Chapter 56

Applying the Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education to Blended Learning Environments

Stephanie Babb
University of Houston– Downtown, USA

Cindy Stewart
University of Houston– Downtown, USA

Ruth Johnson
University of Houston– Downtown, USA

ABSTRACT

Hybrid courses are a blend of traditional and online courses. Chickering and Gamson (1987) identified Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education; these principles have been repeatedly tested in online and traditional courses, and shown to be effective at meeting learning outcomes. In order to apply the seven principles to hybrid courses, instructors should: encourage contact and communication between themselves and the students; provide multiple opportunities for interactions between students; create well-designed student-presented projects and assignments that require participation, engagement, and feedback; provide prompt feedback on both assignments and inquiries; establish both deadlines and expectations for time spent on learning assessments; communicate high expectations for the course through a well-designed syllabus, challenging assignments, and praise for excellent performance; and allow students autonomy in assignment topics.

INTRODUCTION

The face of education is evolving at a rapid pace. Over the last decade, enrollment in fully online courses has experienced double-digit growth almost every year, and approximately one-third of college students in the US are currently enrolled in at least one online course (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Recently, educators have begun blending traditional and online learning modalities. Blended, or hybrid, learning consists of approximately 30-80% of course instruction offered online, with the rest of the course content offered in a traditional, face-to-face setting (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2009). During the 2006-2007 academic year, 35% of postsecondary institutions reported offering hybrid courses to an estimated 1.5 million enrolled students (Prasad & Lewis, 2008). The percentage of hybrid courses offered at the university level continues to increase; in fact, community colleges are now offering more hybrid courses and less fully online courses (Mullins, 2013), and the US Department of Education labels blended learning as the fastest growing modality across all educational levels (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2010). Studies also report that faculty intend to increase the number of hybrid courses offered in future academic years, as educators realize that hybrid courses can offer higher success rates through the online component, and higher retention rates through the traditional component (Bonk & Kim, 2006; Mullins, 2013; Welker & Berardino, 2005-2006). *Forbes* magazine predicts that advances in technology will result in an embracing of the hybrid format in the near future (Proulx, 2012).

Cost is a primary advantage of offering distance and blended courses. The reasons institutions implement distance learning include: increasing student enrollment, offering more courses, creating degree and certification programs, and maximizing college facilities (Parsad & Lewis, 2008). Using the hybrid model for large, introductory college courses requires less physical space than traditional courses, and increases access to higher education, thereby growing student enrollment (Bowen, Chingos, Lack, & Nygren, 2012). Students also stand to save money by enrolling in technology-based courses through reduced tuition fees and use of digitized textbooks, which are typically less expensive than hardbound textbooks (Rickard, 2010).

There are numerous advantages to offering blended courses, besides cost efficacy. Students appreciate the flexibility of blended courses, as they are able to take advantage of the asynchronous learning components at times most convenient for them (Aycock, Garnham, & Kaleta, 2002). Asynchronous learning allows students to actively learn material at their own pace and in a variety of ways, and also gives them time to reflect upon course material and measure their responses before responding to discussions and inquiries (Simonson et al., 2009; Sullivan & Freishtat, 2013). However, blended courses have been criticized as less effective than traditional courses due to less contact and communication between the instructor and student, as well as less student-student interaction (Bullen, 1998; Jackson & Helms, 2008; Richardson & Swan, 2003).

To measure the impact of distance education on student learning outcomes, university leaders are employing industry performance tools, such as benchmarking, to investigate whether institutional objectives are being met. When applied within university settings, benchmarking is a specific method for developing requirements and standards in technology-based learning to assess student performance (Herman & Baker, 2005). Using 50 years of higher education research, Chickering and Gamson (1987) identified seven principles of good practice in undergraduate education; these principles are based on active learning concepts (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Tirrell & Quick, 2012) and serve as the framework for benchmarking teaching and learning. The seven principles encourage self-regulated learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Chickering & Gamson (1991) intended the

Related Content

ICT in Chinese Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges
Xiaobin Li (2017). *Exploring the New Era of Technology-Infused Education (pp. 20-33).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/ict-in-chinese-higher-education/171926

Teacher Education Discussion Module: Online Teacher Chats About Technology in Schools
Michelle Kowalskyand Leonard Long (2019). *Diverse Learning Opportunities Through Technology-Based Curriculum Design (pp. 133-146).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/teacher-education-discussion-module/211091

The Promotion of Self-Regulated Learning Through Peer Feedback in Initial Teacher Education
Elena Cano Garcíaand Laura Pons-Seguí (2020). *International Journal of Technology-Enabled Student Support Services (pp. 1-20).*
www.irma-international.org/article/the-promotion-of-self-regulated-learning-through-peer-feedback-in-initial-teacher-education/255119

Self-Directed Learning in Organizations and Institutes of Higher Learning: Implications on Technology, Practice, and Organizational Culture
Ramona T. Sharpeand Tamara L. Kelley (2014). *Handbook of Research on Education and Technology in a Changing Society (pp. 395-406).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/self-directed-learning-in-organizations-and-institutes-of-higher-learning/111859

Relationships Between Teacher Presence and Learning Outcomes, Learning Perceptions, and Visual Attention Distribution in Videotaped Lectures
Qinghong Zhang, Xianglan Chen, Yachao Duanand Xiaoying Yan (2022). *International Journal of Technology-Enhanced Education (pp. 1-15).*
www.irma-international.org/article/relationships-between-teacher-presence-and-learning-outcomes-learning-perceptions-and-visual-attention-distribution-in-videotaped-lectures/304079