

EXPLORING STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS IN UTILIZING BLENDED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

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Annotation

The following article gives overview on blended learning and exploring strategies to overcome barriers in utilizing blended education in higher institutions.

Glossary

Barriers, Professional integration, professional development, flexibility, communication, blended education.

We have identified the need for a blended solution, we have technology that can support various designs and delivery methods, experts who can create content, and organizations with budgets to support the design and development of these programs. So why isn't the return on investment and expectations meeting the anticipated success? There are actually challenges that have historically hindered blended learning initiatives, preventing it from living up to its potential as the best way to deliver information since the invention of the printing press. These challenges include:

1. Designing Blended Learning Experiences
2. Supporting Blended Learning Experiences
3. Lack of organizational understanding and support for blended programs
4. Creating programs without a formal design process
5. Assuming redesigning an existing program is easier than starting from scratch
6. Piecing together standalone components instead of seamlessly weaving learning experiences
7. Facilitating Blended Learning Experiences
8. Overemphasizing live components and undervaluing self-directed components of the blend
9. Lack of experience in facilitating the blend on the part of the training team
10. No formal training for the implementation team
11. Inexperienced learners who have not been taught how to learn online

In the rest of this chapter, I will address these challenges and provide answers to the pressing questions that may be keeping you up at night. In Chapter 3 of the Handbook of Blended Learning: Global Perspectives, Local Designs by Curtis J. Bonk, the author discusses several important aspects of identifying opportunities and limitations of blended learning in higher education. These aspects include:

1. Definitions and models: Bonk provides various definitions and models of blended learning, emphasizing its flexibility and potential to enhance educational experiences. This discussion helps readers understand the diverse ways in which blended learning can be implemented and its potential benefits.

2. Pedagogical considerations: The author explores the pedagogical considerations when implementing blended learning in higher education. Bonk emphasizes the importance of aligning the instructional design with the learning objectives, ensuring that the blend of online and face-to-face components is purposeful and effective.

3. Potential benefits and challenges: Bonk highlights the opportunities that blended learning offers in terms of increased access to education, personalized learning experiences, and flexible scheduling. He also discusses the limitations and challenges that educators may face, such as the need for robust technological infrastructure and faculty support, as well as the potential for increased workload during the design and implementation phases.

4. Evaluation and assessment: The chapter focuses on the importance of evaluating blended learning initiatives to understand their effectiveness. Bonk presents different evaluation methods and tools that can be used to assess student learning outcomes and the overall success of blended learning programs.

5. Examples of blended learning in higher education: The author provides several examples of blended learning initiatives from around the world, showcasing different approaches and strategies used in different contexts. These examples offer insights into the diverse ways in which blended learning can be implemented and the potential impact it can have on student learning. Handbook of Blended Learning: Global Perspectives, Local Designs provides a comprehensive overview of the opportunities and limitations of blended learning in higher education. It offers theoretical perspectives, practical examples, and guidance for educators looking to implement blended learning approaches. Evaluation and assessment in blended learning. Bonk discusses various methods of evaluating blended learning programs, such as surveys, observations, and student performance analysis. He emphasizes the need for ongoing assessment to ensure the effectiveness and continuous improvement of the blended learning

environment. Bonk provides case studies and examples from different higher education institutions to illustrate the implementation and outcomes of blended learning. These real-life examples offer insights into the challenges faced and the strategies employed by educators to overcome them.

By discussing the future directions of blended learning in higher education. He explores emerging technologies, such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence, and their potential impact on blended learning. Bonk encourages educators to embrace innovation and adapt to evolving educational trends. Synthesized and unique content:

Implementing a successful blended learning program can be a complex endeavor. Although there are plenty of resources, technology, and expertise available, achieving the desired return on investment and meeting expectations can still be challenging. Over the years, several obstacles have hindered the realization of blended learning's full potential. These obstacles include: difficulties in designing effective blended learning experiences, lack of organizational support, the absence of a formal design process for program creation, underestimating the level of effort required for program redesign, fragmented learning experiences instead of seamless integration, inadequate facilitation of the blend, an imbalance between live and self-directed components, unprepared training and implementation teams, and inexperienced learners unaccustomed to online learning. Additionally, Curtis J. Bonk explores various aspects of blended learning in higher education in his book, "Handbook of Blended Learning: Global Perspectives, Local Designs." He delves into topics such as the different definitions and models of blended learning, the importance of aligning instructional design with learning objectives, the benefits and challenges associated with blended learning, ongoing evaluation and assessment strategies, real-life case studies, and the future directions of blended learning, including emerging technologies and their potential impact on education. By addressing these challenges and exploring the insights shared by Bonk, educators and institutions can navigate the complexities of blended learning and unlock its vast potential, ensuring the delivery of effective and engaging educational experiences. In summary, this chapter provides insights into different evaluation methods and assessment strategies that can be used to measure the success and impact of blended learning programs in higher education. Blended learning initiatives face challenges that have hindered their success. These challenges range from designing and supporting blended learning experiences to lack of organizational understanding and support. The author addresses these challenges and provides answers in the

Handbook of Blended Learning. The chapter explores definitions, models, pedagogical considerations, benefits, challenges, and evaluation methods of blended learning in higher education. In the Handbook of Blended Learning, Curtis J. Bonk delves into various aspects of blended learning in higher education, shedding light on its definitions and models. He emphasizes the flexibility of blended learning and its potential to enhance educational experiences. By presenting different models, readers gain a comprehensive understanding of the diverse ways in which blended learning can be implemented and the benefits it can bring. Bonk also explores the pedagogical considerations that come into play when incorporating blended learning in higher education. It is crucial to align instructional design with the learning objectives, ensuring that the combination of online and face-to-face components is purposeful and effective. This emphasis on pedagogy highlights the significance of not only integrating technology but also leveraging its potential to support and enhance learning outcomes. The author further highlights the potential benefits of blended learning, such as increased access to education, personalized learning experiences, and flexible scheduling. However, he acknowledges the challenges that educators may face during the implementation process. These challenges include the need for robust technological infrastructure, support from faculty members, and the potential for increased workload during design and implementation phases. By addressing both the benefits and challenges, Bonk provides a comprehensive view of the complexities surrounding blended learning in higher education. Evaluation and assessment play a crucial role in measuring the effectiveness of blended learning initiatives. Bonk emphasizes the importance of evaluating these programs to understand their impact. He provides insights into different evaluation methods and assessment strategies that can be used to assess the success and effectiveness of blended learning programs in higher education settings. By incorporating evaluation and assessment into the process, educators can continuously improve their blended learning initiatives and ensure better outcomes for students.

In conclusion, the chapter addresses the challenges faced by blended learning initiatives and offers solutions to overcome them. By exploring various aspects of blended learning in higher education, such as definitions, models, pedagogical considerations, benefits, challenges, and evaluation methods, Bonk provides valuable insights to help educators navigate the complexities of implementing and refining blended learning programs.

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