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TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR BLENDED LEARNING IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: A CASE STUDY

Abstract:

It becomes evident when we look at research and scholarly articles that the etymological emergences of 'blended learning' as a field of study and application are relatively new in educational practices. It is also become apparent that there are very limited references to the phrase before 2000; meanwhile, since then various articles encompassing the phrase have been published. Subsequently, it becomes noticeable that the term 'blended learning' has been grasped — in fact a growing body of literature on blended learning (BL) that is providing evidence on the fact that its use is undoubtedly on the rise in higher education

The purpose of this paper is to explore the process of 'blended learning' in the context of higher education practice in a South African Higher Education Institution. A further aspect of this paper is to provide a discussion of the transformative potential of blended learning in the context of the challenges facing higher education in an emerging market such as South Africa. It is maintained that educationally useful research on blended learning needs to focus on the relationships between different modes of learning (for example, face-to-face and on-line) and especially on the nature of their integration. Blended approaches to learning are not just popular technology driven ideas and gadgets that will disappear as fast as they come. Blended learning strategies exemplify how higher education could revisit and strengthen the essential values and practices that have been seriously compromised over the last half-century.

A supposition is that blended learning is consistent with the values of traditional higher education institutions and has the established ability to enhance both the effectiveness and efficiency of significant learning experiences. This paper concludes with a conceptual framework for the best practice of blended learning in higher education.

Keywords:

Blended learning; Emerging Markets, Higher education; Teaching

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