Blended Learning Trends in Workplace Learning Settings: An International Study

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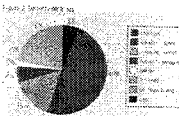Indiana University, Bloomington

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Why the shift to blended? Answer: Fully online learning promised too much!

"E-learning proponents promised just-in-time, just-for-me, anytime, anywhere, 24X7, interactive, streaming, real-time, asynchronous, pervasive, motivational, emotional, collaborative, multimedia, blended, adaptive, personalized, intuitive, rich, engaging, strategic, empowering, scalable, consistent, efficient, and cost-effective learning."
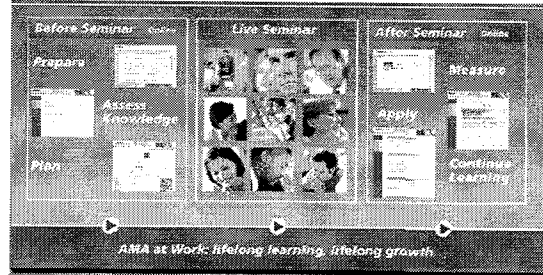
(see Whose Learning Is It, Anyway? Learning & Training Innovations, Clay & Mindrum, July/August, 2003, p.33)

Blending Learning Defined

- "Blended learning refers to events that combine aspects of online and face-to-face instruction" (Rooney, 2003, p. 26; Ward & LaBranche, 2003, p. 22)

rev it up!

AMA Special Report, Effectively Implementing a Blended Learning Approach
(Steven Shaw & Nicholas Igneri, 2006)

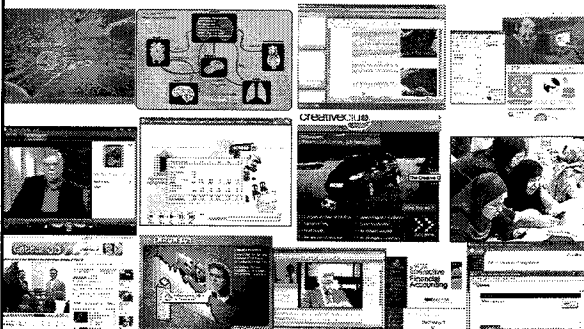Source: American Management Association, AMA at Work

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AMA Special Report, Blended Learning Opportunities; Alison Rossett (2006)

Table 1. What Might Go in the Blend

Live face-to-face (formal)	Live face-to-face (informal)
• Instructor-led classroom (F2F) • Workshops • Coaching, mentoring • On-the-job (OJT) training • Work-based problems	• Collegial relationships • Work teams • Apprenticeships
Virtual collaboration/synchronous	**Virtual collaboration/asynchronous**
• Live e-learning classes • E-coaching, e-mentoring • Instant messaging, SMS	• Email • Online communities and discussion boards • Listservs • Blogs, wikis, podcasts
Self-paced learning (print, CD/DVD, electronic, wireless)	**Performance support**
• Online modules • Online resource links • Simulations and scenarios • Assessments and self-assessments • Workbooks, readings	• Online help systems • Print job aids • Online knowledge databases • Documentation • Performance support tools

Adapted from (Rossett, Douglis, & Frazee, 2003, July)

Blended Solutions: Flash Animations, Webinars, Skype, Reflection Exercises, Mobile Devices, YouTube

Blended Solutions: Cases, Simulations, Simulations, Scenarios, Virtual Worlds, etc.
(Medical Traumas from TD Magazine, August 2006)
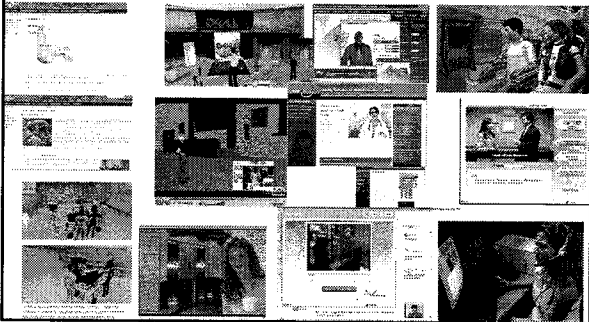
Precursors to this Study

| "Online Training in the Online World" (2001-2002) | "Surveying the future of workplace e-learning: *The rise of blending, interactivity, and authentic learning*" (2003-2004) | "The Future of Blended Learning in Corporate and Other Training Settings: An International Study" (2005-2006) |

Purpose of the Study

- To explore current state and future trends in blended learning in workplace settings on a global scale.

Research Questions

- How blended learning is being perceived and practiced in workplace learning settings today?
- How is blended learning expected to be perceived and practiced in the next few years?
- Are there cross-cultural differences in the current status and future trends of blended learning? If so, what are the differences?

Methods:
The Survey Instrument

- 31 multiple-choice and open-ended questions regarding:
  - ☐ Respondents' demographic information
  - ☐ Questions about the current status of blended learning in respondents' organization
  - ☐ Questions about future predictions of blended learning
- Online survey using "SurveyShare" (www.surveyshare.com)

Tool Used was SurveyShare.
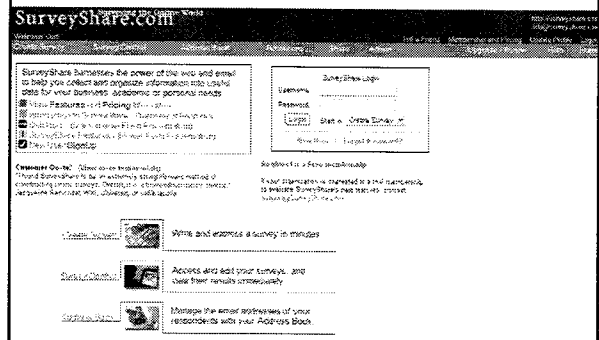
Take Survey

SurveyShare.com *Survey the Online World*

The Future of Blended Learning in Corporate and Other Training Settings (Page 1 of 4) (Preview Only)

Instructions: The purpose of this survey is to explore the current status and future trends of blended learning in corporate and other training settings around the world. For the purposes of this study, blended learning typically entails the combination of face-to-face classroom training and online instruction. This survey contains of 31 questions and will take you about 15 minutes to complete. Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge or make your best guess on the current status and future trends of blended learning in your organization. Thank you.

I. Demographic Information
(Please only include information which you feel comfortable providing.)

1) Where are you primarily employed?
- Canada
- China
- Korea
- Taiwan
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Other _____

2) Please indicate your gender:
- Female
- Male

3) What is the primary focus of your organization? (please select the best fit)
- Agriculture, Forestry or Fishing

Methods:
The Survey Study

- **Message was sent out electronically (i.e., e-mail, forum posts) to invite target groups to the online survey site.**
- **Respondents took the online survey in their native language (i.e., simplified & traditional Chinese, English, and Korean) and their responses were anonymous.**

Methods: Survey Respondents

- **Target:**
  - **Training/HRD (human resource development) professionals who belonged to professional organizations, discussion forums, or listservs on HRD, e-learning, or blended learning.**

Methods: Survey Respondents

- **Respondents: (N = 674)**
  - **From five different countries.**
    - **China**
    - **South Korea**
    - **Taiwan**
    - **United Kingdom**
    - **United States**

US 18% | China 16% | Korea 20% | Taiwan 17% | UK 29%

Gender of Respondents

2. Please indicate your gender:

Female 39%
Male 61%

Methods: Survey Respondents

- Employed in various types of organization (e.g., government, business, not-for-profit), and in a vast array of industries.

Their primary job role	Percentage
Instructional Designer or Content Developer	12.23
Training Manager or Director	11.77
Consultant or Learning Technology Advisor	11.01
Training or Human Resources Support Staff	10.09
E-Learning Manager or Director	8.26
Other	8.26
Trainer or Instructor	7.95
Chief Executive Officer or President	6.57
Salesperson, Marketing Manager, or Communications	5.81
Human Resources Manager or Director	5.05

Respondents' Roles in Blended Learning

6. What is your role in blended learning in your organization?

Role	Value
Designing	23.18
Planning	15.60
Delivering	15.16
I have no role in regards to blended	11.00
Visioning	10.85
Facilitating	8.77
Supporting	8.02
Evaluating	3.71
Other	3.71
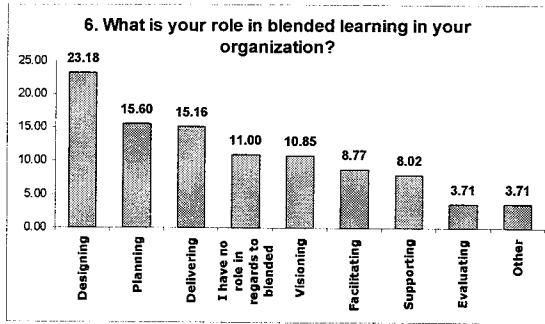
Findings I:
Current State of Blended Learning

Does Your Blended Learning Recipe Work Better on Paper?

Are you Using Blended?

- 9.4%
- 8.2%
- 28.0%
- 61.1%
- 21.3%

☐ Yes, we have been using it for more than 2 years now.

☒ Yes, we have recently started using it.

☒ No, but we are considering using it.

☐ No, it is not something that we have considered.

☐ Not sure. What is blended learning?

37% in China (26% just started and 11% for more than 2 years) and 45% in Taiwan using BL is far lower than US (75%), UK (73%), and Korea (63%)
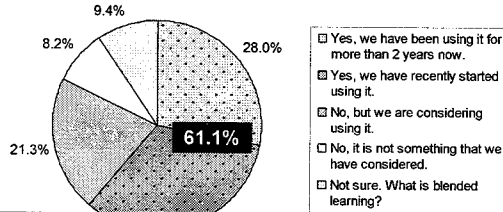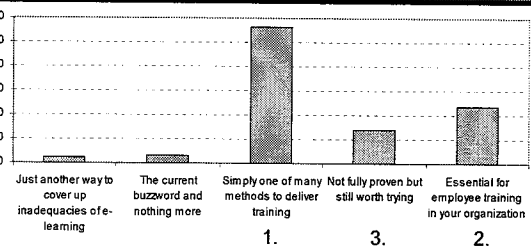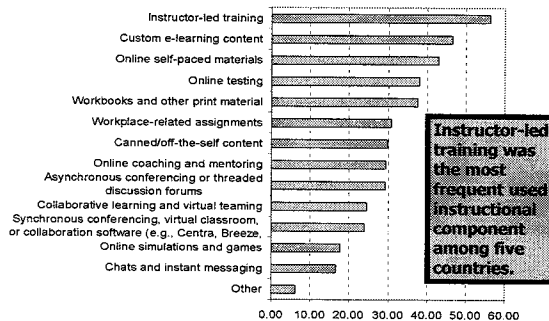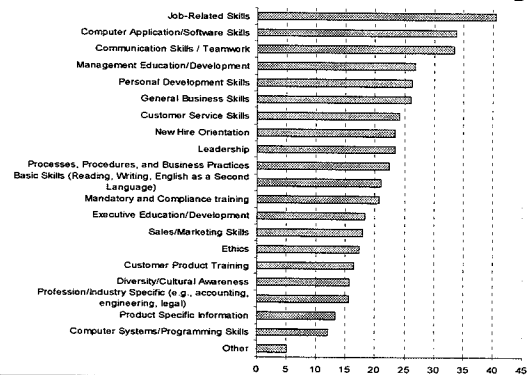

Respondents' Views of Blended Learning?

Respondents among five countries had similar views of blended learning.

Category	
Just another way to cover up inadequacies of e-learning	
The current buzzword and nothing more	
Simply one of many methods to deliver training — 1.	
Not fully proven but still worth trying — 3.	
Essential for employee training in your organization — 2.	

Instructional Components of Blended

- Instructor-led training
- Custom e-learning content
- Online self-paced materials
- Online testing
- Workbooks and other print material
- Workplace-related assignments
- Canned/off-the-self content
- Online coaching and mentoring
- Asynchronous conferencing or threaded discussion forums
- Collaborative learning and virtual teaming
- Synchronous conferencing, virtual classroom, or collaboration software (e.g., Centra, Breeze,
- Online simulations and games
- Chats and instant messaging
- Other

0.00 10.00 20.00 30.00 40.00 50.00 60.00

Instructor-led training was the most frequent used instructional component among five countries.

Skill Areas Taught through Blended Learning

- Job-Related Skills
- Computer Application/Software Skills
- Communication Skills / Teamwork
- Management Education/Development
- Personal Development Skills
- General Business Skills
- Customer Service Skills
- New Hire Orientation
- Leadership
- Processes, Procedures, and Business Practices
- Basic Skills (Reading, Writing, English as a Second Language)
- Mandatory and Compliance training
- Executive Education/Development
- Sales/Marketing Skills
- Ethics
- Customer Product Training
- Diversity/Cultural Awareness
- Profession/Industry Specific (e.g., accounting, engineering, legal)
- Product Specific Information
- Computer Systems/Programming Skills
- Other
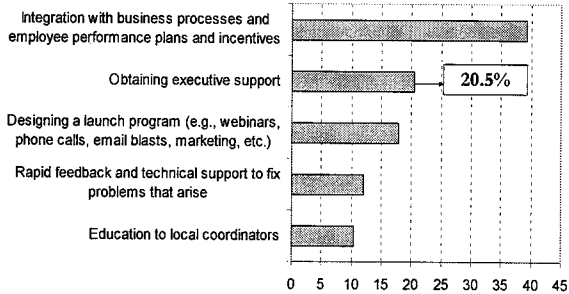
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

3-4 Skills Most Taught Through Blended

- US: Computer Applics, Job Related, New Hire Orientation, Leadership
- UK: Computer Applics, Job Related, Communication/Teamwork, Personal Devel Skills

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- Korea: Job Related, Leadership, New Hire Orientation, Basic Skills
- Taiwan: Job Related, New Hire Orientation, Communication/Teamwork Skills
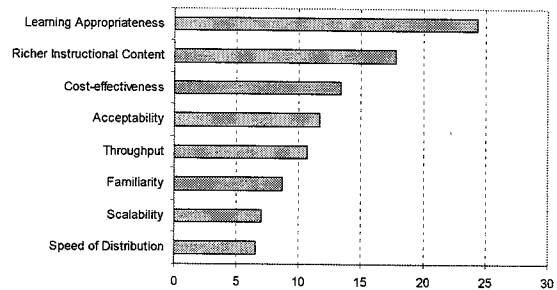- China: Communication/Teamwork, Basic Skills, Customer Service, Sales/Marketing

3-4 Skills Least Taught Through Blended

- US: Basic Skills, Sales/Marketing, Programming, Product Specific, Professional
- UK: Ethics, New Hire Orient, Basic Skills, Exec Ed

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- Korea: Product Specific, Diversity, Customer Product Training, Compliance
- Taiwan: Diversity, Exec Ed, Programming, Leadership, Product Specific, Business Practices
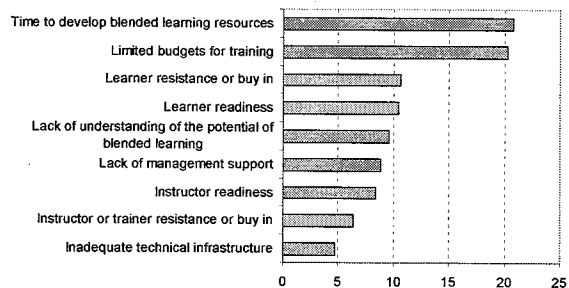- China: Programming, New Hire Orientation, Leadership, Product Specific

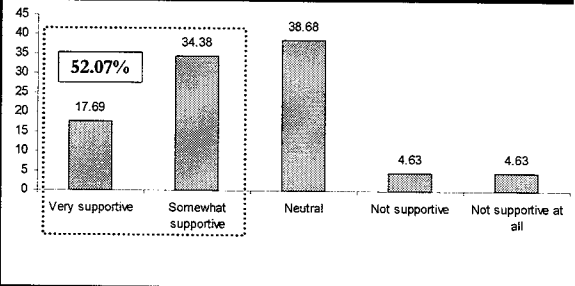## Most Important Issue in Launching a Blended Learning Program

Integration with business processes and employee performance plans and incentives

Obtaining executive support — 20.5%

Designing a launch program (e.g., webinars, phone calls, email blasts, marketing, etc.)

Rapid feedback and technical support to fix problems that arise

Education to local coordinators

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

Greatest Benefit: Why do blended?

Learning Appropriateness
Richer Instructional Content
Cost-effectiveness
Acceptability
Throughput
Familiarity
Scalability
Speed of Distribution

0   5   10   15   20   25   30

Greatest Obstacles to Blended

Time to develop blended learning resources
Limited budgets for training
Learner resistance or buy in
Learner readiness
Lack of understanding of the potential of blended learning
Lack of management support
Instructor readiness
Instructor or trainer resistance or buy in
Inadequate technical infrastructure

0   5   10   15   20   25

## Key Drivers of Blended Learning

Improving the quality of the learning experience	53.01
Increasing the availability and accessibility of learning	47.65
Cost reductions	30.54
New strategic directions or visions within the organization	25.33
External pressures including keeping up with the competition	20.48
Shear enthusiasm from one or more key individuals within the organization	10.73
Other	3.87

Taiwan (44%), US (45%), and China (46%) governments were the least supportive. UK most supportive (62%), while Korea was 2nd (52%).


Bar chart:
- Very supportive: 17.69 (box: 52.07%)
- Somewhat supportive: 34.38
- Neutral: 38.68
- Not supportive: 4.63
- Not supportive at all: 4.63

Strategic Planning for Blended Learning

16-a. Does your organization have a strategic plan for training and development?

Pie chart:
- Do not know 7%
- No 16%
- Yes 77%
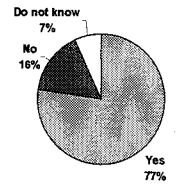
Korea most likely to have a strategic plan at 85% and UK was 79%; China least likely at 71%; USA (72%) and Taiwan (71%) slightly above.

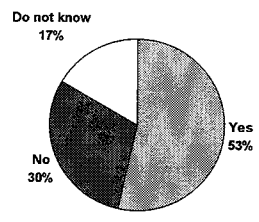## Strategic Planning for Blended Learning – Cont.

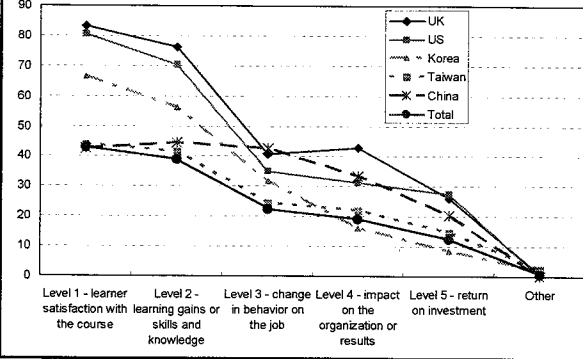16-f. If you have a plan, does it address blended learning?

Pie chart:
- Do not know 14%
- Yes 54%
- No 32%
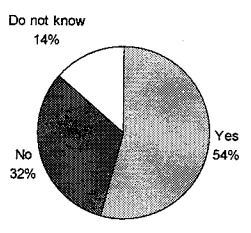
Evaluating the Quality of Blended Courses

17. Does your organization evaluate the quality of blended learning courses?

Pie chart:
- Do not know 17%
- Yes 53%
- No 30%

Evaluate at what level?

Line chart with legend: UK, US, Korea, Taiwan, China, Total

X-axis:
- Level 1 - learner satisfaction with the course
- Level 2 - learning gains or skills and knowledge
- Level 3 - change in behavior on the job
- Level 4 - impact on the organization or results
- Level 5 - return on investment
- Other

Findings II: The future State of Blended Learning
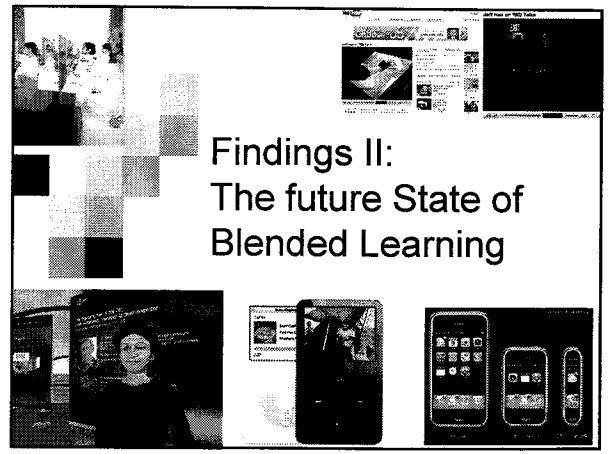
22. How will your organization's spending on blended learning change during the next few years?

65.1%

20.39	44.71	11.48	2.72	3.17	17.52
Will increase significantly	Will increase a little bit	Will be the same	Will decrease a little bit	Will decrease significantly	Don't Know

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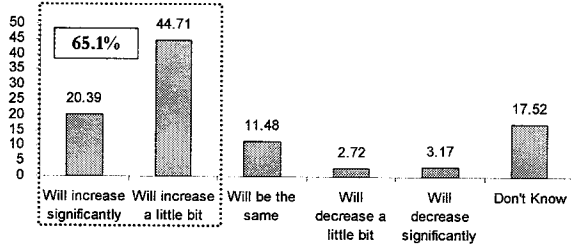
What will Spur the Use of Blended Learning in the next few years?

Bar chart, categories top to bottom:
- Increasing focus related to on-demand learning
- Increasing use of real world cases stories and examples in training
- Increased collaboration, community building, and global connectedness
- The blurring of the lines between work and learning
- Learners/employees making their own learning decisions
- Increasingly individualized or personalized e-learning
- Increased use of hand-held and mobile devices
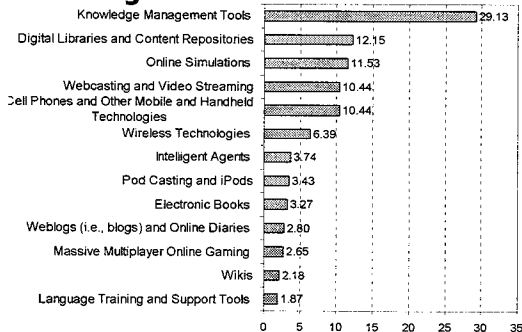
Axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25

Most significant Issues that must be addressed during the next few years

Lack of understanding of what blended learning really is — 15.08
Insufficient management support and commitment — 11.38
Boring and low quality content — 10.15
Learners lacking self-regulated learning skills — 9.85
Learner resistance/hesitancy — 8.77
Fast changing technology — 8.46
Organizational / cultural resistance — 6.77
Limited organizational vision and planning — 5.85
Lack of standards — 5.69
High costs of delivery — 4.31
Lack of quality instructors — 4.00

## Emerging Instructional Strategies for Blended Learning

Bar chart, categories top to bottom:
- Authentic cases and scenario learning
- Coaching and mentoring
- Problem-based learning
- Virtual team collaboration and problem solving
- Self-paced learning
- Simulations or gaming
- Guided learning
- Modeling of the solution process
- Discussion
- Exploration and discovery
- Lecturing and instructor-directed activities
- Debates and role play
- Socratic questioning

Axis: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60

Emerging Technologies for Blended Learning

Technology	Value
Knowledge Management Tools	29.13
Digital Libraries and Content Repositories	12.15
Online Simulations	11.53
Webcasting and Video Streaming	10.44
Cell Phones and Other Mobile and Handheld Technologies	10.44
Wireless Technologies	6.39
Intelligent Agents	3.74
Pod Casting and iPods	3.43
Electronic Books	3.27
Weblogs (i.e., blogs) and Online Diaries	2.80
Massive Multiplayer Online Gaming	2.65
Wikis	2.18
Language Training and Support Tools	1.87

Axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35

How important is BL for the strategic planning for training and development in your organization for the next few years?

67.41%

25.24	42.17	23.80	6.87	1.92
Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not important at all

7
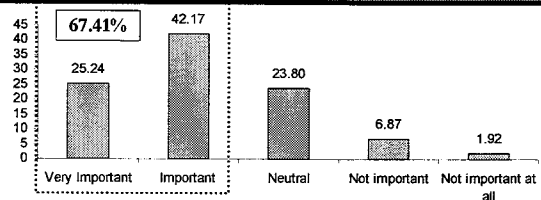
How will the quality of BL be most effectively measured during the coming decade?

Employee performance on the job	29.19
Comparison of learner achievement with those in live or face-to-face classroom settings	13.36
Return on investment (ROI) calculations	12.29
Cost-benefit analyses	11.37
Employee performance on simulated tasks of real-world activities	10.60
Learner satisfaction questionnaires	5.99
Course evaluations	5.38
Time to competency	5.22
Course completion rates	2.61
Computer log data of student usage and activity	2.46
Other	1.54

What would you like the most in a blended learning portal?

Examples and success stories of blended learning	18.93
Blended learning advice, live blended learning consulting, and the ability to list blended learning needs	18.32
Technology and tools for blended learning	12.82
A community forum, chats, blogs, and discussion related to blended learning	9.16
Expert presentations, webinars, and chats	7.79
Web resources related to blended learning	6.26
Access to books, magazines, newsletters, etc.	5.80
Information on conferences, institutions, seminars, workshops on blended learning	5.65
White papers, technical reports, and research reports	5.34
Answers and solutions to FAQs (frequently asked questions) on blended learning	5.04
Video streamed presentations and demonstrations related to blended learning	4.89

Implications

- Blended learning expectations on the rise
- Practitioners facing several barriers to implementing
- More choices, mobility, self-determined learning
- HRD professionals need guidance and professional development on how to implement blended learning
- There are some interesting differences across countries in terms of the levels with which they have adopted blended learning approaches.

Questions and Comments

http://www.trainingshare.com