

Open Educational Resources: A Potential Ally to Promote Blended Learning in Higher Education

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Blended learning is a new norm in higher education systems across the World. For example, the 2015 Horizon Report points out that blended learning is on the rise at universities and colleges as a higher percentage of students are combining online and face-to-face classes (Johnson, Adams, Estrada and Freeman, 2015) Blended learning has emerged as a new teaching-learning approach to deliver higher levels of learning interactivity and higher levels of student engagement, as observed by another Report,

“Every higher education institution today faces the complex challenges of serving increased enrollment levels within tight budgets. Adding to the complexity are new student expectations for the when, where and how of learning where passive listening and doing classwork in isolation are no longer acceptable. These challenges are prompting many colleges and universities to explore new approaches, especially blended learning, for delivering courses” (The Center for Digital Education, 2012, p.2).

Blended learning is generally perceived as a formal education program that integrates face-to-face learning with technology-based, digital instruction. In this process, learning takes place in (or in a combination of) online, mobile, or classroom environments. Now-a-days a number of higher education institutions are integrating technology into the course with online management systems such as Blackboard or Moodle to provide video lectures and supporting materials to the students, in simple terms, they are practicing blended learning. Blended learning, also termed as hybrid learning is defined by Barbour et al. (2011, p. 5) as,

“Learning that combines two modes of instruction, online and face-to-face, but at potentially different points in time...”

Another widely accepted definition from the Clayton Christensen Institute (2015) describes blended learning as,

“The definition of blended learning is a formal education program in which a student learns: at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace; at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home; and the modalities along each student’s learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.”

Blended learning is expected to deliver multiple benefits like- enabling both advanced and at-risk students to learn at their own level and pace;

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