



MODERN PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC  
SOLUTIONS  
EXPLORING NEW BLENDED LEARNING MODELS IN  
TERTIARY EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** *Blended learning is a growing phenomenon in higher education after the COVID-19 pandemic (the educational process moved entirely online), and the way is prepared for blended education mode in universities. Although blended learning research is on the rise, fewer studies regard university students' learning behavior in blended learning environments. This study aims to investigate university students' blended learning behavior perceptions shortly after the pandemic. A 19-item questionnaire was administered to 176 university students in Greece. Students, in general, expressed positive blended learning behavior perceptions. Higher percentages of agreement were associated with the role of audio-visual online resources in facilitating and supporting independent learning and with student motivation in blended education. Students expressed lower percentages of agreement, and some uncertainty, with regard to involvement in small group work with their peers. Implications for students, educators, as well as university policy and practice are discussed.*

**Аннотация:** *Смешанное обучение становится все более распространенным явлением в высшем образовании после пандемии COVID-19 (образовательный процесс полностью перешел в онлайн), и подготовка к смешанному режиму обучения в университетах уже началась. Хотя исследования в области смешанного обучения растут, меньше исследований касается поведения студентов университетов в условиях смешанного обучения. Данное исследование направлено на изучение восприятия поведения студентов университета в контексте смешанного обучения вскоре после пандемии. Анкета из 19 вопросов была распространена среди 176 студентов университетов в Греции. В целом студенты выразили положительные восприятия поведения в смешанном обучении. Более высокие процентные показатели согласия были связаны с ролью аудиовизуальных онлайн-ресурсов в содействии и поддержке самостоятельного обучения, а также с мотивацией студентов в смешанном обучении. Студенты выразили более низкие процентные показатели согласия и некоторую неопределенность относительно участия в малых группах с сокурсниками. Обсуждаются последствия для студентов, преподавателей, а также для университетской политики и практики.*

**Keywords:** *blended learning; university; higher education; student learning behavior; student perceptions.*





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**Ключевые слова:** смешанное обучение; университет; высшее образование; поведение обучения студентов; восприятие студентов.

### INTRODUCTION

The implementation of teaching and learning becomes more efficient and effective in this 21<sup>st</sup> century due to the advancements of technology. By introducing technology into teaching and learning become more flexible and innovative (caner, 2012). The higher education environments, in the last two decades, have witnessed the combining of information technologies and new pedagogies. For example, the widespread use of internet technologies helped teachers design and apply new generation learning environments that are authentic and more engaging. With the increasing importance of using communication technology in higher education, therefore, institutions must react to this change with understanding and vision to produce desired results (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Leaders of higher education are challenged to position their institutions to meet growing demands and expectations of future students for higher quality learning. University need to provide more diverse cross-section of population that facilitate lifelong learning and include technology-based practice in the curriculum.

### Lecturer perceptions and experiences of blended learning.

Teachers' conceptions of blended learning are not uniform. A common view is that blended learning is simply about variety in delivery but that this did not necessarily involve technology (Benson et al., 2011). How teachers view learning technologies is important as their views have been shown to relate to their approach to designing and teaching using these technologies (González, 2012). In these examples, the online aspect of blended learning is seen as a pragmatic management and dissemination tool rather than a way to improve student understanding. The next level shifts the focus from teaching to blended learning providing active learning opportunities (Ellis et al, 2009) such as group work and peer review (Benson et al., 2011). At the highest levels, blended learning is seen as a way to help students build knowledge (Ellis et al., 2009; González, 2009), develop and apply new concepts (Ellis, Steed et al., 2006) and to support specific pedagogy (Yuen et al., 2011). Although not quantified in these studies, it would appear from the literature that most of the activity in blended learning in the tertiary sector is yet to reach the higher levels described here (e.g. Owens, 2012; Nanayakkara & Whiddett, 2005).

### Theoretical background and literature review

According to the Malaysia Education Blueprint initiated by Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MOHE) planned for all public or private universities in the country to adopt BL tool such as MOOC to improve teaching and learning (MOE [2015](#)). Online mode provides students with available materials and resources in form of interactive e-books, study videos, YouTube, and course information. Students also provide feedback to lecturers to help improve teaching and learning effectiveness (Sun and Qiu [2017](#)). In







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addition, students utilize synchronous virtual classroom to collaborate with peers and communicate with their lecturer directly through chat room and regular asynchronous medium such as discussion boards and e-mail (Baragash and Al-Samarraie [2018](#)). In this mode, students can freely and exclusively access course resources in multiple formats provided by the lecturers to support their learning. Besides, online mode enable students to be assessed online this include participating in online quizzes and receiving prompt feedback which aids to enhance learning effectiveness of students (Baragash and Al-Samarraie [2018](#)). Therefore, the BL approach as shown in Fig. [3](#) is employed to provide answer to the second research question which aims to present BL practices to be adopted by learners in universities which comprises of F2F, activities, information, resources, assessment, and feedback. Currently, innovative educational approaches such as BL are being adopted in higher education to provide learners and educators with a pioneering learning environment to encourage and improve teaching and learning activities. BL is described as the combination of conventional Face-to-Face (F2F) teaching and online teaching and has been commonly adopted in institutions as it has the benefits of both traditional delivery and online approaches (Yeou, [2016](#)).

A quantitative research was employed in this study to explore the role of BL on lecturers teaching and students' learning effectiveness. A confirmatory study approach was utilized in this research to present the results which offers freedom and flexibility for reporting survey data. This study was conducted in three Malaysia universities that adopt similar BL approach in their educational process which comprises of about 30% F2F and above 70% online mode. These selected universities employed BL tools such as Moodle which is an open source educational platform that universities utilize to achieve effective online learning. For ethical consideration, implicit consent was provided to the respondents who completed the survey. The aim and purpose of the study and respondent's rights not to partake in the survey was clearly specified. Hence, participation in the survey was voluntary. Moreover, the anonymity of the respondents was guarantee by not disclosing the names of the respondents and their university to the public.

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## CONCLUSION

A range of definitions suggested by researchers include combining classroom learning and online learning, reducing the number of face-to-face sessions to facilitate e-learning, integrating online with traditional classes, using technology to complement traditional form of learning, and flipped classroom learning. From these definitions, a common point is that in blended learning, technology, plays a crucial role to facilitate and support learning. Because of the provision of technology, collaboration among students, synchronous online interactions, and flexibility to access materials can be ensured.

Regarding the teachers' perceptions of blended learning courses, blended learning can increase student engagement in learning, promote student interaction, provide flexible





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environment, help them improving students' skills, and contribute to their professional development. To achieve those potential benefits of blended learning, however, teachers encounter a number of challenges. The first and the major issue is related to time commitment. The second greatest problem is associated with technical problems. The problem of slow internet connectivity hinders the effectiveness of this both face-to-face and online settings, blended teachers have more responsibilities compared to traditional classroom teachers.

Exploring new blended learning models requires a holistic approach that considers student needs, technology infrastructure, and faculty development. By embracing innovation and adapting to the evolving needs of the learning landscape, tertiary education can create engaging, effective, and equitable learning experiences for all students. By staying informed and proactively exploring new blended learning models, tertiary education can continue to advance and meet the evolving needs of students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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