

AN EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGY FOR NET GENERATION IN UTMSPACE

Aina Mardziah binti Ahmad Rifa'i¹, Noorhasyimah binti Ismail², Nurul Huda Baharuddin³, Nawal binti Shaharuddin⁴, Mohd Shafry Mohd Rahim⁵, Sya Azmeela Syariff⁶

^{1,2,3,4} School of Professional and Continuing Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
E-mail: aina@utmpace.edu.my, hasyimah@utmpace.edu.my, huda@utmpace.edu.my, nawal@utmpace.edu.my

^{5,6} Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
E-mail: shafry@utm.my, azmeela.kl@utm.my

ABSTRACT - Nowadays, the generation born between 1998 and above (net generation) are pursuing their studies in higher education, and UTMSPACE has offered this generation the opportunity to continue their education at diploma and matriculation level. This generation is digital natives and very sensitive to technology and communication, which gives advantages to this generation to assimilate with blended learning. In UTMSPACE, Blackboard is used as the platform to implement blended learning to engage the students in the teaching and learning process other than the traditional way. In this research, the respondents chosen are from the students of Foundation Programme UTM. Even though this generation prefers to use technology in their learning process, other external factors will affect their participation in blended learning. Most of the students agree that Blackboard is an excellent platform to manage and collect the materials for educational purposes by their instructors. In conclusion, the application of blended learning is a strategic method in synchronizing the teaching and learning process between the educators and net generation learners.

Keywords: net generation, digital natives, teaching strategies, blended learning

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Net Generation

Net generation is youth those born between 1998 to 2010 and sometime called as Generation Z [1]. They describe their distinguishing characteristics from previous generations and their implications for education, the workplace, and the political, social, and economic arenas. The problem is that is no consensus on those characteristics, the birth dates for defining this population, the names for this

generation, and whether it is even possible to identify a clear-cut profile [2]. Every generation has beliefs, values, cultures, perspectives, interests, and different skills for life and work. The generation born in the early 2000s is exposed to the rapid development of technology and called the net generation. This net generation characters are very sensitive to technology and communication, meaning they have an advantage in the field of information and knowledge development.

Some characteristics define the net generation such as:

1. They're digital natives
2. The world they live in has never felt safe
3. They're accepting
4. They're health-conscious
5. They value their privacy
6. They're entrepreneurial and worried about their future prospects
7. They're changing the distinction between childhood and adulthood

Based on these characteristics, net generation or generation Z is seen to be intact with blended learning where blended learning is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods.

1.2 Blended Learning for Net Generation

Many variables are used in the teaching and learning process. Blended learning is a new term used in higher education and also in a corporate setting. Sometimes, another term such as a hybrid course is used other than blended learning. This definition highlights the ongoing convergence of two archetypal learning environments: the traditional face-to-face (F2F) environment with the distributed (or technology-mediated) environment [3, 4].

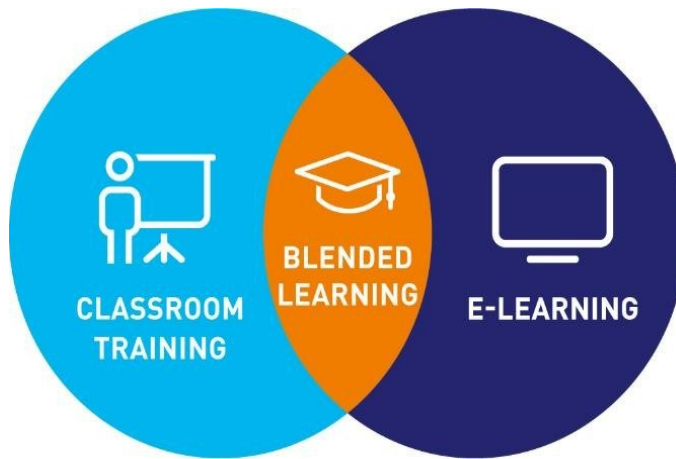


Figure 1. Blended learning combines traditional face-to-face and computer-mediated instruction

Blended learning is adopted widely in educational settings. Over the past decade, blended courses have increased in higher education (HE). Blended learning becomes more prevalent opportunities for research into blended learning are also growing. Researchers and practitioners need to know the current issues and lines of inquiry prominent in blended learning to direct them to the cutting-edge research and enable them to identify the most pressing problems [5].

While the educators who were born in an earlier era are still not familiar with it, so that educators often claimed to be "clueless" (stuttering technology), to address this need no innovations in the learning process so that it complies with these characters, combines conventional learning with communication media such as WhatsApp and google drive is one easy solution social studies lesson on the Z generation.

Learners who are accustomed to communicating using social networks can access the material and lesson plans that have been prepared with structured each meeting. So that they can read or prepare questions before the learning begins. This learning to stand on its information technology infrastructure and can be done anytime and anywhere. So, learning by using blended learning has characteristics that are open, flexible, and can occur anywhere [6].

Hence, this research is developed to assist the instructors in approaching their student's interest in the teaching and learning process especially for net generation

by using blended learning. Blended learning is one of the methods used in the teaching and learning process, and the platform provided in implementing blended learning in UTMSPACE is Blackboard. An interactive class assimilated with the lecturer's experience will increase the interest of net generation involvement in teaching and learning sessions in the classroom, and it will help the instructor or lecturer to handle the student better.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Sample and surveys

The total number of 36 respondents from the Foundation Programme UTM participated in this research. The respondents must experience using Blackboard in their classes. A set of the questionnaire is developed and distributed to the respondents using google drive. In this study, the respondents are the students from the Foundation Programme UTM. The mean age for all of the respondents is 18 years old. These respondents were classed as net generation or millennials. The questionnaire distributed during the second semester of the programme.

A set of questionnaire was developed based on the participation of the students towards blended learning. A set of questionnaire given to the respondents and it is divided into seven parts, which cover their personal information, their concern in participating in blended learning, allocated time for blended learning, their experience towards implementing blended learning in teaching and learning process, their satisfaction, and their suggestion. After that, the results of the questionnaire are collected and analyse.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research is conducted using both female and male students as respondents to answer the questionnaire. From this survey, all respondents own a smartphone and spend more than 10 hours of their 24 hours using their smartphone. These respondents had taken a maximum of seven (7) courses in their semester, and an average of three (3) courses are using Blackboard as exposure of blended learning to the students.

Students spend their six (6) hours from their 24 hours on Blackboard learn which is used as a tool in promoting blended learning. That means students are comfortable with using Blackboard as their tool in the learning process where they can keep their studying materials such as notes and tutorial questions in this Blackboard. That's why they can spend 25% of their hours in Blackboard by using it to revise their studies.

Even though students are passionate about blended learning, other factors such as inexperienced instructors, not so cooperative students, or bad internet will affect their participation in blended learning.

Respondents suggested the subject such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, computing and philosophy should be integrated with blended learning. In line with engaging net generation with blended learning more effectively, educators need to consider strategies that exploit the social networking skills students exhibit outside of class. By incorporating the online habits of net generation students with clear goals, educators can utilize the characteristic proficiencies of their students while ensuring focused learning and positive outcomes.

4. CONCLUSION

In this technology-driven world, technology has assimilated with the traditional teaching and learning method for net generation learners. Hence, the application of blended learning is a strategic method in synchronizing the teaching and learning process between the educators and net generation learners. Even though the net generation is forefront in technological changes, educators must not abdicate their role as authorities directing the learning experiences of their students. Such engagement will improve the delivery of curriculum in an innovative way and compliant with a new teaching process that is focusing on a "student-directed" learning approaches [6].

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to thank and acknowledge UTMSPACE Research Grant: Potential Development Fund (SP-PDF/2018/) for the financial support of this research project.

REFERENCES

- [1] Don Tapscott (2008). *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- [2] Ronald A. Berk (2009). *Teaching Strategies for the Net Generation*. *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching & Learning Journal*. 3(2): 1-24.
- [3] D. Randy Garrison Heather Kanuka (2004). *Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education*. *The Internet and Higher Education*. 7(2): 95-105.
- [4] Charles R. Graham (2009). *Blended Learning Models*. *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology*, Second Edition
- [5] Halverson L.R., Spring K.J., Huyett S., Henrie C.R., Graham C.R. (2017). *Blended Learning Research in Higher Education and K-12 Settings*. In: Spector M., Lockee B., Childress M. (eds) *Learning, Design, and Technology*. Springer, Cham.
- [6] Agus Purnomo, Nurul Ratnawati, Nevy Farista Aristin (2016). *Pengembangan Pembelajaran Blended Learning Pada Generasi Z*. *Jurnal Teori dan Praksis Pembelajaran IPS*. 1(1): 70-77.
- [7] C. Douglass, and M. Sherrill (2014). *Student perspectives on self-directed learning*. *J. Scholarship Teach. Learn.* 14 (1): 13-25.