



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO COVID-19 Education Strategy

Regional Webinar-Arab States

'A conceptual framework on Blended Learning (BL) programmes for school reopening in the Arab States'

Tuesday and Wednesday, 1-2 September 2020, 11am-1:30pm (Beirut time)

Registration: https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_i8pXBVa_Q5WONLstq87B-q

Password: 376828

YouTube Live Streaming: <https://www.youtube.com/unescoibeirutoffice>

Context

The ubiquitous use and rapid advancement of technologies has profoundly changed the creation and dissemination of knowledge in our daily lives. Demands for more flexible access to education have been growing as technology provides a wider range of learning opportunities and resources to meet the diverse needs of learners. In this regard, blended learning (BL) which is also often interchangeably called "hybrid learning", "technology-mediated instruction", "web-enhanced instruction", and "mixed-mode instruction"¹ has been coming more to the fore owing to the fact that it supports democratizing access to quality education and personalizing learning by provision of various learning formats irrespective of learners' location². It adopts a technology enhanced pedagogical approach that usually combines online resources, digital learning content and/or e-learning courses with place-based/face-to-face instruction³, thereby complementing a major pitfall of entirely online learning modalities that often lead to low retention and success rate and fostering its transformative potential.

Along with the aforementioned characteristics and emerging benefits of blended learning, particularly during periods of limited physical school access or closures, UNESCO Beirut Office emphasized that a number of parents across the region perceived a strong necessity for schools to incorporate blended learning through a combination of online and face-to-face learning methods.⁴In addition, the result of the latest complementary survey conducted by UNESCO Beirut Office underscored that more than half of respondents including Ministers of Education, school leaders, teachers and learners in the region strongly endorsed a transition to the blended learning when projecting the eventual transition back to school.⁵

¹ Martyn.M. (2003). The hybrid online model: Good practice. Available at: <https://www.ammanu.edu.jo/EN/Content/HEC/9.pdf>.

² UNESCO Office Bangkok and Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific. (2016). Blended learning for quality higher education: selected case studies on implementation from Asia-Pacific. P. 107. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246851>

³ Ibid. p. 171.

⁴ UNESCO Office Beirut and Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States. (May 2020). Preliminary Analysis and Insights from the UBO Surveys for the Parents and the Youth/NGOs in the Arab Region. P. 1. Internal document.

⁵ UNESCO Office Beirut and Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States. (Forthcoming). Distance Learning in the Arab World: Report on the Response of Arab Countries to Educational Needs during the COVID-19 Pandemic. P.20.

Against this backdrop, UNESCO Beirut Office in line with regional and global agenda for school reopening, organizes a webinar aiming to set forth a conceptual framework on effective implementation of blended learning and to respond to the heightened awareness of the regional needs of enhancing knowledge and sharing good practices of blended learning. Aligned with SDG 4, this webinar will contribute to promoting preparedness and readiness of education stakeholders in rethinking of the structure and delivery of education and securing continuity of education for learners at all school level by harnessing potential of blended learning for enhancing inclusiveness.

Objectives

The main goal of this webinar is to **develop a conceptual framework** on blended learning in line with a regional and global school reopening agenda by addressing the identified priorities and needs of the region to implement blended learning and by outlining common threads to shape a roadmap for its application. It will facilitate knowledge sharing as well as the exchange of good practices for effective integration of BL pedagogies and programmes in policy, curricula and practices. Ultimately, it aims to contribute to building more resilient education systems in the region and widening education policy options for reopening schools in tandem with close monitoring of evolving COVID-19 situation/response and assessing different needs of diverse stakeholders ranging from teachers and educators to policy makers.

The specific objectives of the seminar will be:

- Present a theoretical framework of BL including its concept and methodologies highlighting its benefit when schools are confronting with gradual reopening;
- Review the current state of BL implementation at an institutional level, a programme level and a course level in the region and the findings of a regional study that UNESCO Beirut Office conducted to identify challenges and the needs of stakeholders in education during transition and adaptation to distance learning modalities;
- Prioritize areas to effectively integrate BL programmes in policy, curricula and teaching and learning practices and highlight the roles and responsibilities of education stakeholders and partners in supporting BL programmes in the region; and
- Identify and share good practices and initiatives on BN at regional and international levels for designing and applying BL to a curriculum and practices

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced understanding of the concept of BL, as well as pedagogical strategies and key elements necessary to integrate BL in policy, curricula and practices
- Catalyzed inter-sectoral engagement and leadership to ensure commitment of stakeholders

- Forged a platform for solidifying regional networks, partnerships and cooperation on implementing BL programmes
- Drew a set of recommendations touching upon policies, teaching and learning strategies, partnerships and advocacy for implementing BL programmes for school reopening in the Arab region

Target audiences and panelists

The target audience will include education officials and managers, school leaders, academia, teachers and educators, as well as any other relevant educational practitioners involved in implementing BL programmes.

The panelists will be government officials, educators and professionals in the field of blended learning, with wide experience in design and implementation of BL programmes in diverse contexts.

Registration

- [Registration](#) is free and required in advance. Password: 376828
- Once you register, a unique join URL will be sent to your email.

Live transmission via Youtube

[Live streaming](#) will be provided for those who might not be able to register in advance or to join due to limited capacity of the platform.

Languages

The webinar will mainly be conducted in Arabic. English and Arabic simultaneous interpretation will be provided. Once participants have entered the Zoom platform, they will be able to select language at the bottom of the platform. Those accessing via YouTube live transmission will have access to the webinar in the spoken language.