Julie Buhl-Wiggers: Measuring the effectiveness of blended learning

Blended learning has become one of the most popular approaches to innovate teaching practices in higher education. Yet, systematic and rigorous research concerning the effectiveness of blended learning in management education and training is rather underdeveloped. Often evidence rely on small samples, non-causal research designs and outcome measures such as student evaluations or self-assessed learning. This calls for more rigorous research designs which shed light on actual impacts of blended learning on grades from high stake exams. Thus, Julie Buhl-Wiggers' research project evolves around measuring causal impacts of blended learning interventions on both learning, social and emotional outcomes through rigorous quantitative methods such as randomized evaluations and quasi-experimental designs. In addition, more knowledge is needed on the causal chain between blended learning and academic achievement. For example, the mediating role of engagement is often just assumed but in reality not clear cut. On the one hand, blended learning can increase engagement through more active involvement, less boredom or more relevant examples. On the other hand, blended learning can also lead to less engagement if the blended environment requires new learning strategies which might frustrate the students, procrastination if the learning environment is always accessible etc.

In particular, the research questions that Julie aim to answer are:

- What is the causal impact of active, group-based/co-operative blended learning on academic achievement? And do specific learner types benefit more from active, co-operative blended learning pedagogy?

- Who are the teachers that implement blended learning and have success with it?

- What is the mediating role of engagement in a blended learning setting? And can we increase the effect of blended learning by focusing on preparing the students for new ways of teaching?

- What is the cost-effectiveness of implementing blended learning at CBS?