

Instructor Perceptions of Blended Learning & Need for Further Research

Syed Ahmed Hasnain¹

¹Weill Cornell Medicine Qatar.

Email : ¹sah2010@qatar-med.cornell.edu

Abstract

Blended learning plays a major role in the education sector. A lot of work has been published on student perceptions, technological software, and institutional support. There is a gap in research on instructor perceptions of the blended learning approach. This paper sheds light on the need for further research in the area of instructor perceptions of the blended learning approach. The need for research in area of instructor perceptions of blended learning is highlighted with the help of published literature. It is concluded that research in the area of instructor perceptions will create awareness among instructors and benefit the whole institution.

Index Terms—Blended learning, instructor perceptions, technology, education.

1. Introduction

Instructor perceptions play an important role in education. The specific focus of this paper is going to be more on instructor's personal benefits and perceptions, when applying the blended learning (BL) approach. However, literature review reveals that there is a gap in research on instructor perceptions of the blended learning approach [1], [2], [3], [5]. This paper calls on authors to carry out further research on instructor's personal benefits and perceptions on the blended learning approach. A lot of work has been carried out on students' perceptions and how the class dynamics changes when applying BL. But there is still a need to carry out further research on instructor perceptions of BL.

2. Background

The author carried out research on eight instructors from a university in one of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in 2021 [4]. Instructors were interviewed on their use and perception of BL within their perspective classrooms. The study revealed that the implementation of BL is dependent on instructors' perception of technology and application of BL. And that the student's perception of BL had an effect on instructors' perception of BL. The study also showed that if the instructors perceived technology to be not useful, they would not implement it in class. It was concluded from the study that perceptions can vary from instructor to instructor. Instructor perceptions were dependent on past experiences with technology personal preferences [4].

3. Definition of blended learning

There is no concrete definition of BL. In literature BL is not defined precisely and it could have a different meaning dependent on each institution [6], [7]. For example, mixing a lecture with some demonstrations could be defined as BL. Or teaching with the aid of flash cards, or videos, could be defined as BL. Therefore, it is important for each institution to carry out their own

analysis and research when implementing BL. Specifically with respect to this paper, it is important for intuitions to carry out an analysis of BL and how BL effects instructor perceptions within their institute. It is important to note that with advancement of technological tools in education. BL plays a major role in the current educational institutes [8]. For the purpose of this paper BL is defined as a mix of teaching methods consisting of technology and face-to-face teaching [9].

4. Gaps and need for Research

Intuitions can make decisions to implement technology in the classroom without consulting with the end users the instructors [10]. I think it is important for the intuitions to consult with the instructors before initiating to implement technology intuition wide. Further research in other unique teaching environments will add to literature and the existing gap in literature on instructor perceptions [11]. Literature shows that there is a gap between implementing technology and actually using it in the classroom [1]. The implementers could be the information technology department and the institution, while the implementers are the instructors in class. Therefore, I think it is important to consult the instructors and include them in the process of implementing technology in the classroom. Finding out the instructors' perceptions in one institute can benefit others to learn from their experiences [3]. Blended learning research is difficult to generalize specially when researching instructor perceptions. Because perceptions can vary from one instructor to the other. There is potential to carry out research and hear from the end users [12]. The process of the leadership of an intuition deciding to implement BL creates a communication gap between the leadership and the instructors. Initiatives to carry out research on instructor perceptions will also fill the communication gap and benefit the whole institution. According to [13] instructors views towards BL are negative. Therefore, I think more work needs to be done to understand the whole process. Starting from the need, implementation and instructor perceptions. Any research on BL and instructor perceptions could assist in better guiding the instructors.

5. Instructor Perceptions

Instructor perceptions are important in successful implementation of BL as discussed above. There are many variables that can affect instructor perceptions. Some of the variables outlined in literature discussed above are student perspective, past experiences with technology, personal preferences, and institutional support. Instructors' willingness and confidence to adopt technology is important, as instructor's views are projected in the classroom [14]. Instructors do not always communicate their concerns and preferences. Therefore, it is important to reach out to the instructors and find out their preferences. Carrying out research in the area of BL will encourage instructors to give their feedback. Instructors can already have negative perceptions of technology. Specially experienced mature instructors might have had a bad experience with technology in the past. These preconceptions can be changed with training and support from the institution [14]. Research shows that some instructors can completely ban technology from their classroom based on past poor experiences. According to research banning technology is not the solution but rather the instructors should be further trained to change their views [15]. Training in technology plays a crucial role when it comes to the instructors use of technology. In many

cases the instructors have a fear of the unknown. Study by the author [4] revealed that instructor perceptions of BL are affected by readiness and belief, interest in BL, personal benefits, teaching experience and experience with technology [4]. Motivating people to implement BL is the best option. And institutions leadership plays an important role in motivating instructors. Therefore, self-motivation is important, and it is important for institutions to create an environment of self-motivation [16]. Some common motivators for instructors are promotions, funding, grants and more options available for learning. The end users of BL are students in a classroom. Therefore, students do play an important role in the success of BL. BL can actually support or deter student engagement dependent on the instructor's proper use of BL.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion research and findings on instructor perceptions will create awareness for instructors at a personal level. It will also assist the institutions to better implement the blended learning approach institution wide. It is also concluded based on past research that institutions should consult instructors when implementing the BL approach. Successful implementation of BL is dependent on instructors use and views of technology. As discussed above instructors can have preconceived views of BL which can be changed with support and training.

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