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The Future of Blended Learning and the Emerging Competencies of HRD Professionals in Taiwan

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Purpose of the Study

- Explore the future direction of blended learning in workplace in Taiwan.
- Probe into emerging competencies of HRD professionals.

Precursors to this Study

- "Online Training in the Online World" (2001-2002)
- "Surveying the future of workplace e-learning: The rise of blending, interactivity, and authentic learning" (2003-2004)

Why Blended?

- Fully e-learning has limitations (e.g., lack social interaction).
- Millions of learners around the planet are actually learning in this fashion of blended learning each day (Bonk & Graham, 2006).
- BL a top emerging trend in industry (ASTD, 2003).
- Conceivable that 80-90 percent of college and corporate training classes will be blended (Kim, Bonk, & Zeng, 2005).

Why not blended?

- Time to develop materials, deliver instructions, and enhance interactions
- Instructors/trainers unwilling to change—skeptical of the effectiveness, fear of using the technology, peers can see them, and fear of lack of control.
- The barriers of institutional culture
- Insufficient support from management
- Learners need more self discipline and motivation
- No one universal model of BL

Blending Learning Defined

- "Blended learning refers to events that combine aspects of online and face-to-face instruction" (Rooney, 2003, p. 26; Ward & LaBranche, 2003, p. 22)
Research Questions

- What is the most significant issue or problem with blended learning that must be addressed during the next few years?
- What instructional strategies that will become more widely used in blended learning during the coming decade?
- Which emerging technologies will most greatly impact the delivery of blended learning during the next few years?
- What are the emerging competencies of HRD professionals for adopting blended learning model?

Methods: Overview

- This survey is a part of a longitudinal study of the future of e-learning in corporate training and higher education settings in 2003 and 2004 (Kim & Bonk, 2006; Kim, Bonk, & Zeng, 2005).
- Other countries surveyed included Korea, China, the UK, and the United States.

Methods: The Survey Instrument

- 29 multiple-choice questions regarding:
  - Respondents' demographic information
  - Questions about the current status of blended learning in respondents' organization
  - Questions about future predictions of blended learning

Tool Used was SurveyShare (www.surveyshare.com)

Take Survey (Created Unique Surveys in Four Languages, including Traditional Chinese)

Methods: The Survey Instrument

- Message was sent out electronically (i.e., e-mail, forum posts) to invite target groups to the online survey site.
- Respondents took the online survey in traditional Chinese and their responses were anonymous.
Methods: Survey Respondents

- Target
  - Training/HRD (human resource development) professionals who belonged to professional organizations, discussion forums, or listservs on HRD, e-learning, or blended learning.

Methods: Survey Respondents

- Respondents: (N = 112)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training/HRD Support Staff</td>
<td>18.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Designer or Content Developer</td>
<td>13.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-learning Manager or Director</td>
<td>9.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subcontracts Marketing Manager or Communications</td>
<td>7.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Manager or Director</td>
<td>7.34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trainer or Instructor</td>
<td>6.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant or Learning Technology Advisor</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Manager or Technologist</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool Developer or Programmer</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender of Respondents

- Male 52%
- Female 48%

Number of Employees in Respondent Organizations

- Number of employees

Current State of Blended Learning

- Are you using blended?
  - No, but we are considering using it.
  - Yes, we have recently started using it.
  - Yes, we have been using it for more than 2 years now.
  - Not sure. What is blended learning?

37% in China (26% just started and 11% for more than 2 years) and 45% in Taiwan using BL is far lower than US (75%), UK (73%), and Korea (63%)
What percentage of the training in your organization is currently devoted to blended learning?
- 22 percent not doing any blended
- 32 percent doing 1-10 percent blended; 12 percent 11-10 percent.
- Only about 1 in 10 do more than 40 percent of training in BL format

BL Best Represents What?

Key Drivers of Blended

Instructional Components

Skill areas taught through blended learning in Taiwan

3-4 Skills Most Taught Through Blended
- US: Computer Apps, Job, New Hire Orientation, Leadership
- UK: Computer Apps, Job, Communication/Teamwork, Personal Devel Skills
- Korea: Job Related, Leadership, New Hire Orientation, Basic Skills
- Taiwan: Job Related, New Hire Orientation, Communication/Teamwork Skills
- China: Communication/Teamwork, Basic Skills, Customer Service, Sales/Marketing
3-4 Skills Least Taught Through Blended
- US: Basic Skills, Sales/Marketing, Programming, Product Specific, Professional
- UK: Ethics, New Hire Orient, Basic Skills, Exec Ed
- Korea: Product Specific, Diversity, Customer Product Training, Compliance
- Taiwan: Diversity, Exec Education, Programming, Leadership, Product Specific, Business Practices
- China: Computer Systems/Programming, New Hire Orientation, Leadership, Product Specific

Greatest Benefits of Blended

Greatest Obstacles to Blended

Strategic Planning for Training and Development

If have a Strategic Plan...
- 60 percent share with employees
- 24 percent put on website for anyone to download
- 37 percent say it is working; another 27 percent say it is not working
- 70 percent say it is addresses online learning
- 47 percent say it addresses BL; 37 percent say it does not
- 32 percent say organization has a specific model or framework for BL; 48 percent say no

Taiwan (44%), US (45%), and China (46%) governments were the least supportive. UK most supportive (62%), while Korea was 2nd (52%).
**Future Projections of Blended Learning**

- **Projected Spending on BL**
  - Spending on BL During Next Few Years
  - Don't Know
  - Will increase significantly
  - Will increase a little bit
  - Will be the same
  - Will decrease a little bit
  - Will decrease significantly
  - China increase the lowest (47%); Korea highest (84%); UK second (75%).  (Note: USA was 61% and Taiwan was 63%)

- **54% of participants regarded BL important. This is lower than UK (75%), US (68%), Korea (68%), and China (65%).**

  - **How important is BL for strategic planning for T&D for next few years?**
    - Not important at all
    - Not important
    - Neutral
    - Important
    - Very important
    - **54%**

- **Q1: Most significant issues that must be addressed during the next few years.**
  - Lack of understanding of what blended learning really is
  - Learner resistance/hesitancy
  - Insufficient management support and commitment
  - Boring and low quality content
  - Lack of quality instructors
  - Lack of standards
  - Limited organizational vision and planning
  - High costs of delivery
  - Learners lacking self-regulated learning skills

- **Another Issue: Current Status of Evaluating the Quality of BL**
  - Does your organization evaluate the quality of blended learning courses?
    - **23%** Yes
    - **20%** No
    - **57%** Do not know

- **What people said about the future issues?**
  - "Compared to fully online and face-to-face courses, learners in blended learning settings are required to have both time and accessible physical space. So, blended learning actually requires more learners' time and efforts."
  - "Many organizations prefer either fully online courses or face-to-face courses, since they think blended learning is more costly than other two types."
  - "...because of the high cost of blended learning, it is difficult to convince management to adopt blended learning."
Q4: What are the emerging competencies for adopting blended learning model?

- Competencies are discussed based on the ASTD’s model of management and distribution competencies for learning technologies.
- These competencies are focused on blended learning and situated for the development of blended learning in Taiwan.

1. Understanding of BL

- General Knowledge: Definitions, Impacts, and Models
- Advanced Knowledge, how to...:
  - select effective learning technologies
  - select adequate instructional strategies
  - assure the meaningful integration of all blended learning components
- Also, professionals need to be sensitive to new technologies, envision possible applications, and employ the technologies creatively in practice.
2. Evaluation ofBL
- Instructional strategies evaluation: Effect of instructional strategies on learners, effect of combinations of instructional strategies on learners, and cost analysis of instructional strategies.
- Blended learning components evaluation: Effect of components on learners, effect of the combination of components on learners, and cost analysis of components.
- Technology evaluation: Effect of component technologies on learners, effect of the combination of component technologies on learners, and cost analysis of technology.

3. Benchmarking
- Building successful examples may facilitate these professionals to see what types of training practices work and how they were successfully implemented and to establish a training strategy and set priorities for training practices.
- HRD professionals should be able to...
  - Seek best practices for how to combine instructional strategies in face-to-face and online environments.
  - Collect all kinds of resources.
  - Create a purposeful benchmarking approach.

4. Change Management Skills
- "...helps people adapt to the changes brought on by new technologies and helps them to see the value and benefits of new technologies (Sanders, 2001, p2).".
- Four steps to implement change:
  - Overcoming resistance to change.
  - Managing the transition to the new practice.
  - Shaping political dynamics.
  - Using training to understand new tasks.

Conclusions
- Although e-learning has been widely promoted in workplace learning in Taiwan, there are still considerable opportunities to develop blended learning initiatives.
- Many Taiwanese organizations, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, maintained a wait and see posture.
- HRD professionals were skeptical about the effectiveness of BL.

Conclusions (cont.)
- Researchers and practitioners in Taiwan have to be aware of the challenge in small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Blended learning may provide more training opportunities for such organizations, since it offers more flexible applications than either fully online or traditional face-to-face instruction.

Limitations and Future Research
- The data may not fully represent the situation in Taiwan.
  - Survey was opt in.
  - Sample size only 112.
- Future research will focus on comparisons of different cultures, different industry types, and different organizational sizes.
Questions and Comments
http://www.trainingshare.com