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Professional Development For Blended Learning

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ABSTRACT
Teacher professional development (TPD) ideas on how to educate in an online or blended learning environment are required in order to fully realize the potential of online and blended learning (OBL). While many studies focus on the effects of TPD methods, less research is done on the crucial details of these techniques. By completing a systematic evaluation of qualitative data from 15 articles on TPD that target OBL, this study fills that gap. Six separate synthesized findings were found and combined into a visual framework of the essential elements of TPD for OBL using a meta-aggregative approach. The action recommendations, which offer specific and contextualized advice, are based on these synthesized findings.When considered as a whole, the findings can assist future TPD for OBL research and development initiatives as well as in-service instructors and trainers.

Keywords*:[Development,Professional,Blended mode]*

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Blended learning has become a common educational phenomenon over the past ten years thanks to rising demand and acceptance in higher education. It is becoming more and clearer that blended learning can get around some of the problems that online learning and in-person training have. Blended learning is more effective than online learning or in-person training, according to a meta analysis of more than 1,100 empirical research published between 1996 and 2008 (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2009). According to numerous studies, blended learning will soon replace the current traditional approach for the delivery of courses in higher education (Norberg, Dziuban, &Moskal, 2011; Ross & Gage, 2006). Today, the challenge is how to create an effective blend rather than whether to blend or not.

According to the literature, blended learning courses can be created in a variety of methods, from completely starting from scratch to just adding more online activities to a regular face-to-face course. Due to the fact that the term "blended learning" has no universally agreed-upon definition (Deperlioglu&Kose, 2013; Graham, 2012b; Lee, Fong, & Gordon, 2013; Stacey &Gerbic, 2008), teachers have their own interpretations of the term and consequently design their courses differently. With so many blended learning designs available, choosing the best design approach is becoming extremely difficult, especially for teachers who lack the essential theoretical background and hands-on experience with blended learning, which is the case for most higher education teachers(Huang & Zhou, 2005).

The concept of blended learning:

The word "blended learning" has been in use for the past 20 years, and over that time, it has taken on a variety of meanings. Blended learning is defined with "significant heterogeneity across institutional contexts," according to Graham (2012b) (p. 17). Some of the most common definitions of the term will be covered in this brief background section.

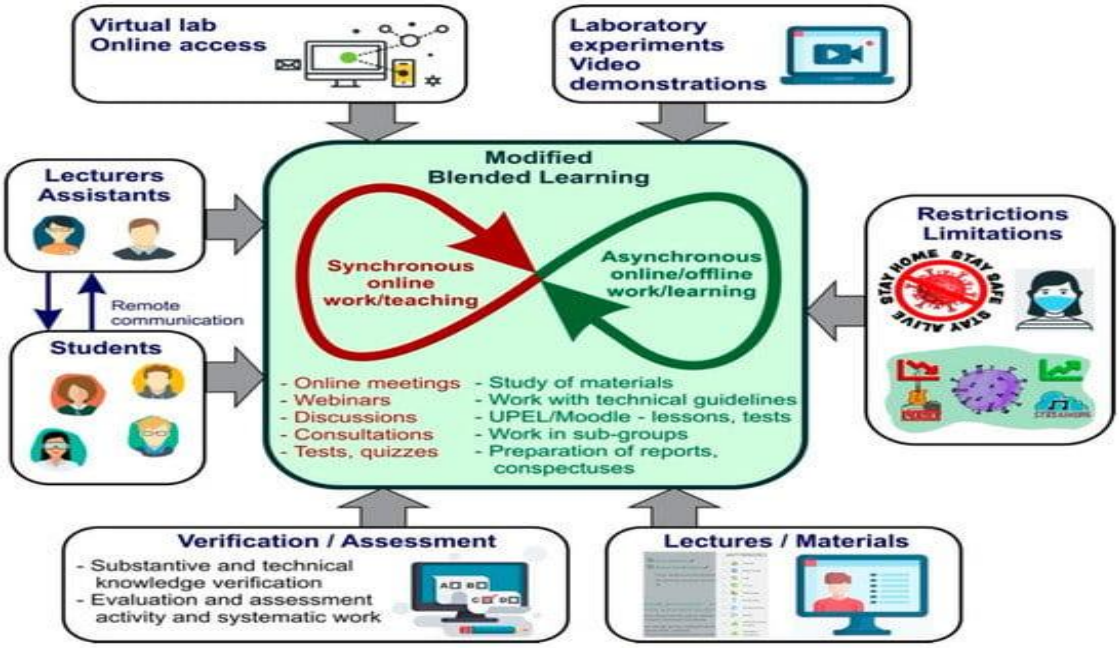
Drawing on the Driscoll (2002) work, Oliver and Trigwell (2005) proposed three different definitions of blended learning (p. 17):

(1) “The combination of media and tools employed in an e-learning environment”.
(2) “The combination of a number of pedagogic approaches, irrespective of the learning technology used”.
(3) “The integrated combination of traditional learning with web-based online approaches”.

Different design approaches:

By examining different processes of designing blended learning courses, we were able to identify three distinct design approaches:

(1) Low-impact blend: adding extra activities to an existing course
(2) Medium-impact blend: replacing activities in an existing course
(3) High-impact blend: building the blended course from scratch.



1. Low-impact blend: adding extra activities:

In the low-impact approach, extra online activities are added to a traditional face-to-face course. A study conducted by Kaleta et al. (2007) found that most teachers designing blended courses add online components to their traditional courses without eliminating any of the existing activities. They called this phenomenon "the course-and-a-half syndrome" (p. 127)

We identified four advantages of the low-impact approach as well as four difficulties.

Benefits

(1) A simple method for creating blended learning courses that can persuade reluctant teachers to give it a try. Teachers who could benefit from blended learning may be hesitant to give it a try because they believe it to be overly complicated and extremely technical, according to Silverwood (2006).

(2) An efficient method of creating a blended learning course. Teachers can add a new activity that effectively addresses a particular pedagogical requirement without spending extra time and energy considering and replanning the entire course or looking into the numerous blended learning components and delivery methods. McCarthy's (2010) Facebook activity is one illustration.

(3) A minimal danger of failure when used properly. The three main risk reasons mentioned by teachers who have taught blended courses, according to Vaughan (2007), are: worry of receiving poorer student evaluations; fear of losing control; and uncertainty over the effects of online learning on classroom interactions. Minimizing these dangers can be accomplished by include an activity while essentially maintaining the regular course.

(4) Designing a blended course only requires a minimal amount of traditional course teaching knowledge.Even a novice instructor can identify the course material that would benefit from an additional online activity.

Challenges

(1) For this strategy to work, teachers need to be familiar with technology.

According to Cennamo, Ross, and Ertmer (2009), teachers need knowledge that can enable them to: • identify which technological tool is needed to meet a specific pedagogical goal; • specify how the tool will be used to help students achieve that goal; • improve students' ability to use appropriate technological tools in the different phases of the learning process, including exploration, analysis, and production.

• choose and use technological resources that will enable them to pinpoint needs and address problems pertaining to their own professional development.

(2) There is a strong chance that a low-impact blend will result in two distinct courses. Newcombe (2011) asserts that when online work is added to a traditional course without cutting back on in-person instruction, it frequently results in the creation of two distinct courses—one online and one in-person.

(3) Students may perceive an extra activity as a burden rather than a benefit. Many students may view the extra work as merely another one to add to the already dense course material (Garrison & Vaughan, 2011).

(4) Adding a new activity without getting rid of an older one might significantly increase the burden for the instructor. Due to the inclusion of more online teaching tools, teachers may have time limits and excessive workloads (Reeves, 2003).

Recommendations
(1) An instructor should start by including a straightforward online activity that both they and their students can readily handle, like a discussion board (Hofmann, 2006) or McCarthy (2010)'s Facebook activity for his course. In the future, if more online activities are required, a medium-impact strategy incorporating replacement may be taken into account.
(2) Adding a new activity must be motivated by a clear pedagogical need, not just by the use of technology. Instructors must therefore identify the issues or gaps in their courses and know how to use technologies and teaching strategies to remedy these concerns (Picciano, 2009).

Medium-impact blend: replacing activities:
The medium-impact strategy involves redesigning an existing course by removing some of the face-to-face instruction by online components' actions This strategy is predicated on the idea that some course components might function better as online exercises. In some circumstances, the remaining in-person meetingsare maintained. In some circumstances, the in-class activities remain exactly the same, but in others, alterations are made (Twigg, 2003). The revamping of a second-year political science course is an illustration of this strategy (Garrison & Vaughan, 2011).
While looking at the medium-impact strategy, we found four advantages and four difficulties.

Benefits
(1) Using this strategy, teachers can replace course components as necessary and introduce gradually at first (Duhaney, 2004).
(2) The knowledge obtained from employing this strategy can boost instructors' confidence in leading a blended learning course (Ertmer&Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010).
(3) An effective strategy for educators who have some experience creating for blended learning but do not want to take the risk of making large course changes. According to Kaleta, Garnham, and Aycock (2005), teachers typically prefer to instruct in the same conventional manner with which they are familiar and at ease and find it difficult and challenging to devote a sizable amount of time and effort to developing a new course.
(4) Provides teachers with continual opportunity to experiment with new forms of instructional technology without sacrificing the full advantages of the conventional course. Aycock, Garnham, and Kaleta (2002) claim that acquiring the skills necessary to use technology in a proper and efficient manner is difficult but can get better with practise.

Difficulties:
(1) As there is no turning back to the old way of teaching, teachers must have good technology knowledge and some confidence to use this strategy. Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) noted that while having technological knowledge is necessary to support students' learning, it is insufficient if the instructor lacks confidence in applying such information.
(2) To create the blended course, a dedicated amount of time and effort must be put into replacing and integrating new course components.
(3) There are no established guidelines that can be used to make decisions about how much or what portion of courses can be substituted. Several factors, including the course's objectives and the instructor's intents, have an impact on these choices (Vaughan, 2007).
(4) It helps to have prior experience instructing the conventional course. While creating a blended learning course utilising this method, one of the biggest challenges is figuring out which components of the course don't work well in the conventional format and then deciding whether they would perform better online. It is challenging to do this with little or no prior knowledge in the field.

Recommendations:

(1) The replacement strategy should be used by teachers gradually. Teachers should begin by shifting a small portion of their course material online, cut back on in-person instruction time accordingly, and scale back as needed until they achieve a harmonious balance between in-person and online instruction (Brunner, 2006; Duhaney, 2004).
(2) The symbiotic equilibrium will change from course to course. There are variations because of a variety of things, including as student characteristics, teacher experience, teaching methods, course objectives, and the

accessibility of online resources. In some courses, it will be more acceptable to spend more time in person than online, whilst in others, the emphasis will be more on the online components. Some other courses (Dziuban, Moskal, & Hartman, 2005; Dönmez&Aşkar, 2005) will mix the two styles of instruction roughly evenly.

High-impact blend:[building from scratch]
The blended learning course is created from the ground up in the high-impact method. This strategy has been defined in the literature in a variety of ways, including radical change, entire redesign, and full redesign. Harriman (2004) and Hofmann have described a typical technique to use this strategy (2006). They suggested that the instructor examine each individual course learning outcome rather than the course as a whole. The instructor must choose the most effective delivery method for each outcome. They suggested that by using this strategy at the level of learning outcomes, teachers may obtain the most efficient combination of technologies and create a better curriculum. This strategy adheres to the standard concept of curriculum development known as constructive alignment in tasks are in line with the objectives of learning (Biggs, 1996).

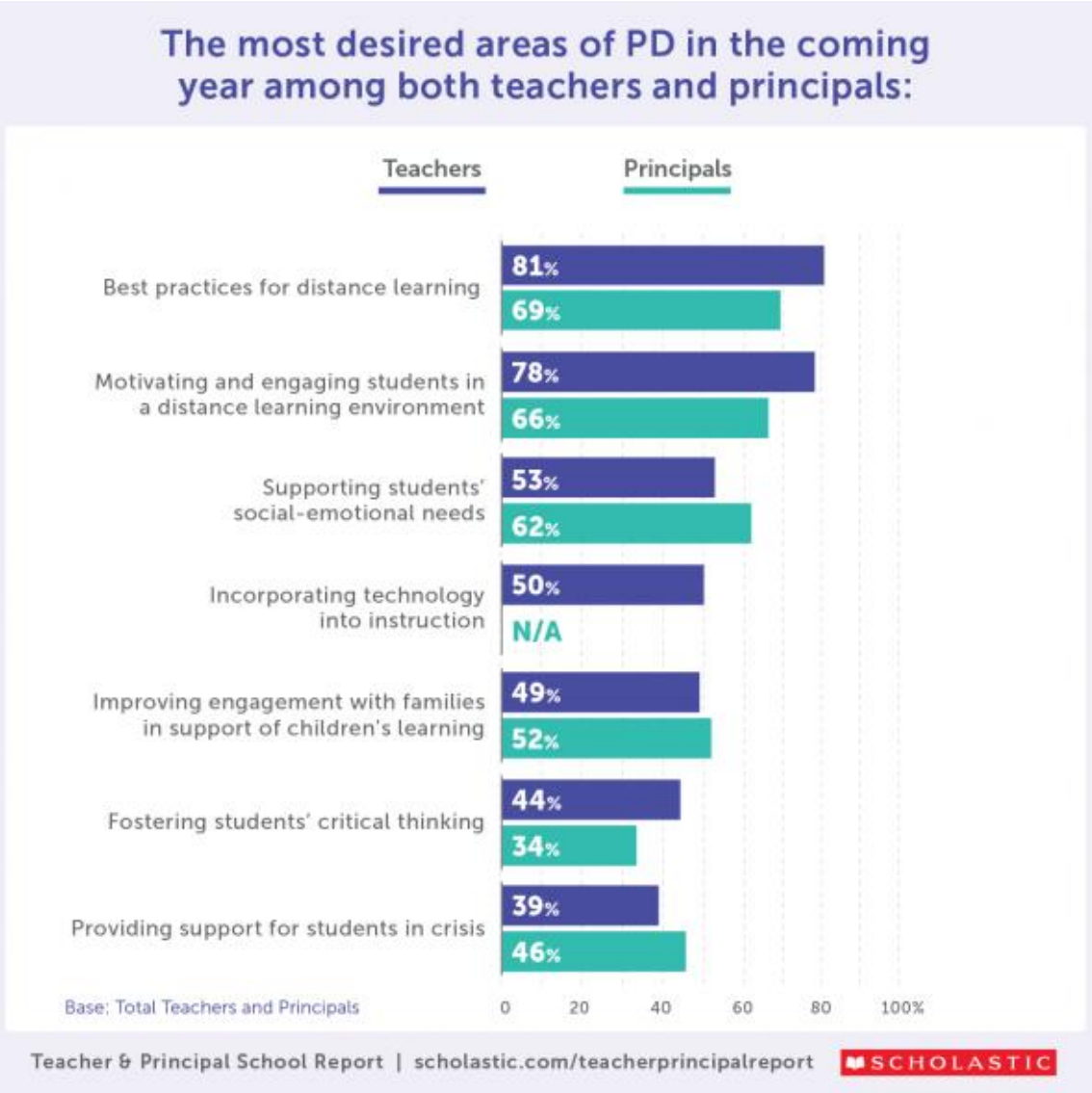
In our analysis of the high impact strategy, we found three advantages and three difficulties:

Benefits:

(1) Offers a chance to improve the current course and lessen or resolve any issues that may exist. When creating a new course, teachers have a better probability of success, especially when the traditional one is having issues (Graham, 2012a).
(2) Enables more effective face-to-face and online integration. In order to effectively integrate face-to-face and online components, the course must be built from the ground up, claim Littlejohn and Pegler (2007).
(3) Provides teachers with the chance to fully benefit from blended learning and better fulfil the requirements of their students. Constructing the course from the ground up offers a better opportunity to reconsider andWith learners' needs in mind, completely rethink the course. The effectiveness of the courses will rise since teachers will have a greater range of delivery methods to choose from (Carman, 2002).

Challenges:
(1) To properly implement this strategy, a high level of technological confidence and understanding are required. Teachers that possess a high level of technological competency can quickly pick up new digital tools and employ them in their lessons (Cook, Owston, & Garrison, 2004). One of the most important variables influencing teachers' use of technology, according to Wozney, Venkatesh, and Abrami (2006), is their belief that it will enable them to more effectively carry out their instructional objectives.
(2) The method has a larger risk of failure than the other methods since students might be introduced to a brand-new, untested course as a result.
(3) A wide range of potential blended learning components must be taken into account by teachers, together with their full ramifications. Walters (2008) claims that the huge Teachers are under pressure to adapt their courses quickly due to the variety of delivery methods, the large range of technological combinations, and the absence of models to follow for specific combinations.

Recommendations
(1) Instructors who are new to or have little expertise with blended learning design should first try one of the other two techniques to get some knowledge that will be useful when adopting this strategy. Selecting the learning activities that are best taught in the classroom and those that need to be prepared for online learning demands a great lot of knowledge and expertise when designing a blended learning course (Walters, 2008). One of the worst teaching practises for a blended course, according to Mortera-Gutiérrez (2006), is when professors don't employ the best teaching tools.
(2)) Instructors ought to think about blending a number of delivery methods. Carman (2002) asserts that e-learning is most successful when it incorporates aa combination of several delivery methods.



II. Conclusion

There isn't a single definition for blended learning that is widely accepted. Although this may seem like an intellectual argument, the effect is that it enables professors and course designers to create their own definitions of the term in the context of their institutions or courses and then use those definitions as the foundation for creating blended courses. This study revealed three separate strategies for creating blended courses—low-impact, medium-impact, and high-impact—that arose as a result of the diversity of blended learning criteria. This classification has been created in light of potential adjustments to the current instructional strategy and learning environment. The major piece of advise is for teachers who have never designed for blended learning to start with a low-impact strategy.They can then try the medium-impact strategy after gaining more experience, and they won't be able to try the high-impact strategy until they have sufficient confidence, expertise, and experience with blended learning design.

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