

Unit 2 Writing – Planning the Literature Review

1. What is the focus and aim of your review? Who is your audience?

The focus of my literature review is on evaluating the impact of blended learning on student engagement in higher education in Qatar. The review aims to assess how digital pedagogies—especially blended learning—affect emotional, cognitive, and behavioural engagement among university students in Qatar. My audience includes academic faculty, policymakers in the Ministry of Education, and researchers involved in digital education in the Gulf region.

2. Why is there a need for your review? Why is it significant?

Despite Qatar's strategic digital transformation aligned with Vision 2030, there is a lack of empirical, context-specific research exploring how blended learning affects student engagement. The review is significant as it addresses this gap and offers recommendations to improve the implementation of blended learning in higher education, ensuring alignment with national educational goals.

3. What is the context of the topic or issue? What perspective do you take? What framework do you use to synthesise the literature?

The context is Qatar's post-pandemic shift toward digital and hybrid learning models, supported by increased investment in ICT infrastructure. The review adopts a student-centred and pedagogical effectiveness perspective, analysing the topic through three frameworks:

- Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): for understanding student technology adoption.

- Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK): for evaluating teacher preparedness and course design.
- Community of Inquiry (CoI): to assess engagement through social, cognitive, and teaching presence.

4. How did you locate and select sources for inclusion in the review?

I used systematic searches through databases like Google Scholar, ERIC, ScienceDirect, and SpringerLink, applying keywords such as “blended learning Qatar”, “student engagement digital education”, and “ICT in higher education”. Inclusion criteria were:

- Peer-reviewed articles (2010–2025)
- Studies focused on higher education in Qatar or the MENA region
- Emphasis on student engagement (emotional, behavioural, cognitive)

5. How is your review structured?

The review follows this structure:

- Introduction (background, aims, scope)
- Methodology (search and selection strategy)
- Theoretical Framework (TAM, TPACK, CoI)
- Applications and Benefits of blended learning
- Challenges and Limitations
- Contrasting Perspectives and Gaps
- Conclusion and Recommendations

6. What are the main findings in the literature on this topic?

- The literature highlights several benefits of blended learning:

- Improved flexibility and autonomy (Timotheou et al., 2023)
- Enhanced cognitive engagement via interactive tools (Zhai et al., 2021)
- Increased collaboration and satisfaction (Fazza & Mahgoub, 2021)

Qatari universities report improved engagement where blended learning is supported by effective design and faculty training.

7. What are the main strengths and limitations of this literature?

Strengths:

- Rich conceptual grounding (use of TAM, TPACK, Col)
- Broad documentation of digital tools and student outcomes

Limitations:

- Over-reliance on self-reported data
- Scarcity of longitudinal and mixed-method studies
- Limited research from Qatar and the Gulf specifically

8. Are there any discrepancies in this literature?

Yes, while many studies confirm the benefits of blended learning, others highlight drawbacks such as screen fatigue, lack of immediate feedback, and increased feelings of isolation (e.g., Harris & Dalton, 2021). Discrepancies also exist due to methodological inconsistencies and absence of regional frameworks for evaluating digital engagement.

9. What conclusions do you draw from the review? What do you argue needs to be done as an outcome of the review?

Blended learning enhances student engagement when implemented effectively, but its success depends on context-sensitive design, faculty readiness, and institutional support. I argue for:

- Structured faculty training in digital pedagogy
- Equitable access policies
- Locally grounded, mixed-method research
- National frameworks for evaluating digital learning environments