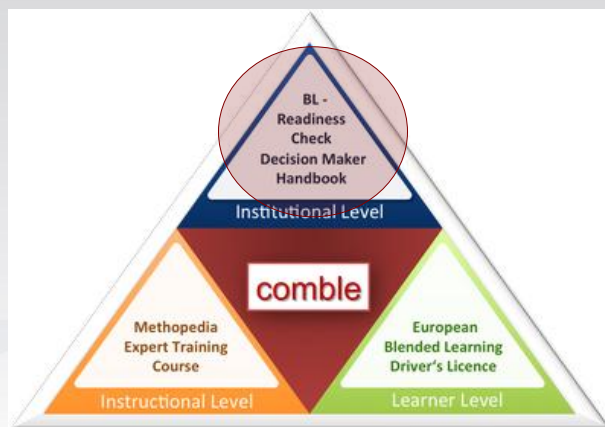




Pitfalls of Blended Learning

Results of the EU Project Comble

Christian Niemczik and Dr. Elke Brenstein



Tartu, April 3, 2009

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Blended Learning promises

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The Blended Learning promise

- ▀ Active and cooperative learning
- ▀ Less “input”
- ▀ More elaboration
- ▀ Essential part of ICT based learning

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Top Ten Pitfalls of BL:

2. Decision Makers don't see the benefit:

Want proof of improved ROI

What to do?

- Demonstrate cost reduction effects
- Explain what non-tangible benefits BL can provide
- Demonstrate practically how it can work
- Find creative solutions for existing problems

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Top Ten Pitfalls of BL:

3. Lack of institutional support:

No overall BL strategy and coordination

What to do?

- Make sure instructors are credited for their efforts
- Ensure that learners have time set aside for learning

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Top Ten Pitfalls of BL:

4. No time for online learning:

Online activities and collaboration are not given enough attention due to busy work schedules

What to do?

- Task completion needs to be monitored
- Consequences attached to tasks (write question for text)
- Incentives should be created to make it fun (e.g. personal profile with funny questions)

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Top Ten Pitfalls of BL:

5. Coordinating content production:

What to do?

- Easy tools for content authoring
- How to deal with external authors?
- Reusability and intellectual property rights

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Top Ten Pitfalls of BL:

6. Lack of technical support:

Authors and instructors are often overwhelmed with technical issues

What to do?

- Have a support person available
- Provide training

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Top Ten Pitfalls of BL:

7. Learners lack basic skills:

Lack of experience with online learning tools and methods

What to do:

- Learners need to experiment with tools
- Help learner to improve self-regulation skills
- Provide opportunities to experience successful collaboration

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Top Ten Pitfalls of BL:

8. Technical Infrastructure:

Instructors and learner need the appropriate hardware and software

What to do?

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Top Ten Pitfalls of BL:

9. Accessibility:

What to do?

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Top Ten Pitfalls of BL:

10. On going support needed:

Coaching of decision makers and trainers

What to do?

- Provide problem-specific support
- Have hot line available

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What is Blended Learning Readiness?

- The degree to which an institution is ready for learning with **new learning technologies and collaborative methods**
- Influenced by **organisational, technical, methodical and psychological aspects** which may help or hinder the implementation of blended learning solutions

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Decision
Maker
Handbook

**Theoretical
Framework**

BLR
Wizard

Interviews with
Application Partners

Surveys

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The theoretical Framework

- **Strategies**
 - E-Learning Strategy, Knowledge Management Strategy, E-Human Resources Strategy, Change Management Strategy
- **Methods**
 - Learning design, e-tivities, collaboration
- **Technologies**
 - Learning platforms, Authoring Tools, Web 2.0 tools

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Decision
Maker
HandbookTheoretical
FrameworkBLR
Wizard**Interviews with
Application Partners**

Surveys

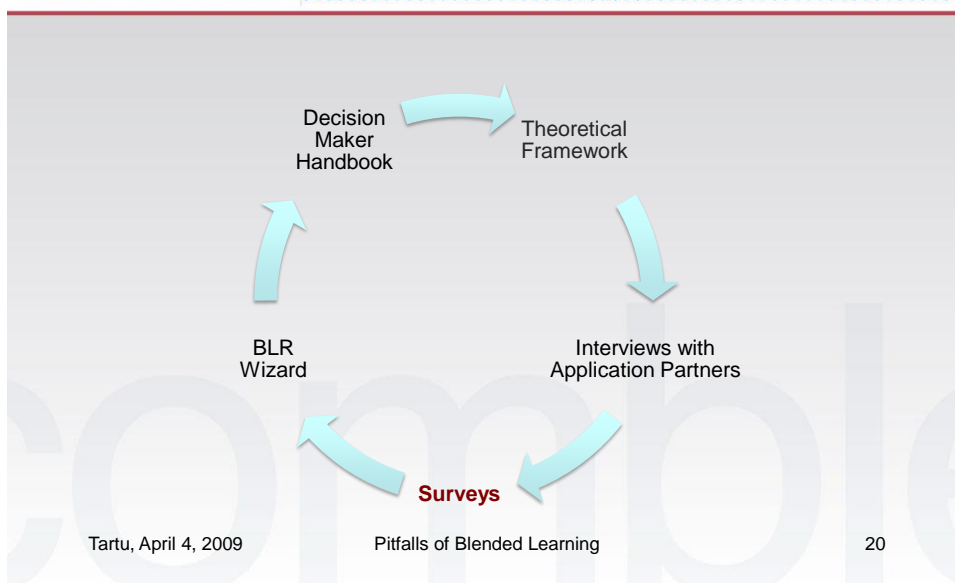
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Business Education	University Education	Further Education
Management (3)	Administration (2)	Management (6)
Trainer	Professor (3)	Instructor (2)
Employee/Cient	Student	Learner
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Findings from practical experience

- There is great need for **custom consulting**
 - Explain what benefits BL can provide
 - Demonstrate practically how it can work
 - Find creative solutions for existing problems
- Instructors need **training and coaching**
 - BL as a different teaching/learning philosophy
 - Specific tools, methods and activities
 - How to apply these in their field

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Summary of Pitfalls

- No overall BL strategy and coordination, no support from the management
- Lack of knowledge about the potential, the tools & methods of BL
- Lack of time and commitment
- Accessibility, technical issues, usability
- Lack of local technical and pedagogical support

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Success factors

- Early adopters function as role models and multipliers of specific competencies and know-how
- Easy content authoring and knowledge sharing
- Active learner involvement
- Collaborative learning
- Problem-based approach
- Improved ROI

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BLR Surveys

A large-scale online surveys will assess **stumbling stones** and **success factors**

- In three **areas of application**
(business, university and further education)
- At various **levels**
(management, instruction, learning)
- In different **cultural contexts**

Participants are asked to provide specific examples of what works

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Decision
Maker
Handbook

Theoretical
Framework

**BLR
Wizard**

Interviews with
Application Partners

Surveys

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A diagnostic tool

- To assist decision makers by asking key questions and providing suitable options with context-specific recommendations
- Technical Implementation
 - Xml based
 - Hierarchical and associative structure
 - Web-based, Flash or ajax
 - Based on logic model with multiple dependencies

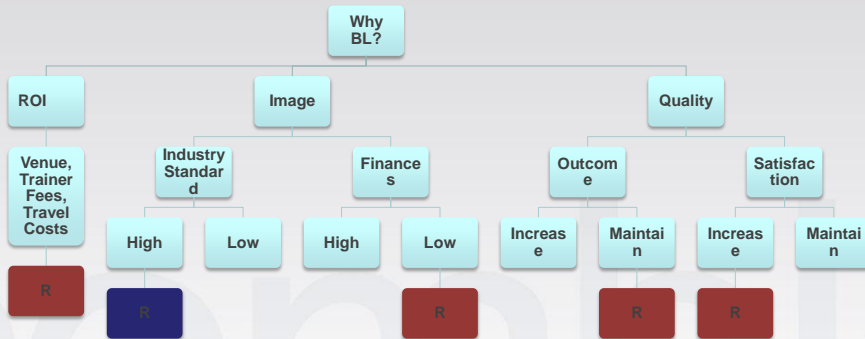
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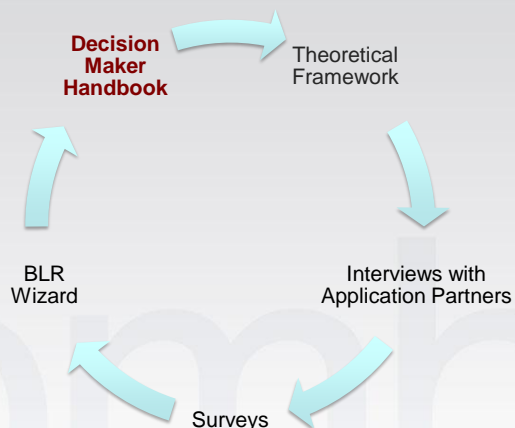
Wizard Example – Strategy Level



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Decision Maker Handbook

- Presents **typical issues** regarding the design and implementation of BL learning solutions:
 - **Strategy, Methods, Technology**
 - **Change management**
- Provides real life **best practice examples** from Businesses, Universities, Institutions of Further Education

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What are the benefits for Application Partners?

- **BRL framework and wizard**
 - > Support with an analysis of the Status Quo
- **Decision Maker Handbook**
 - > Recommendations for Improvement
 - > Learning about Best Practice Examples
- **Methopedia**
 - > Exchange within the BL Expert community
 - > Sharing methods and activities

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