feedback to improve them. Once they get feedback, students ought to have a chance to refine their work before it’s considered for formative evaluation. Say a preliminary concept map. Students can revise it after discussing the topic, summarizing, and getting feedback. The revised map can then be assessed. Then, a creative or collaborative activity might lead to something else that counts as an assessment. Take, for instance, group or individual presentations after self-study. These are learning activities, not assessments. (Many teachers mistakenly grade these initial presentations.) Once the teacher gives feedback during these presentations, students can revise their work, maybe adding a short write-up, infographic, or video.

Learning benefits greatly from continuous assessment and evaluation. Technology helps students stay informed about their performance on online assignments and quizzes. Students should always have access to online reports so they can track progress toward their personal learning goals. It’s important to have good ways to assess student performance. Measuring student growth and accomplishments requires well-defined tools. Objectivity and standardization matter in this process. It also encourages students to take part in self- and peer assessment.

Child-Centered Learning This approach emphasizes child-centered education. It aims to understand and teach each child according to their nature, interests, and aptitudes. Teachers should assess a student's attitude, aptitude, potential, abilities, and aspirations. They also need to consider a student's social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic development, as well as their mental health. This assessment then helps them plan teaching activities.

Valuing Individuality This approach views each person as unique. Everyone has their own individuality; education should respect and develop it. We ought to respect individual differences and help cultivate people's inner strengths. Teachers should join professional organizations. These organizations work to advance educational ideals. They care about the well-being of children and young people. They also strive to improve teaching, supervisory, and administrative procedures. And they consider teachers' well-being too.

Good teaching methods are psychologically and socially sound. The Secondary Education Commission pointed out that teaching methods do more than just affect teacher-student relationships. They also shape personal development, work standards, judgment, intellectual and emotional capabilities, attitudes, and values. Good teachers keep up with the latest teaching methods and use them in the classroom. The main goal of any teaching method is to make lessons interesting, useful, and understandable. Teachers need a progressive outlook, not a conservative one. They should dedicate time to exploring new methods that might be more helpful. Teachers should help learners figure out who they are and what they want to be. Learners can make these decisions themselves. They have a conscious mind and can make choices. Their ability to choose gives them a chance to develop the self-awareness necessary for productive lives.

Conclusion

Teachers need a complete grasp of their subject. Any gaps in their knowledge can diminish their standing with students. They also need to genuinely love what they teach. The University Education Commission noted that "a teacher who isn't a master of the field, who isn't in touch with the latest developments in their subject, and who doesn't bring a free and sound mind to their duties will never succeed in inspiring youth with the love of truth, which is the principal object of all higher education." Teaching demands systematic planning. That means organizing the subject matter effectively, which is why teachers prepare lessons. A well-prepared lesson helps teachers overcome nervousness and insecurity. No matter how able or experienced a teacher, they can't succeed without preparation.

Teaching also succeeds with the art of asking questions. Teachers need to be skilled at crafting and asking relevant ones. For example, an academically strong teacher should excel at asking questions. A teacher's voice should be clear, loud, and moderately pitched. A thin voice can make the class feel dull and monotonous. The best classroom voice is clear, pleasantly toned, and pretty even in its pitch.

Still, it should be able to change, showing different meanings and emphasis. Pre-service professional training means the educational programs offered in training colleges and colleges of education.

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