

Azza Awwad, Gihan Osman & Maha Bali

Center for Learning and Teaching , The American University in Cairo

An Evaluation of AUC's Blended Learning Certificate: Lessons Learned

Overview

1. A short account on the structure and development of the “Blended Learning Certificate” since Summer 2014
2. A short report on the data we collected to evaluate our efforts, and the lessons we learned from interviewing faculty about their experiences
3. A discussion that would both capitalize on and inform the experiences of other institutions across the AMICAL consortium.

Structure and Development of the BL Faculty Development

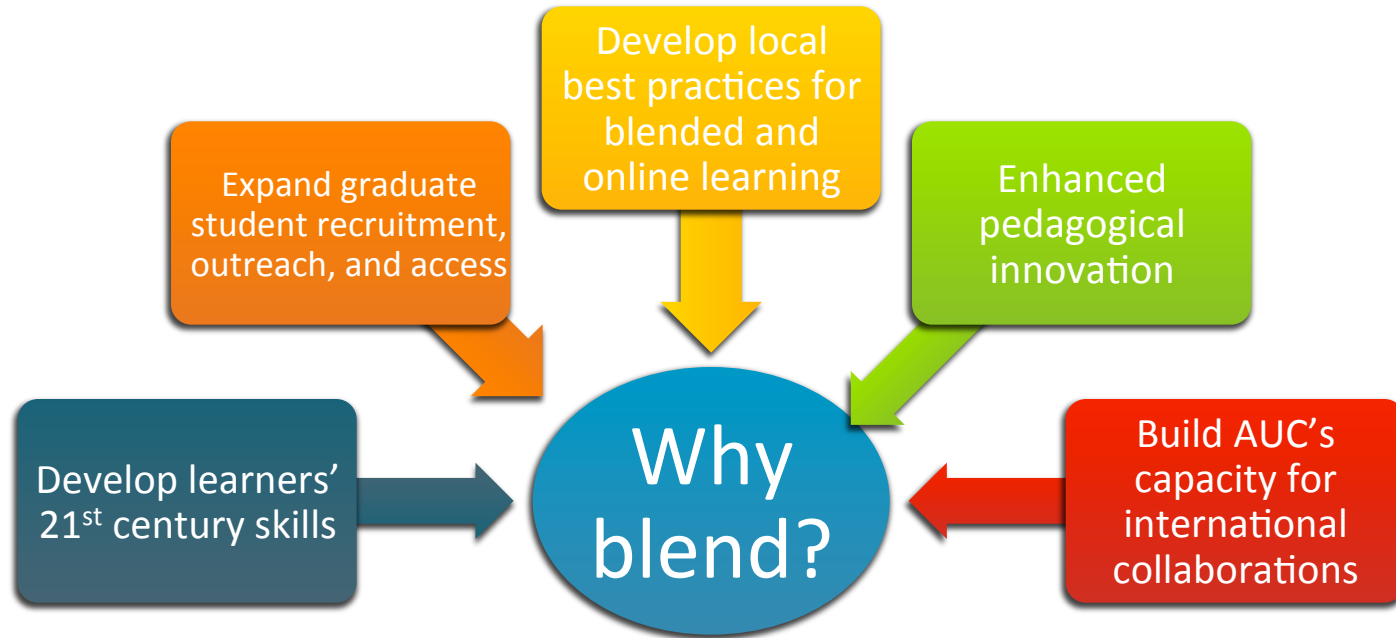
Definition of blended learning at AUC

- AUC Blended Learning Task Force:
Blended learning is a combination of face-to-face and online instruction. Unlike, web-enhanced learning for which students meet face-to-face 100% of the time, blended learning entails replacing a percentage of class time (around 30%-50%) with online instruction. The percentage of online versus face-to-face instruction varies according to context.
- These are only guidelines for degree programs.
- **Non-credit programs have much more flexibility in designing their offerings**

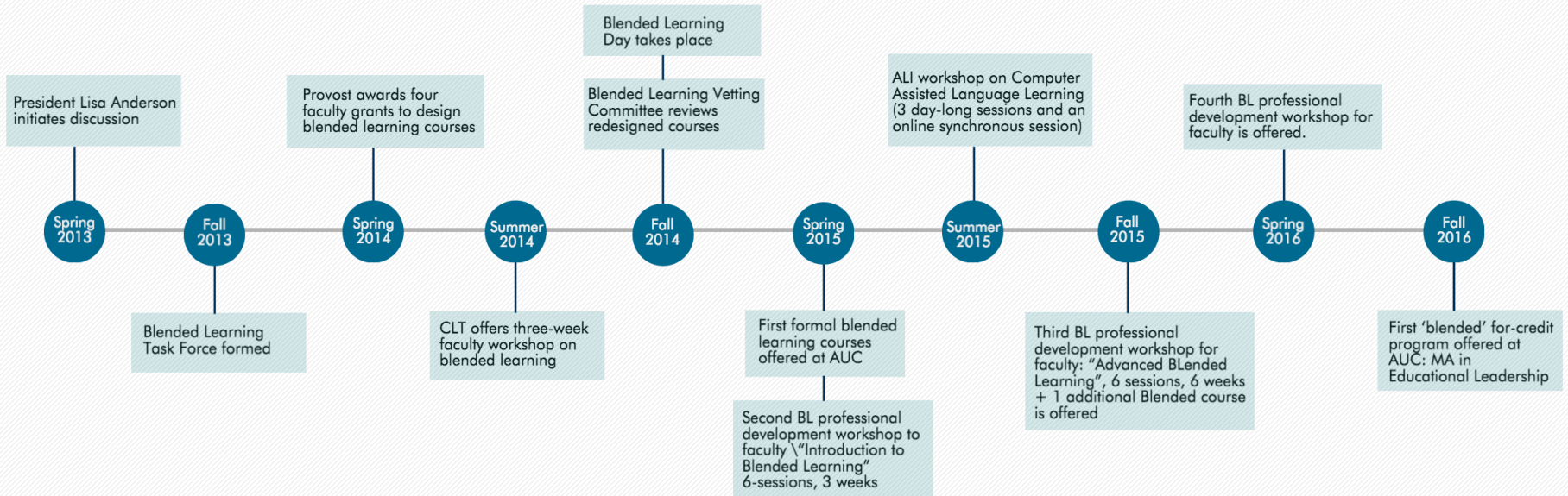
Online Learning Consortium definition

Proportion of Content Delivered Online	Course type	Typical Description
0%	Traditional	Course with no online technology used — content is delivered in writing or orally.
1-29%	Web-enhanced	Course which uses web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course. Uses a course management system (CMS) or web pages to post the syllabus and assignments, for example.
30-70%	Blended / hybrid	Course that blends online and face-to-face delivery. Substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, typically uses online discussions, and typically has some face-to-face meetings.
80+%	Online	A course where most or all of the content is delivered online. Typically have no face-to-face meetings.

Why blended learning at AUC



Timeline of blended learning



Numbers

Since summer of 2014

- 6 cycles
- Offered twice a year
- 6 weeks long combining face-to-face instruction + online activities
- 67 faculty members (full-time and adjunct) attended the course

Data Collection and Results

Data Collection

Interviews with 11 faculty who had taken the course in previous cycles

Motivation to attend PD course

- Faculty's own interest (in BL Pedagogy or in Technology Integration) (10)
- University/school strategic direction (4)
- To replace missed F2F classes (5)
- Student-related reasons: Teaching graduates, students' attendance issues (3)

Positive Aspects of Faculty Participation in BL Series

- BL sessions content, activities and facilitation (8)
- Interaction/discussions with participants from different disciplines and backgrounds (6)
- Exposure to technology tools and applications (4)
- Seeing students' perspective (2)
- Awareness of possible problems associated with teaching online and how to handle them (1)

Faculty Suggestions for Improvement

- Offer more one-on-one support and scaffolding (5)
- Include more application and tangible results (4)
(e.g. Modified syllabus and recorded/planned online lectures)
- Include less theory and design aspects (4)
- Include more technology hands-on training (4)
- Motivate faculty to apply by assigning specific tasks and sharing feedback (2)

Faculty Suggestions for Improvement - Cont'd

- Plan for more sharing of ideas and feedback among participants (2)
- Make program more coherent (2)
- Plan sessions for technically or pedagogically advanced faculty (2)
- Present a larger variety of technology options/tools that fit different pedagogical contexts (2)
- Use fewer technology platforms to conduct PD (2)

Factors to Encourage Faculty to Offer Blended Courses

- Technology (5)
 - Availability of good-fit user-friendly tools
 - Comfort with technology
- More time and fewer responsibilities at work (3)
- School/department support (3)
- Students' favorable reaction to bl course format (3)

CLT's modification of blended learning PD

- Revision of bl sessions alignment and flow
(revision of learning outcomes as well as sequence and flow of sessions)
- One facilitator present for all sessions and gives feedback on the different activities
- Two whole days dedicated to technology tool parade and hands-on held earlier on in the series
- Faculty submissions required on intervals and feedback offered before next session
- Pre and post session activities planned:
 - for faculty to try out students' bl experience
 - to minimize the amount of theory covered face-to-face and maximize application time

Perceived Challenges (By CLT)

- Different faculty goals (web-enhanced versus bl formats)
- Faculty time constraints and limited participation in online activities
- Limited faculty follow-through with bl course implementation
- Different levels of faculty preparedness and backgrounds re course design
- Different levels of faculty expertise and comfort with technology
- Balance between one-on-one support and group interaction
- Optimal workshop duration and format

Contact Information

Azza Awwad

- E-mail: aazza@aucegypt.edu

Gihan Osman

- E-mail: gosman@aucegypt.edu
- Twitter: @Gihanosman