



## TRANSFORMING PEDAGOGY THROUGH SOCIAL LEARNING PLATFORM. A BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH.

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### **Abstract**

*The focus of this paper is transforming the pedagogical practices from teacher centered method to student centered method. This transformation of pedagogy is required to meet the needs of a generation of learners who seek greater autonomy and connectivity as well as opportunities for socio-experiential learning. This method will support knowledge sharing, peer -to -peer networking and access to global audience with socio-constructivist learning approach. In reality today's students demand greater control of their own learning and the inclusion of technologies in ways that meet their needs and preferences (Prensky 2005). Blended learning method is the innovative pedagogy used in the classroom for enriching pedagogical practices, which makes students active producers of knowledge. This research was conducted among Post graduate students of Education in School of Education, Pondicherry University using Facebook as learning platform. This method can also be well applied to any level of education by certain changes in pedagogy and Platform. The platform for teaching used here was Facebook since all the post graduate students were well connected through FB (Facebook). For younger children MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) or EDMODO, two popular learning management systems, can be used. Blended learning is discussed in this paper as a teaching methodology and it should not be understood as another name for online learning or teaching with technology, it should be understood as a pedagogical practice in the regular classroom where face to face teaching is integrated with available technology. This integration of technology in classroom leads to learning relevant and connected to real life situation.*

**Key Words: Blended Learning, Pedagogical Practice, Face to Face Teaching.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent rapid transmission of social media such as Twitter and Facebook have assisted users to connect with people more than ever before. In addition, students are using social media at school for various purposes such as communicating, sharing personal experiences, and exchanging information with others (Selwyn 2009 & Hew 2011). And teachers functioning in educational environments express great efforts to provide students with information by using effective technology-based methods. Information and communication technology has paved the way for accelerating a paradigm shift in the teaching learning process. Several research findings support that online learning strengthens learning skills. However online learning has its drawbacks. One of the main disadvantages is the lack of social interaction which is taken as given in conventional settings. The need for a compromise between the conventional face-to-face sessions and online learning leads us towards a new approach to teaching and learning, the so called hybrid or blended learning (Rogers, 2001). Moreover Educational technology as a discipline demands several effective modes of transaction while teaching: such as discussion, power point presentation, video clip and face to face group discussions. Therefore, blended learning as a pedagogical strategy for enabling teaching and learning more skillfully blending online learning techniques such as delivery of materials through web pages, discussion boards or emails with the effectiveness of socialization opportunities of face- to-face instruction become significant. Blended learning has the potential to foster and transform higher education in teaching and learning, in flexibility and access, and in the optimization of resources. It also helps to provide the digital literacies essential for a global graduate and knowledge society. The facilities of online learning platform Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) and MOODLE Learning Management System were used to provide online learning during the study. This study reveals that social network used in blended learning has certain advantages such as flexibility and comfort in the learning environment, increase in the level of learning, increase in permanence in learning, increase in interest in learning, good-quality interaction and low cost (Garnham and Kaleta, 2002; Young, 2002; Collins, 2003). Blended learning strategy can be considered as one of the initiatives of pedagogical approaches for integrating ICT in Education and effectively enhanced using blended learning strategy and serious efforts could be undertaken to improve the quality of Educational technology by integrating online learning with face-to-face instruction. The present study is a documentation of the actual classroom teaching using blended learning method with Face book as a platform for one semester in the regular M. Ed course.



## **METHODOLOGY**

The programme implementation continued till the end of 10 weeks semester of the academic year of 2013-2014 as regular classroom. In order to facilitate the entire teaching learning activities both as face to face, using suitable technology and internet, that is, a blended learning environment, a web site was designed by using Facebook (M.Ed technology group). The study was carried out with 13 students attending Educational Technology course in School of Education, Pondicherry University (M.Ed.) in the second semester of the academic year of 2013-2014. This is an exclusive group of only the students and the teacher.

## **PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BLENDED LEARNING PROGRAMME**

### **Phase I - The Training Phase**

The students trained for a week about blended Learning Programme. The contents of the Programme follows:

1. Introduction on Blended learning methodology.
2. Discussed advantages and disadvantages if not used properly.
3. Expectations both from the Teacher and the students were conferred.
4. Introducing the students to the world of internet and technology( Pondicherry University is fully Wi-Fi enabled and every year there are few students who does not even have mail id)
5. Orientation on the use of book readers, effective use of power point presentations, web accessing, browsing information, accessing University library resources through remote access, downloading and uploading videos to from and to websites etc..
6. Demonstration on how to use social networking sites for learning.
7. Demonstration for sign up the website (Facebook and MOODLE).
8. Training to use chat machine in Facebook for interacting with the teacher and peer group.
9. Access to all the students to Facebook webpage.
10. Several teaching methods like dialogues, discussion, seminar, effective lecturing, etc...were introduced.

### **Phase II - Presentation Phase**

A complete frame work for teaching through the entire semester was prepared with time frame. This was attached to the face book page for the student reference even before the start of the classes. The class frame also contained a very brief summary each topic to be taught and discussed in the class. This enabled the students to prepare themselves for the lesson before the class. The visual presentations of topics to be taught (in video format), the videos and animations related to the subject, the dictionary and the other related links were send to all the students through the webpage. In addition, for each subject, they were given an assignment that they were supposed to search for before coming to the classroom. The students were asked to bring the research assignments to the classroom. Also, they were allowed to send their assignment online. It was announced to them that they were expected to allocate at least 1 hour a week to carry out the activities presented via the Internet. The research assignments were presented and the subject was taught in the face-to-face setting via the question and answer, discussion methods, video presentation and slide share presentation. The teacher evaluated the activities carried out via (Facebook and MOODLE) with the help of a computer in the classroom and clarified the points that were not understood by the students. Furthermore, at the end of each class, feedback was given by the students. A discussion forum environment for discussing the points that the students did not understand was also part of the website.

### **Phase III – Demonstration Phase**

A complete Blended learning schedule for teaching five units of the subject, Educational Technology is selected for executing the programme. The complete units were transformed to blended units which included all possible and suitable methods such as traditional teaching, web teaching and also teaching using technology. The entire teaching during the programme was supported and managed by the LMS, MOODLE and Facebook. The lesson plans were planned and prepared by the course teacher for all five units. Everyday class session was uploaded on the Facebook Platform for the student reference before the start of the classes. The class frame also contained a very brief summary of each topic to be taught and discussed in the class. This enabled the students to prepare themselves for the lesson before the class. The visual presentations, texts, and related web links related to the topic to be taught has also been uploaded before as well as after the class. Students were given pre and post class assignment that they were supposed to search for before coming to the classroom. The students were asked to bring the research assignments to the classroom for presentation. Also, they were allowed to send their assignment online i.e. posted in the platform. Students were well in advanced informed that they were expected to allocate at least 1 hour a week to carry out the activities presented via the internet. The assignments given to the students were presented in the classroom through face-to-face session. And the teaching session was well supported by the



question and answer, discussion methods, video presentation and slide share presentation. The teacher evaluated the activities carried out via Facebook and MOODLE Platform and clarified the points that were not understood by the students. Additionally, at the end of each class, feedback was given by the students. A discussion forum environment in Facebook and MOODLE LMS were effectively used for discussing the points that the students did not understand was also part of the teaching and learning process.

A complete schedule for Blended learning programme was presented here for 10 weeks.

**Table 1. Blended Learning Programme Schedule**

SCHEDULE	FACE-TO-FACE ACTIVITIES	ONLINE LEARNING ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Week 1 (5 Hours) No. of days – 5 (From 23-1-2014 to 29-1- 2014)</b>  <b>Unit -1: Conceptual Bases of Educational Technology and its Major Developments</b>            Introduction of educational technology, objectives, scope, and difference between ET and IT, History of educational technology, Scope of educational technology, Differences between Educational technology and Instructional technology. Objective, scope and difference between ET and IT.</p>	<p><b>3 Hours conventional method.</b>            Introduction to Facebook learning platform. Facebook account was created and students were given orientation to sign up for Facebook.</p>	<p><b>2 Hours online activity.</b>            Demonstration. (To sign up in Facebook account), Group Discussion, video presentation and link sent.</p>
<p><b>Week 2 (5 Hours) No. of days – 5 (From 30-1-2014 to 5-2- 2014)</b> Components of Educational Technology, Software and Hardware/ High and Low Technology, Relevance of Educational Technology to formal and non-formal Education. Developments in Telecommunication, Electronic Media, Computers in Education, Instructional Applications of Computers- Advantages and Disadvantages of CAI</p>	<p><b>3 Hours conventional method.</b>            Power point presentation/Slide share presentation cum traditional method. Interactive learning, discussion on application of Educational technology</p>	<p><b>2 Hours online activity.</b>            Online chat in Facebook share and comment on materials between tutor and peer groups. Posted material in Facebook group and interactive session was made in the classroom i.e. face to face discussion</p>
<p><b>Week 3 (5 Hours) No. of days – 5 (From 6-2-2014 to 12-2- 2014)</b>  <b>UNIT-II</b>  <b>Learning Theories and their Educational Implications</b>            Introduction of learning theories, Skinner response centered approach, Applications of Skinner response centered approach, Gagnes hierarchical stages were explained.</p>	<p><b>3 Hours conventional method.</b>            Lecture method and discussion. Group discussion about Facebook platform for teaching and learning.</p>	<p><b>2 Hours online activity.</b>            Slide show, video presentation. Email and link. Group discussion in Facebook platform.</p>
<p><b>Week 4 (5 Hours) No. of days – 5 (From 13-2-2014 to 19-2- 2014)</b> Asubel Advance organizer, Examples of advance organizers, Piaget’s learning theory.</p>	<p><b>3 Hours lecture.</b>            Interactive learning, discussion on application of Asubel Advance organizer. Posted material in Facebook group and interactive session was made in the classroom i.e. face to face discussion.</p>	<p><b>2 Hours online activity.</b>            Materials uploaded in Facebook Platform. (Examples of advance organizers, related video and pdf paper was attached)</p>



<p><b>Week 5 (4 Hours) No. of days – 4 (From 20-2-2014 to 25-2- 2014)</b> <b>UNIT-III</b> <b>Planning of Teaching Instructional Technology</b> Bloom s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives-writing performance objectives Mager and Miller. Types of Instructional Design Training Psychology, Cybernetic Psychology and Systems Approach- Need and Importance of Lesson Planning approaches to Lesson Planning.</p>	<p><b>2 Hours conventional method.</b> Assignment presentation by Rovino, Kiran and Arif by Slide show and video presentation. Lecture method and discussion on Facebook platform for teaching and learning process.</p>	<p><b>2 Hours online activity.</b> Group discussion on Facebook platform to enhance interactivity.</p>
<p><b>Week 6 (4 Hours) No. of days – 4 (From 26-2-2014 to 3-3- 2014)</b> Types of Lesson Plans, Resource Unit, Instructional Kit, Workbook and Text book</p>	<p><b>2 Hours conventional method.</b> Power point presentation/Slide share presentation cum traditional method. Assignment Presentation by Priyanka kalaivani. Interactive learning, discussion on Facebook forum and women’s day celebration circular was uploaded.</p>	<p><b>2 Hours online activity.</b> Group discussion on Facebook platform to enhance interactivity. Materials and videos are uploaded</p>
<p><b>Week 7 (5 Hours) No. of days – 5 (From 5-3-2014 to 12-3- 2014)</b> <b>UNIT-IV</b> <b>Programmed Learning</b> Programmed Learning and Main Features of Programmed Learning- Basic principles and Types of programmed learning- Linear Programming Important features of Linear Programming Limitations. Branching programme main features- Backward branching.</p>	<p><b>3 Hours lecture.</b> Lecture method and discussion. Slide show and video presentation. Group discussion. Power point presentation/Slide share presentation cum traditional method.</p>	<p><b>2 Hours online activity.</b> Group discussion in synchronous medium in Facebook. Facebook chat, email and link are sent.</p>
<p><b>Week 8 (5 Hours) No. of days – 5 (From 13-3-2014 to 19-3- 2014)</b> Forward Branching- . Advantages and limitation of forward and backward branching- Examples of branching programme- Mathematics Basic Steps and Principles.</p>	<p><b>3 Hours lecture.</b> Power point presentation/Slide share presentation cum traditional method. Face to face discussions on mathematics tasks. Interactive session was made in the classroom i.e. face to face discussion.</p>	<p><b>2 Hours online activity.</b> In Facebook platform materials uploaded. Interactive learning, discussion on application of branching programme</p>
<p><b>Week 9 (5 Hours) No. of days – 5 (From 20-3-2014 to 26-3- 2014)</b> <b>UNIT-V</b> <b>Evaluation and Instructional Technology</b> Measurement and Evaluation Meaning, concept - Purpose and Objectives of Evaluation- Types of Media Technology Evaluation - feasibility evaluation, formative evaluation, summative evaluation, maintenance evaluation. Norm Referenced Test advantages and limitations</p>	<p><b>3 Hours lecture.</b> Lecture method and discussion on MOODLE LMS orientation was given about MOODLE. Slide show and video presentation and Power point presentation.</p>	<p><b>2 Hours online activity.</b> Slide show and video presentation are uploaded on MOODLE platform.</p>
<p><b>Week 10 (5 Hours) No. of days – 5 (From 26-3-2014 to 2-4-2014)</b> Criterion Referenced Test</p>	<p><b>3 Hours lecture.</b> Video presentation. Power point</p>	<p>2 Hours online activity. Posted material in</p>



Advantages and Limitations - Formative and Summative Evaluations Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation. Types of Feedback- Self feedback and self-development- Relevance of Feedback to Students, Teachers and Parents.	presentation/Slide share presentation cum traditional method. Interactive learning, discussion on types of feedback	MOODLE, Group chat on discussion forum.
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Due to limited scope all the five lesson plans are not listed down only one model lesson plan was presented here for unit 1.

### Unit -1: Conceptual Bases of Educational Technology and its Major Developments

#### Indicative Learning Outcomes

As a result of completing this unit, students will be able to

- Access and evaluate information resources.
- Understand Educational technology and instructional technology.
- Identify the difference between educational technology and instructional technology.
- Explain the history of technology and its application to the present classroom.
- Know scope and objectives of Educational Technology and its meaning and nature.
- Describe the difference between hardware, software and system approach.
- Understand the use of educational technology in formal and non-formal education.
- Know the educational process that takes place through telecommunication and mass media.
- Use hardware and software technology.
- Provide feedback for necessary improvement.
- Individualization of instructions as well for improving the group dynamics of the class-room.
- Examine the uses of principles of psychology for the purpose of behaviour modification.
- Identify the difference between educational technology and instructional technology.
- Understand the history and developments of telecommunication.
- Know the importance of CAI in education.

**No. of days – 10 (From 23-1-2014 to 05-2 2014)**

DATE	DAY	TIME	UNIT	METHOD	TOPIC
23-1-2014	Thurs	11am-12 noon	I	Lecture send email and link	Introduction of educational technology, objectives, scope, and difference between ET and IT
24-1-2014	Friday	10am-11am	I	Slide show and video presentation and send email	History of educational technology
27-1-2014	Mon.	11am-12 noon	I	Lecture method	Scope of educational technology
28-1-2014	Tue.	10am-11am	I	Lecture method	Differences between Educational technology and Instructional technology.
29-1-2014	Wed.	10am-11am	I	Group discussion in the link sent	Objective, scope and difference between ET and IT.
30-1-2014	Thu.	11am-12 noon	I	Online chat in Facebook share and comment on materials between tutor and peer groups.	Components of Educational Technology, Software and Hardware/ High and Low Technology.
31-1-2014	Friday	10am-11am	I	Power point presentation/Slide share presentation cum traditional method	Difference between Educational Technology and Instructional Technology, Relevance of Educational Technology to formal and non-formal Education.
3-2-2014	Mon.	11am-12 noon	I	Interactive learning, discussion on application of	Relevance of Educational Technology to formal and non-formal Education.



				Educational technology	
4-2-2014	Tue.	10am-11am	I	Posted material in Facebook group and interactive session was made in the classroom i.e face to face discussion.	Developments in Telecommunication, Electronic Media, Computers in Education,
5-2-2014	Wed.	12pm-1pm	I	Problem solving method. Problems related to CAI were send to their email solutions should be made by students and send to common email id.	Instructional Applications of Computers- Advantages and Disadvantages of CAI

**The features of the website used in the application were as follows:**

All the students were signed up using a common mail, and a common password was created and provided to all students in technology group. They were asked to sign in face book. Teacher created an account in face book and created a group called M.Ed. tech group and from that group friend requests were sent to all 13 students in technology group and they were added in the group. Students used their own user names and passwords to sign into the system. Once they are inside, they have to go into the group for working. After a student sign into the website, they will see the home page (Figure 1). The home page included the group name and it shows the members in med tech group. The left side of home page contains welcome, news feed, messages, events and find friends. In group med technology blend group the users can exchange message, post status, add files, create link of related materials, add videos etc. They receive notifications when others update their profiles, add materials, photos videos, link and comment/message about the class activities.

**Figure 1. Med technology blend group in Facebook Platform**





Figure 2. Med technology blend group in LMS- MOODLE Platform



## CONCLUSION

The current study reveal that blended learning method of teaching is more effective and it strengthens collobaration between students, student and teacher. And it is to be noted here that the face book platform used was planned and used based on pedagogical approaches in teaching and learning, which includes a constructivist approach to education that means there was a clear emphasize on how learners can be facilitated to contribute to their own educational experiences. Thus such platforms like MOODLE, EDMODO and Face book provides a flexible environment for learning with pedagogical principles as its base which leads to socio-constructivist approach. The classroom teaching learning practices will need to change to meet student expectations and support evolving pedagogical approaches by adopting Planning, a concept evolved from a fast growing academic discipline called Educational Technology. With the onward advance of technology, materials, and evolving pedagogical concepts, academic institutions that hope to successfully improve quality of their teaching learning should immediately shift to design techniques. They can adopt methodologies like blended learning. This will be required in future to harness the energy and talents of the Next Generation for better achievement.

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