EXPERT MEETING 2015

Building the Capacity of Higher Education Institutions in Asia-Pacific for Blended Learning

Hong Kong SAR, China

3-5 June 2015

Co-Organisers
EXPERT MEETING for
“Building the Capacity of Higher Education Institutions in Asia-Pacific for Blended Learning to Enhance Student Engagement and Outcomes” Project

3-5 June 2015
The Hong Kong Institute of Education
10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po, New Territories, Hong Kong SAR, China

BACKGROUND
The rapid advancement of technologies and their pervasive use in daily lives have dramatically changed the way we live and the way knowledge is constructed, distributed, challenged and improved upon. These technology-driven developments challenge many assumptions of what students should learn in universities and how higher education should be delivered. Students are expected to solve complex problems, think creatively and critically, communicate and collaborate with others from diverse backgrounds in technology-rich environments. The challenge for higher education institutions (HEIs) in Asia-Pacific region then is to prepare students who can constantly learn, unlearn and relearn; and make sense of and construct new practices with technologies. Empirical studies have shown that blended learning has the potential of achieving such learning outcomes (Dziuban, Hartmen, Cavanagh, & Moskal, 2011; Overbaugh & Nickel, 2011). Blended learning (BL), which involves both online (asynchronous or/and synchronous) and face-to-face contact time between teaching staff and students, and/or among students in a course, is increasingly implemented in higher education (Graham, Woodfield, & Harrison, 2013).

Despite the promising practices and outcomes that have been documented, the sustainability and scalability of blended learning practices in HEIs has been an enormous challenge (Owston, 2013). Front-line teaching staffs may not share the same vision as their institution (Bohle Carbonell, Dailey-Hebert, & Gijselaers, 2013), and there may be a gap between the staff’s existing competence and that required by the innovations (Fishman, 2005). Given these challenges facing HEIs, this UNESCO-commissioned project by the Hong Kong Institute of Education and its partners aims to develop a toolkit for building the capacity of HEIs in Asia-Pacific to sustain and scale up innovative blended learning practices. This toolkit will consist of a framework for capacity building of HEIs for blended learning, promising practices and lessons learnt, templates and tools for strategic planning, and blended learning practices and resources. Although this toolkit will be developed based on the experiences documented in HEIs in the Asia Pacific region, it will be supported by a comprehensive review of international literature on blended learning capacity building of educational institutions that will make it relevant and useful for HEIs anywhere in the world.
In relation to this, a group of experts will be formed, consisting of representatives from UNESCO Bangkok and several key universities in the Asia-Pacific region, namely The University of Western Australia, Tsinghua University, East China Normal University, The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Seoul National University, Taylor's University and University of Chiang Mai. Each expert will prepare a case study of blended learning practices in their own institution. They will be gathered for a work meeting in Hong Kong from 3 to 5 June 2015.

OBJECTIVES
Co-organised by Faculty of Education and Human Development (FEHD) / The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) and UNESCO Bangkok (Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education), the aim of this Expert Meeting is to plan for the construction of the toolkit to build the capacity of HEIs in Asia-Pacific for blended learning. More specifically, the experts will have a three-day work meeting to:

- discuss and share effective blended learning practices and policies in HEIs;
- conduct a needs and situation analysis of the existing state of blended learning at HEIs in Asia-Pacific;
- discuss the components of the toolkit for HEIs in Asia-Pacific;
- identify the roles and responsibilities of each of the seven HEIs involved in this project, UNESCO Bangkok and other potential partners;
- assign the tasks to be accomplished by and set a timeline for each of the seven HEIs involved in this project, UNESCO Bangkok and other potential partners; and
- develop a network of partners, including HEIs, to work with one another and with other HEI stakeholders to sustain and scale up blended learning practices in the Asia-Pacific.

EXPECTED OUTPUT
By the end of the Meeting, the following outputs are expected:

- framework for the capacity building of HEIs for blended learning;
- draft table of content for the toolkit;
- outline for the institutional case study of blended learning;
- defined tasks and responsibilities for each participant in the Meeting; and
- agreed timeline for the case studies and toolkit construction.

The outputs of the Meeting are expected to be consolidated and finalised by 15 June 2015 and shared with all participants of the Meeting.
DATES AND VENUE
The meeting will be held at The Hong Kong Institute of Education, 10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po, New Territories, Hong Kong SAR from 3 to 5 June 2015.

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