Frontiers of Contemporary Education
ISSN 2690-3520 (Print) ISSN 2690-3539 (Online)
Vol. 2, No. 1, 2021
www.scholink.org/ojs/index.php/fce

Original Paper

Implementation of the Blended Learning Approach: The Case of SPUP Graduate School

Inicia C. Bansig[1]

[1] St. Paul University Philippines (e.g., Graduate School, St. Paul University Philippines), Tuguegarao City, Philippines

Received: April 12, 2021 Accepted: April 20, 2021 Online Published: June 21, 2021

doi:10.22158/fce.v2n1p75 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/fce.v2n1p75

Abstract

This study aims to assess the implementation of the Blended Learning Approach (BLA) at the Graduate School level at St. Paul University Philippines. The study utilized the mixed research approach. More specifically, the study utilized the quantitative approach particularly the descriptive causal-comparative research design as it assessed the implementation of the BLA and associated factors. The qualitative approach dealt with the responses of the participants regarding their views on the strengths of the BLA and the challenges they encountered in the implementation of the BLA. The study utilized the questionnaire method in gathering the data and covered the faculty and students as the study participants. The tools used for data analysis tools include the frequency and percentage counts, t-test, F-test, and thematic analysis. The results reveal that the participant's assessment of the extent of implementation of the BLA along the four learning areas is "high". Most specifically, they rated the aspect on Assessment and Evaluation as "very high", Methods, Learning Resources, and Modality as "High".

Keywords

blended learning, graduate school, learning outcomes, online learning, face-to-face learning

1. Introduction

The continuous development in technology is increasingly affecting the lives of individuals and has reshaped our culture. It has transformed the practices in the area of education especially concerning approaches and methodologies/strategies employed in the delivery of instruction.

As technology brings about changes in our society, more universities and colleges provide opportunities to students to engage in classroom activities that make them more proficient in using technology to manage their learning.

With the advent of digital transformation transfer, education has undergone major changes in recent years. The development has allowed full access to global communication and many resources available to students at all levels. The introduction of different approaches of instructional delivery like blended learning, flexible learning, e-learning exemplifies the transformation that has been occurring in the educational landscape.

Blended learning is defined as combining face-to-face teaching with computer-mediated instruction (Graham, 2006). Blended learning can also refer to both software and hardware or installed devices in physical learning spaces (i.e., DVD players, document cameras, whiteboard capture systems, videoconferencing, web cameras) and mobile devices (cell phones, clickers, PDAs, laptops, or Tablet PCs, iPods, iPads, digital cameras, USB drives, and GPS systems) to enhance interaction. According to Garrison and Vaughn, "blended learning is more than enhancing lectures. It represents the transformation of how we approach teaching and learning. Blended learning is a coherent design approach that openly assesses and integrates the strengths of face-to-face and online learning to address worthwhileeducationalgoals" (Garrison & Vaughn, 2008).

In (Kitchenman, 2011), *Blended Learning* is defined as a versatile tool with which to address all sorts of problems, to analyze their nature, and to treat them with greater depth and scope than other, more traditional approaches. Blended learning taps multiple resources to bridge the gulf between ordinary, everydayclassroomsandthe 21st-century skills our children should acquire.

Blended learning is also about creating a more flexible learning environment. According to Collis and Moonen (2001), flexible learning has often been understood as distance education. However, this is not necessarily the case. "Flexibility can involve options in course resources, in types of learning activities, in media to support learning" even for full-time, on-campus students (Collis & Moonen, 2001, p. 9). Flexibility requires technologies because they enable students to overcome the limitations of time, location, delivery method, and the communication style offered in many face-to-face courses.

The use and management of learning technologies have often been associated with distance education programs and with faculty/students who are "digital natives" participating in virtual environments. In blended learning, the web-based technologies are transferred to the face-to-face classroom to enhance interaction and student-centered activities (web-enhanced classrooms) or to enhance online education through classroom contact (classroom-enhanced online education) (Dziuban et al., 2004).

In a study on *Blended Courses as Drivers of Institutional Transformation* conducted by Charles D. Dziuban et al., at the University of Central Florida, USA, they concluded that institutional transformation at a university when properly managed, blended initiatives reposition the institution for better response to current student lifestyles and educational requirements while increasing the efficient use of classroom space. Outcome data suggest that these benefits enhance learning effectiveness while mitigating infrastructure expansion requirements created by demographic pressures.

In the same study, the reaction of the faculty to the associated workload, level of interaction within the course, and willingness to continue teaching in each modality was collected. The results showed that faculty responses to teaching blended courses were overwhelmingly positive.

At St. Paul University Philippines, particularly in the Graduate School Department, the Blended Mode of instructional delivery, which is a combination of face-to-face classroom interaction and technology-driven independent and research-based learning is employed. Research on Blended Learning Best Practices and Challenges toward 21st Century Learning was conducted in 2017, but no further research was done to investigate its effectiveness. Hence, this study is conducted to find out the effectiveness of the Blended-Learning in the Graduate School of St. Paul University Philippines.

1.1 Conceptual Framework

The investigation was based on the following framework.

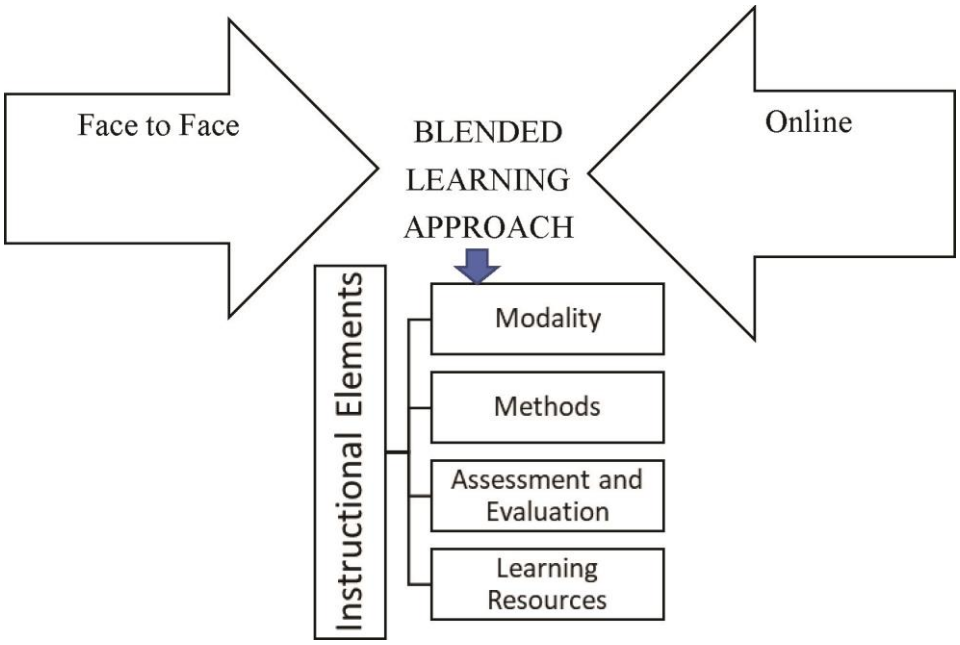

Figure 1. Blended Learning Approach Model

Figure 1 presents the BLA model with which the study was anchored. As shown, the BLA is a conglomeration of three teaching modalities, namely, the face-to-face modality, the modular approach, and online instruction.

Face-to-face learning is an instructional method where the course content and learning materials are taught in-person to a group of students. This allows for live interaction between a learner and an instructor. It is the most traditional type of learning instruction. Learners benefit from a greater level of interaction with their fellow students as well. In face-to-face learning, students are held accountable for their progress at the class's specific meeting date and time. Face-to-face learning ensures a better understanding and recollection of lesson content and gives class members a chance to bond with one

another (Tophat Glossary, n.d.).

Modular Learning features individualized instruction that allows learners to use Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) in print or digital format/electronic copy, whichever applies to the learner. Learners under Modular Learning can also use other resources such as Learner's Materials, textbooks, activity sheets, study guides, and other study materials. Usually in this mode, teachers will have to deliver appropriate learning materials. However, students can also access these materials by downloading electronic copies through their computer, tablet PC, or smartphone Malaya (2020).

E-learning, also referred to as online learning or electronic learning, is the acquisition of knowledge that takes place through electronic technologies and media. In simple language, e-learning is defined as "learning that is enabled electronically". Typically, e-learning is conducted on the Internet, where students can access their learning materials online at any place and time. E-Learning most often takes place in the form of online courses, online degrees, or online programs (Abernathy, 2019).

In the context of the study, the assessment of the implementation of the BLA was focused on the four key elements, namely, the instructional modalities, methods, assessment and evaluation, and learning resources. The instructional modalities involve the three aforementioned teaching modes. Methods include the strategies utilized by teachers in the delivery of the content in the various teaching modes. Assessment includes the different means which the teacher uses in measuring learning outcomes. The Learning resources encompass the teaching tools, facilities, and equipment used by the teacher in the delivery of the lesson through the various teaching modalities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess the implementation of the blended learning approach at the graduate school level.

More specifically, the study aimed to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the profile of the faculty participants in terms of the following:
   - 1.1 Subjects handled;
   - 1.2 Number of subject preparations;
   - 1.3 Number of years in teaching in the Graduate School; and
   - 1.4 Employment status (parttime/fulltime)?
2. What is the profile of the student participants in terms of the following:
   - 2.1 program cluster;
   - 2.2 program; and
   - 2.2 graduate-level?
3. What is the extent of implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School concerning the instructional elements?
   - 3.1 modality
   - 3.2 methods
   - 3.3 assessment and evaluation

3.4 learning resources

4. Is there a significant difference in the participants' assessment of the extent of implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School concerning the instructional elements when they are grouped according to profile variables?

5. What are the strengths of the Blended Learning Approach as assessed by the participants?

6. What are the challenges encountered by the participants on the Blended Learning Approach in Graduate School delivery of instruction?

1.3 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the participants' assessment of the extent of implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School concerning the instructional elements when they are grouped according to profile variables.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

The study was limited to the assessment of the implementation of the BLA at the graduate school level. This study was conducted during the academic year 2018-2019 which covered faculty and students as study participants. The study would not endeavor to establish the effectiveness of the approach but was solely focused on the extent of implementation of the approach concerning the defined instructional elements.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized the mixed research approach. The quantitative approach dealt with the participants' profile and their assessment of the extent of implementation of the BLA for the defined instructional elements. The qualitative approach dealt with the responses of the participants regarding their views on the strengths of the BLA and the challenges they encountered in the implementation of the BLA. More specifically, the study utilized the descriptive causal-comparative research design as it investigated factors that affect their assessment of the implementation of the BLA.

2.2 Participants of the Study

The study covered two groups of participants particularly, the total population of graduate school faculty [N=42] and a random sample of students [315] for the academic year 2018-2019. The stratified random sampling was used in selecting the student participants with the program as the main strata under consideration.

2.3 Instrumentation

The survey questionnaire was the main tool that was used in data gathering. The survey tool involved three parts, the first part of which sought data on the personal profile of the participants, the second part asked for the participants' assessment on the implementation of the BLA, and the third part involved an open-ended question to elicit the participants' views on the strengths of the BLA as well as the

challenges they experienced in the implementation of the said approach.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The data were gathered through the following procedure:

1. The researcher sought permission from the VP academics for the conduct of the study.
2. The researcher identified the study participants and secured Informed consent from them.
3. The research personally administered the questionnaire to the two groups of participants.
4. The participants' responses were organized using appropriate data analysis tools.

2.5 Data Analysis Tools

The data obtained from the study were subjected to the following data analysis tools:

The frequency and percentage count were used to analyze the profile of the participants.

The mean was used to interpret the assessment of the participants on the implementation of the BLA. The means were further interpreted using the four-point Likert scale in a low-moderate-high-very high continuum.

F-test was used to test the inferences set in the study.

The deductive thematic analysis was utilized to organize the participants' responses on their views regarding the strengths of the BLA and the challenges they encountered in the implementation of the said approach.

3. Results

3.1 Profile of the Faculty-Participants

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Faculty-Participants in Terms of Courses Taught

Subject Cluster	Frequency	Percentage
Core Subjects	24	57.14
Major Subjects	28	66.67
Cognate	13	30.95

The majority of the faculty teaches the major courses or core subjects. This is traced to the fact that the highest percentage of courses offered for all programs are major subjects, followed by core courses.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Faculty-Participants in Terms of Number of Course Preparations

Number of Subject Preparations	Frequency	Percentage
3	19	45.24
2	15	35.71
1	8	19.05
Total	42	100.00

As shown in Table 2, the largest cohort of faculty participants has 3-course preparations. In every semester, a faculty may handle at most 3 courses, thus, the highest number of course preparations is 3. Due to the variations on course offerings for each program, particularly the major courses, faculty tend to have three-course preparations.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Faculty-Participants in Terms of Number of Years in Teaching

Number of Years in Teaching	Frequency	Percentage
More than 10 years	22	52.38
6-10 years	17	40.48
1-5 years	3	7.14
Total	42	100.00

Table 3 shows that the majority [52.38] of the faculty have been teaching in graduate school for more than 10 years. This is an indicator of their commitment to sharing their expertise in graduate school.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Faculty-Participants in Terms of Courses Taught of Employment Status

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Full Time	36	85.71
Part- time	6	14.29
Total	42	100.00

The majority [85.71] of the faculty are full-time faculty. Only 6 or 14.29 % of the participants' are part-time faculty.

3.2 Profile of the Student-participants

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Student-Participants in Terms of Program Cluster, Program and Level

Program Cluster	Programs	Master's Level		Programs	Doctoral Level		Total	
		F	%		F	%	F	%
Health Sciences	MSN	48	22.43	DNS	15	14.85		
	MAN	12	5.61					
	Sub-Total	60	28.04	Sub-total	15	14.85	75	23.81
Education	MST	65	30.37	DME	5	4.95		
	MAED	23	10.75	PHD	27	26.73		
	Sub-Total	88	41.12	Sub-total	32	31.68	120	38.10
Information Technology	MIT	12	5.61	DIT	26	25.74	38	12.06
Business	MBA	7	3.27	DBM	5	4.95		
	MSHM	8	3.74	DHM	7	6.93		
	Sub-total	15	7.01	Sub-total	12	11.88	27	8.57
Social Sciences	MSSW	8	3.74	DPA	9	8.91		
	MOP	6	2.80	PHD PSYCHO	7	6.93		
	MAPSYCH	5	2.34					
	MPA	20	9.35					
	Sub-total	39	18.22	Sub-total	16	15.84	55	17.46
Total		214	100.00	Total	101	100.00	315	100.00

Table 5 reveals that the highest percentage [38.10] of the student-participants are enrolled in programs associated with education. These programs include the MST, MAED, DME, and Ph.D. Also, the table shows that there are more participants taken from the master's degree program which comprise 214 [67.94%] participants while those in the doctoral level comprise 101[32.06] participants. For the master's degree program, students enrolled in the MST program got the highest percentage [30.37%] followed by those who are enrolled in MSN program [22.43%]. For the Doctoral program, the highest percentage [26.73%] are enrolled in the Ph.D. program which is closely followed by those who are enrolled in the DIT program [25.74%].

3.3 The Extent of Implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School for the Instructional Elements

Table 6. Mean Assessment of the Faculty and Student Participants on the Extent of Implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School Concerning Modality

Indicators	Faculty		Students	
	x	DI	X	DI
1. Teacher-Student interaction is done face-to-face (onsite).	2.83	H	2.92	H
2. Teacher-student interaction is conducted through non-physical means through technology but may not require internet connectivity.	1.85	M	2.12	M
3. Content delivery is done online in the synchronous mode where teachers and students interact simultaneously.	2.02	M	2.13	M
4. Content delivery is done online in the asynchronous mode where teachers monitor students' learning.	3.15	H	3.21	H
Category Mean	2.46	H	2.64	H

Table 6 reflects that the students assess the extent of implementation of the BLA through the defined modalities is at a high extent. The high extent of use of the desired modalities is an indicator that the students have adequate exposure to the different teaching modalities, particularly the face-to-face and online-asynchronous modes.

3.4 Methods

Table 7. Mean Assessment of the Faculty and Student Participants on the Extent of Implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School Concerning Methods

Indicators	Faculty		Students	
	x	DI	X	DI
1. The use of the following strategies in onsite/offline modes:				
1.1 Classroom lecture	2.87	H	2.93	H
1.2 Self-directed Modular Instruction	1.83	M	1.92	M
1.3 Project-Based Learning	2.89	H	3.02	H
Mean	2.53	H	2.62	H
2. The use of the following strategies in remote/distance-offline modes:				
2.1 Discussion through Video Conferencing	1.54	L	1.68	L
2.2 Interactive Online Collaboration and Discussion/Chat	2.92	H	3.11	H
2.3 Virtual Learning	2.89	H	2.92	H

Mean	2.45	M	2.57	H
3. The use of the following strategies in synchronous-online modes:				
3.1 Discussion through Video Conferencing	3.32	VH	3.28	VH
3.2 Interactive Online Collaboration and Discussion/Chat	3.28	VH	3.32	VH
3.3 Virtual Learning	2.78	H	2.83	H
Mean	3.13	H	3.14	H
4. The use of the following strategies in asynchronous-online modes:				
4.1 Reading Assignments	3.28	VH	3.35	VH
4.2 Pre-recorded Video/Audio Streaming	2.15	M	2.21	M
4.3 Research Activities	3.34	VH	3.42	VH
4.4 Case Study Analysis	2.56	H	2.76	H
4.5 Lectures	3.67	VH	3.87	VH
Mean	3.00	H	3.12	H
Category Mean	2.78	H	2.86	H

The data in Table 7 show that the students and faculty assess the implementation of the BLA methods as high. More specifically, both participants assessed the extent of implementation of synchronous-online modes such as discussion through Video Conferencing, and Interactive Online Collaboration and Discussion/Chat as well as the asynchronous-online mode such as Reading Assignments, Research Activities, and Lectures as Very High.

On the other hand, a low level of implementation was revealed on the use of the Discussion through Video Conferencing in remote/distance offline modes while there is a moderate level of implementation of the Self-directed Modular Instruction in onsite/offline modes and pre-recorded video/audio streaming in asynchronous modes.

3.5 Assessment and Evaluation

Table 8. Mean Assessment of the Faculty and Student Participants on the Extent of Implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School Concerning Assessment and Evaluation

Indicators	Faculty		Students	
	x	DI	X	DI
1. Appropriate feedbacking mechanisms were done by professors in either online or offline mode.	3.45	VH	3.28	VH
2. Assessment tasks match the learning outcomes.	3.65	VH	3.67	VH
3. Assessment forms used include either traditional and authentic assessments.	3.76	VH	3.45	VH

4. Multiple assessment strategies were used to measure students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.	2.34	M	2.43	M
5. Students' grades are accessible to students.	3.67	VH	3.87	VH
6. The use of offline assessment modes such as:				
6.1 Project-based Assessment	3.15	H	3.02	H
6.2 Narrative Reports/Laboratory Reports	2.35	M	2.46	M
6.3 Portfolio Assessment	1.89	M	2.00	M
6.4 Reflection Paper	3.28	VH	3.65	VH
6.5 Research/Literature Review	3.78	VH	3.67	VH
6.6 Written Correspondence/Essays	3.34	VH	3.40	VH
6.7 Case Analysis	3.35	VH	3.42	VH
Mean	3.02	H	3.09	H
7. Use of online assessment modes such as:				
7.1 Asynchronous and synchronous quizzes	2.80	H	2.76	H
7.2 Major examinations conducted in synchronous mode	3.26	VH	3.56	VH
Mean	3.03	H	3.16	H
Category Mean	3.27	VH	3.28	VH

Table 8 generally reveals that the two groups of participants assessed the extent of implementation of the BLA in graduate school instruction concerning Assessment and Evaluation at Very High. More specifically, assessment techniques with a very high level of implementation include the following: (1) providing feedback in either online or offline mode, (2) assessment tasks match the learning outcomes, (3) assessment forms used include either traditional and authentic assessments, (4) Students' grades are accessible to students, (5) Assessments in offline modes (e.g., Reflection Paper, Research/Literature Review, Written Correspondence/Essays, and Case Analysis), and online assessment modes such as major examinations in synchronous mode.

Assessment strategies such as the use of multiple assessment strategies to measure students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well Narrative Reports/Laboratory Reports, and Portfolio Assessment are implemented to a moderate extent.

3.6 Learning Resources

Table 9. Mean Assessment of the Faculty and Student Participants on the Extent of Implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School Concerning Learning Resources

Indicators	Faculty		Students	
	x	DI	X	DI
1. A link is provided to students to enable them to access library resources.	3.58	VH	3.67	VH
2. The use of the following learning resources in offline instructional mode:				
a. Learning Modules	2.21	M	2.48	M
b. Handouts/Worksheets/Lecture Notes/Manuals	3.27	VH	3.89	VH
c. Teaching Videos (i.e. videotaped simulations, lecture videos)	2.45	M	2.24	M
d. Open Educational Resources (OER)	1.87	M	3.11	H
e. Case Studies	3.37	VH	3.86	VH
Mean	2.69	H	2.90	H
3. The use of the following resources in online instructional mode:				
a. MSTeams	3.27	VH	3.67	VH
b. Frontlearners	1.56	L	1.49	L
c. EDIS	1.58	L	1.87	L
d. Google Meet	2.78	H	2.89	H
e. Zoom	3.06	M	3.17	M
f. Edmodo	2.02	M	1.80	M
g. Canvas	1.67	L	1.59	L
Mean	2.28	M	2.35	M
4. The use of the following Communication modes in the Instructional process				
a. email	3.89	VH	3.78	VH
b. text messaging	2.36	M	2.04	M
c. messenger/group chat	3.29	VH	3.45	VH
d. viber	1.98	L	1.98	L
Mean	2.88	H	2.81	H
Category Mean	2.85	H	2.97	H

In general, participants' assessment on the extent of implementation of BLA along Learning Resources got a high extent rating.

Noteworthy is the very high extent of use of the following learning resources: (1) A link is provided to students to enable them to access library resources, (2) offline instructional mode such as the use of Handouts/Worksheets/Lecture Notes/Manuals, and Case Studies, (3) online instructional modes such as MSTeams, and (4) communication modes such as email and messenger/group chat.

On the other hand, a low rating is given to the implementation of learning resources such as the use of Frontlearners, EDIS, and Canvas as online instructional modes, and Viber as a communication modality.

Table 10. Summary Table on the Mean Assessment of the Faculty and Student Participants on the Extent of Implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School Concerning Learning Resources

Instructional Areas	Faculty		Students	
	x	DI	X	DI
1. Modality	1.96	M	2.09	M
2. Methods	2.78	H	2.86	H
3. Assessment and Evaluation	3.27	VH	3.28	VH
4. Learning Resources	2.85	H	2.97	H
Overall Mean	2.72	H	2.80	H

In summary, the participants' extent of implementation of the BLA along the four learning areas is high. Most specifically, they rated the aspect on Assessment and Evaluation as very high, Methods, and Learning Resources as High while have a moderate rating for Modality.

3.7 F-Test Result on the Significant Difference in the Participants' Assessment of the Extent of Implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School For the Instructional Elements When they are Grouped According to Profile Variables

Table 11. F test Results on the Assessment of the Faculty-Participants on the Extent of Implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School Concerning the Instructional Elements When they are Grouped According to Profile Variables

Instructional Elements	Course Handled		Number of Course Preparation		Number of Years in Teaching in the Graduate School		Employment Status	
	F	PV	F	PV	F	PV	F	PV
Modality	2.56	0.15	2.03	0.23	2.14	0.21	2.76	0.67
Methods	1.89	0.09	1.93	0.15	1.87	0.18	2.18	0.21
Assessment and Evaluation	2.47	0.21	2.02	0.23	1.76	0.52	1.98	0.08
Learning Resources	2.79	0.13	2.17	0.17	1.92	0.28	1.87	0.13

As shown by the probability values that are less than 0.05, there exists no significant difference in the assessment of the faculty-participants on the extent of implementation of the BLA in the Graduate School for the instructional elements when they are grouped according to profile variables. This implies that regardless of the course handled, number of course preparations, number of years in teaching in the Graduate School, and Employment Status, the implementation of the BLA along the instructional elements are of the same extent.

Table 12. F test Results on the Assessment of the Student-Participants on the Extent of Implementation of the Blended Learning Approach in the Graduate School for the Instructional Elements When they are Grouped According to Profile Variables

Instructional Elements	Program Cluster		Program		Level	
	F	PV	F	PV	F	PV
Modality	2.67	0.23	2.09	0.17	2.45	0.12
Methods	2.18	0.16	1.91	0.27	2.18	0.17
Assessment and Evaluation	2.15	0.21	1.89	0.19	2.09	0.21
Learning Resources	2.67	0.34	2.17	0.25	1.92	0.15

The results reveal that the students do not differ in their assessment of the implementation of the BLA when they are grouped according to program cluster, program, and level. This result reflects the commitment of the Graduate School Unit in its initiatives to implement the BLA in its instructional delivery, an approach that is deemed appropriate for adult learners and the learning context brought by technological advancements.

3.8 Strengths of the Blended Learning Approach

Among the noted strengths of the BLA as exposed by the participants are as follows:

1. It enhances learning.
2. It promotes the a*cquisition of the desired skills and values.*
3. *It promotes heightened accessibility to learning*.
4. *It offers differentiation.*
5. *It promotes flexibility in learning*.

3.9 Challenges Encountered by the Participants on the Blended Learning Approach in Graduate School Delivery of Instruction

Among the challenges encountered by the students in their exposure to BLA are poor i*nternet connectivity and Power Interruption, Lack of Gadgets and Technical Issues, and Insufficient Resources*.

4. Discussion

The data in Table 1 indicate that majority of the teachers handle major subjects. The vast majority of the courses offered to graduate school are major subjects. These courses are offered to add up to the existing knowledge of the students in their field of expertise. This is intended for the mastery of their craft to improve the way they perform their tasks in their respective workplaces. The data in Table 2 implies that the number of subject preparations of faculty is manageable. Three subjects preparation is reasonable enough to allow the faculty to prepare their lessons and to monitor students' progress. Table 3 reflects that majority of the faculty have been in the teaching profession for more than 10 years. This indicates their passion and commitment to share their expertise in graduate school. The majority of the faculty are full-time employees of the University. These faculty handle subjects both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Some of them hold administrative functions in the University. The data in Table 5 reflects that the faculty from the different programs are represented. The table in Table 6 reflects that the high extent of implementation of the BLA through the face-to-face and online modalities. This result is an indication that the participants have rich exposure to the various teaching modalities. The data in Table 7 reflect the high extent of implementation of BLA concerning instructional methods. Noteworthy is their very high extent of implementation of the synchronous-online teaching modes such as discussion through Video Conferencing, and Interactive Online Collaboration and Discussion/Chat as well as the asynchronous-online mode such as Reading Assignments, Research Activities, and Lectures. These methods are those that involve either the face-to-face and online instructional modes. Most of the methods that were utilized promote the use of technology and the conduct of activities that promote critical thinking. Table 8 reflects that the faculty participants utilize varied assessment tools in providing feedback in either online or offline mode. This mode of assessment depends on the nature of tasks required from the students. Online assessments are oftentimes utilized in a distance learning mode where students could only be reached through online

modality. The assessment tasks that the faculty require the students match the learning outcomes that were defined in the syllabi. Further, teachers use either traditional and authentic assessments to measure whether students acquire the desired knowledge, attitudes, and skills as defined in the course syllabi. Furthermore, the faculty ensures that students' grades are accessible, and grade computations are transparent to show objectivity. Table 9 reflects that the faculty have a very high extent of use of learning resources particularly those that are linked to online modes. Students are provided with opportunities to access library resources through online modes. In the face-to-face modes, instructional materials such as Handouts/Worksheets/Lecture Notes/Manuals, and Case Studies are highly utilized. These materials are important aids to facilitate students in understanding the course content and the required outputs. Online instructional modes such as MSTeams and Zoom are commonly used especially for classes with foreign students or those on distance learning. Moreover, social resources such as email and messenger/group chat are highly utilized. Online resources such as the Frontlearners, EDIS, and Canvas for online instructional modes, and Viber for communication modality are rarely utilized by the participants due to their limited features and accessibility. In summary, the participants have a high extent of implementation of the BLA along modality, methods, assessment, and learning resources.

The data in Table 12 reveal that the faculty implementation of the BLA along the instructional elements are of the same extent regardless of the course they handled, number of course preparations, number of years in teaching in the Graduate School, and Employment Status.

The BLA enhances learning, promotes the acquisition of the desired skills and values, promotes heightened accessibility of learning, offers differentiation, and promotes flexibility of learning. Students' exposure to the blended learning approach leads them to a deeper understanding of the content and a higher level of content mastery. Teachers can track students' compliance to the learning activities and their extent of engagement and can monitor the amount of learning that they acquired. Because most students today are surrounded by technology in their everyday life, they often engage more easily with the material when technology is incorporated in instructional settings (Walker, 2018). The BLA incorporates multiple methods of instruction from an assortment of perspectives, thus, proves to have an effective learning outcome for most students involved (Giarla, n.d.).

The BLA exposes the students to meaningful and varied activities that allow them to acquire and improve their digital skills. The various instructional modes particularly the use of online learning trained the students to acquire digital skills. Students become empowered as they expand their technological skills and competency with technology (Walker, 2018). Multifarious activities harness students' innovative skills. The BLA also trained students to acquire adaptability skills as they deal with one mode to the other. In their written outputs where they derived ideas from reputable sources, they learned the skill in proper documentation of sources and requirements. Moreover, BLA trains students to be independent learners, have a strong determination to learn, and commitment towards attaining quality learning.

The BLA provides accessible materials both print and non-print. Students consider BLA as a convenient mode of learning since the teacher has a range of options for the delivery of lessons. BLA is considered safe and comfortable since it reduces travels to schools as there are other teaching modes to choose from such as online or modular. With this, there is an ease of access to education. BLA is also the most appropriate instructional mode for professionals as they are given time to manage their learning while performing their work functions.

The high-quality digital educational tools allow teachers to measure each student's learning level and provide activities and instruction that meet the child where they are to give them appropriate lesson material (Walker, 2018).

BLA is multimodal, hence provide variation to students, particularly the mode of teaching and assessment. Students in remote areas can attend classes through other modes, can learn while working. Students' exposure to various online learning modalities hastens their flexibility skills caters to various learning styles/diverse students. Blended learning classes offer flexibility for teachers in how they present material and for students in the pace and variety of the learning approaches they experience (Walker, 2018). Because blended learning incorporates a variety of instructional approaches, learning activities can be tailored to address numerous learning styles. Blended learning also offers flexible time frames that can be personalized to each person, offering them the ability to learn at their own pace (Giarla, n.d.).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of the findings, the following conclusion is arrived at:

The graduate school has been successful in the implementation of the BLA as supported by the high rating it garnered in areas of modality, instructional methods, assessment and evaluation techniques, and learning resources. This is made possible through the strong support of the administration and commitment of the graduate school faculty in the attainment of the graduate school program objectives through the BLA. Moreover, clarity of the implementation plan of the BLA and the constant follow-up and monitoring from the top administration facilitated the implementation of the approach. Also, the subjects handled, number of subject-preparation, number of years in teaching, and employment status of faculty do not affect the extent of implementation of the BLA in the graduate school. The strengths of the BLA as exposed by the participants are driving factors for its high extent of implementation. The BLA enhanced learning, assists in the acquisition of the desired skills and values, enhances the accessibility of learning, provides opportunities for differentiation, and promotes flexibility of learning. The challenges encountered by the participants are external thus, considered as factors that are beyond control.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are derived:

1. The graduate school to sustain the high extent of implementation of BLA as an instructional approach.
2. The administration and faculty may consider enhancing the implementation of the BLA specifically on areas where these are rated at 'moderate' levels.
3. Faculty may consider investigating the effectiveness of the BLA in improving learning outcomes.
4. Future research may consider expanding the investigation by considering other related variables.

References

Abernathy, D. (2019). *What is E-Learning?* Retrieved from https://e-student.org/what-is-e-learning/

Chen, P. D., Lambert, A. D., & Guidry, K. R. (2010). Engaging online learners: The impact of Web-based learning technology on college student engagement. *Computers & Education, 54*(4), 1222-1232. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2009.11.008

Dziuban, C. D., Hartman, J. L., & Moskal, P. D. (2007). Blended learning. *Educause Centre for Applied Research, 7*, 1-12.

Garrison, R. D., & Vaughn, N. D. (2008). *Blended learning in higher education: Framework, principles, and guidelines*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118269558

Giarla, A. (n.d.). *The Benefits of Blended Learning. Teach Thought*. Retrieved from https://www.teachthought.com/technology/the-benefits-of-blended-learning/

Graham, C. R. (2006). Blended learning systems: Definitions, current trends, and future directions. In C. Bonk, & C. Graham (Eds.), *The handbook of blended learning: Global perspectives, local designs* (pp. 3-21). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.

Kitchenham, A. (2011). Blended learning across disciplines: Models for Implementation. *University of Northern British Columbia, Canada. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-60960-479-0*

Malaya, B. (2020). *Modular Distance Learning: Here's what you need to know*. Retrieved from https://www.whatalife.ph/modular-distance-learning-heres-what-you-need-to-know/

Tophat, G. (n.d.). *Face to Face Learning*. Retrieved from https://tophat.com/glossary/f/face-to-face-learning/

Torrisi-Steele, G., & Drew, S. (2013, May 28). *The literature landscape of blended learning in higher education: The need for better understanding of the academic blended practice*. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2013.786720

Walker, S. (2018, September 12). 5 Benefits of Blended Learning. *Topics in Education. I imagine*. Retrieved from https://www.imaginelearning.com/blog/2018/09/5-benefits-blended-learning