

PEDAGOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Despite the increased recognition on the use of online technologies for the delivery of flexible and student-centered learning environments, there are numerous critiques that its usage does not transform academic's pedagogy: the uses of online technology for teaching and learning have been restrictive, mainly for dissemination or display of knowledge. This paper draws on the findings from three case studies that explore the manifestation of blended learning pedagogies in higher education. Six academics teaching at three different higher education contexts at two different countries, namely Australia and Malaysia were interviewed in order to understand the ways in which online technology is utilized for teaching and learning and the tensions arising from the usage. Guided by the perceptions that BLP is a socially situated practice, the study aims to interrogate the different manifestations of BLP at different contexts of higher education, highlighting the complex interplay between the users (academics), online technology and other significant elements within specific socio-cultural contexts. Focusing on the academic pedagogical practices that are shaped and reshaped within its specific socio-cultural context, this study demonstrates the complexity and fluidity of the different varieties of blended learning pedagogy that are manifested in different conditions and contexts. It contributes to further understanding of the ways in which online technologies are used in higher education pedagogy within the context of global knowledge economy that emphasizes flexible and student-centered pedagogy.

KEYWORDS: *Blended Learning Pedagogy (BLP), higher education, online technology*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Universities worldwide are now positioned within an internationally competitive (Gibb, Haskins, & Robertson, 2009) and super-complex higher education sector (Barnett & Hallam, 1999). As such, universities need to respond to changes. Among the changes identified are the changing governance of higher education, increase use of online technology, increase values of knowledge, increase diversity of student population. Academics as the main players in the higher education are also expected to have more diversified roles in teaching (Dora *et al.*, 2012; Sidek *et al.*, 2015, Sidek *et al.*, 2012) and researching (Ismail *et al.*, 2015). These changes challenge universities to re-evaluate their current structural configurations, leading to changes at the levels of individual academics as well as universities (institutions). Operating within a specific country, universities are bounded by its national higher education policies, which are also influenced by global forces. In this regard, universities as well as academics need to reconfigure their pedagogies in order to be relevant in the openness and interconnected global context.

Viewing the needs for university to prepare for the future, Peters (2002) highlights the importance of realizing the potential use of online technology that transforms higher education. In this regard, online technology should not be used merely to serve the functions of conventional teaching practices, but rather it should be used in ways that it facilitates a transformed pedagogy. Bonk (2010) suggests that in addition to enhance, extend and transform learning, online technology should be used for shared learning. Online technology, such as the online social networking should be used to promote dialogue and create new communities for co-construction of knowledge (Bonk, 2009; Garrison & Anderson, 2003; Mortimore, 1999). Further, given the current challenges and demands on higher education, VanDerLinden (2014) emphasized the need to consider the adoption of blended learning as an institutional approach in which universities is regarded as learning organizations. In this respect, online technology has become one of the essential tools to deliver higher education relevant to the changing environment of higher education and academics need to be given sufficient support and training (Dora *et al.*, 2012).

The prevalent usage of online technology in higher education has resulted in the growing practice of blended learning pedagogy. In its common term, blended learning pedagogy (BLP) refers to the combination of both face-to-

face and online learning environments. Blended learning pedagogy (BLP) is considered as an appropriate pedagogy for the changing new environment of higher education because of its potential to transform the existing teaching practices in higher education (Garrison & Anderson, 2003; 2008; Graham & Robison, 2007, VanDerLinden, 2014). BLP is claimed to have the potential to deliver flexible and student-centered learning environments and facilitate the development of higher order thinking among students (Vaughan, 2007). It is also considered as a richer learning environment than either the face-to-face or wholly online learning environment (Kerres & De Witt, 2003). BLP is considered as a pedagogy which has the flexibility to accommodate the new cultures of learning that acknowledge the diversity of students' needs and learning styles rather than emphasizing the sameness or one-size-fits all teaching and learning approaches.

The mediation of online technology for active student engagement in learning is still dubious as there is limited evidence that the use of online technology demonstrates a transformation in conventional teaching practices. Some researchers (Laurillard, 2006; Selwyn, 2007) suggest that the use of online technology have been restrictive and non-transformative. Instead of using it to support flexible, higher order thinking and active learning environment, it is argued that online technology has been mainly used for information delivery (Laurillard, 2006) and administrative purposes (Selwyn, 2007). There are claims that the use of online technology in teaching and learning are merely "doing old things in a new way" (Noss & Pachler, 1999, p. 195) and "simulating rather than stimulating learning" (Saltmarsh & Sutherland-Smith, 2010).

The gap between the potential of online technology and its actual practice highlights the need for a further understanding of the complex relationship between the user, technology and contextual environments that influence its usage. Viewing the complexity and dynamic of blended learning framework, Wang, Han & Yang (2015) proposed a six dimensional framework, called the Complex Adaptive Blended Learning System (CABLS), grounded in the complex adaptive systems theory. The six dimensions are the learner, teacher, content, technology, learning support and institution. For the purpose of this paper, the manifestation of BLP is viewed as an outcome of heterogeneous actors that are interacting with each rather than independent from one another. These actors are not situated in vacuum, but they are culturally situated

within the context of an organization (Fox, 2007; Saltmarsh, Sutherland-Smith, & Kitto, 2008; Samarawickrema & Stacey, 2008). Considering that actors within an organization are influenced and shaped by its wider socio-cultural context underpinned by the multifaceted and ever changing environment of globalization, this study takes a step further by exploring the diversity and varieties of localized BLP manifested at different higher education contexts.

This paper aims to report part of a research project that investigates the manifestation of BLP at three different contexts of higher education, which involves two different countries: Malaysia and Australia. The purpose of this research project is to provide an understanding of the manifestation of BLP that delivers flexible and student-centred learning environments. In this case, BLP is considered as the reformed teaching practices among academics as they respond to the challenges for a reconfiguration of higher education pedagogy within the openness and interconnected globalization process and the development of technology. It provides a platform to understand the interaction between how globalization influences and shapes higher education teaching practices as well as how teaching practices influence and shape globalization process. In this regard, this paper focuses on addressing the following research question: What are the varieties of BLP manifested across different contexts of higher education?

To address this research question, this paper is organized in four main sections. The first section defines BLP and describes a framework that guides the conceptualization of the manifestation of BLP while the second section describes the research method of the study. The third and fourth sections present the discussion and conclusions.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The term 'blended learning' has received various definitions and interpretations; however, in this paper focuses on the definition proposed by Garrison and Vaughan (2008). Rejecting the demarcation of online and face-to-face learning environments of BLP, Garrison and Vaughan (2008) define blended learning as "... the thoughtful fusion of face-to-face and online learning experience. The basic principle is that face-to-face oral communication and online written communication are optimally integrated such that the strengths of each are blended into a unique learning experience congruent with the context and intended meaning", (p.5).

Garrison and Vaughan (2008) highlight the need for a coherent blend between face-to-face oral communication and online written communication in order to realize the synergistic strengths of the two learning environments. Underpinned by constructivist approach to learning, Garrison & Vaughan (2008) calls for a fundamental re-design of the structure and approach of teaching and learning. The re-design involves three key assumptions, which are "thoughtfully integrating face-to-face and online learning; fundamentally rethinking the course designs to optimize student engagement; and restructuring and replacing traditional class contact hours", (p.5).

Blended learning in this study refers to the combination of face-to-face and online learning environments (Dziuban et al., 2006; Garrison & Vaughan, 2008; Graham, 2006, Glazer, 2011), regardless of whether it is used for the delivery of campus-based or distance education programs. It is also described as a combination of a campus-based and distance education. This definition allows for the investigation of varieties of BLP in different higher education contexts. In this respect, the term *blended learning pedagogy (BLP)* rather than *blended learning* is considered more appropriate, considering that the focus of this study is on exploring academics' teaching practices using online technology in higher education. Learning environments that are either fully face-to-face or fully online are beyond the scope of this study.

Using Graham's categorization of blending, the practice of BLP that encourages student-centred learning in this study is termed as *Productive BLP*. *Productive teaching practices* in higher education are defined as teaching practices that deliver flexible and student-centred learning environments. In this study, it

refers to a blended learning environment that allows students to be at the centre of a learning process as they engage in a meaningful, deep learning approach (Biggs, 2003; Entwistle, 2010; Ramsden, 2003). As knowledge users and producers, students participate actively and collaboratively in the learning process. In this context, 'blended learning pedagogies' refer to productive teaching practices that use online technology to deliver a flexible combination of face-to-face and online learning environments.

Underpinned by the globalization process, BLP is conceptualized as enacted within its social, historical and political localities, in which all are embedded within the global context. As shown in Figure 1, the manifestation of BLP involves three expanding layers, consisting the local teaching and learning context at the inner layer, expanding from the institutional to the national contexts. All the three layers are situated within the interconnected and interdependent globalised world. Thus, the manifestation of variety of BLP has both global as well as the local influences.



Figure 1: Conceptualization of BLP

The conceptualization of BLP is drawn from two premises. Firstly, drawing from the socio-cultural perspective, the manifestation of BLP is viewed as a "socially situated practice" (Goodyear, 2009, p. viii). The meaning making and actions are constantly changing due to the interaction within a specific historical and socio-cultural context (Crotty, 1998; Jones & Dirckinck-Holmfeld, 2009). Secondly, it is conceptualized as the outcome of heterogeneous actors negotiating with each other regardless of their hierarchical positions (Callon, 1986; Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Flichy, 2007). Thus, this avoids the deterministic perspectives that share the views of a direct cause and effect relationship between the actors.

In this research, the manifestation of BLP is conceptualized as a complex web of relationships between human actors (such as the academics, students and support staff) and non-human actors (such as technology, policy documents, and infrastructures), which shape and are shaped by each other within a specific context. This implies that nothing is purely social and nothing is purely technical (Latour, 1996). In this case, Actor Network Theory is used as a lens to explore the interaction of various actors as they influence and shape each other towards the manifestation of BLP (Latour, 1996). The emphasis of heterogeneous actors as constituents of the manifestation of BLP allows for an interrogation of the different manifestation of BLP within the system within specific historical, political and socio-cultural contexts of higher education. Further, the actors that shape the manifestation of BLP are not operating in vacuum, but rather they are contextualized within specific historical, social and cultural contexts.

The conceptualization of globalization as a dynamic and multidimensional process (Appadurai, 1996; Edwards & Usher, 2008; Giddens, 2002; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Robertson & White, 2003; Vidovich, 2004) provides the basis for the multiple directions of actors in the framework. In this respect, the actors within the layers are actively interacting with each other in a multidimensional manner as they respond and in response to each other. This is drawn from the notion of 'glonacal' coined by Marginson and Rhoades (2002). They highlight the reciprocal interactions between the different layers, namely the global, national and local contexts in order to illustrate the dynamic process of globalisation.

Considering the fluid and multiple interactions of actors within and between layers, the manifestation of BLP as conceptualized in Figure 1 is simplistic in nature. However, the three-layered framework allows for systematic interrogation of BLP practices. It allows an understanding of ways in which global and national understanding of student-centred learning pedagogy are taken up by different universities as it is translated through their distinctive teaching and learning policy. This policy is further translated into teaching practices among the academics at the local teaching and learning context. As such, aspects such as differences in pedagogical practices and using online technology for teaching and learning are contextualized within its political and social-cultural contexts.

Guided by Gee's notion of small discourse and capital Discourse (Gee, 1989), the practice of BLP is viewed as a coordinated pattern of performance or an alignment between the performances of various actors, which is constantly changing, framed within a specific community Discourse. Gee (1989) defines the capital 'D' Discourses as,

... ways of being in the world; they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes. It is a sort of 'identity kit', which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize discourses (p. 6-7).

Gee's notion of Discourse provides an appropriate lens to describe the constantly changing identities of the actors as they interact with each other and contextualized within specific historical, social and cultural context. Gee argues that individuals make themselves visible and recognizable in a community through language, and through their beliefs, attitudes, actions and disposition in which all of them integrate with each other.

Discourses are not static and they may be in conflict with each other. To be acceptable as a member of a community, the community Discourse needs to be acquired. According to Gee, Discourse can be acquired by enculturation (apprenticeship) into social practices through scaffold and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse. Additionally, the enculturation through supports can be seen the academic's own initiative to change responding the Discourse of the specific university as well as the professional development supports provided by the university.

Discourse also represents a social identity. Identity is a 'negotiated experience' in which people present themselves. Similar to Discourse, identities are not fixed but constantly being constructed and negotiated through their language, beliefs, attitudes etc. Identities are further developed as participation in particular communities of practice increased. These identities, further, are based on shared sets of values, agreed-upon cultural understandings and ideologies, which underlie our use of spoken and written discourse.

According to Swennen, Jones & Volman (2006) identity is constructed by one's involvement in the communities of practice that one belongs to, in which the identity also influences the communities. Specifically, the professional identity as academics for a larger part takes place while working as academic and by interacting with colleagues and student-teachers. Additionally, the academic's interaction with the technology influences and shapes the professional identity. In this context the development of a professional identity can be viewed as the professional development.

In this context, investigating the beliefs and values and the teaching practices of the academics and the normative understanding and practices of the universities, national and global contexts provide insights on several issues. First, this allows the exploration of the possible tensions in relation to the Discourses of using online technology within and between different contexts of higher education, which leads to further understanding the ways in which BLP is manifested. Second, it helps to illuminate the distinctive normative understanding and practices that exist in a particular socio-cultural context and its relationship with the wider social and cultural national and global contexts. This can be achieved by interrogating the taken-for-granted understandings and behaviors of the academics within different socio-cultural contexts, embedded within the national and global context.

The fluid interactions and co-construction of identities of actors within a specific socio-cultural context indicate the production of a locality (Appadurai, 1996), or a vernacular design (Goodyear, 2009) of BLP practices. Thus, focusing the particularity and situatedness of BLP practices, this study acknowledges the distinctiveness of each BLP practice. This is because the practice of BLP is viewed as a socially situated practice which is continuously shaped and re-shaped by its historical, social and cultural contexts (Crotty, 1998). Specifically, the constantly changing identities are not only influenced by the socio-cultural situation within the local teaching and learning context, but also within the specific institutional and the national contexts, in which all of them are operating simultaneously within the globalised context. Further, the vernacular BLP is also a reflection of the distinctive cultures of learning within specific cultural context, subject subcultures (John & La Velle, 2004) and different learning environments (Dillon, Wang, & Tearle, 2007; Lamy & Goodfellow, 2009; Lemke & Helden, 2009).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study is framed within qualitative interpretive inquiry (Holliday, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 2000) in order to provide a nuanced understanding of the naturally occurring intertwined actors that influence and shape the manifestations of BLP across different contexts of higher education. It intends to seek answers to how social experiences are created and given meaning within specific, localized social contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Several studies (Ismail et al., 2015; Hassan et al., 2015,) have adopted various approaches to investigate how a new approach accepted by users. Consistent with this conceptual framework, this study is designed to trace '*the variation in the ways online technology are used in teaching practices* in a variety of situations [italics added]' (Stake, 2010, p. 61). As such, multiple case study (Stake, 2006, 2010; Yin, 2003) comprising of an exploration at three institutional cases is employed.

This research employs multiple case studies involving three universities, two in Malaysia and one in Australia. The three universities known as university A located in Australia, university B and university C both located in Malaysia. All the three universities have adopted a centralized online learning management system (COLMS) tailor made to the needs and emphasis of the respective universities.

There are two main factors that have influenced the case selection. Firstly, the selection of three different cases: the dual mode university, off-campus based university and campus-based university provide the appropriate sites to explore the varieties of BLP that are manifested in different context of higher education. This is relevant to the concern of this study in which universities eventually will be transformed into 'brick-and click' universities (Levine, 2003). Secondly, the study that takes place at two countries of different socio-cultural backgrounds and level of advancement in online technologies provides appropriate sites for understanding the different ways the actors at different contexts influence and shape the manifestation of BLPs. Further, the researcher's pre-existing relationships with the two universities facilitated the access to the three sites.

Data utilized for the discussion in this paper is based on the conversations with six academics that inform the ways in which they use online technology

for teaching and learning at their respective workplace. These academics are purposely selected and they are identified as Fred and Jade at university A, Siti and Seri at university B, and Wan and Wani at university C¹. For consistent comparison of the BLP practices at the three higher education context, the selection of the academics for the interview is based on four criteria. Firstly, the academics selected are those who are teaching undergraduate students and use both online and face-to-face learning environments in the delivery of the subjects taught. Secondly, the medium of instructions for the subject taught should be in English language considering that most of the information available online are in English language. Thirdly, they should have more than three years experience using online technologies in order to ensure that they have some degrees of confidence and familiarity teaching with online technology. Finally, the academics are also selected based on recommended exemplars of best teaching practice in each faculty. Considering that all the academics selected at the three sites are female, issues of gender differences in relation to using online technology are beyond the scope of this study. To capture the ways in which academics practice BLP, interviews with the academics at the three sites were conducted two times, in which the subsequent interviews took less than one hour. The second session of the interviews was utilized to seek clarifications or other important information, which were missed out during the first interview. In addition, permission to access the online learning platform and other relevant documents of the subject taught by the academic was also requested during the interview.

A thematic approach of organizing the data was employed. All data were taken and re-arranged under themes or categories (Creswell, 1998; Holliday, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Schwandt, 2001). Using inductive analysis, the possible patterns, themes and categories were discovered by looking for key phrases, terms and practices that are special to the people in the setting. These themes were then examined deductively with reference to existing frameworks from the literature review which are found to be relevant (Patton, 2002). Within-case and cross-case analysis was conducted. Specifically, themes that emerge based on the analysis of the three cases were compared and contrasted in order to build abstractions across cases (Merriam, 2009). For the within case analysis, the description of the manifestation of BLP and the relevant themes arising from within each of the three sites were based on the data analysis procedures involving several stages: talking to the data, coding, categorizing and thematic analysis.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study explores the ways in which actors situated within the local teaching and learning interacts with the actors at the institutional, national and global contexts. The main actors investigated at the local teaching and learning context are the academics, teaching and learning tools and resources, the content curriculum and assessment. The actors at the institutional context are the normative understanding and practices of the university, which is represented by its policy direction and implementations, technology infrastructure and the institutional professional development for academics. The national context serves as a backdrop to contextualize the universities within its broader socio-cultural contexts. Two different nations represented by the Australia and Malaysian higher education systems are included in this study. In this respect, guided by policy studies related to globalization and education (Burbules & Torres, 2000; Marginson, Murphy, & Peters, 2010; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Torres & Van Heertum, 2009), the nation's education system and reform policy were drawn upon in order to understand the two-way relationships between the university, national policies and globalization. The findings and discussions in this section aim to address the research question mentioned above.

Suggesting that Productive BLP is the appropriate BLP for the 21st century higher education, the other two BLPs, Enriched and Basic are considered as the varieties that do not have the maximum potential to deliver flexible and student-centred pedagogy. The three varieties are mapped within a continuum, starting from the Basic, a variety which has prominent features of transmissive and teacher-centred pedagogy, followed by the Enriched in the middle, and the Productive BLP, a variety which has the maximum potential to provide flexible and student-centred pedagogy.

The classification of BLP practices is based on their potential to deliver flexible and productive learning environment appropriate for the 21st century. Productive learning environment is a learning environment where students participate actively as co-producers of knowledge, work collaboratively in sharing knowledge and construct knowledge through intellectual dialogues and discussions. Students are equipped with the appropriate learning skills for active engagement in meaningful and challenging tasks. Online technologies are utilized to provide flexible platforms for students to interact and in the

learning process regardless of their differences in learning behaviors and cultural background. Academics function as motivators and facilitators to motivate learning and provide students with necessary learning skills to enable students to participate actively in the learning process.

As shown in , the distinctive features of the three varieties are classified based on three main aspects, which are integration of face-to-face and online learning environments, use of online technologies and teaching strategies. Coherence and alignment between the curriculum, teaching tools and resources, teaching strategies and assessment is also taken into consideration. The frame of the three BLP varieties is also informed by the features of BLP practised by the six academics at the three different higher education contexts. Hence, a combination of a deductive (existing literature) and inductive analysis (six cases of BLP) has been undertaken to classify their features into three categories: Basic, Enriched and Productive BLPs.

Table 1: Features of the Basic, Enriched and Productive BLPs

Aspects	Basic BLP	Enriched BLP	Productive BLP
Learning Environment	The main teaching and learning happens in the face-to-face, while online learning environment functions to supplement the face-to – face learning environment	Teaching and learning happen in both environments, but they are organized in chunks although there are some linkages; Online learning environment is used to replace the face-to-face learning environment	Face-to-face and online learning environment are integrated coherently; Learning can happen in both environment simultaneously

<p>Use of online technologies</p>	<p>No evidence of using COLMS;</p> <p>Use of online technology for informal learning, display and disseminate information; rely heavily on static knowledge represented by written module and texts</p>	<p>Use of COLMS for repository of information and communication with students;</p> <p>Online technologies are used for repository of information, online discussions monitored by the teacher.</p>	<p>Use of varieties of media and online technology, including COLMS;</p> <p>Online technologies are used for repository of information, active interactions, utilization of multiple source of knowledge and representation of knowledge produced</p>
<p>Teaching Strategies</p>	<p>Emphasize dissemination of information (explanation and demonstration)</p> <p>Source and authority of knowledge vested upon the teacher</p> <p>Emphasise on preparing students for examination</p>	<p>Teacher generally decides the types of technology to be utilized. Students have limited freedom to decide on the technology used.</p> <p>Some emphasis on preparing students for examination and developing multimedia literacy</p>	<p>Nurturing the love of learning, building students capacity to participate in learning (life-long learning); developing students' higher order thinking, creativity and multimedia literacy; Emphasizes building relationship with students and practicing community of learning</p> <p>Focus on equipping students with competencies and professionalism</p>

The Basic BLP is a variety that has relatively minimum potential to facilitate productive learning. It resembles a conventional pedagogy that emphasizes teacher centred pedagogy and face-to-face learning environment. Although both face-to-face and online learning environments are evident in Basic BLP, the online environment is used to support the face-to-face learning environment and deliver knowledge. The use of online technology is minimal and its usage

is mainly for information repository, communication and organization of the teaching and learning process. The printed material is used quite extensively and Power Point presentation is used to deliver knowledge. This practice is reflected in Wan's teaching practice at MCBU.

The Enriched BLP is a variety that is situated between Basic and Productive BLP. It has the potential to deliver an enriched learning environment with some limitations for productive learning environment. Both face-to-face and online learning environments occur in Enriched BLP, but they are utilized in chunks. Although there are evidences of active students' participation, Enriched BLP is not a fully transformed pedagogy from a conventional pedagogy due to the relatively strong teacher presence. The use of online technologies in Enriched BLP does not really transform learning because students are not given the freedom to choose the technology they want to represent or design their products of knowledge. The types of technology used are mainly determined by the academics or universities, rather than giving students the freedom to choose any technology that they are comfortable with. For example, Wani uses Blogs, Jade uses CLOMS, WebQuest and DRUPAL and both Siti and Seri use COLMS.

The Productive BLP represents a drastic transformation from conventional teaching and learning environment. Rather than focusing on the academic as the main actor in the teaching and learning, Productive BLP delivers learning environment where students actively participate in a community of learning. This variety has the potential to facilitate the development of the human capital relevant for the 21st century. Varieties of media and online technology are used for multiple modes of communication in the Productive BLP. The usages of online technologies range from a repository of information, a medium for rich interaction and continuous learning environments and a representation of knowledge produced. Interactive and rich multimedia PowerPoint presentation is used to attract students' attention during the delivery of information. Rather than matching specific technology that can achieve the objectives of the learning, the use of varieties of online technology is focused on providing maximum opportunities for students to participate in the learning process. Similarly, students are given the opportunities to choose whichever medium or technologies to represent and design their product of knowledge. Emphasis on nurturing the love for learning and providing

sufficient learning skills and resources for active participating in the learning process, Productive BLP prepares students for life-long learning. Teaching and learning is characterized as a networked of interaction within a learning community. Emphasis on nurturing the love for learning and providing sufficient learning skills and resources for active participating in the learning process, Productive BLP prepares students for life-long learning. Teaching and learning is characterised as a networked of interaction within a learning community that recognises the importance of trust and mutual respect as the prerequisite of learning (Thorpe & Mayer, 2009). The hierarchical relationship between teacher and students is insignificant as the main role of the teacher is to give encouragement, support and assistance for students. While students take the main roles in the construction of knowledge, teacher facilitates learning and provides assistance to enable them to construct and apply knowledge. This variety is reflected in Fred's teaching practice at ADMU.

This classification is restrictive to the six cases of BLP described in this study, considering that BLP is a socially situated practice. Thus, it is anticipated that this framework may have different descriptors for different cases of BLP manifested in different contexts. In this respect, although it may be useful as guidance to classify BLPs, careful consideration should be made to generalize it to other teaching and learning contexts. Further, the purpose of this classification is not to assess the effectiveness of the BLPs. Rather, it serves as a reflection of the diversity of BLP practiced within the global higher education context and to discern the variety that conforms to flexible and student-centred pedagogy.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The discussion focuses on the forms of BLP practised by six academics at three different higher education contexts. Suggesting that Productive BLP is the variety that conform to the global pedagogy and good teaching practices for flexible and student-centred learning, the other two varieties, namely the Enriched and Basic BLP are considered as different from the Productive BLP because their practices do not optimally deliver flexible and student-centred learning environments. They are not considered as inferior pedagogies; rather they are shaped by differences in ideology and practices across different contexts, embedded within the institutional, national and global normative understanding of higher education in the new century.

This research shows that academics, universities as well as national higher education providers to some extent, are pursuing for student-centred learning environment and using online technology for teaching and learning. In this regard, Productive BLP is considered as the normative understanding and practice of higher education globally. This is because it has the maximum potential to deliver flexible and student centred learning environment. As such, the Productive BLP is the practice of BLP that conforms to the global discourse of higher education and the other varieties are not inferior to the Productive BLP. Despite the best effort made by academics to practise Productive BLP, there are others who are still practising Basic and Enriched BLP. They are varieties of BLP that are localised based on the normative understanding and practices of teaching and of using online technology at specific historical, political and socio-cultural contexts.

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