

21st CENTURY TEACHING: The Teachers' Perceptions in the Used of Blended-Learning Approach in Teaching

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Abstract

The study mainly focused on determining the perception of teachers towards blended learning approach in teaching. This study employed the qualitative research. A qualitative research using phenomenological approach was conducted to assess the validity and strength of teachers in using technology as result to blended learning in the classroom.

The scope and focus of the study were limited to the four teachers of the Calamba Bayside Integrated School who are using blended-learning in teaching.

Findings of the study suggest that time in blended learning is unlimited. It is different from traditional instruction since it makes the learning process more enjoyable and unique. It also boosts the interest of the students. Blended learning makes the entire learning process more convenient.

The researchers suggest that blended learning be used in other learning areas since it is very useful because it makes the students become more aware and careful about the use of social media/technology. Students also become more interactive.

Keywords: blended learning, technology, social media

Introduction

Filipinos have deep regard for education since education occupies a central place in Philippine political, economic, social and cultural life. It has always been strongly viewed as a pillar of national development and a primary avenue for social and economic mobility. Low quality education is an endemic problem in most developing countries like Philippines as shown by the international and local assessments where the Filipino students show poor performance.

The Department of Education (DepEd) is pursuing a package of policy reforms that as a whole seeks to systematically improve critical regulatory, institutional, structural, financial, cultural, physical and informational conditions affecting basic education provision, access and delivery on the ground. These policy reforms are expected to create critical changes necessary to further accelerate, broaden, deepen and sustain the improved education effort already being started by the Schools First Initiative. This package of policy reforms is called the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA). This package of policy reform is expected to create basic education sector that is capable of achieving the Education for All (EFA).

The Department of Education encourages teachers to utilize technology in teaching. Technology continues to advance and provide options to make tasks easier. Education is not exempt from the innovations and has not been for decades. The problem seems to be how to blend the technology and the teaching to develop the right formula for successful schools, teachers and students. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of research in the K to 12 setting. Building a practical framework for teachers to impact students is needed to move forward in making blended learning an effective practice. Additional research needs to be provided on how the teacher actions, beliefs and knowledge of blended learning impact student achievement.

The job of the teacher is to present subject material in a manner that is organized and offers the students a sense of structured familiarity for learning in order to achieve better retention. While at times there has been a social perception that teachers avoid or rebel against the use of technology in the classroom, this stubbornness is often due to the perception of power and authority being lost (Cuban 1986). In fact, teachers embrace change when it is required to be more effective, yet typically these changes are in ways that support their knowledge and authority in the classroom rather than undermine it.

Also, we live in a world that is rapidly evolving through technology. This evolution has led to a changing cultural ideology and how we function day to day. The influences of technology have become ubiquitous in almost every aspect of our current society, including in our educational systems. As expectations have risen within our classrooms, for both students as well as teachers, we are seeing more and more educational technology being implemented into academia and at all levels.

In addition, diving into the teacher's knowledge and trust of the use of a blended intervention and cross referencing that to student outcomes will allow districts to shape the way professional development is delivered as well as provide a data component to allow teachers to see the impact on student knowledge acquisition, performance and the need for differentiation. Barkley (2010) noted that there is a need for additional research to determine if blended learning can potentially improve teacher effectiveness. Teachers would benefit from understanding how to use technology as an instructional tool.

However, teachers, administrators and coaches are struggling to navigate classroom environments that have been asked to transition from print to the use of technology like smart boards, tablets, etc. to technology designed to supplement practice activities for students and now

to a blended learning model that integrates direct instruction from both the teacher and the technology. These environments are not always familiar to the consultants, districts, schools or teachers.

Machine learning is a subset of artificial intelligence, is an effort to program computers to identify patterns in data to inform algorithms that can make data-driven predictions or decisions. As we interact with computers, we're continuously teaching them what we are like. The more data, the smarter the algorithms become. (Vander Ark, 2015)

This machine learning generates a continuous stream of new content in real time that best meets the learning needs of each individual student in every learning moment (Gottlieb, 2015).

Based on the above cited statements and information, the researcher has come up in assessing the importance of technology which is also based on A Child and Community Centered Education System (ACCESs) in Calamba Bayside National High School in the City of Calamba. Since the school need to continuously improve learning, her findings will be her basis on the development of a work plan to further strengthen the use of technology and reemphasize the centrality of learners and the involvement of relevant community and basic education delivery to support change efforts towards achieving the desired outcomes.

Research Questions

This study generally deals with the teachers' perception regarding the use of the blended learning in teaching.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following specific problems:

1. How do the teachers described their lived experiences as regards to the use of blended learning approach in teaching?

2. What themes emerge from the testimonies shared by the teachers using blended learning approach?
3. Based from the findings and reflections, what action plan can be offered in order to enrich the utilization of blended learning?

Methods

Research Design

The study utilized the qualitative research with phenomenology as approach. This approach is used when a researcher is interested in drawing out relationships and patterns of gathered data to gain deeper understanding of a phenomenon. This strand of research is discovery-oriented and, the findings are not predetermined because variables will not be manipulated; instead, it is emergent in design. Research questions at the onset, as well as data collection procedures or protocols may change along the way depending on what ongoing data collection and inductive data analysis reveal (Creswell, 2007).

The interviews will provide the support for a larger synthesis of conclusions regarding the blended learning and the effects of technology. With this in mind, the researchers conducted an in-depth analysis of the experiences of teachers who are using blended learning in teaching. It is an appropriate research method for the purpose of this research because this study will provide a comprehensive overview of the subject, as well as detailed findings and to identify possible areas of further research that may be needed, and to see more clearly what research is revealing.

The choice of this method will deem appropriately since the study aims to account the life of a teacher using technology in the classrooms.

Sampling

In the conduct of this qualitative research, the researchers used purposeful random sampling. This is the most appropriate sampling for the study since this looks at a random sample and adds credibility to a sample when the potential sample is larger than one can handle. While this is a type of sampling that uses small sample sizes, its goal is to increase credibility, not to encourage representativeness or the ability to generalize.

The study conducted in Calamba Bayside National High School in the Division of Calamba. The City of Calamba is located in the province of Laguna, Region IV-A Calabarzon.

The participants of the study were four teachers who are using blended learning in teaching.

Data Collection

A letter of consent was secured from the school principal of Calamba Bayside Integrated School. A letter of consent was also sent to the Head of the chosen teachers. Thereafter, the Focus Group Discussion was scheduled with the teachers. The researchers prepare the guide questions, recording gadgets, writing materials before facilitation of the interview. An assistant to scribe the discussion was also asked to be engaged. The recorded interviews were transcribed and reconciled with the written account. Afterwards, the researchers proceed with the encoding of the verbatim transcription, tabulation of data and qualitative data analysis to arrive at emerging themes.

In gathering pertinent information, the researchers used an interview guide questions to direct the flow of discussions with the participants. The following questions were included in the interview guide for the teachers:

1. How would you describe your experience with blended learning in your classroom?

2. How was blended learning different from traditional instruction in your classroom?
3. How did students respond to blended learning in your classroom?
4. How has your perspective changed regarding the use of blended learning?
5. What barriers/ problems did you encounter using blended learning?
6. How have your students been impacted by using blended learning?
7. How has implementing blended learning impacted you as a teacher?
8. What additional professional development would improve the implementation of the blended learning solution your ability to support students?

Data Analysis

This study employed what is generally referred to as theme-centered or category-based analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe a specific theme-centered analysis as thematic analysis. One of the advantages of this type of analysis is its theoretical freedom. Thematic analysis is done by coding the data. Coding is done by combining the data for themes, ideas and categories and making similar passages of text with a code label so it can be retrieved at a later stage for further comparison and analysis. Coding the data makes it easier to search, compare, and identify any pattern (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Ethical Considerations

The researcher explained to the co-researchers the significance and objectives of the study. The confidentiality of the information to be shared or spoke by the co-researchers was secured. The authors of literature and studies used in establishing the rationale, background of the study and to support the findings of the study were given proper citation.

At the time of gathering of data, the researchers avoided giving opposing comments on co-researchers' views or opinion on the matter of topics that arises in the discussion. The

researchers prevent themselves in asking the co-researchers questions or follow-up inquiry that may lead the co-researchers against the truthfulness of his/her experience.

Results and Discussion

A. Experience with Blended Learning in Classroom

As a teacher who is using blended learning in classroom, the respondent described her experience as it is very accessible anytime the students will pass their output or performance. She was just gave them the deadline of submission. Likewise, the students can ask her questions anytime through chatting online.

The second respondent answered that blended learning and using this kind of approach is a different and challenging experience since it requires a lot of patience. The students have self disciplined when it comes to submit their output online.

B. Difference between Traditional Instruction and Blended Learning

The respondent answered that the time in blended learning is unlimited. This means that the time of teaching is not only on the scheduled time but it can be beyond the class hours. The respondent can talk or message the students anytime.

In addition, the other respondents said that it is different from traditional instruction since it makes the learning process more enjoyable and unique. It also boosts the interest of the students. It makes the entire learning process more convenient.

In blended learning, the students have a freedom to choose their convenient time they want to talk with the teacher.

C. Response of the Students to Blended Learning

Some students cannot able to comply because some of them are not allowed to go to computer shop after class hours. Some students do not have their own computer. However, most of the students can communicate well with the respondent since they have cell phone.

Moreover, most students like it or respond to it positively. However, there are some who are not really appreciative.

Engagement of students in blended learning was a theme. Teacher noted that, “It helped me engage my students more and there is room in the classroom for this type of learning.” She also added that “Their desire to learn improved.” “Student increase in motivation and engagement” was a factor that was an impact on students.

D. Perspective regarding the Use of Blended Learning

The respondents can now extend the knowledge of the students. Before, she do not know how to manage her class. Since they don't have enough facilities in school so she need to think of ways to engage her students to her subject.

The respondents thought that at the beginning, using blended learning is impossible and difficult but as the time goes by it makes her teaching more easy.

“Direct instruction is impacted using blended learning. The students are getting less of ‘me’ time and more computer based instruction.” She said. “The implementation was fine and easy. The program is easy to use and all the information is right there. My personal impact reinforces that students need direct instruction.” I was not really sure what to think about the blended learning before I used it, but now I feel that it is a good resource to add to our learning programs for part of the day. I feel that it helps the students have some time where they get learning at their

individual learning level instead of being in a group where their skill levels may be somewhat different from each other.

E. Barriers/ Problems Encountered using Blended Learning

Not all students know how to use computer. Even though they have subject in Computer, there were still some students who are not interested in blended learning. Some students are not fond of using social media.

Another thing is lack of budget since some of them do not have internet at home.

In addition, there were some instances wherein the school has also low internet access. Because of this, students had difficulty in connecting in the internet.

F. Impact to Students by Using Blended Learning

The students can now follow instructions properly. When there are some queries, the students just send messages to the respondent. Instead of spending their time on social media or games, they use it to practice what they have learned with the respondent.

They become more aware and careful about the use of social media/ technology. Students become more interactive.

The teacher stated that her students, “increased student motivation, student scores improved and students made gains” This qualitative information confirms the data in this study indicating that have an impact on student outcomes.

G. Impact of Blended Learning to Teacher-Respondent

It makes teaching easier. The students have focus in their study. The students can communicate well with the teacher online.

Blended learning makes the teacher more effective.

Personalized learning was also reflected in the study. “Blended learning has impacted me as a teacher by helping me see different ways my students learn and more skill levels that I need to work on with them.” The teacher mentioned that “it gives me time to work with students individually. I can see what they are doing. They are held accountable.” She saw personalized learning as well stating, “(blended learning) addresses individual student needs.”

The teacher reported, “Direct instruction is impacted using blended learning. The students are getting less of ‘me’ time and more computer based instruction.” She went on to say, “The implementation was fine and easy. The program is easy to use and all the information is right there. My personal impact reinforces that students need direct instruction.”

She added, “I was not really sure what to think about the blended learning before I used it, but now I feel that it is a good resource to add to our learning programs for part of the day. I feel that it helps the students have some time where they get learning at their individual learning level instead of being in a group where their skill levels may be somewhat different from each other.

H. Professional Development of Blended Learning

Mentoring for teachers is very important. As facilitators of learning, teachers should know how to improve their teaching through technology.

The training that would provide more clarification about blended learning since there are some teachers who assume that this can only be done using internet or social media.

Teachers requested additional time and supports with the blended learning. She commented that she was interested in “looking more teachers who will use blended learning for each grade level.” She also added that additional information and supports around the program. Teacher with knowledge of blended learning was nearly as likely to request additional professional development.

Conclusions

The following are the conclusions derived from the findings of the study in line with the specific problems presented herein:

1. That the teacher respondents differentiate blended learning from the traditional instruction as more enjoyable and unique.
2. That the teacher-respondents mentioned that the students respond positively with the implementation of blended learning.
3. That the perspective on teaching of teacher- respondents changed with the use of blended learning.
4. That there is an impact on students' performances in the implementation of blended learning in classroom.
5. That there is an impact on teaching of teachers who are using blended learning.
6. That training for teachers on blended learning will provide more clarification since there are some teachers who assume that this can only be done using internet or social media.

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Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to express their sincerest and deepest gratitude to all the people who helped, supported and encouraged them to finish their research. This would not have been completed without their unselfish cooperation and assistance:

Dr. Rosemarie D. Torres, Schools Division Superintendent of Calamba City, for the permission she had given to them which made it possible for them to conduct the study.

Dr. Isabelita R. Hizon, the Education Program Supervisor of Calamba City, for her support and encouragement and for sharing her knowledge in research. It has been of great help to the researchers;

Dr. Ma. Helen G. Magnaye, Principal II, for her encouragement to the researchers that boosted their confidence and for the support that made the study more interesting, possible and successful.

To the four teacher-respondents for sharing their precious time and assistance in achieving the endeavor of this study;

Above all, to **ALMIGHTY GOD**, for HIS richer, deeper and more glorious grace on earth, for giving her strength, wisdom and encouragement that enlighten her mind to see this study more clearly and appreciate it more deeply.

- *researchers*

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