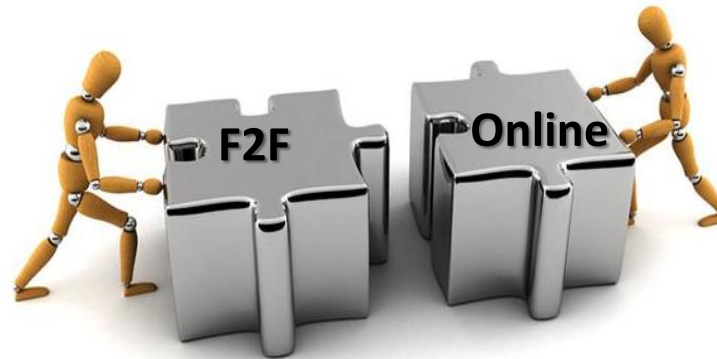


EDRS5220: Project in the Theory of Ed. Asynchronous Plenary

Flexible Learning Environments: Theories, Trends, and Issues



Debra Ferdinand-James, PhD
Educational Technologist & Blended Learning Champion
School of Education, UWI, St. Augustine

October 21, 2015

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



• **Connectivism**

- 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



E-Learning (EL)

- **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

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

(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).



(flexibility, convenience, learner-centred)



Blended Learning (BL)

Replacement Model Used at SOE

Web-Delivered

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

Web-Enabled

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



Blended Learning

Trends	Issues
➤ Use of emerging technologies (e.g., tablet computing and mobile phones)	➤ Wi-Fi access not evenly distributed to accommodate use anytime, anywhere
➤ More student-centered learning requiring collaborative skills	➤ Under-developed team work skills for orienting work to successful completion
➤ Increase in BL programmes/access	➤ Insufficient BL orientation for students
➤ Increase in training and competencies for online learning	➤ Insufficient expertise for developing BL training and programmes
➤ More flexibility in learning schedule	➤ Lags in students' online participation
➤ Increase in networking and learning communities	➤ Managing time and collaborative projects
➤ Enhanced learning resources	➤ Some learning resources do not afford the interactivity expected online



Flipped-Learning (FL)

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)



Quick Self-Test Q1.



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**



Quick Self-Test Q2.



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**



Quick Self-Test Q3.



Choose the correct answer by clicking on a letter to the left for the corresponding statement to the right. Have fun!

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

Trends	Issues
➤ Students with disabilities empowered by flipped classroom	➤ Know how for digitizing course content and making it Spec. Ed. compliant
➤ Flipped learning show greater student engagement	➤ Know-how in creating engaging content
➤ Majority of faculty view flipped learning positively	➤ Some faculty don't know enough to try it
➤ Improved student performance	➤ Some students depend on teacher more to achieve learning outcomes
➤ Higher home-work completion rates	➤ Labour intensive preparation for achieving learning outcomes
➤ Enhanced learning materials and access	➤ Lack of incentives for work in preparing flipped learning materials

(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

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

(Banas, 2011; eSchool News, 2015; Figaro-Henry & James, 2015; Hui, 2014; Poll, 2015).



References

- Banas, J. R. (2011). Chapter 4: Standardized, flexible, design of electronic learning environments to enhance learning efficiency and effectiveness. *IGI Global*. Retrieved from [http://www.igi-global.com/viewtitlesample.aspx?id=52829&ptid=47404&t=standardized, flexible design of electronic learning environments to enhance learning efficiency and effectiveness](http://www.igi-global.com/viewtitlesample.aspx?id=52829&ptid=47404&t=standardized,flexible%20design%20of%20electronic%20learning%20environments%20to%20enhance%20learning%20efficiency%20and%20effectiveness)
- Bart, M. (2015, Augusts). Flipped classroom survey highlights benefits and challenges. [Faculty Focus](#)
- Cybinski, P., & Selvanathan, S. (2005). Learning experience and learning effectiveness in undergraduate statistics: Modelling performance in traditional and flexible learning environments. Retrieved from [Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education, 3\(2\), 251-271](#)
- eSchool News. (2015, July). *State law takes aim at cyberbullying*. Retrieved from <http://www.eschoolnews.com/2015/07/29/law-cyberbullying-530/>
- eLearning Industry (2015a). *A strategy for an e-Learning school culture*. Retrieved from <http://elearningindustry.com/creating-an-e-learning-school-culture>
- eLearning Industry (2015b). *Top 8 eLearning and EdTech Trends for 2015*. Retrieved <http://elearningindustry.com/top-8-elearning-and-edtech-trends-2015>



References

- Ferdinand, D. (2014, May). [Championing blended learning in higher education: Reflections on lessons learnt](#). 2nd Virtual Educa Symposium, MOE and OAS, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.
- Figaro-Henry, S., & James, F. (2015). Mobile learning in the 21st Century higher education classroom: Readiness experiences and challenges. *Caribbean Curriculum*, 23, 99-120.
- Honeycutt, B., & Garrett, J. (2014, January). Expanding the definition of a flipped learning environment. [Faculty Focus](#)
- Hui, K. T. (2014, December). District policy change could ban selfies. *eSchool News*. Retrieved from <http://www.eschoolnews.com/2014/12/08/school-bans-selfies-723/>
- Kineo and The Oxford Group (2013). *Blended Learning – Current Use, Challenges and Best Practice, Report 2013*. Retrieved from <https://www.kineo.com/m/0/blended-learning-report-202013.pdf>
- Ling, P., & Fraser, K. (2014). The future of learning and teaching in next generation spaces. [International Perspectives on Higher Education, 12, 65-84](#)
- MLearning. (2009, July). Retrieved May 10, 2010, from *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MLearning>



References

- Marshall, S. (2007). [Engagement theory, WebCT, and academic writing in Australia](#). *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT)*, 3(2), 109-115.
- Narozny (2010, November). Students on the Go: What's an instructor to do? [Faculty Focus](#).
- Poll, H. (2015). *Pearson student mobile device survey 2015*. retrieved from <http://www.pearsoned.com/wp-content/uploads/2015-Pearson-Student-Mobile-Device-Survey-Grades-4-12.pdf>
- Pierce, D. (2015, June). Flipped learning is changing the face of special ed. [eSchool News](#).
- School of Education (2013). *Blended learning policy*. Faculty of Humanities and Education: The University of the West-Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad.
- Simonson, M., Smaldino, S., Albright, M, & Zvacek, S. (2003). *Teaching and learning at a distance: Foundations of distance education*. (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Thurab-Nkhosi, D. (2013). Blended learning at the University of the West-Indies, St. Augustine: A first look at policy implementation. [Caribbean Teaching Scholar , 3\(1\), 5-22](#).





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

