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Session G1

Paper

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT WITH BLENDED LEARNING - A STUDY BASED ON THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

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The paper presents the methodology and results of a survey research conducted at the University of Liege (Belgium) about blended learning (Garrison & Vaughan, 2012). It investigates the level of use of this instructional practice and elicits determinants that predict or prevent its implementation.

Methodology: The instrument is a questionnaire designed in strict accordance with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB, Ajzen, 1985, 2011), which forms the conceptual background of the study. In short, TPB pinpoints 3 universal antecedents of intention (attitudes, control, norms), each of them influenced by specific beliefs tied to the object of the intention [here: to practice blended learning]. Out of 680 invitations, 114 faculty filled in the questionnaire.

Results: As for current usage, findings show that 70 respondents claim to already practice some form of eLearning. However, this use remains, for a vast majority, very basic and hardly akin to full-fledged BL.

As for predictors of future engagement with BL, regression analyses reveal that the 3 universal determinants of intention identified by TCP are significantly active regarding BL:

- attitudes ($p < .001$), significantly mediated by 2 specific beliefs: BL fosters motivation ($p < .001$) and exercising ($p = .027$);

- perceived control ($p = .003$), significantly mediated by one specific belief: the eLearning platform of the university is powerful and user-friendly enough ($p < .001$);

- norms ($p = .029$), significantly mediated by one specific belief: colleagues think that BL should be used ($p = .038$)).

Interestingly, a prior use of technology-enhanced learning has a significant influence on several positive beliefs towards BL, among which that it supports work steadiness, motivation and deep learning.

Value for practitioners: By providing insight into what stimulates or inhibits faculty's resort to blended learning, the study has relevance for staff development teams dealing with this major trend in higher education (Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, & Freeman, 2015).

Additionally, TPB presents as a conceptual framework helping to capture personal/contextual factors of academics' pedagogical intentions and behavior regarding the evolution of their courses. In this respect, it gives a valuable hook on levers that can be activated to support change and innovation in a SOTL perspective.

The paper addresses firstly the conference topic 2 - Future students, future pedagogies, future learning paradigms, and secondly topic 5 - From local scholarship to changing practice.

References

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Session G2

Roundtable

ENGAGING STAFF IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY: A DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP APPROACH

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The objective of this Round Table is to explore how the conundrum of practicing distributed leadership as part of an active professional development learning process can be achieved.

The rationale for this Round Table lies in the challenge of developing a new generation of academics with leadership skills to enable them to participate more actively in addressing the complex situation in which higher education is placed. Faced with this complexity, it is not surprising that new approaches to leadership in higher education are being mooted that are more inclusive of the breadth and depth of expertise that exists within the sector.

Distributed leadership is being discussed globally as a leadership approach that provides opportunities for a broad range of employees, with diverse strengths, to contribute towards effective leadership. While distributed leadership is not a new concept in higher education, the need for a more structured approach is emerging as complexity challenges traditional ways of working. In Australia, faced with this challenge, the Office for Learning and Teaching has, over the last 10 years, funded projects that are underpinned by a distributed leadership approach to learning and teaching improvements. In the UK, the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education has funded a series of Stimulus papers to encourage the proliferation of ideas about new approaches to leadership. In emerging Asian economies the need for significant change in the governance of universities to ensure graduates have the skills for emergent futures is also resulting in reconsideration of traditional leadership approaches.

As a result of the Australian empirical research, a number of resources to assist implementation of a distributed leadership approach have been designed. This includes a conceptual model of distributed leadership, an enabling tool for distributed leadership and benchmarks to assist self-evaluation of distributed leadership have resulted. These resources are available to assist professional development for distributed leadership (see www.distributedleadership.com.au) and are included in the practice section of a recent Stimulus Paper funded by the UK Leadership Foundation for Higher Education to encourage the spread of more shared approaches to leadership. While these are important developments that can assist the proliferation of understanding of distributed leadership, design of professional development opportunities to use these resources needs a more systematic approach to ensure impact.

This Round Table will engage participants in activities to identify how they can use these resources to conceptualise, enable and evaluate a distributed leadership approach to change in learning and teaching. These activities draw on recent positive feedback from participant engagement in