# Commentaries for the article "An experience of Synchronous On- Line Classes" by Marta Genis Pedra and M. Teresa Martin de Lama

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## RESUMEN

En este trabajo se describe la metodología utilizada en la Maestría en Educación Bilingüe de la Universidad Nebrija destacando el método blended learning. Los autores presentan y describen los distintos instrumentos que se utilizan para brindar a los estudiantes oportunidades efectivas en el aprendizaje del contenido y la lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje mixto, aprendizaje síncrono, adquisición de lenguas extranjeras, aprendizaje active, interacción en tiempo real, plataforma virtual colaborativa

## ABSTRACT

*This paper describes the methodology used in the Masters of Bilingual Education at Nebrija University highlighting the blended learning method. The authors present and describe the different instruments used to provide students with effective opportunities in learning the content and foreign language.*

*Keywords: blended learning, synchronous learning, foreign language acquisition, active learning, live interaction, collaborative virtual platform*

The article *An experience of Synchronous On-Line Classes* by Marta Genis Pedra and M. Teresa Martin of Lama explains in simple terms the implementation of a methodology endorsed in other fields and that now underlies the teaching of Masters in Bilingual Education at Antonio de Nebrija University.

This article is very interesting and provides enough information to understand the practice of one aspect of blended learning methodology: synchronous communication. The authors know the subject well and understand its elements as well as its practical operation.

Blended learning places the reader in the subject. Its methodology is based on the challenges facing higher education today. This article discusses various moments in the evolution of blended learning from the first appearances in networks to the current debate on the need for a new methodology for teaching in the digital age.

With its development; the previous experiences in different parts of the world and in other subjects, the authors contextualize practice holding Nebrija University Masters in teaching bilingual education.

The authors establish that blended learning is a complex, yet flexible methodology. The authors recognize the advantages of the combination of current teaching methods in the aspects of great value specifying the time and mobility of students, their learning style, and constant interaction possibilities. This not only recognizes the value of saving money but other elements that are present in the teaching-learning process.

The content of this article undoubtedly serves as a basis and reference for future investigations. Those interested in establishing the effectiveness of the use of blended learning methodology not only in the current program of bilingual Master Nebrija University but also in other institutions and programs have to take into consideration the key benchmark offering this article.

Authors present and describe a coherent, comprehensive, and real application of e-learning in higher education based on a real practice experience.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In the Theoretical background, authors explore a timeframe of blended learning from 1971 when the concept networking was mentioned.

The 21 century brought new forms of pedagogy emerging from the use of innovative technologies, including computing and networked devices.

Today we live in a culture where technology has affected everything. This article considers the crucial essence of social learning "shift between using technology to support the individual to using technology to support relationships between individuals".

The authors of the article have taken into account the current discussion around a theory of e-learning. There are several hypotheses in favor and against a new theory for e learning. It is an ongoing debate. A new theory of learning is an imperative since a new way of acquiring knowledge has to be explained in a different way.

The authors of this article have explored substantial changes over the first decade of the 21st century. The reader can understand the continued development of e-learning. There have been different version to identify this methodology can be distinguished however some common elements that remain stable in any current approach.

In these days, the prevailing approach focuses on the combination of virtual- digital and face-to -face. The most recent evolution of e-learning has become integration in time and space in which there is an interaction. There are two general strategies for communicating in a blended learning methodology: Asynchronous and Synchronous. There are advantages and disadvantages in each of them. The first one enables flexibility while the second one takes place like a real conversation. Each proves valuable in its own way.

It has been well established that this theory focuses its attention toward critical thinking and knowledge construction. In this case, it is recognized that in some ways it is based on the theory of constructivism. Learners' interactions with their environment foster the ability to create digital communities. This recognition is a combination of oral and writing synchrony that supports the development of reflective thinking.

Closing the theoretical background part of this article, the authors take up the theory of connectivism to emphasize the idea for the need for a new theory as a basis for learning in the digital age. Instead of course design, it is necessary to design work with social networking for learning that responds to the true interests of the students.

The constant development of technology and how it is putting into practice in education service is a permanent challenge for modern education. The new model of teaching and learning requires taking into consideration not only the transmission and reception of information, but also its processing and the infinite possibilities of handling the information in a world in which knowledge is transmitted by a myriad of routes.

## BLENDED - LEARNING METHODOLOGY

This sectionpresents the novelty of the methodology and its rapid evolution which has allowed flexibility. The authors recognize that there is no standardization of the use of the combination of digital tools or resources to carry out the teaching and learning process. Each institution or individual adapts the methodology according to their interests.

In some cases this varies by levels of activity, full courses, and parts of a program or a whole institution. In each case the idea that students are no longer simple receivers to become active participants in their own learning is crucial.

Nowadays, the challenge facing higher education institutions lies in the opportunity of redesign; reorganize the teaching experience with which approach increased efficiency, effectiveness and convenience. Nebrija University has already chosen.

## ELEMENTS OF BLENDED LEARNING

Based on the recognition of the variety of definitions, styles and elements, the authors emphasize the most common among them. It offers the definition of each element, its application and practical advantages.

**BLENDED-LEARNING AT NEBRIJA UNIVERSITY**

This part of the article is dedicated to raise awareness of the history of the practice of blended learning methodology at the University Antonio de Nebrija.

It is a brief explanation of the fundamentals of the paradigm that combines classroom interaction between teachers and students and between students themselves. The frequency of face to face periods used to occur in two-week periods intensively.

The reader is located in time and space to understand the circumstances in which they conduct the incorporation of asynchronous element of communication in teaching bilingual master's program at the University Nebrija.

It specifies that the implementation of this type of blended learning meets the needs of both the institution and students.

**MASTER' DEGREE IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

The implementation of a Masters program in bilingual education responds to the growing demand for teachers for teaching bilingual English and Spanish.In the last decades in Spain there is an increased interest in the bilingual teaching. It has become necessary prepare teachers capable of teaching in bilingual settings. This is a challenge for the education to prepare competent professionals to meet that demand. Nebrija University has been a pioneer in this task.

This part of the article characterizes the master's program offered by the University Bilingual Nebrija. The authors explain the overall purpose of the preparation program that includes linguistic, pragmatic and cultural perspectives. The university looks for the preparation of pedagogical staff methodologically able to effectively and efficiently lead the challenge of bilingual education.

This part of the article closes with an explanation of three components of the blended-learning methodology applied to the Masters program in Nebrija in bilingual education: on-line classes, campus On Campus Classes and Virtual Tools.

The authors explain not only the online tools, but also virtual space that facilitates a better understanding of them.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The article offers findings that justify the use of blended-learning methodology to meet the needs of modern students. The authors conclude by stressing the need for further research to determine the effectiveness of this methodology. References are original and allow those interested to go to the sources to expand on the subject.