ENHANCING THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH IN ENGLISH

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Abstract:

The study aimed at studying the effectiveness of blended learning Approach in improving Secondary school students' achievement in English. Secondary school of Jamshedpur town in East Singhbhoom District were selected as samples by using Simple random sampling technique. The sample of the study was consisted of (100) students out of which male (50) and female students (50), who were divided into two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group was taught through using the blended learning approach while the control group studied the same units through the traditional method. An achievement test was developed in the mentioned units of the English Language to measure the achievement, which had a sufficient validity and reliability. It was applied to the sample of the Study; the appropriate statistical tools were used to analyzed and interpret the data. The results indicated the presence of statistically significant differences in the post-achievement scores due to the teaching method in favor of the experimental group, the findings also showed that there exists no significant difference between the boys' and girls' students of 9th class in academic achievement using blended learning approach. This Shows a Positive trend for the implementation of Blended learning as it helps in the achievement of leaners and helpful for the teachers also for giving appropriate skills and knowledge to the learners of English at secondary level.

Keywords: Blended learning Approach, achievement, Teaching of English, Secondary School Students.

Introduction:

In the context of the rapidly developing scientific and technical revolution, the education and training sector has actively implemented tasks and solutions to enhance support management, teaching, learning, assessment, scientific research, and the application of information and communication technology (ICT) (Acosta et al., 2018; Baris, 2015; Bray and Tangney, 2017; Diabat and Aljallad, 2020).The teaching and learning environment is embracing a number of innovations and some of these involve the use of technology through blended learning. This innovative pedagogical approach has been embraced rapidly though it gives through a process of Blended Learning. Recently the educational research literature has indicated that blended approaches to learning might provide an optional environment for enhancing student engagement and success. The idea of blending different learning experiences has been in existence since human started thinking about teaching. The on-going infused web-based technologies into the learning and teaching process has highlighted the potential of blended learning. Collaborative web-based applications have created new opportunities for students to interact with their peers, teachers and content. Blended Learning is often defined as a combination of face-to-face and online learning. Most of the recent definitions of blended courses indicate that this approach to learning offers potential for improving how we deal with content, social interactions, reflections, higher order thinking, problem solving, collaborative learning and more authentic assessment in higher education, which could potentially lead to a greater sense of student engagement. Moskal, Dziuban and Hartman (2013) suggest that "blended learning has become an evolving, responsive and dynamic process that in many aspects is organic, defying all attempts at universal definition"

From the era of teaching using chalk and blackboard, transparency and projector to LCD and presentations, the education system has gone through another face of evolution. Latest trend in education is uses of Blended Learning as a method of teaching. Now, blended learning is a widely used term in education. Blended learning is one of the most modern methods of learning helping in solving the knowledge explosion problem, the growing demand for education and the problem of overcrowded lectures if used in distance learning, expanding the acceptance opportunities in education, being able to train, educate and rehabilitate workers without leaving their jobs and teaching housewives, which contributes to raising the literacy rate and eliminating

illiteracy; blended learning increases the learning effectiveness to a large degree, decreases the time environment required for training, decreases the training costs, allows the learner to study at his favorite time and place, allows for live interviews and discussions on the network, provides updated information suiting learners' need, and provides simulations, animations, practical events and exercises and practical applications (Al- Shunnaq and Bani Domi, 2010). blended learning is one of the contemporary trends of education and one of the new trends of the teacher in the twenty first century; it can be described as an educational method in which more than one means is used for transmitting knowledge and experience to learners to achieve the best of the learning outputs (Freihat, 2004); accordingly, this model combines the advantages of e-learning and the benefits of classroom education; this education is based on the integration between the traditional learning and e-learning (Al-Rimawi, 2016).

According to Krause (2007), "Blended learning is realized in teaching and learning environments where there is an effective integration of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning as a result of adopting a strategic and systematic approach to the use of technology combined with the best features of face-to-face interaction." In the last few decades, blended learning has arisen as a new and significant educational trend. Research on blended learning is relatively new and is linked with other educational field such as English teaching methodology, educational technology, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), and distance education (Picciano, Dziuban & Graham, 2013). Blended learning has been defined to differentiate between this teaching and learning mode and traditional or online learning. To illustrate, Bonk and Graham (2012) define blended learning as the combination of traditional face to face interaction with computer-assisted instruction.

Significantly, blended learning can be used instead of traditional or online learning because it promotes a stronger sense of engagement and community than traditional face to face or fully online teaching and learning methods. Blended learning Approach can also promote students' diverse learning styles, where each student has a different style of learning. Blended learning based on the dimensions of face-to-face and technology-mediated teaching does not provide an adequate theoretical basis (Cronje, 2020). The style of learning is a variation of how information is consumed and then structured and processed. Students who need more time to

process content will relearn data offline or online with blended learning method. The ability to present teaching in the form of text or photographs (still or motion) that can sometimes not be applied face-to-face would make it easier to better understand the content through offline or online techniques. The intrinsic and extrinsic factors must, of course, be considered to improve the motivation of students. One of extrinsic factors that promote the emergence of students' motivation is the adoption of the blended learning approach, as it can increase students' attractiveness to learning. While the intrinsic factors, one of which is the incentive for learning needs, comes from inside students**.**
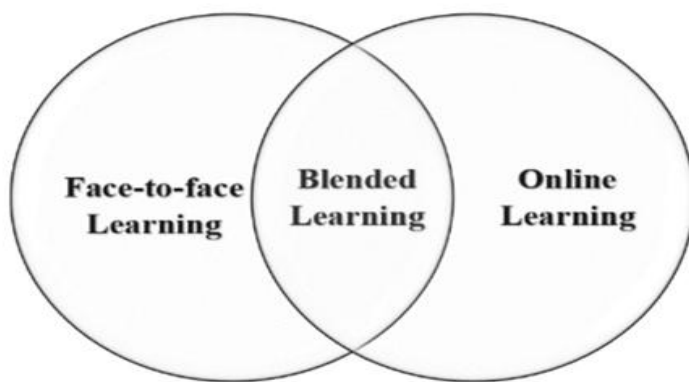

Figure1. Blended learning environment

The secondary stage of education covering 2-3 years of academic study starts with class 8th to 10th consisting of student aged between 14 years to 16 years. The schools which impart education up till 10th class are known as Secondary schools, High schools, senior schools etc. The ed-tech platforms are working together to make sure that learning is fun and engaging while putting a strong emphasis on holistic development and secondary education will be productive as recommended by Mudaliar Commission (1952-53) and Kothari Commission (1964-66). Teaching of English at secondary level is to help students to acquire practical command of English, to enable the learners to communicate effectively and appropriately in real life situations, to use English effectively for study purpose across the curriculum, to develop and integrate the use of the four language skills i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking. It certainly allows students to grasp the knowledge or subject matter provided in various teaching

styles, so that this approach can promote students' achievement and attitudes in learning. In addition, by increasing international vocabulary learned in studying, increasing trust in communication using English and demonstrating it in everyday conversations, it can also enhance the English of students.

Rational of the study:

The impact of digitalization on education was already a reality before the COVID-19 pandemic with the rise of online education but it was made mainstream because of the lockdown except in those cases where the digital divide makes it impossible forcing students to access education from home after the first wave the teaching world faced the challenge of the new school year and this is where blended learning emerged as a firm commitment in the present and looking to the future. The COVID-19 pandemic was participated a profound change in the global educational system, transforming the way in which education was delivered. The importance of the current research stems from its topic, blended learning, and it is conducted to consider blended learning an invented technique in teaching and developing the teaching methods used in teaching science in the elementary schools by providing a new method of teaching where the information technology and communication is used without the need for a radical change in the traditional methods; the reason is that the blended learning method does not rely on the traditional methods but it works to improve them by integrating them with the electronic methods.

- ⊠ focusing on activating the blended learning technique in the educational process and in the teaching of the basic stage, in particular.
- ⊠ providing a guide for the teachers and writers of science in the elementary stage for the references it contains on using the novel technologies and
- ⊠ the global network of information (the Internet) in particular to enrich the topics; such topics are identified along with the websites, the computerized software and the traditional methods of teaching.

According to the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), published by India's government, Blended Learning should be experiential and activity based. It is not a mere mix of online and face-to-face modes, but refers to a well-planned combination of meaningful activities in both.

NEP 2020 has explored many possibilities and dimensions to make education a comprehensive and equivalent to global requirements.

The University Grants Commission on May 20, 2021 introduced blended mode of teaching and learning in universities and colleges, where up to 40% of any course can be taught in online mode and rest 60% offline, is a welcome step as this will be more effective in increasing learning skills of students and providing them greater access to quality education.

Blended learning is not new, and contrary to what some may think, it has been in use for more than 20 years. It was first used in the corporate world as a strategy to allow employees to continue in the workplace and study at the same time (Sharma, 2010), but it also emerged in the educational context as a result of:

a) The accessibility of computer technology in and outside the classroom,

b) The expansion of the pedagogical potential of ICT for teaching and learning (Hong and Samimy, 2010) and

c) The disillusionment generated in online learning with the stand alone-adoption of online media (MC Donald, 2008)

Sangeeth Ramalingam, Melor Md Yunus, Harwati Hashim (2022) investigated blended learning strategies for sustainable English as a second language education at the end of the research several recommendations were presented which should be the focus of future studies.

Rana Al-Maroof, Noor Al-Qaysi, Said A Salloum, Mostafa Al-Emran (2021) conducted a study that examined the blended learning acceptance, a systematic review of information system models. The research concluded by stating that e-learning was found to be the most effective tool used to manage blended learning classroom.

Karen Smith, John Hill (2019) investigated the nature of blended learning through its depiction in current research. The research concludes with recommendations of how higher education research could provide institutions with evidence to ensure their 'best of blends.'

Arnab Kundu (2018) conducted research on "Blended Learning in Indian Elementary Education: Problems and Prospects" and stated that Blended Learning can fit within a larger program of reasonable improvement plans for problems in Indian educational system. If implemented in a well-planned, organized way with a positive attitude it could bring a better future.

Lalima and Kiran Lata Dangwal (2017) mentioned that Blended Learning is to some extent is the solution to problems prevailing in Indian educational system. If implemented in a well-planned, organized way with right type of attitudes it can become the future of our own benefit that steps for adapting blended learning are soon initiated.

Banditvilai (2016) conducted a study that examined the use of blended learning to enhance English learners' language skills and learning autonomy is an Asian University. The research concluded by stating that "Blended learning is a valuable concept that can be used to more successfully achieve teaching goals."

Ja'ashan (2015) investigated students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of blended learning in an EFL English course in Bisha University, Saudi Arabia. He concluded by stating that the participants mentioned that blended learning is more convenient than traditional face to face teaching, and that is increased their motivation to learn and develop their skill accordingly.

 Shih (2010) investigated the use of blended learning approach to teach and English course he stated that one of the benefits of using blended learning approach is to improve students speaking skill as well as other language abilities such as their grammar, pronunciation, facial expression and eye contact.

The above researches show that the blended learning can be used to enhance the learning process and outcomes of language learners. English language learners usually show positive perceptions and attitudes towards the use of blended learning as and English teaching approach. These positive prospective are derived from several directions, including but not limited to, developing students' language skills in interacting and engaging settings, fostering the learning process, and providing opportunities to be independent learners. There is scarcity of research that demonstrates effectiveness of blended learning approach at secondary level and how instructors

can utilize this approach to provide meaningful learning to students. So, this is an attempt by the researcher to analyze the effective use of blended learning program in Jharkhand.

Operational definition:

Blended Learning: Blended learning, also known as hybrid learning, is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods.

Secondary Level: Secondary education is the education stage following primary education. The basic concepts taught in the primary section are utilized in the secondary section bearing the concepts that the learners will be learning in their higher studies.

Objectives of the study:

⊠ To examine the effectiveness of blended learning approach on academic achievement of students in English

⊠ To examine the effectiveness of blended learning approach in relation to gender

⊠ To examine the effectiveness of blended learning approach in relation to achievement in prose and poetry

⊠ To examine the effectiveness of blended learning approach on academic achievement of students in relation to two types of school.

Hypotheses of the study:

i. There will be a significant difference between the academic achievement of experimental and control group students

ii. There will be no significant difference between the academic achievement of boys and girls taught through blended learning approach

iii. There will be no significant difference between the achievement in prose and poetry taught through blended learning approach

iv. There will be no significant difference between the academic achievement of private and government school students taught through blended learning approach.

Delimitation of the study:

As this study is time bound and was conducted for the purpose of writing this paper so it is delimited on following:

- High schools of Jamshedpur only
- Students of class IX only
- Study is confined to the teaching of particular subject i.e. English
- Study will be conducted on 100 sample students only.

Design of the study:

The proposed study was experimental research. True experimental design was used to study the effect of blended learning approach on academic achievement of class IX learners i.e. pre-test, post-test equivalent group design will be used.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN TABLE

Assignment of groups	Matching of one-to-one subject	Pre-test	Treatment	Post test
Experimental groups	Achievement score	Achievement test	Teaching through Blended Learning	Achievement test
Control group	Achievement score	Achievement test	Teaching through traditional method	Achievement test

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of secondary school students in East Singbhum district of Jharkhand. The sample of the study will consist of 100 students of class IX and the subset will be selected by Simple Random Sampling Technique.

Tools: Following tools were used for assessment of various dimensions considered in the present research.

- ✍ Self-made lesson plans based on 5E model from the English text book were used to teach the students of class IX.
- ✍ Self-made English Achievement Test, based on four chapters taken from class IX English Reader book was used.

Statistical tools Used for the Study:

The data analysis for the present research was done quantitatively with the help of statistics. The statistical techniques were used to find out the value of mean, standard deviation and 't'-value. The analysis and interpretation of the research data were presented in the tabular and graphical design as shown below.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of Objectives 1

The first objective of the study was to examine the effectiveness of blended learning approach on academic achievement of students in English.

Type of Group	No. of students	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Level of Significance	Result
Experimental group	50	77.88	8.53				Significant
				98	8.71	0.05	
Control group	50	64.40	6.85				Significant

Table 4.1: Achievement of experimental and control group of students taught through B L

Represent the mean scores of an experimental group and a control group in their post-test. The experimental group has 77.88 and control group has 64.40; whereas SD values are 8.53 and 6.85 respectively. The t-value is 8.71 is greater than critical value at 2.00, which is

significant at 0.05 levels. Hence there is a significant difference between the gain scores of experimental group and control group. Therefore, the directional hypothesis is accepted and it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of blended learning approach in the academic achievement of class IX students in learning English. The comparison of means and standard deviation of experimental and control group is shown in following figure

4.2 Analysis of Objectives 2

The second objective of the study was to identify the effectiveness of blended learning approach in relation to gender.

Table 4.2: Academic achievement in relation to gender taught through Blended Learning

Type of Group	No. of students	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Level of Significance	Result
Boys	50	72.38	9.78				Significant
				98	1.21	0.05	
Girls	50	69.90	10.66				Significant

Represent the mean scores of achievements in boys' group and girls' group in their post-test. The boy's group has 72.38 and girls' group has 69.90; whereas SD values are 9.78 and 10.66 respectively. The t-value is 1.21 is less than critical value at 2.00, which is significant at 0.05 levels. Hence there is no significant difference between the gain scores of boys and girls. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement in learning English taught through blended learning approach. The comparison of means and standard deviation of boys and girls is shown in following figure
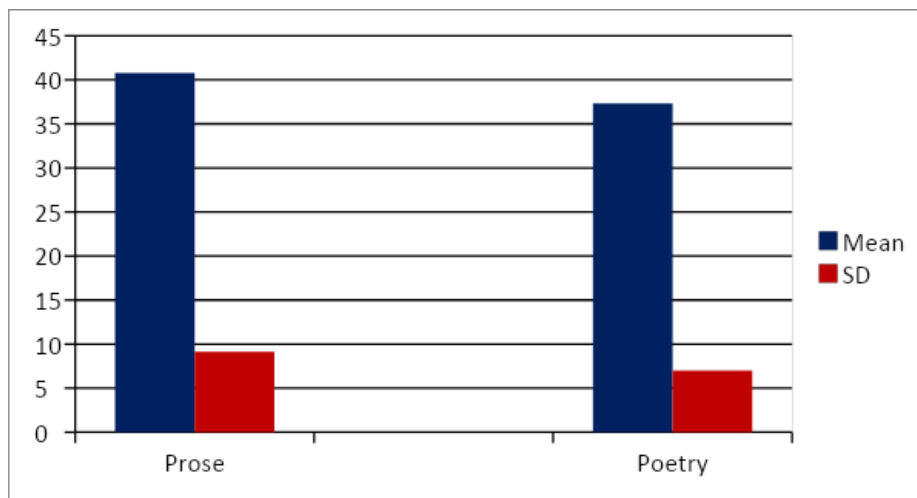
4.3 Analysis of Objectives 3

The third objective of the study was to identify the effectiveness of blended learning approach in relation to achievement in prose and poetry.

Table 4.3 Academic achievement in Prose and Poetry taught through Blended Learning

Types of Groups	No. of Students	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Level of significance	Result
Prose	50	40.78	9.15				Significant
				98	2.13	0.05	
Poetry	50	37.30	7.01				Significant

Represent the mean scores of academic achievements is prose and poetry in the post-test. The mean scores are 40.78 and 37.30; whereas the SD values are 9.15 and 7.01 respectively. The t-value is 2.13 almost equal to the critical value 2.00, which is significant at 0.05 levels. Hence, null hypothesis has been accepted. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the achievement in prose and poetry taught through blended learning approach.

4.4 Analysis of Objectives 4:

The fourth objective of the study was to identify the effectiveness of blended learning approach on academic achievement of students in relation to private and government schools.

Table 4.4: Academic achievement of Private and Government school students taught through Blended Learning Approach

Types of Groups	No. of students	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Level of Significance	Result
Private	50	71.58	10.60				Significant
				98	0.42	0.05	
Government	50	70.72	9.98				Significant

Represent the mean scores of academic achievement of private and government school students in their post-test. The private group students have 71.58 and government group students have 70.72; whereas SD values are 10.60 and 9.98 respectively. The t-value 0.4274 is less than critical value 2.00, which is significant at 0.05 levels. Hence, null hypothesis has been accepted. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the private group of students and the government group of students in their academic achievement.
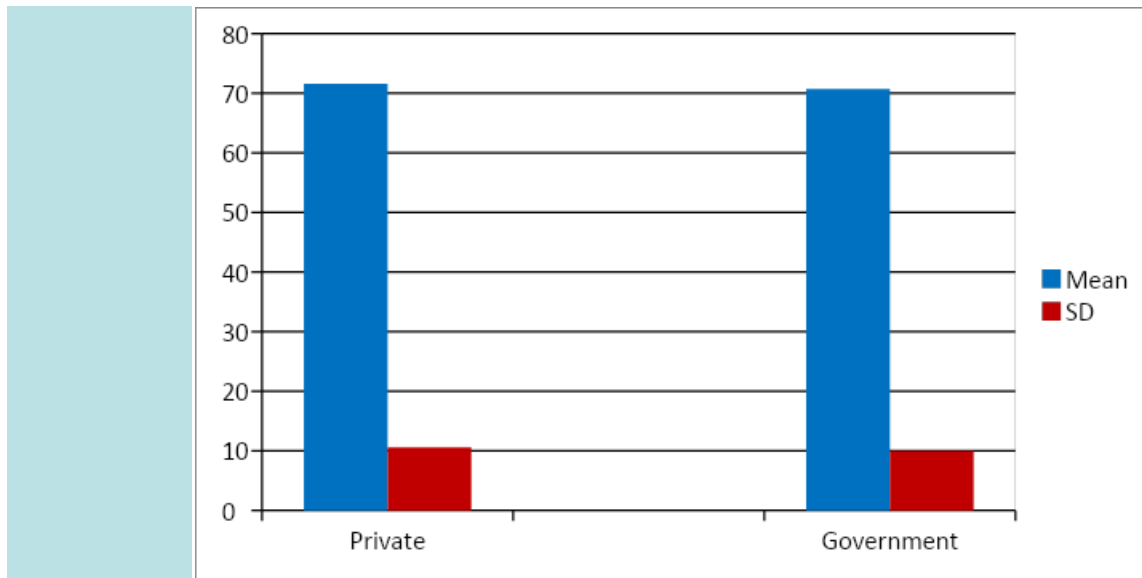
Figure 4.4: Academic achievement of Private and Government school students taught through Blended Learning Approach

Findings:

From the analysis of data, it is found that the blended learning approach has better learning outcome in comparison to the traditional method. This means that the students who studied the blended learning method got higher grades than students who studied the traditional method. The researcher interprets this by clarifying how using a mixture of technology and traditional learning work to attract the interest of the learners and renews the learners' activity because of the fun and pleasure it contains. The major findings of Sangeeth Ramalingam (2022), Dr. Amaal Al Masri (2020), Ling Siew-Eng (2015), Waheeb S. Albiladi (2019) also strengthened the findings of the present study that there is a significant effect of blended learning approach in teaching English on class IX students. The benefits of blended learning, however, are only achieved by active and well-organized way.

Educational Implications:

The findings of the present study are beneficial for the school authorities, teachers, students and society. There are implications of the study for students' English learning. The study is beneficial for increasing students' active participation and learning and suggests that technology-oriented

schools can help the students in developing various types of healthy attitudes such as understanding of English concepts, adjustment, cooperation, discipline, self-directed learning, interest, positivity, curiosity and make learning attractive, easier and more interesting. The study is beneficial for increasing teachers' effectiveness too. This present study is having the following educational implications for all the stakeholders of Education which will tell about the findings of the study also:

Students- It will help the students to look back on earlier materials and to move through coursework at their own pace. The use of blended learning will definitely enrich their knowledge domain and give them a scope to learn from various perspectives.

Teachers- Teachers can visualize and track each student's progress. Teachers can keep the students engaged, stimulated and motivated they will also make use of technology in the field of Education and combat the individual difference of learners too.

Curriculum framers- It will help in improving the quality of education and information assimilation while making teaching more efficient and productive. The findings of this study will give a base for the curriculum framers too construct and develop curriculum which support the format of blended learning.

Parents and Guardians- Parents and guardians will be able to communicate with teachers about their children's progress in real time. Any incidences at home or school can be shared between the parents and the teachers to ensure the child's wellbeing and progress.

Conclusion:

The blended learning approach in education has become a vital role in positive reality. The blended learning approach provides instant information with infinite reality and accuracy. The blended learning approach used by English teachers as an aid will prove with their combination a very powerful teaching aid. The appropriate use of blended learning will develop the areas of vital importance for the future development of English teaching. Blended learning approach in English has great potential for education of the future, if properly and effectively used. It can cope with the problem of quantity and quality in education. This study reveals that government school students need the more facility for blended learning because private students show the

good performance for blended learning approach in English than the government school students. Government funding agency, NGO, etc. can help the students for providing proper resources.

It was finally concluded that the experimental group, taught through Blended Learning Approach did much better than the control group, taught through traditional method. This shows a positive trend for the implementation of Blended Learning Approach in the schools. Blended Learning Approach can help the development of the students and it can also help and motivate the students to learn English in easy and effective way.

Suggestions for future Study:

- The present study was bounded only for Jamshedpur city. For generalizing the inference drawn from the results different geographical areas could be chosen.
- The effectiveness of blended learning approach on achievement of students could be investigated belonging to other urban and rural areas with certain modification.
- For increasing the effectiveness of present study, the study could be conducted on large sample.
- The present study was conducted for IX class students. The effectiveness of blended learning approach could be studied for elementary, primary and for higher classes.

Follow-up studies:

- A study may be conducted to compare the impact of blended learning approach in different types of schools, boards, and age groups.
- A study may be conducted to compare the impact among different types of innovative methods and techniques on students' academic achievement.
- A study may be conducted for improving the teachers' effectiveness through blended learning approach training.
- A comparative study may be conducted to know the impact of blended learning approach on slow learners, backward and handicapped students' (visual, auditory, or other disabilities) academic achievement.
- Other variables like interest, motivation, attitude, adjustment, self-concept, value pattern can also be evaluated with blended learning approach training.

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