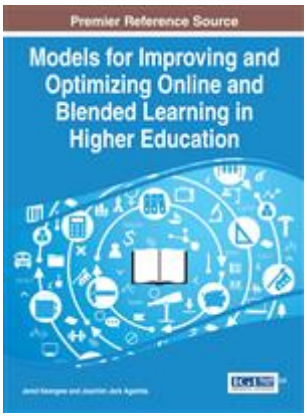
International Women Online Journal of Distance Education

October, 2016 Volume: 5 Issue: 4 Reviews: 01 ISSN: 2147-0367

MODELS FOR IMPROVING AND OPTIMIZING ONLINE AND BLENDED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by Jared KEENGWE and Joachim Jack AGAMBA, IGI Global, ISBN: 9781466662803, 2015, USA

Reviewed by Gülay EKREN
Sinop University
Sinop, TURKEY



This book has fifteen chapters which focus on process models for online and blended learning, how these models support the teaching and pedagogical approaches as well as learning outcomes, and how these models help faculty to be successful in their teaching process. It emphasizes models and teaching options for delivering and designing courses using online and blended approaches. It also provides the benefits and limitations of Learning Management Systems or Course Management Systems. Faculty and institutions have a big responsibility to evaluate instructional practice related to the needs of different types of learners. It can be also more crucial for them to be able to transit from traditional delivery methods to technology mediated methods. Contributors of this book establish the benefits of instructional technology over traditional methods and argue for a willingness to embrace the challenges involved in the process of optimizing technology tools in blended and online learning environments. This book can be useful not only for faculty to be successful in their teaching process (when engaging learners and leading to desirable outcomes) or academic careers but also for executives and educators, who are interested in planning, design, implementation, and utilization of technology-mediated environments or platforms in consideration of institutional mission, academic program goals or specific instructional and institutional situations.

Chapter 1
Optimizing Blended Teaching and Learning in Brick-and-Mortar Institutions
Joachim Jack Agamba

This chapter highlights factors affecting proper use of technology in education such as faculty resistance to change and the need for alternative forms of support for faculty in the utilization of Course Management Systems (CMS) for blended teaching and learning. According to the author, alternative approaches are required apart from one-size-fits-all approach to assist the faculty for implementing CMS tools on blended and online course in brick-and-mortar institutions of higher education.

Chapter 2
Utilizing Learning Management System (LMS) Tools to Achieve Differentiated Instruction
Sophia Palahicky

This chapter introduces the use of LMS tools in the view of sample scenarios to achieve differentiated instruction which supports effective teaching and student learning in face-to-face, blended and online learning environments. Author also presents internal and external barriers that prevent teachers from using LMS tools effectively.

Chapter 3
A Rich Environment for Active Learning (REAL): A Model for Online Instruction
Heather Robinson, Alana S. Phillips, Anneliese Sheffield, Michelle Moore

This chapter proposes a social constructivist instructional model named Rich Environment for Active Learning (REAL), which evolves from constructivist principles to enhance student knowledge construction in online higher education courses. Authors describe four attributes of REAL as a viable model in the context of benefits and opportunities to the students. They also suggest the use of a Learning Management System with REAL model to provide enriching social constructivist learning environment.

Chapter 4
Active Learning Strategies for Online and Blended Learning Environments
Cynthia Cummings, Diane Mason, Kaye Shelton, Katie Baur
This chapter provides a set of teaching and learning methods for faculty to support active learning strategies; such as simulations, role playing, problem-based and project-based learning, case-based learning, web 2.0 tools (wikis, blogs), collaboration methods, peer editing, peer instruction, feedback, building online community, online icebreakers, and flipped classrooms.

Chapter 5
Cultivating Community in Online and Blended Learning Environments
Tracy W. Smith, Emory Maiden III
The authors of this chapter provide experiences of instructors who are working for Appalachian State University, USA. This chapter presents the cases of three instructors to provide tools and methods for promoting social, cognitive and teaching presence in online course environments. This chapter also highlights the challenges of faculty about online instructions.

Chapter 6
Serving Nontraditional Students: Meeting Needs through an Online Writing Program
Dianna L. Newman, Meghan Morris Deyoe, David Seelow
This chapter presents the effectiveness of multimedia supported online writing tutorials developed for nontraditional students in higher education.

The tutorials are five web-based modules on Moodle platform. Multiple external specialists reviewed the modules in terms of content and instructional design. Before the pilot application of these tutorials, an online survey about learning style, writing efficacy, and technology efficacy of modules were conducted with students. The findings of this study support the investigation of learner characteristics as a part of module development or curriculum material development.

Chapter 7
Blended for Student Engagement and Retention: The Case of Cinema and Visual Culture and Healthy Lifestyle Studies
Ishmael I. Munene, Flower Darby, John Doherty
This chapter examines the literature on blended learning and then presents an analysis of two implementations of blended courses at Northern Arizona University (NAU). This chapter highlights the benefits of advanced technology in terms of pedagogical approach, course structure, and redesign process of courses in traditional and online classes by the way of two exemplary courses. According to authors, blended learning courses need institution and faculty support, student engagement to provide blended learning opportunities.

Chapter 8
Student Outcomes and Retention in Online Academic and Training Programs
R. S. Hubbard

This chapter presents a brief background about online education in such issues; student retention, outcomes of online education, professional development and problems associated with online education. Then a set of recommendations are elaborated for meeting successful student outcomes and retention in online education. These recommendations focus on self-directedness of online learners, faculty's role in keeping students on track, taking specific steps to increase social presence, the use of team management tools, supporting online faculty and using a learning management system.

Chapter 9
Blending in the Humanities: Course Model and Assessment Results
Astrid Klocke, Danielle Hedegard
This chapter presents a course in Cinema Studies from Northern Arizona University (NAU) which was redesigned as a blended course for two programs. After blended version, student enrollment has increased continually by over 1000% in two years. The signature assignments with standard rubrics; one for assessment and one for grading, used to measure students' ability and learning. Besides, the success of redesigned course was assessed with institutional data and also qualitative data from surveys and reflective essays. The authors offer blended design to increase student learning and faculty teaching.

Chapter 10
Using Instructional Design Goals to
Appropriately Classify Instructional Design Models
Shani Salifu
This chapter examines different instructional design models under an assertion declared by Gustafson and Branch (2007) which built around the ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implementation, and Evaluate) principles. Firstly, authors underline the importance of choosing an appropriate instructional design model based on the match between the design situation (classroom, product, and system) assumptions and model characteristics. Then, the selected characteristics which are used to classify instructional design models are introduced, and some key characteristics of Classroom, Product and Systems design models are discussed as an example for each of them.

Chapter 11
A Model for Improving Online
Collaborative Learning through Machine Learning
E. Muuro Maina, Peter W. Wagacha, Robert O. Oboko
This chapter proposes a model which integrates Weka clustering algorithms into Moodle platform to improve online collaborative learning. The model uses collaboration competence levels (clusters) of students as high, medium, and low to apply machine learning algorithms such as clustering algorithm. Authors also create an interface in Moodle to provide learners an immediate feedback that allows the instructor to send a SMS or an email either to entire cluster or to a single student.

Chapter 12
Blogs in Teacher Education: Knowledge Sharing
Among Pre-Service Teachers on a Group Course Blog
Peggy Semingson
This chapter presents a case study to examine asynchronous learning tools such as blogging to foster blended learning in a face to face course.

This study also looks three types of elements (teacher presence, social presence, and cognitive presence) included Community of Inquiry Framework (Garrison and Arbaugh, 2007) which can be used to design computer mediated learning to support blended learning. Blog data were gathered from undergraduate students of traditional preservice

course by semi-structured instructor-designed prompts and additional readings. Students had guidelines and a simple rubric for their blog assignments. The author examines and discusses teacher presence, social presence, and cognitive presence in this course related to students' blog posts and comments with scholarly literature.

Chapter 13
Using Technology to Enhance Teacher Preparation Field Experiences
Ursula Thomas
This chapter highlights the role of field experiences as well as benefits and challenges in teacher education. Field experiences types such as professional development schools, service learning, alternative placements, laboratory experiences, studying abroad, and paid field experiences, technology enhanced field experiences, paired filed placements are introduced briefly. And then an online learning management system named Desire 2 Learn was used for managing field experiences and gathering data for program assessment and accreditation in a teacher education program.

Chapter 14
Blended Learning and Digital Curation: A Learning Design Sequence
Nathaniel Ostashewski, Romana Martin, Andrew Brennan
This chapter provides an integration of digital curation activities into a blended higher education course. According to this chapter, digital curation activities provide a method to prepare students for lecturers to support critical analysis skill development and also provide a roadmap for lecturers who want to engage students in pre-lecture, flipped, or blended learning activities. The authors firstly present challenges and benefits of engaging students in digital curation activities. Then they represent the blended learning sequence in the context of a third year business education course in an Australian university.

Chapter 15
Learning through Web-Based Authoring Tools
Tony Lee, Doo Hun Lim
This chapter introduces the role of web-based authoring tools from the learners' and faculty's perspective in learning environments. It also highlights four different generational learners (traditionalist, baby boomers, and generation X, generation Y) and their values, preferred leadership styles, learning and communication styles. Then the impact of web-based authoring tools in online learning has discussed in the context of different characteristics of the four generations.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This is a book which introduces process models for improving and optimizing online and blended learning in higher education. According to book features of these models need to be firstly based on learning outcomes but also faculty and institutional goals, specific instructional and institutional situations and contextual realities.

In this context, Chapter 6, Chapter 8, and Chapter 12 focus on learning outcomes, Chapter 2, Chapter 9, and Chapter 15 present contextual reflections, Chapter 1, Chapter 10 and Chapter 14 guides the choice of instructional design situations,

Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 7 provide guidelines for faculty to develop learning strategies for online or blended environments, Chapter 3, Chapter 11, and Chapter 13 present a roadmap for engaging new models to improve online and blended learning. This book can be beneficial primarily for faculty and educators to optimize technology tools as well as alternative instructional models in online and blended learning environments.

Overall, this book can be a resource for administrators and educators who are interested in critical needs of different types of learners such as lifelong learners, non-traditional learners or disadvantageous groups (such as women who have to look after their babies or have to stay at home, people with disabilities, non-working people, part-time workers, people in rural areas etc.) who want to engage traditional learning environments.

BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of the REVIEWER

Gülay EKREN has been working as a lecturer at the Department of Computer Technologies of Vocational School of Ayancık, Sinop University since 2009. She has a BA degree from the Computer and Instructional Technologies Department of Ege University, and MA degree from the Management Information Systems Department of Gazi University. She also has an online MA degree from the Distance Education Department of Anadolu University. Her research interests are open and distance learning, distance education management, mobile learning, and management and information systems.

Gülay EKREN
Sinop University
Vocational School of Ayancık
Sinop, Ayancık 57400, TR
Phone: +90 0368 613 3436 / Extension: 6915
Email: gekren@sinop.edu.tr