

Rough Draft

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Why blended learning? My new vision for teaching writing in kindergarten.

As a teacher in Texas, I imagine that, like in any primary school in the United States, starting the teaching and learning process with very young children with different academic needs represents a challenge. Trying to motivate them to achieve the miracle of good knowledge (learning) and appropriate values that will serve them for life is a significant challenge.

As I begin the adventure in my classroom, I am ready to start the learning journey by implementing different techniques to attract their attention in any of the subjects I teach. By doing it the conventional way and following class plans, I realized the lack of motivation and apathy that I often face, especially in the middle of Hagerty's class, where there are no audiovisual resources other than the sounds of the letters. Children who have a lot to say but need help putting their ideas in order or writing them down meaningfully.

Several months into the school year, we see how students still need to learn to think about an idea or write it down. Therefore, attaining the targeted aims, such as opinion, informative, and narrative writing, is not easy. Over the years, it has been a nagging problem that we have to battle in our classrooms year in and year out, one that we have to dip ourselves into in the quest for new looks and alternatives, bearing in mind the traits of children of this age. The vast majority enjoy video games, YouTube videos, and digital whiteboards more than traditional games or writing letters with pencil and paper.

This article addresses why Blended Learning is important and how we could show the way in this scenario. It will reveal the benefits of the station rotation model in the kindergarten classroom by reflecting on students' writing progress and motivation.

Why blended Learning:

Blended learning, [by definition](#), is an approach that responds to a new social context in which the need for a renewed pedagogical model that relates the process of technological and social change to educational innovation is evident. The opportunity to integrate traditional teaching methods with digital tools can be an effective solution to address the lack of motivation in writing in kindergarten. According to Fleck (2012), many teachers have begun to move away from the traditional approach to teaching and are trying to find ways to increase learner engagement.

Horn and Staker (2015) noted

“Just a few steps can be taken in educational circles, and you hear about blended learning. It is at the top of the trending topics related to changing education. Blended learning is any formal education program in which some element of the learner controls time, place, path, and pace. In all blended learning programs, students do some of their online learning. This does not mean using digital tools, like an online graphing calculator or Google Docs. Blended learning means a broader educational shift from an in-person teacher to web-based content and instruction (pp 31-34).

Specifically, the station rotation model, [by definition](#), will significantly improve students' writing skills. The focus on combined interactive, adaptive, and dynamic learning activities is part of its effectiveness. Students can easily access learning materials and collaborate with peers and teachers. It is one of the most popular blended learning approaches. The model is neither new nor exclusive to blended learning. Teachers have used learning activity "hubs" in their classrooms for decades, particularly at the primary level (White J, 2019). One of the most essential benefits of kindergarten classrooms is its flexibility for teachers and students. Teachers can decide how they would like to teach the learning material, and depending on the type of model, children can access the course material from anywhere convenient for them.

Innovating from the Beginning: How Technology Transforms Learning in Kindergarten?

Before, when we talked about education, we immediately thought of the physical classroom. However, when discussing education today, it is inevitable to think about the Internet and digital media. Today, they exhibit transformative advances in artificial intelligence, machine learning, massive data processing, robotics, and biotechnology. In it, technology creates a world of profoundly personalized and instant experiences. This is where we must be ready to take advantage of those opportunities in the daily lives of our students.

According to Don Tapscott, author of "Growing Up Digital," early exposure to technology helps children develop digital skills that will be essential in their later lives. Tapscott argues that children who use technology from an early age are more likely to adapt quickly to technological innovations in the future.

In this way, we see how endless educational options may interest us, providing a world of possibilities. Among the contributions that ICT offers are:

- Stimulates creativity and ingenuity.
- Promotes the experience.
- Advances according to the learning rhythms of each student.
- Develop study and research strategies.
- Provokes curiosity.
- Stimulates independence.
- Wake up learning.
- It helps in the development of different eye-ear and especially eye-hand coordination.

The digital age has radically changed the development of the process of education. Technology advances at compromise levels about every aspect of human life. Therefore, it is necessary to be constantly updated to keep up with the significant changes in the world and its development.

My new vision for teaching writing in kindergarten.

I am complicit in the power of using technology to foster motivation in students. Faced with the unexpected and sad news of the death of a kindergarten teacher in October 2022, and after having been without a teacher for more than two months, I arrived at a classroom where sadness, self-distrust, absence of routines, and lack of motivation were the norm. See how they could barely write their name to compete with each other to write a note to the teacher. Or Seeing Darío arrive every morning crying because he had his shoes untied, forgetting Wednesday's folder, or not being able to write his name to say:

Dario: Teacher, have you seen what reading level I am reading at?

Teacher: No:

Dario: Level E (first-grade level).

Alarm signals that were building the paths to implement some digital tools. Nothing was more genuine than seeing little eyes shining at the possibility of writing on a digital screen or using tablets or computers in digital writing activities with interactive applications (Seesaw, ABC Mouse) that teach the formation of letters, words, and phrases. Alternatively, a 3-minute YouTube video can help them understand new writing concepts. It keeps children's attention and explains ideas visually and attractively, which previously took them hours, sometimes days, to learn with the blackboard and chalk. Showing them videos of people writing was essential to helping them understand the process and replicate it. Implementing rewards and recognition for achievements in writing encourages children to try harder. Inspiration and the strength of passion, which in my class translates as "Superpower." Identify your superpowers, believe in them, and unleash them. Listen to your inner strength and show how valuable you are. These were some of the reflections I told them, and incredibly, those children transformed that place (the class) into a space we never wanted to leave.

Despite seeing the first results in implementing this methodology, there is still a long way to go, a lot of work to do, many tools to apply, and finding, along the way, a

collaboration between traditional teaching methods and digital tools that best applies to our little Cowboys. Finding the right path is a meticulous and ongoing task that occupies us daily in the beautiful mission of teaching and educating.

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