

Blended Learning Quality
Malaga Conference
27th - 29th August 2015

*Understanding the Quality of the Student
Experience in Blended Learning Environments*

Sandy Ryder FHEA, ACMA, MBA, MInstLM

Tony Greenwood MPhil, MA, PGCE, BA

Purpose and Objectives of the Research

- The **purpose** of this research is to understand which Flexible & Distributed Learning (FDL) techniques generated positive student engagement.
- The **aim** of the research was to inform the development of the module for future iterations.
- The **objectives** of the research are to:
 - Understand which FDL techniques derived positive student engagement.
 - Explore other possible FDL techniques that may be appropriate for the module.
 - Identify which FDL techniques may be transferrable to other modules.

•A psychological investment in their learning. *Dietz-Uhler & Hurn (2013)*

•Students perform higher level learning behaviours. *Li et al (2014)*

•Interaction is part of engagement. *Dietz-Uhler & Hurn (2013)*

•Student led interaction = low vol high qual. *Gibson(2013)*

•Student / lecturer interaction crucial. *Boling et al (2012)*

•Age + experience with on-line technology is significant. *Simonds & Brock(2014)*

•Students expectations of education and their ability to control their space. *Holley & Oliver (2010)* .

•Alignment in design. *Biggs & Tang (2013)*

•**B-R-G Model** = full cohesion in design . *El-khalili & El-Ghalayini (2014)*.

•Non-verbal communication.

Gibson (2013)

•Emerging pedagogy required.

Boling et al (2012)

•Currently 'stretch the mould'.

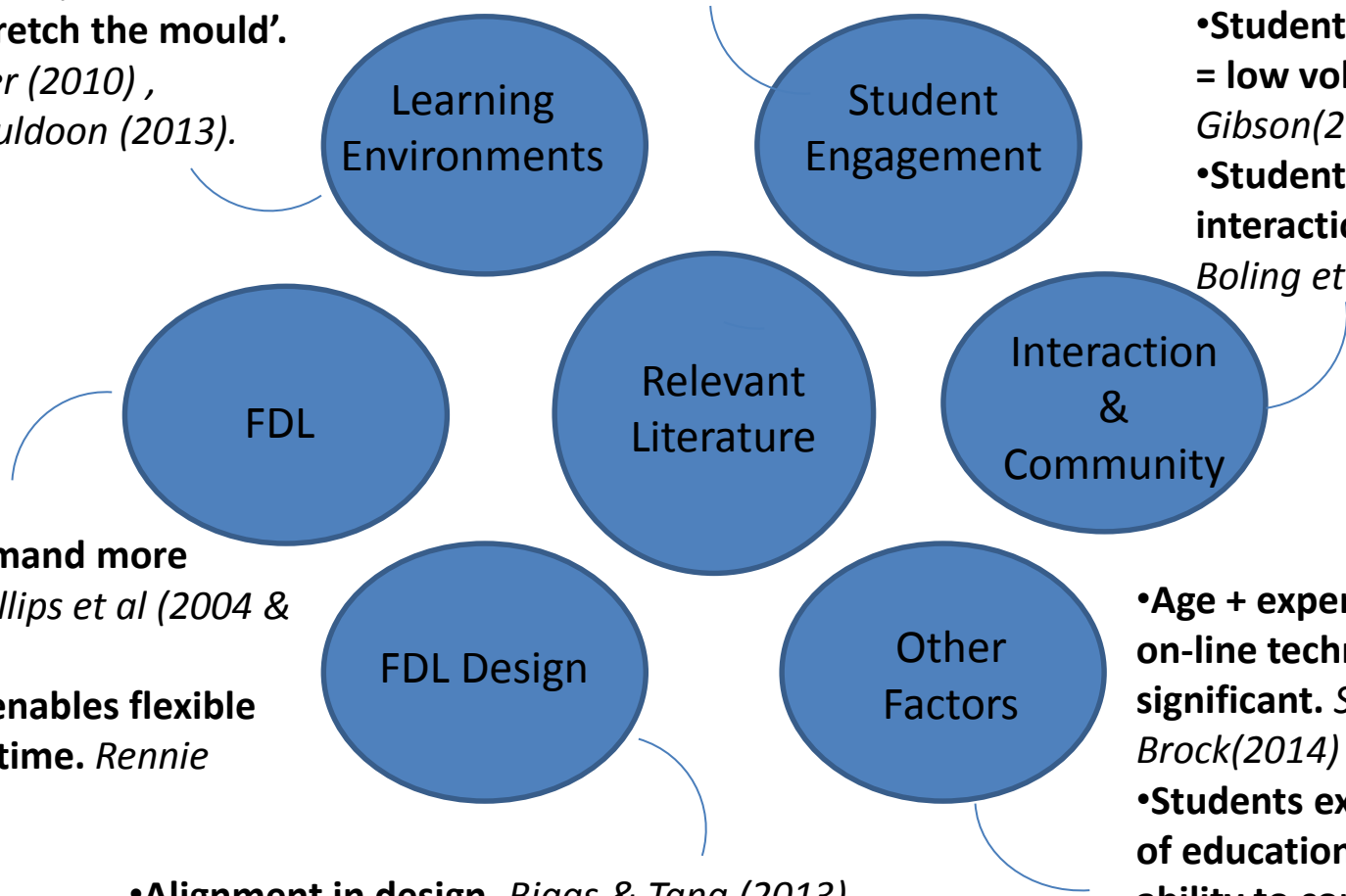
Holley & Oliver (2010) ,

Bricknell & Muldoon (2013).

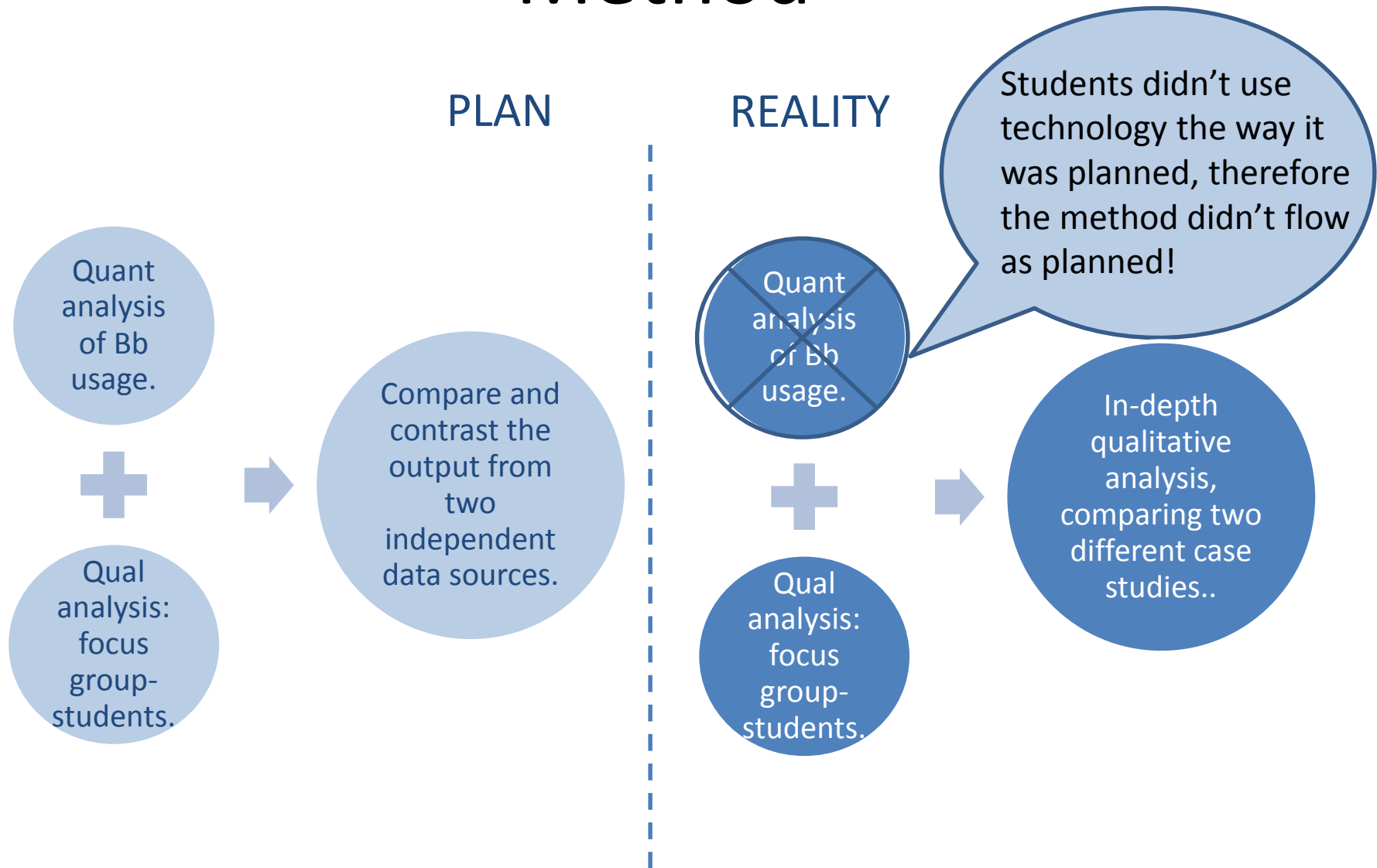
•Students demand more

flexibility. *Phillips et al (2004 & Rennie (2003)*

•Technology enables flexible distance and time. *Rennie (2003)*



Method



Findings: Quantitative

- Students in Case Study 1 used the learning technology as intended and therefore analysis was possible.
- Students in Case Study 2 used the learning technology as a reference tool, but used other technology (social media) more often. Compare and contrast analysis was therefore not possible.

The quantitative analysis was not therefore used in this research project. However this raises an interesting point for the ability to research the way students learn and interact in future research.

Findings: Qualitative

- Participants recall of FDL techniques was strong.
 - Case Study 2 used the VLE as a reference tool that was part of a suite of learning technology available.
- Students valued the ‘connection’ with the tutor.
 - Particularly important in Case Study 1.
 - Voice over power-point, feedback.
- Student support was important to them:
 - Peer relationship in Case Study 2 particularly strong.
 - Social media, discussion forum, informal study groups.
- Learning environment was a factor for Case Study 2
 - University premises provided appropriate location for ‘study’.
 - Rural environment provide ‘retreat’ like environment for reflection.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Objective	Conclusion	Recommendation
1. Understand which FDL techniques derived positive student engagement.	Techniques alone did not derive positive student engagement.	Plan cohesion into the design of the module using a model like the B-R-G but also take into consideration how assessment fits the content, activity and technology. Ensure opportunity for valued interaction with tutor and peers.
2. Explore other possible FDL techniques that may be appropriate for the module.	Interactive techniques could be increased. Allow use of technology outside of University control.	There isn't a 'best' technique for enabling student engagement. It must be done in light of #1. above. Be aware of the social media that students might use, but be careful about changing the dynamic if it's working!
3. Identify which FDL techniques may be transferrable to other modules.	A wide range of techniques would be transferrable, particularly those which develop the student / tutor relationship.	The use of technology has to be deliberately designed in each case to fit the content, activity, technology and assessment.

References I

- Biggs, J and Tang C (2011) Teaching for Quality Learning: What the student does. 4th ed. Berkshire: Open University Press / McGraw Hill.
- Boling, E. C., Hough, M., Krinsky, H., Saleem, H., & Stevens, M. (2012). Cutting the distance in distance education: Perspectives on what promotes positive, online learning experiences. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 15(2), 118-126.
- Bricknell, L & Muldoon, N. (2013). Rethinking Online Teaching and Learning: A Case Study of an Approach to Designing an Online Learning Environment. *The International Journal of Technology, Knowledge and Society* 8(4). pp33-47.
- Creswell, J (2014) Research Design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches. 4th Ed. Sage: London.
- Dietz-Uhler, B & Hurn, J (2013) Strategies for Engagement in Online Courses: Engaging with the Content, Instructor and Other Students. *Journal of Teaching and Learning with Technology* 2(2) pp62-65.
- El-Khalili, N & El-Ghalayini, H (2014) Comparison of Effectiveness of Different Learning Technologies. *International Journal of E-Learning Technology* 9(9). 56.
- Finley, D (2012) Using Quality Matters (QM) to Improve All Courses. *Journal of Teaching and Learning with Technology* 1(2) pp48-50.
- Gibson, K. (2013). Fostering Collaboration and Learning in Asynchronous Online Environments *Journal of Teaching and Learning with Technology*, 2(2). pp60-78

References II

- Holley, D & Oliver, M. (2010) Student engagement and blended learning: Portraits of risk, *Journal of Computers and Education*. 54(3) pp693-700
- Li, F. Qi, J. Wang, G. & Wang, X. (2014) traditional Classroom V's E-Learning in Higher Education: Differences Between Students' Behavioural Engagement, *International of Emerging Technologies in Learning*. 9(2) pp48-51
- Lopez-Perez, V. Perez-Lopez, C & Rodriguez-Ariza, L (2011) Blended learning in higher education: Students' perceptions and their relation to outcomes, *Journal of Computers and Education*. 56(3) pp818-826
- Phillips, R. Cummings, R, Lowe, K. & Jonas-Dwyer, D (2004) Rethinking Flexible Learning in a Distributed Learning Environment: A University Wide Initiative. *Educational Media International*, 41(3) pp195-205
- Rennie, F (2003) The Use of Flexible Learning Resources for Geographically Distributed Rural Students. *Distance Education*, 24(1) pp25-39
- Simonds, T & Brock, B (2014) Relationship Between Age, Experience and Student Preference for Types of Learning Activities in online Courses, *Journal of Educators Online*, 11(1) pp1-19