

## The impact of *Oxford Inspire* and its Blended Approach on Teaching and Learning

This study conducted by Oxford University Press India, analyses the impact of the multi-modal competency-based course, **Oxford Inspire** and its Blended Approach on teaching and learning.

### Introduction

**Blended Learning** as an approach for teaching and learning blended into the academic environment insidiously way before it became a critical necessity during the pandemic. COVID forced the world over to induct technology into the day-to-day teaching-learning practice to ensure an uninterrupted experience for all stakeholders. The model that rolled out proved successful enough to become a mainstay of sorts, so that even at the commencement of physical classrooms, the blended format continued to thrive with vigour. Meanwhile, many schools had upgraded to smart classes with digital accessories and LMS platforms and were thus amenable to welcoming products that were specifically developed to support a blended mode of transaction.

This paved the way for the launch of **Oxford Inspire**, India's first competency-based blended learning solution, with the right mix of teacher-led and self-paced learning through print, experiential learning and digital media to help achieve enhanced learning efficacy.



### Background

#### Purpose:

- ✓ How much of **Oxford Inspire** and its various features teachers have used.
- ✓ Benefit of using these features to meet the stipulated mandates of the NCF.
- ✓ How **Oxford Inspire** has kept students engaged and motivated, tracked developmental changes in them as they got immersed in the course.
- ✓ Impact the course has had on improvement in learner's performance.
- ✓ Practical tips of what adopting **Oxford Inspire** entails.

**Method used:** The case study adopts a qualitative approach by triangulating focused interviews conducted on three educators of *S.D. Senior. Secondary School, Kania, Haryana*:

- Jyoti Verma and Sunita, teachers at the Preparatory levels (Grades 3-5)
- Narender Kumar, Chief Academic Officer of the school



## Case Study Findings

### Theme 1

**Choosing the right direction:** Being among the first few teachers in the country to incorporate the blended mode of learning, Jyoti and Sunita were quick to notice the positive impact of adopting a blended solution, like **Oxford Inspire**.

The 3 areas they were pleased with were:

- Enhanced Learning Efficacy and Engagement,*
- Student-centric and Innovative Approaches, and*
- Integration of Technology and Blended Learning that helped them move away from rote learning.*



### Theme 2

#### **Moving up the highway:**

The first steps are crucial. All three educators from the school agreed that the offline and online trainings on the platform and handholding by Team Oxford, coupled with integration of smart boards in classrooms, which enhanced the blending of traditional textbooks with digital technology, played a significant role in getting teachers equipped, and ensured a smooth and effective roll-out of **Oxford Inspire**.



### Theme 3

**Riding the initial hiccoughs:** Every pioneering soul has to endure hiccoughs, and so did this user institution. When asked about the challenges they faced to implement Oxford Inspire, and how they worked around them, the teachers and the Academic Officer identified three areas which they had to surmount:

- Technical issues*, where both Jyoti and Sunita mentioned login credentials as a significant obstacle initially, and how they supported each other to address technical queries through Whatsapp groups.
- Resistance to change*: Narender mentions facing resistance from both parents and teachers due to their prior comfort with traditional teaching methods, but how it was dealt eventually through persistent communication about the advantages and features of the new product, gradually earning trust and acceptance, and,
- Increased workload and adaptation*: Jyoti initially felt that incorporating new activities increased the time required to cover chapters but also admitted that this resulted in more engaging and effective lessons.

### Theme 4

#### **Paradigm shift with far-reaching transformational impact:**

**Oxford Inspire**, according to the school team, has been playing a formidable role in helping the teaching-learning environment move away from a **teacher-centred one to a more student-centred one**, where the learners are actively engaged in constructing responses to questions, leading to greater vocalization and expression of thoughts, participating in the assessment processes, and handling technology, a first-time phenomenon, no doubt.



### 8 palpable differences made by Oxford Inspire:

On being probed on whether **Oxford Inspire** was reflecting a difference in the way students were responding and the way teaching was happening, the teachers and the Academic Officer came up with positive responses on a number of counts:



In Sunita's words, 'students are actively practicing and exploring new topics on their own, demonstrating their eagerness to learn and discover' and Jyoti felt, 'in our English lessons, activities at the end of each chapter promote team building and involve the entire classroom. The activities are so captivating that students eagerly participate, fostering an environment of enthusiasm and collaboration.' Narender spoke about how the Learn Buddy contributed to improved engagement, interaction and collaboration. The highpoint here is, 'Teachers are now asking questions based on students' responses, fostering a more communicative approach to learning.'



Students draw inspiration and enthusiasm from game-based concepts, competition and leaderboards, and rewards incentivise participation.



Previously, art was a separate subject that didn't engage many students, but with art-integration fostered through the Oxford Inspire platform, the school team noticed enhanced critical thinking, real-life connections, fun engagement, deeper understanding of subjects and improved retention, thereby ensuring a richer learning experience.



DIY assignments, question-based approach have made it possible for students to navigate through the content with ease, demonstrating mastery of competencies in knowledge, abilities and skills. Narender Kumar has witnessed a noticeable increase in open communication among students, fostering a more collaborative and engaged classroom environment.



Jyoti noted that when 'students encounter difficulty in crossing a level, they persistently attempt to overcome it, seeking remedies and giving their utmost effort. This dedication not only improves their learning but also hones their skills and abilities,' providing evidence of the positive role played by game-based learning and periodic self-assessment checks.



The detailed competency-based reports for individual learners as well as for the whole class helped analyse learner levels, app usage patterns, learner preferences for activities as also discern what approaches worked best.



Students were self-motivated to answer difficulty-graded end-of-chapter questions and enjoyed tasks which used visuals and quizzes.



An encouraging degree of progress was evident in their understanding of concepts, notably among students who were using the apps that helped them access resources anytime, anywhere, on any device.

## Action Points

The school team is extremely satisfied with the training and support they have garnered from the Oxford University Press Team helping with **Oxford Inspire**, but they mentioned few areas where some more interventions are desirable.

1. Offline access of platform
2. School-wide, class-specific analysis of teacher performance
3. Additional trainings focusing on emerging topics in education, National Education Policy (NEP) and National Curriculum Framework (NCF)
4. Peer learning sessions to facilitate an exchange of experiences among different schools using new techniques and classroom innovation
5. Self-observation techniques for teachers to further support professional growth

## Practical tips for future users of *Oxford Inspire*

When asked what experiences they would like to share with teachers and management of other institutions, the following seemed to resonate with the three:

1. Consider adopting **Oxford Inspire**, since it brings about a shift in classroom transactions.
2. Jyoti reflected that it would be important for teachers and students to utilize the app extensively to foster 'active engagement with digital resources, enhancing the overall learning experience.'
3. Sunita saw the relevance of taking trainings imparted seriously. She emphasized, 'attending all training sessions, seeking assistance when necessary, and engaging in hands-on practice are essential for a deeper understanding of the product, ultimately leading to greater success.' Narender seconded this view when he added that it was crucial for educators to lead the way by embracing flexibility in adopting new technologies and prioritize the development of communication and questioning skills.

## Conclusion

The study has driven home the fact that in today's dynamic educational landscape, it is, as Narender has said pertinently, 'crucial to embrace innovative learning platforms that not only enhance students' skills, but also promote sustainable development, a key focus of **Oxford Inspire**.' Blended Learning offers a way to integrate both traditional resources with technology in an eco-system that is still transitioning from the purely analogue system to a digital one. Narender rightfully says,

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Beyond just acquiring knowledge, students need to understand their role in society and how they can contribute positively. **Oxford Inspire** provides a holistic approach to education, preparing students for the challenges of tomorrow while instilling a sense of responsibility towards the world around them.

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