



Blended learning in higher education: Institutional adoption and implementation



Wendy W. Porter*, Charles R. Graham, Kristian A. Spring, Kyle R. Welch

Department of Instructional Psychology & Technology, Brigham Young University, 150 MCKB, 1 North University Hill, Provo, UT 84602, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 11 October 2013

Received in revised form

25 February 2014

Accepted 26 February 2014

Available online 12 March 2014

Keywords:

Post-secondary education

Distance education and telelearning

Teaching/learning strategies

ABSTRACT

Relatively little of the current research on blended learning (BL) addresses institutional adoption issues. Additional research is needed to guide institutions of higher education in strategically adopting and implementing blended learning on campus. The authors conducted a prior study in which they proposed a framework for institutional BL adoption (Graham, Woodfield, & Harrison, 2012), identifying three stages: (1) awareness/exploration, (2) adoption/early implementation, and (3) mature implementation/growth. The framework also identified key strategy, structure, and support issues universities may address at each stage. The current study applies this adoption framework to 11 U. S. institutions participating in a *Next Generation Learning Challenge* (NGLC) grant and attempting to transition from an awareness/exploration of BL to the adoption/early implementation phase. The study also compares U.S. institutional strategy, structure, and support approaches to BL adoption and identifies patterns and distinctions.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Institutions of higher education are increasingly adopting BL, the combination of face-to-face and technology-mediated instruction. In 2002, the editor of *The Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks* predicted that approximately 80–90% of higher education courses would become blended in the future (Young, 2002). By 2004, scholars reported that 45.9% of U.S. undergraduate institutions already offered blended courses (Allen, Seaman, & Garrett, 2007). In 2011, scholars noted the “explosive growth of blended learning” and acknowledged BL’s potential to become the “new normal” in higher education (Norberg, Dziuban, & Moskal, 2011, pp. 207–208).

While a number of scholars have conducted course-level investigations of BL’s effectiveness, very few have provided guidance for BL adoption at the institutional level. Accordingly, Graham, Woodfield, and Harrison (2012) examined a purposive sample of six U.S. institutions of higher education at various stages of BL adoption and proposed a framework to assist administrators to effectively implement BL. The framework identified three stages of blended learning adoption (see Table 1), as well as key strategy, structure, and support issues universities may address at each stage (see Table 2).

Graham et al. (2012) noted that “many institutions of higher education that are in the awareness/exploration stage would like to transition to adoption/early implementation” (p. 11) and recommended conducting future research on this transition. Accordingly, this study examines U.S. institutions of higher education that are transitioning between the first and second stages of adoption in order to achieve the following research goals:

1. Identify institutional strategy, structure, and support markers that would allow administrators to determine their progress in transitioning from awareness and exploration of BL to adoption and early implementation
2. Identify and provide details about issues administrators should address in order to successfully facilitate their institution’s transition from awareness and exploration of BL to adoption and early implementation

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 385 208 7507.

E-mail address: wendy.woodfield@gmail.com (W.W. Porter).

Table 1
BL implementation stages summarized from the BL adoption framework.

Stage	Description
Stage 1: Awareness/exploration	Institutional awareness of and limited support for individual faculty exploring ways in which they may employ BL techniques in their classes
Stage 2: Adoption/early implementation	Institutional adoption of BL strategy and experimentation with new policies and practices to support its implementation
Stage 3: Mature implementation/growth	Well-established BL strategies, structure, and support that are integral to university operations

2. Literature review

This literature review explores scholarship regarding institutional BL adoption, specifically focusing on scholars' recommendations for implementation. The review is based on the BL adoption framework with minor adaptations due to this article's objectives. For example, the BL framework combined its analysis of infrastructure, professional development, technical support, and pedagogical support. We chose to emphasize each aspect's importance in initial adoption efforts by analyzing them separately. We also combined BL definition and policy into a single category since those were largely synonymous here. Also, we eliminated implementation as a separate category since this article specifically focuses on institutional BL implementation. The review is organized by the three categories of issues identified by the BL adoption framework: strategy, structure, and support.

2.1. Strategy

2.1.1. Purpose

Institutions implementing BL should identify the goals they intend to achieve (Moskal, Dziuban, & Hartman, 2013). Graham, Allen, and Ure (2005) cited three general purposes for BL adoption: (1) enhanced pedagogy, (2) increased access and flexibility, and (3) improved cost-effectiveness and resource use.

BL may provide pedagogical benefits such as increased learning effectiveness, satisfaction, and efficiency (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Graham, 2013). The University of Central Florida (UCF) conducted a multi-year study examining the success rates of tens of thousands of their face-to-face, BL, and online students. UCF defined *success* as earning at least a C-grade, and the study considered college, gender, and modality. UCF reported that the success rates for BL were higher within each college than either fully face-to-face or fully online courses for both males and females (Dziuban, Hartman, Moskal, Sorg, & Truman, 2004; Graham, 2013).

BL has also demonstrated potential to increase access and flexibility (Graham, 2006; Moskal et al., 2013; Wallace & Young, 2010). Specifically, BL provides students with increased access to higher education offerings while providing institutions greater access to student populations (Piper, 2010; Shea, 2007; Vaughan, 2007). BL also affords teachers and students enhanced temporal and geographic flexibility, allowing them to determine when and where online segments of instruction occur (King & Arnold, 2012; Sharpe, Benfield, & Francis, 2006).

In addition, BL may facilitate economic goals such as improved cost effectiveness and resource use (Graham, 2013; López-Pérez, Pérez-López, & Rodríguez-Ariza, 2011; Moskal et al., 2013). For example, BL delivery models may feature lower operating costs than face-to-face models (Vaughan, 2007). While operating costs vary among implementation models, Battaglino, Haldeman, and Laurans (2012) determined that the overall per-pupil expenditures to implement BL in a K-12 environment are significantly lower than the national average for traditional brick-and-mortar schools. In addition, BL facilitates increased enrollment and enhanced use of physical facilities by requiring less seat time than fully face-to-face courses and enabling higher student retention than fully online courses, thus decreasing time for completion of degrees (King & Arnold, 2012; Niemiec & Otte, 2010).

2.1.2. Institutional advocacy

Successful BL implementation requires advocacy among administrators, faculty, and other institutional personnel (O'Dowd, 2013; Taylor & Newton, 2012). Administrative advocates contribute to developing a shared vision for BL implementation, extending communication, and locating necessary funding and other resources (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Vaughan, 2007). Faculty, support staff, and even student advocates provide cooperation and enthusiasm that may facilitate implementation (Donnelly, 2010; Moskal et al., 2013). Advocates can collaborate through exploratory discussion groups, consultations, and designated partnerships (Niemiec & Otte, 2010; Vaughan, 2007).

2.1.3. Definition

Creating an institutional definition of BL can facilitate a number of important objectives, which include distinguishing BL courses from other delivery methods for scheduling purposes, providing students with clear and reliable expectations regarding BL courses, and developing appropriate support strategies (Niemiec & Otte, 2010; Taylor & Newton, 2012). Toth, Foulger, and Amrein-Beardsley (2008) asserted that while formulating an institutional definition does not necessarily require all instructors to follow identical procedures, collaboration should facilitate a level of consistency. Garrison and Vaughan (2013) noted that the definition should be more inclusive than

Table 2
BL implementation categories summarized from the BL adoption framework.

Theme	Description
Strategy	Addresses issues relating to the overall design of BL, such as definition of BL, forms of advocacy, degree of implementation, purposes of BL, and policies surrounding it
Structure	Addresses issues relating to the technological, pedagogical, and administrative framework facilitating the BL environment, including governance, models, scheduling structures, and evaluation
Support	Addresses issues relating to the manner in which an institution facilitates the implementation and maintenance of its BL design, incorporating technical support, pedagogical support, and faculty incentives

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/348423>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/348423>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)