International Conference
"ICT for Language Learning" 4th edition
PIXEL

Blended Language Learning Design. What is the Place and Role of Collaboration in the Process?

Marie-Therese Barbaux
University of Sydney (Australia)
marie-therese.barbaux@sydney.edu.au

Abstract

The design of a blended language learning curriculum, combining face-to-face and online learning, usually requires from the course designer a range of skills and knowledge wider than the necessary expertise in the subject area. In universities, educational designers, skilled in the technologies and pedagogies that support blended learning, provide some assistance to the teacher in the design of learning activities and the selection of appropriate technologies. This paper examines the relationship between the teacher/subject expert and the educational designer, as well as collaborative relationships between teachers. It reports on an investigation of the design process of language curricula in Australian universities and attempts to establish categories of collaborative practices currently used to support the process of blended language learning design.

Teaching is essentially a design-based activity (Mishra & Wallace, 2002; Brown & Edelson, 2003; Goodyear & Markauskaite, 2008). It is about creating opportunities for learning through the design of tasks and environments that promote productive learning. This is especially true for language learning and teaching where learning by doing and active engagement are essential to learning. Effective collaboration between curriculum designers and educational designers is therefore critical. However the relationship between subject expert and educational designer is still often based on a deficit perspective, and the subject expert is seen as 'lacking' the essential technical, and related pedagogical, skills for blended learning design and needing the specialised support of educational designers (Clayton, 2010, Stefani, 2010). This paper argues for a more integrated relationship, based on comprehensive collaboration and partnership rather than a mere support relationship.

The paper reports on an inter-faculty blended learning design experiment involving the formation of a multidisciplinary team and the design of blended curricula over an academic year. It analyses the nature and scope of the collaborative interactions within the design team and concludes that the type of collaboration that developed during the design process fell short of the partnership quality necessary for a truly sustainable process. Reasons will be explored and a more 'organic' and ecological conception of the blended learning design process will be advocated.

To be effective in terms of both student learning and institutional sustainability, blended learning design needs to be seen as a collaborative task shared within distributive design teams and multidisciplinary networks (van Merriënboer, 2002; Siemens, 2008; Veletsianos, 2010).

The process of blended learning design is in essence an iterative conversation that engages complementary scholarship and capabilities and co-constructs shared understandings and artifacts (Geisler & Rogers, 2000).

Paper outline:

1. Concept of teaching as design.
2. Relevance for blended learning design- collaboration essential
3. Currently often a deficit perspective – professional development of academics
4. Difficulty of collaborating-cultures, language
5. Tools for collaborating in design: visualisation, planners ….
6. Project: fell back into individualised prof dev- hard to get to a model
7. Recommendation: more organic collaboration in the design/re-design cycle

---

Concept of teaching as design.

(Mishra & Wallace, 2002)

Relevance for blended learning design- collaboration essential

- linear procedural design approach (ADDIE) but evolving educational designer role, with more consideration given to the complex problem-solving process of educational design (Irlbeck, 2010)

Currently often a deficit perspective – professional development of academics

Difficulty of collaborating-cultures, language

Tools for collaborating in design: visualisation, planners ….

Project: fell back into individualised prof dev- hard to get to a model

Recommendation: more organic collaboration in the design/re-design cycle

- "ecological strategies" (Resnick, 2003)

Teachers as Curriculum Designers – on the Contribution of Teachers' Participation in Collaborative Curriculum Design to Teacher Development and Curriculum Innovation.

Adam Handelzalts (submitting/presenting), Bregje de Vries, Amber Walraven, Hanna Westbroek

Conference: ECER 2010
http://www.eera-ecer.eu/index.php?id=421&no_cache=1&Action=showContributionDetail&contributionUid=4483&conferenceUid=3

The large-scale curriculum innovations of science subjects in the Netherlands and in Germany for example all make use of so-called teacher design teams (Boersma et al, 2005; Driessen en Meinema, 2003; Parchmann et al, 2006). In these projects, teachers design innovative curriculum materials in co-operation with each other and often also with other experts, such as: educational design experts, educational researchers, and domain experts. Several studies have shown a positive relation between curriculum implementation and the active involvement of teachers in the development process (Ben-Peretz, 1990; Clandinin & Conolly, 1992; Edelson, 2002; Davis & Krajcik, 2005; McKenney, 2005; Parke & Coble, 1997; Shulman & Armitage, 2005; Voogt, Almekinders, van den Akker & Moonen, 2005). These studies tend to focus on effects in terms of, for example, teacher professioinal development, but not on the characteristics of the teams and the processes involved and how these are related to the measured effects.

Chapter three - The emergence of learning design as a research field
http://e4innovation.com/?p=403

Littlejohn and Falconer (2008: 20) argue that there are three challenges facing teachers: increasing size and diversity of student body, increasing requirement for quality assurance and rapid pace of technological change. They also argue that there is a gap between the promise and reality of the use of technology in education and that there is little evidence that education has changed fundamentally.

Goodyear and Yang (2008: 167) use the related term educational design, which they define as the set of practices involved in constructing representations of how to support learning in particular cases…. Beetham and Sharpe (2007: 7) prefer the term 'designing for learning', which they define as 'the process by which teachers – and others involved in the support of learning – arrive at a plan or structure or design for a learning situation'. Like Goodyear and Yang, they believe that learning can never be wholly designed, only designed for (i.e, planned in advance) with an awareness of the contingent nature of learning as it actually takes place.

The learning design research work has developed in response to a perceived gap between the potential of technologies in terms of their use to support learning and their actual use in practice (Conole, 2004; Herrington et al., 2005; Bennett et al., 2007).

Koper and Oliver (2004: 98) define 'learning design' as 'an application of a pedagogical model for a specific learning objective, target group and a specific context or knowledge domain'. It specifies the teaching-learning process.

The AUTC Learning Design project aimed to capture a range of pedagogical models as learning design case studies with the intention that these could then be used by teachers to guide their practice and enable greater sharing and reuse of designs (Oliver, et al., 2002, AUTC, nd, Agostinho, 2008). The work was based on a framework for describing learning designs developed by Oliver and Harrington (Oliver, 1999, Oliver and Harrington, 2001). This was based on three critical elements: learning tasks, learning resources and learning supports.

In the UK the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) funded a series of projects under the 'Design for Learning programme' (See Beetham, 2008 for a review of the programme and the lessons learnt). The term 'Design for Learning' was used rather than learning design to indicate a broader scope and a more holistic approach. Design for learning was defined as 'a set of practices carried out by learning professionals… defined as designing, planning and orchestrating learning activities which involve the use of technology, as part of a learning

session or programme' (Beetham, 2008: 3). … The programme also supported the development of two pedagogical planner tools, Phoebe (Masterman, 2008) and the London Pedagogical Planner.

Closely related to the area of learning design and arguably a sub-set of learning design is the work on pedagogical patterns. Garzotto and Retails, S. (2008: 113) provide a critical perspective on design patterns for e-learning. Patterns originates in the area of Architecture and are defined as follows:

> 'A design pattern describes a problem which occurs over and over again in our environment and then describes the core of the solution to that problem in such a way that you can use this solution a million times over, without ever doing it the same way twice'. (Alexander, Ishikawa, & Silverstein, 1977)

The OU Learning Design Initiative emerged from previous work on the development of a learning design toolkit, DialogPlus (Fill and Conole, 2008). Like the Phoebe and the LPP tools, DialogPlus was intended to act as a step-by-step guide to enable teachers to create learning designs.

DRAFT operational principles of the Collaborative Blended Learning Design Framework

Based on theories of distributed cognition as well as constructionism ?

- active partnership from all – define parameters: roles, tasks, reporting and communications. Networked learning context for design team, 'blurred' design context (by opposition from blended design where FTF and online are usually not synchronous), promotion of metacognitive reflection
- on-going professional interaction – professional community: define features and enablers – effective peer critique mechanisms + effective peer sharing machanisms. Embedded in normal activities (teaching, designing, learning)
- all members are learners – teachers and designers are placed in a learner position around tasks and on the three levels of pedagogy, content/disciplinary context, technology. Importance of the teachers' learning opportunities/experiences during the design process (Teacher as learner) and Students as Teachers/Designers. Designer as learner? Should designers get specialised into disciplinary fields so that they learn about the teaching and learning traditions in the discipline(s) and can engage at the level of disciplinary coherence of the learning design
- active input from students – 'blurred' learning environments make teaching and learning visible – defines ways in which students are active participants (during teaching, before teaching) and teacher thinking is made visible to students
- both process and product are key elements: strong demonstrable links between the two, clarity in the definition of both – define products that are highly dependent of the process and based on activity from teachers and/or designers and/or students
- learning and teaching become visible through the networked design and learning environments: teachers see the work of other teachers in details. Making learning and teaching visible from design process to product: key element in teachers' ability to reflect, revise and make changes in their teaching practice.