THE CHALLENGE OF BLENDED LEARNING

UNICON Summer Workshop, July 23rd 2014
Blended learning… a disruptive innovation?
Goal: Assess the Views of Senior L&D Professionals in Flagship Global Companies Regarding Their Use of Blended Learning in Executive Leadership Development

Questions… Why is it being used? How? And to what benefit?
Qualitative research study based on in-depth interviews with 41 L&D Executives.

- Chief Learning Officer
- Senior Vice President of Leadership Development
- Global Director of Talent Management
- VP Senior Executive Programs
- Global Learning & Development Leader
- Director, Corporate Leadership Development
- Director of Executive Development
- Head of Learning
- Chief Advisor, Learning
- VP Group Learning & Leadership Development
- VP Head of Corporate Training & Learning
- Head of Global Talent
- Director, Global Leadership Development
- Director, Head of Global Curricula

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<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
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<td>Consumer Goods</td>
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<td>Energy</td>
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<td>General Industry</td>
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Global companies selected purposefully for their excellence in management and expertise in learning.

A multinational technology and consulting corporation, and one of the world’s largest companies in terms of revenue.

A multinational pharmaceutical company, and one of the world’s largest by prescription sales.

A multinational banking and financial services corporation, and one of the largest bank holding companies in the United States by assets.

A multinational oil and gas producer, and one of the world’s largest energy companies by market capitalization.

A global chemical company, with sales of €40 billion and 100K employees.

A global multinational consumer goods company, with over $85 billion in sales.

One of the world’s largest chain of fast food restaurants, serving more than 60 million customers daily in 119 countries.

A flag carrier and the largest airline of one of Europe’s biggest countries, by population and economic activity.

A multinational pharmaceutical company and one of the world’s largest in sales.

A European industrial company and one of the world’s largest cement manufacturers.

A multinational food and beverage company, and one of the largest food companies in the world measured by revenues.

A multinational mass media corporation, operating in 50 countries and employing in excess of 104,000.

A multinational company and one of the world’s leading supplier of IT solutions for the global travel and tourism industry.

One of the world’s largest consulting, outsourcing and professional services companies.
3 findings describing how, why and to what benefit blended learning is used for executive development.

**How?**

Preconceptions about online learning are slowing the adoption of blended learning as a model for corporate leadership development.

**Why?**

Deficiencies in organizational properties and HR competencies are hindering blended learning’s use in executive leadership development programs.

**Benefits?**

The affordances of a blended learning model do not align with the needs of executives and the objectives of their leadership development.

How is BL being used? Adoption is slow…there is a lingering association with 1.0 e-learning.

“Talking about blended learning, people’s imaginations seem to instantly go to e-learning, some form of “e”… "E" seems to still carry quite a bad smell; people were burned, because effectively first and second generation of e-learning was very much content down the pipe.”

“Scalability and economics… When we do live events that becomes very expensive because you have to pay for the location, pay for the travel costs, you're taking people out of their roles for that period of time; and the scalability is limited… Whereas using an online environment you can do everyone in a very short period of time for very low cost.”
Why is BL (not) being used? Organizations don’t have the resources and capabilities to implement.

“I do think there is a culture point that you’ve got to get past. Yes, I think it can work anywhere... but I think it will work more easily in some environments and contexts than others.”

“There is a lot of resources that need to be in place before you can be successful with that kind of (blended learning) strategy. I would say that most companies don’t have (the technology)... many companies cannot afford it.”

“I have a number of people on my team who have great “traditional” e-learning skills, but e-learning skills are not what we need…. they grow up in a different context, and it's very difficult (for them) to look at the digital learning in a different way.”

“People in L&D roles... really enjoy the whole classroom experience. They like to design it. But they like even more to co-facilitate it... That's what they like and that's why they are in the profession. And for them to think about it differently and start designing blended programs...it's sometimes less exciting.”

What are the benefit of BL? Relevance for executive-level leadership development is limited.

A bunch of the participants said “Can’t you just get us together for face-to-face sessions... It's easier for me to just get away from my day job and learn than it is to carve out 90 minutes at a time.”

“I think you’ve got a generation who are at the top who are not used to using this type of technology. So I don’t want to say they’re afraid of it, they’re just not used to it.”

…trying to develop this community that appreciates each other and realizes why it should be connected, that is looking to get things done perhaps in a different way. And that's going to require people reaching out to each other to learn things about each other, to develop a level of trust. I think that’s part of the reason why at the executive level we end up in the traditional classroom... because there’s a point at which that personal connection, that learning from each other, that wrestling with problems in person, the innovation from combined efforts becomes so important - and it's hard to get that virtually.
So by and large, I think executive leadership development programs deliver via engagement. So effectively you’re getting together not to learn but actually to be engaged. And so you’ve got a lot of people who are running programs wanting to use different methods, where if you actually talk to attendees on these programs they’ll basically say it’s great for networking. They’ll say it’s a little bit like a party. It’s just great to get together and have a chance to feel important and a break from the job and you can talk to other people in a similar role. And the formal learning is a pretext for doing that and so quite often it starts to go awry when somebody in HR starts down this road of saying “Let’s move some of the learning onto another channel.” And that kind of strips away at the face-to-face element because then actually you’re killing the thing you were delivering - because you’ve misunderstood how your program is working.

A CLIENT PREROGATIVE
CHANGING MINDSET

Mariam Kakkar
Head of Leadership and Management Development
UNICEF
It’s a struggle to partner with business schools who really, really know how to use blended approaches for executive education. They use online learning more as an add on to the face to face and don’t design it from the start with a blended approach… so that’s a struggle we face.

A lot of business schools design the curriculum around the face to face, they don’t design it around pre, during, after… the continuous. Every response to an RFP that I get always focuses everything on the face to face. They say, “The program will be five days. The work shop will be five days.” But they don’t approach it as a package and that’s where you, you see sort of the disjoints that happen.
IESE’s mission since its foundation has been leadership in discussion-based learning.

The Case Method (Discussion-based Learning)

1. Individual Case Preparation
2. Team Analysis and Debate
3. Case Discussion in Class, led by Professor
4. Conclusions Drawn and Lessons Learned
5. Application to Real Context, Decision Making

Adult Learning Process (Kolb Learning Cycle, 1984)

- Have an Experience
- Reflect & Analyze
- Think & Conceptualize
- Experiment & Practice

The conceptual model remains unchanged... what is different is how it is delivered.

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<th>IESE 1958</th>
<th>IESE 2014</th>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom-based</td>
<td>Continuous development \“anytime, anywhere\”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>Tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper-based</td>
<td>Web-based, Multimedia, Mobile, Social... Unlimited</td>
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<td>Case, technical note...</td>
<td>Learner Profile</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reader of “binders” and books / local</td>
<td>Contributor of resources to social learning community / global</td>
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<td>Expert leading (and bounding) discussions</td>
<td>Professor Role</td>
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<td>Facilitator initiating knowledge exploration</td>
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3. Development of resources, capabilities, skills to scale

1. Purposeful selection of methodologies

2. Integration across modes

“to have a great idea… have a lot of them”

Thomas A. Edison
Principles of strategic direction

- Given ambiguity and the wide range of strategic options, a portfolio of initiatives may make more sense than the selection of one strategy.
- Start with an inventory of existing efforts
- Work on a number of small complementary projects - rather than a megaproject.
  - Rethinking how the classroom is used is as important as experimentation with online technology.
- Think strategically about where to get started; picking the right program to start out with greatly increases the likelihood of success.
- Maximize the learn-to-burn ratio, which implies not only picking promising areas to work in, but also doing so on the cheap.
- Emphasize the development of flexible resources—the capabilities and skills to support new initiatives, which is a key in environments that are still geared toward delivering classroom-based learning.
- Put organizational mechanisms in place to ensure focus on new initiatives and to facilitate coordination across these initiatives/between them and the “mainstream”.
- Sequence activities and reviews and adjust rapidly, including abandoning them if exit triggers are hit.
A FLAVOR OF SOME INITIATIVES...

Solutions Development
New Methodologies & Tools
• Development of New Methodologies & Tools:
  • New LMS
  • “DL Suite”
  • Experiential learning modules

Expertise Building
Training & Support to Faculty/Staff
• Learning Hub: mapping of internal know-how & sharing with IESE community
• Courses redesign: GEMBA
• Distance Learning infrastructure: e-Sessions & webinars; support to virtual campus implementation
• Online Courses: Coursera & CorpU

Thought Leadership
Research, Publication & Communication
• Internal Event: Global HR Think Tank
• Research Project: student perception of “flipped classroom” using MOOC