Incorporating blended learning approach in higher education with innovative strategies practiced during the pandemic: Exploring students' voices

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Abstract

Blended learning gained huge scholarly attention in Bangladesh during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Online teaching with tech-mediated tools was the only solution during the pandemic. Though it was the emergency response to continue teaching and learning during the disruptive situation, it paved the way to practice blended learning with the combination of face-to-face and online instruction. This paper reviews previously published literature, especially newspapers focusing on the pandemic and higher education in Bangladesh and accumulates students' voices to identify innovative techniques practiced during the pandemic so that these can be utilized to form a blended learning approach. Focusing on the qualitative approach, data were collected through published literature and students' interviews. Data from published materials were analyzed using the document analysis procedure, whereas data gathered from interviews were analyzed using the thematic analysis procedure. Findings highlight both the failure and success stories along with the way of utilizing those success stories to implement blended learning. Based on the findings focusing on innovative COVID practices, this study, drawing the attention of the relevant policymakers, presents a blended lesson plan that can be utilized for English language teaching in Bangladeshi higher educational institutions.

Keywords   Blended learning, Bangladesh, Higher Education, Innovative strategies, Post-pandemic time.

Paper type   Research paper

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Blended learning, also known as hybrid learning, is a teaching-learning approach that integrates face-to-face instructions and online learning activities. It incorporates technology and digital resources into the teaching-learning process, allowing students to learn synchronously and asynchronously. It is an adaptive, dynamic, self-organizing, and co-evolving system that is not only the combination of face-to-face learning and technology-assisted instruction; rather, it is a complex integration of both face-to-

face learning and technology-assisted learning. (Wang, Han, & Yang, 2015). The idea of blended learning is not new, and the emergence of this concept can be traced to the advent of 2000 (Güzer & Caner, 2014). Blended learning and online learning are innovative practices resulting from the disruption caused by the pandemic (Cheung, Wang, & Kwok, 2023). It became popular in Bangladesh during and after the disruptive situation of COVID-19.

The year 2020 was marked as the year of the Global Pandemic with the spread of COVID-19, emerging from Wuhan, China to every corner of the world. It put the world into a horrifying halt. The lives of people, the economy, and education became affected by the outbreak of it. There is no doubt that education became the worst victim of it as there was a global call to shut down all educational institutions worldwide to reduce the quick spread of this virus. Bangladesh, like other countries, struggled with this deadly virus. Amid despair and uncertainty, the only option that came to an effect to continue education was the introduction of tech-mediated tools like Zoom, Google Meet, recorded videos, WhatsApp, Facebook groups, and the likes. Learning and teaching continued through these tools synchronously and asynchronously. The silver lining that peeped amid that situation was that online learning-teaching paved the way to develop innovations to conduct classes. Though it was a quick response to tackle the unavoidable situations of continuing education during the pandemic, it introduced new pedagogies, new techniques, and innovativeness that can be incorporated into the classroom even after the pandemic.

1.2. Significance of the study

By analyzing and identifying innovative teaching and learning practices during the pandemic, the study may help to implement blended learning in higher education, allowing students to learn synchronously and asynchronously while utilizing technological affordances. Besides, this approach can be used as an effective strategy to continue education during future disruptions. It can provide incisive guidance on effectively integrating technology and online resources into pedagogies to support blended learning. Demonstrating innovative techniques utilized throughout the epidemic can encourage instructional creativity among teachers, resulting in a more stimulating and effective learning environment. Adopting a blended learning approach can direct stakeholders towards a more effective teaching and learning approach.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The research aims to find the view of students of higher educational institutions regarding the innovative strategies practiced during the

pandemic that can be implemented in the classroom to incorporate blended learning. It also urges to know the success stories and failure stories regarding tech-mediated education. It highlights those success stories of blended learning so that these can be included in university curricula.

1.4. Research questions
This research endeavored to find answers to the following questions:
➢ What innovative learning and teaching strategies were practiced during the pandemic?
➢ What are the effective and non-effective practices?
➢ How can those effective practices be utilized to adopt blended learning?

2. Literature review
2.1. Education during the pandemic
Like other countries of the world, classes in Bangladesh were being taught online during the pandemic. The platforms used to conduct classes are Google Meet and Google Classroom (Star Online Report, 2020). The government broadcast live lessons for secondary school pupils via national TV stations (Das & Kusakabe, 2021). Most private universities also started offering their students online courses or distance learning (Shahriar, Arafat, Sultana, Akter, Khan, Nur, & Khan, 2021). Daffodil International University was one of the educational institutions in Bangladesh that quickly transitioned to online teaching during the pandemic. This university has its own Learning Management System (LMS), and an online platform named Blended Learning Center (BLC) (Kazal & Rahman, 2020). Many other universities, like the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, East Delta University, and American International University Bangladesh shifted their classes online (Jasim, 2020). Brac University has its own online learning platform named "BuX", and students can use pre-recorded lessons, participate in numerous tests and quizzes and submit assignments utilizing "buX", developed using the well-known MOOC platform provided by EdX. The university conducted its online education through this MOOC platform (Iqbal, 2020).

The Ministry of Education of Bangladesh launched a program for the students named "Amar Ghore Amar School" (i.e., My school in my house) to narrow down the preceding digital divide where pre-recorded classes were telecast in Sangsad TV (Das & Kusakabe, 2021). The University of Liberal Arts conducted its online class using Moodle, a Learning Management System (LMS), Zoom, and Hangouts (Genilo & Rahman, 2020). During the disruptive time of the pandemic, online

platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and video communication technologies grew in prominence for learning and teaching (Khan, Rahman, & Islam, 2021).

2.2. Challenges faced by learners
Challenges faced by students across Bangladesh were poor internet connection, fall of quality of classes that teachers conducted, poor socio-economic conditions of the students as everybody could not buy a smartphone, computer, or laptop, high expenses for internet data package and lack of social and emotional wellbeing (Jameel & Real, 2020). Other challenges were a lack of readiness and engagement, a smaller range of classroom activities, and understanding of teachings via online platforms (Al-Amin, Zubayer, Deb, & Hasan, 2021). Lack of technological infrastructure, proficiency, lack of proper online teaching pedagogy, and lack of proper resources were some of the problems of online classes (Iqbal, 2020).

2.3. Challenges faced by teachers
Teachers of educational institutions faced several challenges in offering education through online platforms. Major challenges were the lack of proper technological devices among participants to access classes, the digital divide, lack of proper technological efficiency and lack of proper online pedagogy, challenges to conduct online assessments, and adverse psychological effects on teachers and students (Khan, Rahman, & Islam, 2021). Other mentionable challenges were academic dishonesty or academic integrity violations, infrastructure, coverage of learning outcomes, and commitment of students to submit assessments. Solutions to stop academic dishonesty in remote teaching were making different questions for each student, making online presentations, and merging several assessment methods together. (Guangul, Suhail, Khalit, & Khidhir, 2020). Other concerns of the teachers were controlling the students' attention, engaging them in lectures, and lack of proper skills in using technology tools (Shohel, Roy, Ashrafuzzaman, & Babu, 2022).

2.4. Lessons learned during pandemic
The pandemic taught rethinking about the system of education. New and improved learning tools were introduced gradually in the sector of education. Remote learning brought flexibility for teachers and students. During the pandemic, smartphones turned from a luxury item to a necessity. Smartphones acted as substitutes for gadgets that were necessary for online education. During the pandemic, smart devices brought about a new opportunity to digitize education and rethink improving the system of education (Chowdhury, 2021). Wal (2020) shed

light on creating online, active blended learning by integrating both interactive classes and pre-recorded classes and it can be carried out through platforms like Google Classroom and Google Meet. Biswas (2020) remarked that "the university authorities could introduce the Learning Management System (LMS) or Content Management System (CMS) as most of the world universities conduct through it" (Biswas, 2020). Educational software can be an excellent solution to digitize the education system of Bangladesh after the pandemic is over (Bhuiyan, 2020). COVID accelerated the digital transformation in higher education, and students need to foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills among themselves (Rahman & Nessa, 2020). By creating high bandwidth and secure network connectivity at universities, BdREN, an initiative of HEQEP, started the foundation of digital infrastructure for higher education institutions (Mustahsin-Ul-Aziz & Ahmed, 2020). A collaborative response by the government, technology-integrated education, equity, newness in pedagogy and assessments, and the provision of multiple ways to support learning can be helpful in enriching the educational system (Sarwar, Hossain, & Kaye, 2020).

2.5. Implementation of blended learning after the disruption era
Al-Amin, Zubayer, Deb, & Hasan (2021) examined blended learning as beneficial for slow learners, aiding in the development of digital literacy and cutting down on the amount of time spent in traditional classes even though learning as a whole would grow. Implementing blended learning in higher educational institutions would be challenging due to a lack of necessary tools and technologies, a lack of enthusiasm for autonomous learning, a lack of interaction between teachers and students, and a lack of appropriate assessment strategies. Ara and Mahmud (2021) highlighted students' and teachers' voices to examine the potential and difficulties of implementing blended learning in public universities. During this time of technological innovation, it is necessary to get updated with digital skills in education, and blended learning can facilitate it. The primary difficulty in implementing blended learning is infrastructural development. Khan (2021) provides a framework for blended learning. According to his framework, classes can be conducted online and offline. Practical classes, extra-curricular activities, and final presentations can be conducted offline. Quizzes and assignments may be completed online, but all tests and examinations must be taken on campus.

2.6. Blended learning policy in Bangladesh
The government of Bangladesh has developed a national policy for blended education. To develop a blended learning framework for Bangladeshi higher educational institutions, many factors such as

budgetary allocations and other requirements should be considered (UGC, 2022, p. 5). Universities need to adapt their existing pedagogy and must ensure technological infrastructure (UGC, 2022, p. 6). Universities should ensure technological support as well to teachers, students, and a trained staff body (UGC, 2022, p. 8-9).

2.7. Literature gap

Extensive research was carried out on the challenges teachers and learners faced during the pandemic. Also, research was carried out on introducing blended learning after the pandemic, but research highlighting students' voices to implement a blended learning approach after the pandemic seems absent. As a result, this research tried to fill this gap by prioritizing students' voices to incorporate blended learning through innovative during-COVID practices.

3. Methodology

Employing the qualitative research approach, the researcher conducted document analysis and thematic analysis procedures to conduct this research.

Data were collected from related published materials since 2020 and from students' semi-structured interviews. Students were selected through random sampling. Five undergraduate students and five master's students participated in this study. The information of the students is provided below.

Gender	Male	4
	Female	6
Level of study	Undergraduate	5
	Masters	5

The researcher set the code by breaking down data into several parts. The researcher then categorized the coded words/phrases under certain themes in accordance with the findings. The researcher sought the right words that convey the essence of what they wanted to be conveyed.

4. Findings and discussion

Collected data were analyzed thematically and discussed from a critical point of view. By analyzing these data, several failure stories and success stories of education during the pandemic were identified. In discussing the findings, the researcher focused on answering the research questions that were written in this study.

4.1. Failure stories

Major failure stories that were identified after reviewing related literature are poor internet connection, expenses of internet and lack of gadgets, growing digital divide due to poor internet connection, quality of classes, passive learners, lack of proper infrastructure and lack of training among teachers, reliability of tests and lack of emotional wellbeing.

4.1.1. Poor internet connection and expenses of internet

Emergency remote teaching forced students and teachers to participate in classes online, but poor internet connection was a burning issue in this mode of synchronous classes. Classes were being held synchronously via Zoom or Google Meet. The frustrating issue was that teachers and students could not attend classes smoothly due to network fluctuation, and ZOOM burnout became a familiar issue. As a result, both teachers and students had to combat low internet connection, and most of the class time was eaten up by the internet.

> "During the lockdown period, we went to our village home and there was no broadband internet at that time in our village home.
> I had to face serious problems due to internet connection at the time of attending class through ZOOM ". (P7)

Amid the situation of logging in and logging out, it was hard to concentrate on classes. Load shedding or electricity problems and internet hazards were vital reasons for learners not to be regular in online classes (Al-Amin, Zubayer, Deb, & Hasan, 2021). Many students from rural areas and low-income families were unable to take advantage of online education because of issues with access to the internet and the high cost of mobile data (Jasim & Sajid, 2020).

4.1.2. Digital divide

Because of poor internet connection and lack of technological devices, all students were not getting equal access to education. Several students were being deprived. As a result, the digital divide grew among students who were getting access to the internet and gadgets and who were not getting access to the internet and gadgets. For that reason, their education was being hampered, and the digital divide prevailed. Alamgir (2021) stated that "most students in urban areas have access to learning through the internet, but the digital divide has so far proved to be a great disadvantage for underprivileged learners as they face the prospect of dropping out, mainly for the lack of devices and poor access to the internet" (para. 13).

4.1.3. Quality of classes

Many students reported that the quality of teaching was degraded during remote classes. "It's rather evident that the channels of communication between students and teachers have become severely strained, with both parties failing to fully understand each other's shortcomings" (Jameel &

Real, 2020, para. 10). Questions were raised regarding several issues like the mode of teaching. Many teachers were delivering their lessons in the same manner as they would in traditional face-to-face classes. Literary courses at university levels were not so interactive as they were likely to be. Teachers were providing lecture notes and study materials for literary courses, but this sort of approach was tiring for the students as it needed to be more interactive and more open. "I could not enjoy my literature classes very much. I could not feel the lines that were written in the book and ultimately classes seemed lifeless to me, but language classes did not seem such boring." (P9)

Besides, some students opine that most of the teachers were busy completing their syllabus, and the quality of online classes was distant from face-to-face classes. Theoretical classes were conducted, but lab classes were postponed as the institutions were shut down.

4.1.4. Passive learners

During synchronous online classes, students keep their microphones off, which is an etiquette of online teaching, but the negative aspect goes with it as well. Certain students silently exited the online classroom without providing responses when teachers posed questions, and those students attempted to justify this behavior by attributing it to an internet hazard.

> "I admit that I used to remain silent in the class if teachers asked any questions and later, I said that I did not hear anything because of network fluctuation. I know this was a very bad habit, but I did it many many times." (P1)

4.1.5. Lack of infrastructure and training among teachers

Starting remote teaching was an emergency response to an emergency call, and educational institutions abruptly started their e-journey. For that reason, all educational institutions did not have the proper infrastructure necessary for e-learning. Besides, teachers were not trained to conduct classes online as well. Aged teachers faced difficulties coping with the online teaching platform.

4.1.6. Reliability of tests

Conducting tests online is a troublesome job in Bangladesh, as this country is not so developed in technology to conduct tests online. Many educational institutions conducted assessments through assignments. Students had the opportunity to copy from many sources while working on their assignments. Certain universities administered online tests without the requisite proctoring. As a result, many students used to follow dishonest means like copying from books or the internet. "I didn't at first follow any unfair means, but I saw how many of my friends were getting

better grades without putting in any extra effort "(P10). These issues raised questions regarding the reliability of scores gained by students.

4.2. Success Stories and innovative strategies

Success stories or effective practices and innovative strategies that go hand in hand with failure stories are synchronous online teaching through TV channels, recorded classes, introduction to LMS, tech-savvy generation, and learner autonomy.

4.2.1. Asynchronous online teaching via TV

To minimize the growing digital divide and to bridge the gap as much as possible, the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh launched the program "Amar Ghore Amar School" (i.e., My school in my home) in Sangsad TV for the students of primary and secondary levels where live classes were telecast. Students got benefitted from this program, and by participating in this program, they could keep track of their education.

4.2.2. Recorded class

Recorded class is one of the features that allows teachers to record their classes at the time of conducting synchronous classes. Zoom or Google Meet permits to record classes that are conducted by teachers. Recorded classes created an opportunity for students who missed classes for any unavoidable reason. Furthermore, students could listen to their classes again if they faced difficulties in their lessons.

"Many students in my class missed classes regularly because of their limited access to the internet, so our lecturers started recording the lessons and sent them to us over WhatsApp. As a result, we could listen to the sections we had trouble with. During that time, I also developed the habit of carefully transcribing my teachers' every word". (P4)

4.2.3. Introduction to LMS

The culture of introducing e-learning platforms has been introduced to many universities. Many universities have been facilitating their e-learning through the Learning Management System (LMS). Brac University has its own LMS, buX, allowing students to access pre-recorded classes, participate in quizzes and examinations and submit assignments. Daffodil International University has its own LMS, BLC or Blended Learning Center. The University of Liberal Arts uses the LMS, named Moodle. Many universities use Moodle, Google Classroom, and CANVAS.

"During that time, our instructor utilized CANVAS LMS, and we were able to readily access all course materials, submit assignments, and take quizzes". (P2)

4.2.4. Practice of several types of formative assessments

Students reported that during the pandemic, they were introduced to several new assessment techniques like quizzes, open-book exams, worksheets, discussion boards, and reflection papers. During the time of traditional face-to-face classes, it was not possible to conduct these types of formative assessments in the class due to the shortage of time.

> "Quiz was very helpful to check our understanding of certain lessons as we could complete it through our mobile phones, and it was less time-consuming. At the beginning of every week, our lecturer used to assign us a quiz on the lessons of the previous week. It was very helpful for us". (P1)

> "At the end of every week, we were assigned to write a reflection paper on what we have learned in that week, and what we have not understood. Based on our reflection papers our teacher used to give us audio feedback. As we knew that teachers would assign us to write reflection papers, we tried to attend classes attentively or listened to the recorded class (P6)".

> "We used to discuss any topic in our discussion board. As a result, it was a sort of peer tutoring". (P7)

4.2.5. Tech-savvy generation and learner autonomy

Students started participating in their classes online in late March or early April 2020. Within this period, they gradually grew to be efficient in technology. Technophobic students are gradually growing to be confident, which opens the doorway to higher education.

> "Once I was not so efficient in using technology, but online classes sometimes seem a blessing to me as I have developed myself so much in using technology. In fact, I have developed an online course in LMS, which was a part of one of my courses". (P7)

> As students navigated through the internet to access their learning materials, the tendency of self-learning developed among them. It allows them to empower themselves to compete in the upcoming competitive world of education. They are capable of counselling themselves and guiding themselves. "When I have developed a course in CANVAS LMS, I learned to do it through the internet by myself." (P7)

4.3. Utilizing the success stories to incorporate blended learning

The experience of emergency remote teaching has brought a new approach to teaching which can be implemented in higher educational institutions. The combination of online classes and physical classes will ease teaching and learning. Practices that would enable blended learning

have been discussed by Su & Rao (2020). Those practices are teachers' lectures with audio recordings, asynchronous online seminar tasks like discussion forums, quizzes, blogs, etc., and tutorial tasks (Su & Rao, 2020).

4.3.1. Recorded class to manage large classroom

The size of Bangladeshi classrooms is big. Recorded classes can work as an effective catalyst to manage this sort of large classroom. The backbenchers cannot listen to their teachers' lectures properly in the classroom. If their teachers provide them with the recorded version of their lecture, they can sort out their problems easily. They will receive the greatest benefit from lectures with audio recordings because they will be able to re-listen to the material.

> "Even in this time of post-pandemic situation if teachers provide
> us the audio recordings, we can get the best outcome from it".
> (P2)

4.3.2. Learning management system

Universities can use LMS to improve their students' learning. Using their own LMS, students can access learning materials that are necessary for them. Besides, LMS helps teachers to keep their courses organized. Other universities can follow the footprint of the universities of Bangladesh, which have become successful in using LMS. It helps the educators to provide materials to learners and keep track of their performances (Rundle, 2018).

4.3.3. Integration of plagiarism checker in LMS

Plagiarism-checking software can be integrated by the university into their LMS to reduce the culture of plagiarism that students conduct. Software like Turnitin can resolve this issue as the question arises regarding the reliability of tests. Many LMSs like Google Classroom already have the facility of detecting plagiarism (Togam & Jadhav, 2022). At the time of checking answer scripts, if "the instructor has any doubt about any particular work of the student, then with the help of these plagiarism detection tools they can easily check the answer and get assurance" (Kumar, 2019, para. 17).

4.3.4. Online assessment and offline assessment

 Students express their opinions that assessment can be conducted in a blended way. Summative assessment usually takes place at the end of the learning period (Adinda, Siahaan, Raihani, Aprida, Fitri, & Suryanda, 2021) and formative assessment refers to the tasks or activities that a student completes during a course, which are designed to provide

feedback and enhance their learning (Higgins, Grant, & Thompson, 2010). Findings from students' interviews highlight that summative assessments can be conducted offline, and formative assessments like quizzes, reflection papers, etc. can be conducted online. As a result, teachers can utilize the whole time of face-to-face class.

> "We will attend classes face-to-face and then the formative assessment on that class will be held online. But before the pandemic teachers have to allocate an amount of time in the class for checking the students' understanding. Now it is very easy with the intervention of technology". (P8)

4.3.5. A model lesson plan on blended learning
Upon the students' opinions, a model lesson plan was developed, and the blended learning approach was followed to develop it.

Lesson Plan on John Donne and the Metaphysical Poetry
This module/lesson is designed to introduce the biography of John Donne and his metaphysical love poems. This module will cover three Love poems by John Donne: "The Ecstasy", "The Canonization", and "The Sun Rising".
Learning Objectives
1. After being introduced to John Donne's metaphysical conceit, students will identify the meaning of the poetic language used in "The Canonization" and "The Ecstasy".
2. During while-reading activities, they will interpret the literary device, the surface, and the underlying meaning of these two poems.
3. After analyzing these two poems, they will apply their schemata of these two poems in interpreting "The Sun Rising".
4. They will analyze these love poems autonomously at their home after reading the resources.
5. They will critique their understanding on Google Docs collaboratively after analyzing the poem.
Learning Outcomes
1. Students will be able to attempt the quiz successfully after reading the poems.
2. They will be able to attempt the worksheet made on the interpretation of Donne's metaphysical poems.
3. After while-reading activities, they will be able to apply their understanding of these poems and analyze the other love poems of Donne autonomously.
4. They will be able to write creative essays successfully at the end of the module.

Readings and Resources
(The course teacher will provide some resources on selected topics)
Tasks for this Module
(The teacher will select only two tasks for every student)
1. Follow-on quizzes
2. Worksheet
3. Classroom game
4. Studies on Quizlet
5. Collaborative work on Google Docs
7. Discussion on Google Classroom
8. Reflection paper
Pre-reading Activities
- Students will watch a video on the biography of John Donne and metaphysical poetry (online/asynchronous).
- Follow-on quiz on the biography of John Donne watching the video (online/asynchronous).
- Recitation of the poem "The Ecstasy" (Physical/synchronous).

Materials
A video on the recitation of the poem will be uploaded on the LMS.
Students will be divided into groups, and stanzas of the poem will be divided among them. Then, they will be asked to go through the video and prepare themselves for the recitation in the next class. The group-wise recitation of the poem will take place (physical/synchronous).
Feedback on the recitation (online/asynchronous)
The teacher will give audio feedback on their recitation by addressing each group and uploading the audio on Google Classroom. The recitation will occur only to encourage them for the further reading of poetry out of personal interest.
Stimulation before getting started to discuss and analyze the poems (offline/synchronous)
After the recitation, they will be asked some questions to stimulate them.
For example,
1. What is the meaning of ecstasy?
2. Can they guess something about the poem or the theme of the poem by reading the title?
Task on Quizlet (online/synchronous)
Many important words or phrases with definitions or explanations will be given to the students. They will have to decide which definition or explanation fits best with the word as it is used in the poem. This can be individual work or pair work. It would be best to do this activity through Quizlet.

Worksheet (online/asynchronous)
They will be asked to find out the figurative language or literary devices in the poem.

Interpreting the poem (offline/synchronous)
After assigning the task of reading the materials on the poem, which are already provided in the Google Classroom, they will be asked to interpret the stanzas in the next class. In the physical class, the teacher will nominate someone among the students to interpret a line or stanza; after finishing his/her part, that student will nominate someone else for the same, and this will be continued till the end.

Collaborative task on Google Docs (online)
A link to Google Docs will be provided to the students, and they will be asked to write collaboratively about their ideas based on the concept of the uploaded video in the same file.

Quiz (online/asynchronous)
A quiz on the provided articles will be uploaded through the Google form, and students will submit this after class, online or offline.

Poster Presentation (Offline/synchronous)
They will make posters by quoting their favorite lines from the poem, which will be displayed in their classroom. After completing "The Ecstasy", students will be prepared to discuss "The Canonization". It will occur in the physical classroom.

Reflection paper(online/asynchronous)
Students will write on reflection paper what they have learned throughout this week, and they will reflect on their learning on this paper.

4.3.6. The rationale for this blended lesson plan
The proposed lesson plan is designed by incorporating the best COVID practices according to students' opinions, and it focuses on the formative assessments that can be held online. This lesson plan has integrated face-to-face instruction with digital learning. It stands apart from the traditional one, as it has a blended format. This lesson plan highlights synchronous and asynchronous learning simultaneously. The lesson has been divided into three phases: Before learning, while-learning and after learning activities. Quiz, worksheet, tasks on Quizlet, and reflection paper facilitate asynchronous assessment. As a result, students will remain engaged in study throughout the semester. Teachers' feedback on their activities will help them to identify their mistakes. The poster presentation will make them enthusiastic about studying, and it will accelerate their learning activities.

5. Conclusion

The time of the pandemic was full of flickering hope, grief, uncertainty, and losses. The educators and students combated this situation without any prior training regarding technology. The situation is over now, and it has opened new avenues in the field of higher education. Blended learning, the combination of face-to-face and digital learning, has become the new arena after the pandemic. The introduction of several new practices during the pandemic has brought light to the new strategies, thereby motivating educators to venture into uncharted territories in pedagogy. By welcoming the COVID practices, stakeholders can furnish the future of education by adopting new strategies. It can establish a more comprehensive educational environment with the best outcome and equip students with technological skills. It can also foster problem-solving skills and critical-thinking skills among students.

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