

**LEADERSHIP READINESS FOR BLENDED INSTRUCTION IN BARBADOS:
A SINGLE-SITE CASE STUDY OF A BARBADIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL
AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Neekaie Beckles-Clarke*
The Berkeley Institute, Bermuda

Avanelle Joseph-Edwards
The University of The West Indies, Global Campus

Abstract: *The present study examined the perspectives of 13 Management Team members on the factors which affected leadership readiness for and during the shift to blended instruction in a Barbadian secondary school amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Qualitative data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and documents. A single-site case study research design was employed. The conceptual framework was a modified model of Graham et al.'s (2013) and Wong et al.'s (2014) blended learning assessment frameworks. Thematic analysis revealed three themes: Insufficient External Governance, Lack of Leadership Training, and Systemic Barriers to Readiness. The findings contribute novel insights to the literature on leadership preparedness for blended approaches and have practical implications for educational leadership and strategic planning during crisis situations. This study expands understanding of the critical factors impacting leadership readiness for successfully adopting innovative instructional modalities.*

Keywords: *blended instruction, hybrid instruction, leadership readiness, COVID-19, Barbados*

* Corresponding Author (beckles.neekaie@gmail.com)

REFERENCES

- Acree, L., Gibson, T., Mangum, N., Wolf, M. A., Kellogg, S. & Branon, S. (2017). Supporting school leaders in blended learning with blended learning. *Journal of Online Learning Research*, 3(2), 105–143.
<https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/171355/>
- Adekola, J., Dale, V., & Gardiner, K. (2017). Development of an institutional framework to guide transitions into enhanced blended learning in higher education. *Research in Learning Technology*, 25. <http://dx.doi.org/10.25304/rlt.v25.1973>
- Alqabbani, S., Almuwais, A., Benajiba, N., & Almoayad, F. (2020). Readiness towards emergency shifting to remote learning during COVID-19 pandemic among university instructors. *E-learning and Digital Media*, 18(5).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2042753020981651>
- Anderson, T. (2020). Academics, achievement gap, and nutritional health: The impact of coronavirus on education. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin: International Journal for Professional Educators*, 87(1), 14–17. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/academics-achievement-gap-nutritional-health/docview/2457214568/se-2>
- Anoba, J., & Cahapay, M. (2020). The readiness of teachers on blended learning transition for post-COVID-19 period: An assessment using parallel mixed method. *PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education, and Learning*, 4(2), 295–316.
<https://doi.org/10.20319/pijtel.2020.42.295316>
- Antwi-Boampong, A., Freeman, E., & Muat, H. (2019, January). *A thematic and grounded theory understanding of faculty adoption of blended learning in higher education*. [Paper presentation]. Proceedings of the European Conference on e-Learning. doi: 10.34190/EEL.19.112
- Barbados Government Information Services. (2020, September 5). *Statement by the Minister of Education // Sept.5 //5pm*. [Video]. Facebook.
https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2629476070639508&ref=watch_permalink
- Barbour, M. K., & Ferdig, R. E. (2012). Online learning. In S. McLeod & C. Lehmann (Eds.). *What school leaders need to know about digital technologies and social media*. [53-66]. Jossey-Bass.

- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544–559.
<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/2/>
- Bleeker, A., & Crowder, R. (2022). Selected online learning experiences in the Caribbean during COVID-19. United Nations.
https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/47742/3/S2101018_en.pdf
- Bordoloi, R., Das, P., & Das, K. (2021). Perception towards online/blended learning at the time of COVID-19 pandemic: An academic analytics in the Indian context. *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal*, 16(1), 41–60.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/AAOUJ-09-2020-0079>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. Sage.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise & Health*, 11(4), 589–597.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. Sage.
- Brynard, D. J., Hanekom, S. X., & Brynard, P. (2014). *Introduction to research* (3rd ed.). Van Schaik.
- Cavanagh, T., Thompson, K., & Futch, L. (2016). Supporting institutional hybrid implementations. [Unpublished manuscript]. In K. Linder & D. Fontaine, D. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*. http://olc-wordpress-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2016/02/pre-release_cavanagh-thompson-futch-institutional-hybrid-chapter_final.pdf
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed). Routledge.
- Correia, M. (2016). *An investigation of teacher and administrator perceptions of blended learning: Implementation, student learning, and professional development*. (Publication No. 10285484) [Doctoral Dissertation, Western Connecticut State University]. Education Dissertations 18.

- Duarte, A. (2016). *Blended learning: Institutional frameworks for adoption and implementation*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of the Incarnate Word]. The Athenaeum. https://athenaeum.uiw.edu/uiw_etds/9
- Dziuban, C., Graham, C., Moskal, P., Norberg, A., & Sicilia, N. (2018). Blended learning: The new normal and emerging technologies. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 15(3). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-017-0087-5>
- Dziuban, C., & Picciano, A. (2015). The evolution continues. *ECAR Research*, 6(15), 1–19.
- Garrison, D. R., & Kanuka, H. (2004). Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education. *Internet and Higher Education*, 7(2), 95–105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2004.02.001>
- Garrison, D. R., & Vaughan, N. D. (2008). *Blended learning in higher education: framework, principles and guidelines*. John Wiley.
- Graham, C. R. (2009). Blended learning models. In M. Khosrow-Pour (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of information science and technology* (2nd ed., pp. 375–382). IGI Global.
- Graham, C. R. (2013). Emerging practice and research in blended learning. In M. G. Moore (Ed.), *Handbook of distance education* (3rd ed., pp. 333–350). Routledge.
- Graham, C. R., Woodfield, W., & Harrison, J. B. (2013). A framework for institutional adoption and implementation of blended learning in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, Article 18, 4–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2012.09.003>
- Hamza-Lup, F., & White, S. (2015a February). *Hybrid course delivery: Impact on learning and assessment*. [Paper presentation]. 7th International Conference on Mobile, Hybrid, and On-line Learning At: Lisbon, Portugal. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275018304_Hybrid_Course_Delivery_Impact_on_Learning_and_Assessment
- Hamza-Lup, F., & White, S. (2015b). Design and assessment for hybrid courses: Insights and overviews. *International Journal on Advances in Life Sciences*, 7(3 & 4), 122–131. <https://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/1811/1811.07273.pdf>

- Hilliard, A. (2015). Global blended learning practices for teaching and learning, leadership and professional development. *Journal of International Education Research*, 11(3), 179–188. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1070786.pdf>
- Hrastinski, S. (2019). What do we mean by blended learning? *TechTrends*, 63(5), 564–569. doi:10.1007/s11528-019-00375-5.
- KMT. (2020, September 5). Blended approach seems the best option for new term in September. *Loop News*. <https://barbados.loopnews.com/content/blended-approach-gets-nod-new-term-when-school-begins-sept-21>
- Kokare, M., & Strautins, K. (2018). Setting up blended learning at school: Leadership perspective. *Society integration education: Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*, 2, 240-253. <https://doi.org/10.17770/sie2018vol1.3161>
- Leacock, C., & Warrican, S. J. (2020). Helping teachers to respond to COVID-19 in the Eastern Caribbean: Issues of readiness, equity and care. *Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2020.1803733>
- Leidl, D. M., Ritchie, L., & Moslemi, N. (2020). Blended learning in undergraduate nursing education – A scoping review. *Nurse Education Today*, 86, 104318. doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2019.104318.
- Leithwood, K., Christopher D., Sammons, P., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2007). *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*. <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/6967/1/download%3Fid%3D17387%26filename%3Dseven-claims-about-successful-school-leadership.pdf>
- Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Lim, C., Wang, T., & Graham, C. (2019). Driving, sustaining and scaling up blended learning practices in higher education institutions: A proposed framework. *Innovation and Education*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42862-019-0002-0>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.

- Ma'arop, A. H., & Embi, M. A. (2016). Implementation of blended learning in higher learning institutions: A review of the literature. *International Education Studies*, 9(3), 41–52. doi:10.5539/ies.v9n3p41
- Matthewson, T. (2020, March 12). *Most schools are completely unprepared for coronavirus and virtual learning*. PBS News Hour.
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/education/most-schools-are-completely-unprepared-for-coronavirus-and-virtual-learning>
- Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training. (2023). *Reimagining Education in Barbados*. <https://mes.gov.bb/News/Announcements/Education-Reform.aspx>
- Mirriahi, N., Alonzo, D., McIntyre, S., Kligyte, G., & Fox, B. (2015). Blended learning innovations: Leadership and change in one Australian institution. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology*, 11(1), 4–16.
- Mladenova, T., Kalmukov, Y., & Valova, I. (2020). Covid 19 - A major cause of digital transformation in education or just an evaluation test. *TEM Journal*, 9(3), 1163–1170.
<https://doi.org/10.18421/TEM93-42>
- Modan, N. (2020, June 17). *Fast Forward: Hybrid models could prove effective. Are they here to stay?* K12 Dive. <https://www.k12dive.com/news/fast-forward-hybrid-models-could-prove-effective-are-they-here-to-stay/579782/>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2020, September 24). *Strengthening online learning when schools are closed: The role of families and teachers in supporting students during the COVID-19 crisis*. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=136_136615-o13x4bkowa&title=Strengthening-online-learning-when-schools-are-closed
- Parker, M., & Alfaro, P. (2021, August 2). *Education during the COVID-19 pandemic: Access, inclusion and psychosocial support*. United Nations.
https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/47741/3/S2101017_en.pdf

- Porter, W., & Graham, C. (2016). Institutional drivers and barriers to faculty adoption of blended learning in higher education. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 47(4), 748–762. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12269>
- Porter, W. W., Graham, C. R., Bodily, R. G., & Sandberg, D. S. (2016). A qualitative analysis of institutional drivers and barriers to blended learning adoption in higher education. *Internet and Higher Education*, 28, 17–27.
- Rashid, Y., Rashid, A., Warraich, A., Sabir, S., & Waseem, S. (2019). Case study method: A step-by-step guide for business researchers. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1609406919862424>
- Richey, R. (2013). Encyclopedia of terminology for educational communications and technology.
- Rupp, N. (2016). *Online learning and effective leadership: The importance of relationship building and culture*. (Publication No. 9781339837291) [Doctoral Dissertation, Old Dominion University]. Educational Foundations & Leadership Theses & Dissertations. https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=efl_etds
- Simons, H. (2009). *Case study research in practice*. Sage.
- Spring, K., Graham, C., & Hadlock, C. (2016). The current landscape of international blended learning. *International Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning*, 8(1), 84–102. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTEL.2016.075961>
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.
- Taggart, S., Skinner, B., Roulston, S., & Austin, R. (2024). Blended and Online Learning; what works and why in primary and secondary schools. Evidence from Northern Ireland. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2024.2305706>
- Thomas, G. (2011). A typology for the case study in social science following a definition, discourse and structure. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(6), 511–521. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1077800411409884>

- Tight, M. (2010). The curious case of case study: If you point a viewpoint. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 13(4), 329–339.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570903187181>
- Tulyakul, P. (2020). *Nursing education institution readiness for implementing hybrid instruction*. (28029243) [Doctoral Dissertation, Oklahoma City University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Wharton-Beck, A., Chou, C. C., Gilbert, C., Johnson, B., & Beck, M. A. (2024). K-12 school leadership perspectives from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Policy Futures in Education*, 22(1), 21–42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14782103221135620>
- Wong, L., Tatnall, A., & Burgess, S. (2014). A framework for investigating blended learning effectiveness. *Education + Training*, 56(2/3), 233-251. doi:10.1108/ET04-2013-0049.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and method* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Zhonggen, Y. (2015). Blended learning over two decades. *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education*, 11(3), 1–19. doi: 10.4018/IJICTE.2015070101