

# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEW BLENDED LEARNING PARADIGM

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## BACKGROUND

Recently, there has been considerable interest in the use of online learning materials to support student learning, with many academics embracing opportunities to create more blended approaches to the provision of courses (Beetham & Sharpe 2013). Blended learning environments may offer considerable benefits for both students and academics. Despite this, broad-scale incorporation of blended learning into science courses has remained limited. The pattern of adoption and success of blended learning may be influenced by various drivers and barriers (Brown 2016).

## METHODS

In this study, perspectives of academics (n=6) who were first exposed to, developed and then delivered a blended learning course were elicited during semi-structured interviews. Responses were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis.

## RESULTS

Academics involved varied in both their familiarity with blended learning and their understanding of associated pedagogies. Academics with greater experience and knowledge tended to recognise its potential to enhance student experiences, and focused more on the opportunities. Whereas, those with less extensive experience were more likely to highlight concerns with workload and student engagement.

## CONCLUSIONS

As student experiences of blended learning are likely to be enhanced when academics are confident and positive about its adoption, tailoring support to ensure all academics engage is essential.

## References

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