Hybrid, Blended, and Online Learning at Laureate Education: Exploring Myths and Best Practices

Presenter:
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**Introduction**

**Objective**
- Address concerns that faculty, students, and their parents may have about digital teaching and learning from the perspective of empirical evidence.

**Key Take Aways**
- Understand both the value of as well as the best practices in digital teaching and learning.

**Benefits**
- Laureate Education is uniquely poised to meet the global need for higher education with its commitment to provide students access to quality higher education around the world. Bringing to life the Laureate spirit, “Here for Good,” means expanding our commitment to students who currently are not able to access higher education.
“In the everyday rush and with three kids to raise, attending classes at a university has always been very complicated for me; I tried a few times, but always gave up along the way. I chose to study online and it was the best choice I made for my personal and professional development because I was able to gain knowledge and adapt my schedule to the course. In this sense, the involvement of UNIFACS faculty members was crucial. Today, I’ve successfully finished my course and I already received a promotion in the company I work at.”

Ederubia dos Santos Itaparica
Meeting the unmet global need for higher education

Reaching students who otherwise might not have access to quality higher education

Responding to the new ways students are increasingly interacting with technology

Living Here for Good
Defining Hybrid, Blended, and Online Learning

**Blended courses** are taught partially online and partially on premises (i.e., face-to-face).

Some courses in *hybrid programs* are taught fully online and some are taught fully face-to-face and/or in a blended format.

All courses in fully-*online* programs are taught completely online (although there may be limited face-to-face requirements associated with assessments and/or “residencies”).
Myths Around Quality

"Courses taught online are lower in quality than courses taught on campus"

- Digital courses/programs must follow face-to-face regulatory processes including programmatic accreditation (where appropriate)

- External quality standards (e.g., Quality Matters) are available to help institutions meet best practice expectations

Laureate has developed internal quality standards and processes for both institutional use and to guide
Myths Around Student Integrity

“Students online cheat more than students on campus”

Research indicates that online students cheat no more than (and sometimes less than) face-to-face students.

In one study, face-to-face students were more likely to get answers from someone who had already taken the exam; copy a paper or answers without the other person’s permission; commit plagiarism; or use a professional writing service.
Myths Around Student Connectedness

“Online student are so isolated—just sitting behind their glowing screens”

- Technology can erase time and distance
- Students who are part of online groups develop academic, social, and problem-solving self-efficacy similar to student who are part of face-to-face groups
- Students with issues such as lack of perseverance and time management may benefit from digital learning
Myths Around Student Connectedness

“Online student are so isolated—just sitting behind their glowing screens”

I usually use short videos to explain some concepts or patterns of participation and that allows me to get closer to students overall in the time we work online. Other times I use videos so that students present themselves to the rest of the group when the first classroom session does not occur in the beginning of the course and it helps us feel part of the group.

Sonia Martínez Requejo
Associated Professor, School of Social Sciences,
UEM
Faculty may be involved in course design, instruction, or both

Course design (independent of instruction) impacts learning outcomes

Faculty – student interactions in digital teaching and learning are key predictors of student success
Myths Around Effectiveness

“Students learn much more effectively in face-to-face instruction”

“on average, students in online learning conditions performed modestly better than those receiving face-to-face instruction”

The effectiveness of online education hinges on the quality of the course content and is independent of the modality.

“student performance as measured by grade is independent of the mode of instruction”
Myths Around Effectiveness

“Students learn much more effectively in face-to-face instruction”

When a student who is a slow learner came forward and said, “Now I have the confidence that I can perform better, thanks for providing such an interactive course (through Blackboard). I am learning better now.” This is the best motivation for any teacher, I feel!

Narasimman Swaminathan
Faculty of Health Sciences
INTI International University
Myths Around Employer Attitudes

“Students who study online will have difficulty getting jobs after graduation”

In the “International Distance Learning Survey,” 83% of the 1,500 CEOs surveyed believed that online education was as credible as traditional, face-to-face education.

A study of information systems recruiters found that work experience and academic performance were key hiring factors, but not modality of education.

Western Governors University, an online institution, had a 5-year employment rate significantly higher...
Pedagogy in High Quality Digital Teaching and Learning

Same principles of pedagogy as face-to-face: quality relationships with students, supportive learning environment, intellectual exploration.

The best college teachers:  
- Know their disciplines and understand the principles of learning  
- View preparation for teaching just as important as research  
- Set high expectations for their students.  
- Create a supportive and collaborative learning environment  
- Treat their students with respect  
- Engage in continuous improvement
Pedagogy in High Quality Digital Teaching and Learning

Empirical research on online learning supports core face-to-face pedagogical principles:

✔ Online courses should provide good support for student-to-student and student-to-content interactions
✔ Interactions should include cooperative and collaborative learning
✔ Instructor’s moderating role in guided discussions is of great importance
✔ Instructors should be able to provide timely, formative feedback
✔ Content provided should be visually engaging and interactive
Pedagogy in High Quality Digital Teaching and Learning

I believe [online education] shows me every day that it is possible to “change the world” and that it is possible to be and do better and better, since the experiences and outcomes I go through in teaching online assures me of the dimension and responsibility of being an educator and not just someone to pass along content.

Suzana Coelho
Professor, Social Work
Best Practices in Digital Teaching and Learning

Maintaining Student Engagement

Creating Community

Fostering Feedback

Student Engagement
Creating Community
Great teachers create great communities

Ability of Faculty, particularly those teaching in a digital environment, to create a community of learners is essential.

Establishing presence and rapport with students assists them in becoming actively and socially engaged learning community members.

Social presence (the degree to which a person is perceived as a ‘real person’ in mediated communication) is key to retention.

Authenticity is critical to creating effective learning communities.
Networking with classmates is possible with the Stamford Online MBA Program through Blackboard. Collaborate so I am not feeling left out or on my own. I also have opportunities to use technology to conduct group work with my Online MBA friends, without having to be in the same location.

Student, Online MBA Program
Stamford International University
Fostering Feedback
Students value courses with a high level of instructor involvement and with timely feedback on their work.

Early forms of digital teaching and learning provided little opportunity for feedback other than on graded exams and papers.

Formative feedback provides guidance to students during the process of learning and is positively correlated with academic outcomes. What are some effective feedback practices?

- Clarify what constitutes good performance (goals, criteria, and expected standards)
- Deliver useful information to students about their learning
- Encourage positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem
- Provide opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance
I've received a lot of thanks from students who value my feedback, which focuses on how they can improve their thinking processes and make their arguments clearer and convincing. Helping students close the loop in their application of concepts is a critical part of what we bring that is of great worth.

William Schulz  
Professor of Strategy and Leadership  
Walden University
Maintaining Student Engagement
Maintaining Student Engagement

If we can meaningfully engage all students in their learning, we will be well on our way to improving student outcomes and student retention.

“... engagement involves the student’s efforts to study a subject, to practice, to obtain feedback, to analyze, and to solve problems.”

In a study comparing online to face-to-face students, “Students in the online course may be more reflective in their learning process, indicated by the findings that online students spent more time preparing for the course and that they felt more connected to Faculty.”

Face-to-face methods to improve faculty-student engagement apply to online as well, and there are well-accepted online practices to improve engagement:

✔ Post a welcome message to students that is motivating and energetic
✔ Respond to all student queries in a reasonable amount of time (e.g., within 24 hours)
✔ Ensure that all formative feedback is both encouraging and detailed
Conclusions

I saw in the news that UNITEC advertised its virtual mode programs and I said, “My moment has arrived, the time has come to study and the conditions were conducive. I could study without leaving my family or quitting my job... the possibility to keep studying was a click away.”

Karen Padilla, Student
UNITEC Honduras
Conclusions

- We’re here to support you
- The White Paper is available for download in English, Spanish and Portuguese at http://HBOToolkit.laureate.net
- Feel free to contact me: barry.sugarman@laureate.net
- Time for Q&A now