


Chapter 118

Considering the Fourth Quadrant Learning: Facilitating Learners Towards Acceptance of Blended Learning

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ABSTRACT

This action research reports the experiences of introducing blended learning in the delivery of a post-graduate course to students in the university. The research conceptual framework is adapted from the technology acceptance model. The objective is to assess the level of acceptance of online learning and to document the attempts of the facilitator to create an independent, student-directed, and student-centered learning environment. This is the fourth quadrant learning typology. The research participants were a group of Masters in Education students who registered for the course “Strategies for Teaching and Learning.” Blended learning was introduced as a variant from the standard face-to-face instruction. This proved to be a valuable learning experience for both participants and lecturer. The perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of online learning was not matched with the behavioral intention.

INTRODUCTION

IR4 brought with it the wave of advancement in technology aided instruction and an inevitable shift towards online learning. At the same time, Malaysia’s “Vision 2020” called for sustained, productivity-driven growth which required a technologically literate, critically thinking workforce to meet the demands of the 21st century global economy. In July 2001, the nation announced its K-Economy Master Plan (Chan, 2002). ICT was identified as one of the important factors in achieving the objectives of the Educational Development Plan 2001 – 2010 (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 2001). The rapid and unceasing development of global digital communications made it a challenge for the nation to produce

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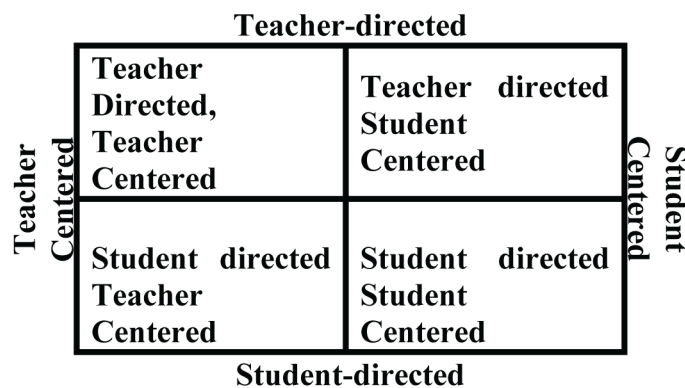
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knowledgeable and online savvy workforce. To this end, the Ministry of Education's (MOE) call for the democratization of the lifelong learner strongly endorsed online learning as an enabling means for accessing information, communication and for productive purposes. Globalization requires new ways of learning and technological advancement makes changes in learning inevitable. We need to review our ways of teaching and learning and constantly move towards improvement for maximum learning effectiveness. This can be represented in the form of teaching and learning quadrants.

THE TEACHING AND LEARNING QUADRANTS

This is a simplistic framework to demonstrate various teacher-student roles and teaching behavior (Goh, 2012) that reflects various scenarios that explains the nature of learner-centeredness and direction (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The teaching and learning quadrants



This typology highlights the roles of significant players. The terms 'teacher-centered' and 'teacher-directed', and 'student-centered' and 'student-directed' highlights the actor who is most active and responsible for making decisions and arrangements pertaining to the learning process. These terms do not represent absolutely distinct states but rather opposite extremes along a continuum of teaching and learning strategies and teacher-student roles.

MOE's third thrust for the use of ICT in education is the use of technology to increase productivity and efficiency. ICT and online technology is to be used extensively to automate and mechanize work processes (Chan, 2002). For this to happen, the student as the technology user will have to be the most active actor responsible for making decisions and arrangements pertaining to the learning process. I called this the *fourth quadrant* teaching and learning typology. This optimal learning situation (Figure 2, lower right quadrant) allows the learners to engage in relating new ideas and explanations to their own prior beliefs. The emphasis is on constructivist learning and the teacher plays the role of task designer and knowledge facilitator. It is the teacher who prompts and guides the learner when necessary and helps him or her back onto an even course by posing thoughtful, open-ended questions rather than supplying ready-made answers.

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