CASE STUDY: BLENDED LEARNING THROUGH INTERUNIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE INTERACTION

Dr Beatriz Fainholc - National University of La Plata, CEDIPROE Foundation, Bs Aires-, Argentina. bfainhol@speedy.com.ar www.cediproe.org.ar

Dr. Norma Scagnoli, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA. scagnoli@uiuc.edu
INTRODUCTION

• An experience of introducing blended learning in the curriculum of an undergraduate course on Educational Technology for senior education majors in UNLP, Argentina
• Duration of experience: 4 years
• Population size 50 (average) per year
• Professor Dr. Fainholc and teaching team (2TAs) – content expert and professor
• Collaborators: Dr. Scagnoli, instructional design and online learning specialist and Anthony Hursh, technology specialist from CTER, Univ of Illinois at U-C, USA
WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Urbana, IL, USA

La Plata, Argentina

Copyright 2007 The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System
QUESTIONS FOR THE AUDIENCE

• How many of you have worked in remote collaboration with a colleague (from different location)? Can you stand up?
• How many of you have collaborated in IT innovations in Higher Education? (stay standing)
• How many of those who have collaborated, have been involved in projects that include not only research but also actual teaching?
OBJECTIVES OF THIS SESSION

- To present the blended learning initiative
- To describe the design and implementation processes
- To discuss the strengths and weaknesses of virtual collaboration
- To reflect and discuss the lessons learned
BLENDED LEARNING

- Blended learning defined as a planned combination of teaching approaches that include a diversity of media, online and face-to-face teaching strategies, in order to improve the teaching and learning mediated processes.
OBJECTIVE 1: PRESENT INITIATIVE

• Goal: “Walk our Talk” providing a coherent methodology to teach the subject.
• This was the first course in its format in the UNLP College of Education
• Format satisfied needs and interests
• Project involved inter-universities collaboration
• Expecting to expand learning and practice communities, including scientific-technologic action- research to improve teaching within an internationalized context
OBJECTIVE 2: DESCRIBE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES

• Started in 2004
  – Analyzing curricular needs,
  – Exploring course management systems
    • Fit to the curricula
    • Be in agreement with resources
    • Flexible and user friendly
  – Defining instructional design and sequence of implementation:
    • Yr 1 (2005): Upload unmodified content to CMS (Moodle)
    • Yr 2 (2006): New curriculum by competences, changes in Inst Design
    • Yr 3 (2007): Pedagogical practices for blended learning
OBJECTIVE 2 : DETAILS OF COLLABORATION

• **Yr 1: Upload unmodified content to CMS (Moodle)**
  – Strategy that served familiarization and socialization process with system and among collaborators

• **Yr 2: New curriculum by competences, changes in Inst Design**
  – [Guide to instructional design of blended learning](http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference)
  – New content and new strategies
OBJECTIVE 2 : DETAILS OF COLLaborATION

- Yr 3: Pedagogical practices for blended learning
  - Deepen collaborative exchange
  - Enhance cognitive and meta cognitive skills
  - Help knowledge building (distributed and situated approaches)

Technology was not the focus of this year’s work however it was not invisible and its presence could not be ignored.
# OBJECTIVE 2: TIMETABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Upload unmodified content</td>
<td>Changes in Instructional Design</td>
<td>Emphasis in pedagogical strategies for b-learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary analysis</td>
<td>Monitoring Formative evaluation</td>
<td>Modifications in course content (teaching by competences)</td>
<td>Stress on collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision on design</td>
<td>Action Research Reflective practice</td>
<td>Introduction of new collaborative practices</td>
<td>Highlights on students self and co evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision on LMS</td>
<td>TA and student training</td>
<td>Wikis Webquest E-portfolios</td>
<td>Emphasis on journals and e-portfolios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Training</td>
<td>Reflective practice</td>
<td>Reflective Practice</td>
<td>Summative evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23rd Annual Conference on Distance Teaching & Learning

http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference

Copyright 2007 The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System
OBJECTIVE 3: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES
TOOLS FOR VIRTUAL COLLABORATION

• Communicative rationale based on respect and negotiation processes
• Communication: Weekly at the beginning, once or twice a month as project progressed
• Systems: (Synch) MSN messenger / Skype/ phone; (Asynch) e-mail, discussion forum
• Strengths: easy access, user friendly, free, voice and video enabled.
• Weaknesses: personal limitations, technology literacy, hw and sw issues, broadband issues.
SCREENSHOTS OF THE COURSE

2007

2006

2005
OBJECTIVE 4: REFLECTION AND LESSON LEARNED (BLEARNING)

From the learning results in the application of a Blended Learning approach:

POSITIVE FINDINGS:
- Self confidence and security to operate
- Enhance skills and attitudes
- Respect multiple intelligence and cognitive styles
- Paradigm shift to student oriented models
- Reinforce independent study habits
- Increase technology mediated interactivity

LIMITATIONS:
- Lack of recognition, hidden reluctance
- Poor information literacy
- Lack of comprehensive and critical reading skills
- Lack of awareness of personal and institutional prejudices
- Misunderstanding of scheduling imposed by application of b learning
- Acceptance of tradition and routines to avoid changes
OBJECTIVE 4: REFLECTION AND LESSON LEARNED (COLLABORATION)

From the remote collaboration process

• POSITIVE FINDINGS:
  – Inter-institutional dialogue and common framework
  – International social and academic interaction
  – Shift to open dialogue (Importance of social, cultural and linguistic features)
  – Understanding of lack of unified definitions for b-learning
  – Facility to overcome misunderstandings in communication

• LIMITATIONS:
  – Continuous availability of research partners in the 4 yr period
  – Demands of long term projects without institutional support
  – Multiple interpretations of the concept of b-learning
RISK AWARENESS

- Fall into technologism ignoring human recreation
- Disregard the opportunity to teach comprehensive and critical reading skills
- Over structured learning processes, abuse of instructional design templates or guidelines
- Disregard the multi-dimensional process involved in the complexity of b learning
- Ignore the demands of long term projects
FINISHING THE EXPERIENCE, WE OBSERVED

- Significant increase in an active commitment in teaching and learning processes, towards a student oriented model: the more activities we prepare, the more they will interact….

- Students’ progressive increase of benefitting from the comprehensive and critical use of the huge availability of online materials

- Although not everybody has a PC and connectivity at home, the change in study habits and information processing in mediated interaction is done in an irreversible way.

- Synergy in the collaboration
REMEMBER:

- Each system will be more or less effective according to seriousness in its design, honesty in its guidance and monitoring in practice. This is what we are doing now….and we will continue…

- The best teaching approach is the one that best adapts itself to students’ needs and their possibilities as main actors of learning proposals. In this case B learning proved to be the most efficient, effective and pertinent choice. There is no way back to traditional teaching.

- B learning is not better or worse than other formats. Quality will depend on multiple aspects such as adequate pedagogical design, training, available tech resources, good management and continuous monitoring, and perseverance.

- Collaboration will grow only in a context of mutual respect, overcoming single thought (international ideological hegemony)
CASE STUDY: BLENDED LEARNING THROUGH INTERUNIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE INTERACTION

Dr. Beatriz Fainholc - National University of La Plata, CEDIPROE Foundation, Bs Aires-, Argentina. bfainhol@speedy.com.ar  www.cediproe.org.ar

Dr. Norma Scagnoli, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA. scagnoli@uiuc.edu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASES of INSTRUCTION</th>
<th>HOW</th>
<th>Face to face</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To PRESENT new content</td>
<td>Professor lectures</td>
<td>Probl.Discuss</td>
<td>Readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading . Debate</td>
<td>Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solving problems</td>
<td>Video . Cartoons</td>
<td>Powet Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual presentation</td>
<td>Slides</td>
<td>Links Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PPT, Multimedia</td>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To GUIDE the student to comprehension</td>
<td>Questions and answer</td>
<td>Guide Activities in class to orientate and clear</td>
<td>Guide of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Forus - chats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Debate.Practical exercises</td>
<td></td>
<td>E-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To GIVE ACTIVITIES and PRACTICE in order the practice of the student</td>
<td>Exercises : short essays.</td>
<td>Solving problems</td>
<td>Guide of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Guide of activities in small groups</td>
<td>in Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Debate in Forum.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborativeworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wiki</td>
<td></td>
<td>works off-on line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To EVALUATE and to measure in terms of objectives (formative, sumative), self and co-judgement.</td>
<td>Quiz essays for conceptual relationships.</td>
<td>Exercises and Practice work</td>
<td>Questions and Answers M choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written Exames</td>
<td>Practice work</td>
<td>To send two pgs synthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Webquest Project in groups.</td>
<td>Tutorials</td>
<td>Webquest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portfolios</td>
<td>Exercises and Practice work</td>
<td>Portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final oral/ face to face examen .</td>
<td>back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scagnoli, N (2007) in press
COLLABORATIVE CONTEXT

To develop a real/virtual learning community, with commitment to work and create together: *WIKIS* for study concepts and contents, to be online with mates and tutors for doubts, to elaborate Webquests, to research into the web, to develop meta-cognition by Portfolios, and self-awareness by de Diaries…..and so on.

*Fainholc, B. (2006) Collaborative Context*