

STUDENT EXPERIENCES AS THEY JOURNEY THROUGH BLENDED LEARNING

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KEYWORDS: Blended Learning, Student Perceptions, Digital Literacy

BACKGROUND

Blended learning has become increasingly prevalent in Higher Education (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004)- Incoming students are diverse in their prior exposure to technology impacting on their digital literacies, and this diversity may not be accommodated by blended learning environments (Tang & Chaw, 2016).

AIMS

The aim is to explore whether students' perceptions of blended learning are related to their digital literacies, and to monitor these transitions over time.

DESIGN AND METHODS

Students in first-year STEM courses were surveyed to measure their perceived levels of digital literacy. Semi-structured interviews explored the perceptions towards blended learning of 11 participants at both the start and end of the teaching semester. These were transcribed and analyzed inductively to identify emergent themes.

RESULTS

Students were grouped based on levels of digital literacy from their survey responses, ranging low to high. Student understanding of blended learning was variable, with many unable to define it. Students reported high levels of confidence in their ability to use digital tools, despite a range of prior technology experience and perceived levels of digital literacy.

CONCLUSIONS

Students exhibited varied perceptions towards blended learning, irrespective of their digital literacy and prior exposure to technology. This diversity in student perspectives and experiences should be addressed in blended instructional design.

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Proceedings of the Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education, The University of Sydney and University of Technology Sydney, 2 - 4 October 2019, page 116, ISBN Number 978-0-9871834-8-4