The Challenges of Blended Learning in Time of COVID-19 pandemic

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Description

Rationales for adopting blended learning could include the ability to operate globally, supporting diversity via equity of access learners who are unable to attend classes, increasing interaction between learners and faculty (Dziuban, Moskal, & Hartman, 2005; Sharpe, Benfield, Roberts, & Francis, 2006; Stacey & Gerbic, 2009). However, very little has been written about the pedagogical challenges of blended learning in times of crisis such as COVID-19 pandemic that could help in mitigating disruptive circumstances, especially in higher education, if it is known (Julie et al., 2012). This poster aims to explore the challenges that could be faced when redesigning courses using blended learning approach and suggest solutions for it.

Some challenges and suggested solutions when using blended learning approach.

Technology Readiness. Using the technology presents a challenge for blended learning because both learners and faculty are not experience in using the technology. (Muna et al., 2020). Research suggests blended learning is an effective way to continue in education in the time of crisis if both learners and faculty have the ability and experience in using the technology.
- ❖ Readiness to use digital technologies is an important factor to enable faculty and learners to adapt flexibly to blended learning environments when normal patterns are disrupted (Mark & Seeman, 2008).

Training Issues. The time for training and to re-design and administer the course is one of the challenges that faculty and learners could face. Alebaikan and Troudi (2010) mentioned that "One reason could be that the universities and institutions do not provide enough training workshops for online learning [blended learning] systems" (p.52).
- ❖ Some training workshops about how to design courses and teach via using blended learning approach could help in dealing with unexpected circumstance.

Getting Students on board with the new format. According to Kenney & Newcombe, 2011, some learners may "skeptical about the new approach and not used to taking responsibility for their own learning" (p.53).
- ❖ This is will not easy on both learners and faculty. learners must manage their time very well, adopt to the new approach and faculty need to continuously remind students about due dates and where to find materials and assignments on the website.

Platform Issues. platforms could be locally or globally developed. Some issues could be faced are related to the systems. The issues like inability to upload large files, inefficient design and etc. (Alshammari,2015).

Summary.

Some challenges have been discussed in this paper and through enhanced awareness of the practical issues surrounding the implementation of blended learning in time of crises in higher education contexts will help to provide more effectively plan to address such issues. Knowing the challenges is an important starting point toward the goal of more universal blended learning usage in times of crisis.

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