The E-Learning Imperative: To Blend or Not To Blend

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Objective

Provide empirical data relevant to an e-learning business case for the Development Academy of the Philippines and its partners to:

- Increase ability to respond to enrolment demands
- Provide better experience for professionals as students
- Improve student engagement
- Improve student learning.
Methodology

- Analysis of course websites
- Survey Questionnaires:
  - Students
  - Faculty
- Focus group discussion
Schoology Websites

5 major course websites (MC) analyzed were:

- Principles and Practices in Microfinance
- Key Issues in Microfinance Policies and Regulations
- Microfinance Methodology
- Planning, Budgeting, Financial management and PME
- Practical Issues in Microfinance Management
1. Organization and layout
   - Well organized, simple & straightforward
   - Consistent, standard Schoology design
   - Clarity and ease of navigation
2. Instructional design and delivery

- F2F and online components clearly delineated
- Online portion from 25-40% of the total course time
- Diverse activities in both online and face-to-face mode
- Not evident that student’s online participation is included in the criteria for grading
3. Communications, interaction, and collaboration

- Variety of tools to facilitate communication
- Group work or project activities were not observed

4. Learner support and resources

- No links to institutional policies & program information
- No list of academic resources and links to DAP’s library and other resources.
Students and Faculty Survey

1. Increase DAP’s ability to respond to enrolment demands
2. Provide better experience for professionals as DAP students
3. Improve student engagement
4. Improve student learning
Students’ and faculty Survey

1. Increase DAP’s ability to respond to enrolment demands
   - Solid majority of the students and faculty favor blended learning over fully online or face-to-face courses
   - Faculty members lack confidence in their technical skills
Students and Faculty Survey

2. Provide better experience for professionals as DAP students

- Definitely a better experience for professionals as students

- Solid majority agree that F2F sessions helped the students to collaborate online
Students and Faculty Survey

3. Improve student engagement

- Many students have been more engaged with blended learning but not a solid majority
- Faculty members felt they had more interaction with their students than in traditional classes
4. Improve student learning

- Majority of the students prefer blended learning over fully online or fully face-to-face courses
- Students understand better in the blended format
- Faculty members also indicated that students generally performed better
Recommendations for LMS

- Explicitly define blended learning for students
- Provide clear outline of expectations and rubrics for grading of online components
- Adopt a uniform pattern for the online/face-to-face components so that unoccupied classroom space can be utilized for other courses
- Use a standard course layout template so that students who have previously taken up courses through the LMS are not confused by the website organization
Recommendations for Students

- Ensure proper orientation in the blended mode with details of course schedule and online requirements.
- Avoid the “course and a half syndrome” (online component as add on to lecture-based course) so that student workload is reasonable.
- Encourage online discussion in courses and faculty presence to create a more engaging environment.
Recommendations for Faculty members

- Instructional designers who specialize in supporting the instructional format must be assigned to faculty members who are preparing a blended course.

- Encourage faculty members to work with instructional designer to review their courses to determine the extent to which the course meets criteria.

- Provide technical support as needed by faculty members.
References:

Amaral & Shank (2010). “Enhancing Student Learning and Retention with Blended Learning Class Guides”

“Blended Learning in K-12.” Innosight Institute


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