EDRS5220: Project in the Theory of Ed.
Asynchronous Plenary

Flexible Learning Environments: Theories, Trends, and Issues

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Presentation Outline

- **What** is Flexible learning?
- **Why** do we need to flex learning?
- **What** are some characteristics of flexible learning environments?
- **Which** learning theories mostly apply to flexible learning environments?
- **What** are some trends and issues in flexible learning environments?
What is flexible learning?

- “flexible learning is an alternative to the face-to-face teaching model traditionally associated with higher education”  
  *Cybinski & Selvanathan (2005, p. 252)*

- “FlexLearning is a course delivery strategy that allows student to have the option to take course either completely face-to-face, or completely online, or in a blended fashion with no learning deficit.”
  
  *PennState Lehigh Valley (2015, Section. Background)*
Why do we need to flex learning?

- Keep abreast of global educational trends in offering new course delivery formats
- Respond to flexibility and convenience wants of adult learners
- Expand reach to global market of learners
- Accommodate increased number of learners in and outside classroom
- Address budget constraints in education funding
- Promote self-reliance and life-long learning
- Remain competitive in providing 21st Century digital learning spaces

(Cybinski & Selvanathan 2005; Ling & Fraser, 2014; PennState Lehigh Valley, 2015)
What are some characteristics of flexible learning environments?

- Reduction in traditional F2F time in learning environment
- Offers flexibility in choice of delivery mode for learning
- Offers equivalence in learning despite delivery mode
- Offers convenience of fitting learning into personal schedule
- Designed for student-centered and collaborative learning
- Requires self-regulation and motivation for learning
- Relies on technology in meeting learning outcomes to include assessment

(PennState Lehigh Valley, 2015; Cybinski & Selvanathan, 2005).
Which learning theories mostly apply to flexible learning environments?

- Connectivism
- Constructivism
- Engagement
Learning Theories mostly applying to flexible learning environments

- **Connectivisim**
  - Finding/connecting to info online for learning
  - Currency of info key to learning
  - Decide what info. to choose & synthesize for learning

- **Constructivism**
  - Construct knowledge from integrating new knowledge with past knowledge and experience
  - Student-centred learning
  - Learning achieved thru interaction and collaboration

- **Engagement**
  - Relational and collaborative learning
  - Engaged in solving real-life problems
  - Service-oriented in donating time/talent

(Simens, 2005; Ling & Fraser, 2014; Marshall, 2007)
What are some trends and issues in flexible learning environments?

Popular Flexible Learning Environments:

- E-learning
- Blended learning
- Flipped learning
- Mobile learning
• **EL Definition:**
  “... refers to learning and teaching using electronic media and requires the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) combined with electronic media” (eLearning Industry, 2015, Para. 1).

• **Electronic Learning Environments (ELEs) Definition:**
  “… refer to online, computer-based, or high technology learning forums.” (Banas, 2011, p. 2).
## E-Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Trends</strong></th>
<th><strong>Issues</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More interactive/collaborative learning</td>
<td>Insufficient know-how for designing interactive/collaborative learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in courses/enrollment</td>
<td>Insufficient faculty to facilitate courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of gamification as a problem-solving tool</td>
<td>Change of mindset towards use of gamification in learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in modernizing e-learning spaces</td>
<td>Pedagogy not aligned to the changing technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-learning focused on achieving learning outcomes</td>
<td>Technology placed before learning outcomes in planning instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearable e-learning technology (e.g., watches)</td>
<td>Affordability and Acceptability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Banas, 2011; eLearning Industry, 2015b; Ling & Fraser, 2014).*
Blended Learning (BL)

- **BL Definition:**
  “An integrated and planned approach to teaching and learning that appropriately combines face-to-face and online strategies and technologies to advance student-centered learning” (Thurab-Nkhosi, 2013).

**Continuum of Learning Modes**

- F2F
- **Blended**
- Online

*(flexibility, convenience, learner-centred)*
Blended Learning (BL)

Replacement Model Used at SOE

100% online no teaching in class
SOE first and last classes f2f

Some f2f classes replaced by online sessions
Mix determined by CC and approve by CETL

(SOE, BL Policy, 2013)
# Blended Learning

## Trends

- Use of emerging technologies (e.g., tablet computing and mobile phones)
- More student-centered learning requiring collaborative skills
- Increase in BL programmes/access
- Increase in training and competencies for online learning
- More flexibility in learning schedule
- Increase in networking and learning communities
- Enhanced learning resources

## Issues

- Wi-Fi access not evenly distributed to accommodate use anytime, anywhere
- Under-developed team work skills for orienting work to successful completion
- Insufficient BL orientation for students
- Insufficient expertise for developing BL training and programmes
- Lags in students’ online participation
- Managing time and collaborative projects
- Some learning resources do not afford the interactivity expected online

(Kineo and The Oxford Group, 2013; Thurab-Nkhosi, 2013; Ferdinand, 2014)
EL Definition:

“... flipped class is learning environment in which the activities traditionally completed outside of class as homework are now completed in class during instruction time”.
(Honeycutt & Garrett, 2015, Para. 2).

What do you think are some characteristics of flipped learning?

(Click on video on next slide to find answers)
Flipped-Learning (FL)
(click on graphic to watch video)
Choose the correct answer by clicking on a letter to the left for the corresponding statement to the right. Have fun!

1. Which of the following best describes the flipped classroom?

   A. Students engage their teachers online to complete homework
   B. Students engage their peers online to complete homework
   C. Students engage in home-work activities in class
Choose the correct answer by clicking on a letter to the left for the corresponding statement to the right. Have fun!

2. Which of the following is typical of the flipped classroom?

A. Students watch videos of course content at home
B. Students interact to complete learning activities in the class
C. Students work collaboratively on content outside of class
3. Which of the following best describes teaching in flipped classroom?

A. Teachers engage with students in virtual classrooms
B. Teachers digitize the course content and learning activities
C. Teachers replace some F2F classes with online sessions
## Flipped Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trends</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities empowered by flipped classroom</td>
<td>Know how for digitizing course content and making it Spec. Ed. compliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flipped learning show greater student engagement</td>
<td>Know-how in creating engaging content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority of faculty view flipped learning positively</td>
<td>Some faculty don’t know enough to try it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved student performance</td>
<td>Some students depend on teacher more to achieve learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher home-work completion rates</td>
<td>Labour intensive preparation for achieving learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced learning materials and access</td>
<td>Lack of incentives for work in preparing flipped learning materials</td>
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(Pierce, 2015; Bart, 2015).
Mobile Learning (ML)

- **ML Definition:**
  “Mobile learning is defined as any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies” (Narozny, 2010, Para. 1).
# Mobile Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trends</th>
<th>Issues</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase demand for fully mobile degrees</td>
<td>Quality of mobile degrees/courses questionable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase use and ownership of mobile devices</td>
<td>Wi-Fi access lags behind and increase in cyber-bullying and inappropriate selfies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrowing of the educational and digital divides</td>
<td>More corporate funding needed to provide resources and access</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance of mobile devices shifted to students</td>
<td>Some students do not update their software to include anti-virus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase in Apps for mobile devices</td>
<td>Incompatibility of Apps with different devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rise in U-Learning</td>
<td>Faculty preparedness for ubiquitous learning lags behind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


• Bart, M. (2015, Augusts). Flipped classroom survey highlights benefits and challenges. *Faculty Focus*


References


- Honeycutt, B., & Garrett, J. (2014, January). Expanding the definition of a flipped learning environment. Faculty Focus


References


• Narozny (2010, November). Students on the Go: What’s an instructor to do? *Faculty Focus.*


• School of Education (2013). *Blended learning policy.* Faculty of Humanities and Education: The University of the West-Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad.


Now to the Great Debate!

Thank You!
Quick Self-Test Q1.

That’s correct! Good Job!

Continue
Self Test Check Q1.

That’s incorrect!

Try Again
Quick Self-Test Q2. √

That’s correct! Good Job!

Continue
Self Test Check Q2. ×

That’s incorrect!

Try Again
Quick Self-Test Q3. ✅

That’s correct! Good Job!

Continue
Self Test Check Q3. ×

That’s incorrect!

Try Again