



**REINVENTING**  
PUBLIC EDUCATION

# **An Analysis of the Impact of Blended Learning on School Culture, Relationships and Achievement**

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Final Presentation

For Seton Educational Partners

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# Data Sources

## Saint Anne and DePaul 2013-14 and 2014-15

- Student performance data
- Teacher and student focus groups
- Principal interviews
- Informal observation data
- Formal, extended observation data on time use
- Teacher and student surveys

## St. Gertrude the Great and St. Joseph 2015

- Principal phone interviews

# Final Findings

# Academic Culture and Outcomes

# Qualitative Data Summary

|             | Student surveys | Teacher surveys | Student Focus groups | Teacher Focus groups | Structured Observation data |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| DePaul 2014 | 4-8             | K-2<br>3-8      | 1, 2, 3, 4           | 3-5, k-2             | 1, 2, 4                     |
| DePaul 2015 | 4-5             | k-5             | 2, 3, 4-5            | k-2, 1-2, 3          | 2, 3, 4                     |
| SA 2014     | 4-8             | k-8             | 4, 5, 6-8            | k-3, 4-8             | 4, 8                        |
| SA 2015     | 4-8             | k-8             | 4-5, 6-8             | k-3, 4-8             | 4, 8                        |

# Academic Culture and Outcomes

## Finding 1:

BL helps to **academically focus** teacher-teacher and teacher-student relationships

# BL helps to academically focus teacher-teacher and teacher-student relationships

- **Common BL systems** and approaches unify and **academically focus teaching staffs**
- Teachers report: BL **improved teachers' understanding of students academic needs** through:
  - Time with students in small groups
  - BL data



# BL helps to unite and academically focus teaching staffs

*I think it's (the way I interact with colleagues) more academic than complaining-- it's more like, "This is what I'm seeing either from the data or classroom interactions. Have you seen it?" I feel like it gave commonality to our academy at least, whereas before it was like, "Did you have this person last year?" "Yeah." "What were they like?" This is more, "I know you're using the same computer program. I know you have the same routines in your class." Our responsibilities as colleagues are very similar on that level. It's changed our interactions.*

DePaul k-2 teacher

(Common software and systems created) *some type of unification...*there was so many things that we were unified in, they had so many other areas they could talk about... They were able to have more unified conversations when it came to either the special needs or the enrichment of scholars.

(Teacher to teacher relationships) improved because the *teachers started to share their ideas*, whereas I've seen it before where they really didn't. *They were also able to share and acknowledge each other for the accomplishments that the kids were having.* They were able to look to see what someone else may have been doing differently that could help them out in their classroom. Their communication, their professional communication was enhanced amongst colleagues...

- First year blended school principal (both quotes)

# Teachers report better understanding their students' academic needs...

All teachers new to BL at DePaul reported being able to recognize and address students' academic needs more readily this year than last

## Through detailed data

*Blended learning has provided more opportunities to do more individualized instruction. It provides immediate data that has become helpful in adjusting curriculum.*

*- Saint Anne 4-5 Teacher*

*[Before BL] it was like well these are the low kids that an interventionist would see and she is going to them all three years... it's more fluid (now).*

*- DePaul 3-5 Teacher*

## And time with small groups

*I know more about [my students] academically in terms of their strengths and their weaknesses because my group is so much smaller in front of me.*

- DePaul 3-5 Teacher

*[Before BL] it wasn't, "I'm meeting with these 3 because this is what we need to do." It was, "I'm going to pull this group here because you guys need to finish up this, and then you all are going to be doing this." I felt like when small groups did happen before then, it was haphazard.*

- DePaul k-2 Teacher

# Academic Culture and Outcomes

## Finding 2:

Teachers and students report that teachers have **shifted** their **instructional approaches**

# Teachers and students report that teachers have shifted their instructional approaches

- Testing and **accountability** has led to less **instructional time on projects and “crafts”**
- **More time working independently and in partners** and less in groups
- Working independently may help students to develop **independence and perseverance** and can provide students with **focused learning time**

## Testing and accountability has led teachers to spend less instructional time on projects and “crafts”

*I've liked the fact that it just makes them individually accountable for achieving standards and stuff like that. I've liked that dynamic... it maybe has taken away from a little bit of the project time, but only because maybe I had too much project time, or too much group time before, and now it's a little more balanced.*

*- Saint Anne 4-8 Teacher*

*We don't really do much crafts anymore because we have to get to this subject and then we can't finish and so we don't really have time for stuff like that unless it's having to do with our subjects.*

*- DePaul 3-5 Student*



*I try to incorporate at least one or two (projects) a trimester, (but) when it's preparing for the NWEA's, it's like, "Nope. Shut it down."*

*- DePaul K-2 Teacher*

*I struggle with being so locked into the data-- and nobody's forcing me-- but I feel because now everything's out in the open for everyone to see when it comes to math and reading, I don't have time to do what I did on the history of Santa Claus. Things that I loved doing, things the kids love doing, but we don't have time for that right now. I feel upset about that, but their reading and math is really good. So I don't know what's worth it...*

*- DePaul K-2 Teacher*

# Students spend more time working independently and in partners and less in groups

*We don't really go in groups anymore.... we work by ourselves more. In my opinion I feel I work better by myself because I'm more concentrated on the work. So I think maybe the teacher thinks that it's better for us to work by ourselves. Also when we work in groups it gets really loud and people on blended learning gets distracted by that.*

- Saint Anne 6-8 Student

*I work better when I'm independent because then I can just focus on what I need to learn and not worry about anybody else.*

- DePaul 3-5 Student

# Working independently may help students to develop independence and perseverance

*I think you even heard it, like Mary in class today saying "I can't do this. It's too hard," and she's then like, "Oh, I got it! It makes sense!" She just needed a little nudge and she was able to do it*

*- Saint Anne 4-8 Teacher*

*(students) know I am teaching another group of students, I can't drop my things and come over and help them. It presents them the opportunity to persevere.*

*- DePaul 3-5 Teacher*

# Academic Culture and Outcomes

## Finding 3:

**Most teachers and students do not report having more 1:1 time together.**  
However, **1:1 time varies by teacher and student**

Individual attention varies by teacher and student, but most teachers and students do not report having more 1:1 time with students

- Most teachers and students **do not report having more 1:1 time with BL**
- Some teachers and students **perceive more or different opportunities for personalized instruction**
- BL teachers appear to give **disproportionate amounts of individual attention to high achieving students**

# Most teachers and students do not report having more 1:1 time with BL

All **new** implementing teachers at DePaul reported on surveys that the amount of time they spent interacting 1:1 with their students is the same as last year.

Most **continuing** BL teachers and students do not report a change in the amount of time they spend 1:1 with their students

# But some teachers and students perceive more or different opportunities for personalized instruction

**I sit in the middle for whoever needs help** (while students work with partners)... **Individually working one-one-one, I feel like it's been a lot more than it has when we were a full group.**

- Saint Anne 4-8 Teacher

Since **you are around the same level** (in small groups), you...might need help around the same things **so it's easier for the teacher to tell you all at once instead of going person to person.**

- Saint Anne 3-5 Student

# Consistent with traditional classes, BL teachers give disproportionate amounts of individual attention to high achieving students

| Average interactions per hour |                      |      |      |                       |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------|------|-----------------------|
|                               | Q1 (lowest students) | Q2   | Q3   | Q4 (highest students) |
| T-> S academic                | 3.38                 | 2.70 | 4.62 | 6.77                  |
| T-> S non-academic            | 1.18                 | 1.09 | 2.15 | 1.77                  |



# Academic Culture and Outcomes

## Finding 4:

BL **engages students** through competition and external structures, improved self-efficacy, interesting programs, and teacher support

# BL engages students through a variety of mechanisms

- **Competition and external motivators**
  - Students are both supportive of one another and competitive
- **Improved self-efficacy** and enthusiasm for learning
- Fun and **interesting programs**
- But **some students report fooling around on computers** and teachers worry that student motivation has declined with tech difficulties and as novelty has worn off

# External Motivators

66% of SA students and 46% of DePaul students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, **“I know that if I work hard on the computer I will get a reward”**

*And there are other motivations too. Like when she had said if we raise 500 thousand points we get a **pizza party**, and also the \$20 thing our math teacher bakes us **cupcakes**. And then there are a lot of motivations for that which I think is pretty good.*

*- Saint Anne 6-8 Student*

# Students frequently set goals and support one another...

*It builds community sort of in a subtle way. I have never had a student who is like you only passed two lessons. (Other T: no, it is very... it is very uplifting). They are really supportive of each other too. They are like you met your goal! We just did end of year last week. Did you meet your goal? Not in a oh I want to put you down if you didn't kind of way but just being very supportive of each other.*

- DePaul 3-5 Teacher

*If somebody passes a level, it's like this big deal. They get so excited that it's almost distracting because if they pass it, they passed and everybody else is like oh my gosh, congratulations. Like they're so excited for each other.*

- Saint Anne K-2 Teacher

## And compete to reach goals

*There was competition between students when it came to the NWEA mapping. 'I'm going to make sure that my score gets... See if I can get mine up higher than yours. I'm going to make sure that I have at least these many point improvements from January to April.' For us to hear any type of academic competition was almost unheard of, but to hear that they were competing and that they wanted to do better... it was awesome to see.*

*- First year blended school principal*

*People are competitive, and they're encouraging each other at the same time because if you're like, "Oh I bet you I can raise \$20 faster than you 8th graders. And its like, "Oh yeah 7th graders." And that motivates them more I guess you could say*

*- Saint Anne 6-8 Student*

# Improved self-efficacy and enthusiasm for learning

*every day I am like "ooh I get to read a new article" or "I get to learn a lot more" and it makes me excited.*

*- DePaul 3-5 Student*

*If I don't understand the way the teacher is teaching us the material then TTM helps me because it goes step by step, and then I learn it.*

*- Saint Anne 6-8 Student*

# Students report that their self-efficacy has increased in both reading and math

Average of 3 items measuring self-efficacy:  
Students responding “a lot”

| DePaul           |         |      |
|------------------|---------|------|
|                  | Reading | Math |
| Year 1<br>(2014) | 36%     | 48%  |
| Year 2<br>(2015) | 43%     | 65%  |

| Saint Anne       |         |      |
|------------------|---------|------|
|                  | Reading | Math |
| Year 1<br>(2014) | 47%     | 36%  |
| Year 2<br>(2015) | 46%     | 47%  |

# Fun and interesting programs

*we get to do different types of games and (we learn) while playing games*

*- DePaul 3-5 Student*

*It I doesn't feel like you are just staring at the computer, clicking on answers. For TTM guided learning, it's a category in the lesson, it has a game, on I-ready they make jokes and it's animated*

*- Saint Anne 4-8 Student*



# But there are concerns that student motivation has declined with tech difficulties and as novelty has worn off

*This is compared to last year. I feel the kids really kind of lost interest, they didn't take it as seriously, it wasn't motivating*

*- Saint Anne k-3 Teacher*

*I feel like motivation was less of an issue last year because it was so new. I found that that's a lot harder this year. (It's) like, "This isn't exciting. This is just school."*

*- DePaul k-2 Teacher*

*(last year) everyone was like zipped up and just wanted to do it because it was new... so we wanted to get used to that, but now we are all used to it*

*- Saint Anne 3-5 Student*

# Social Culture and Relationships

# Social Culture and Relationships

## Finding 5:

Overall, we find **neutral or positive impacts of BL on social aspects of teacher-student relationships**. However, focus groups reveal some nuanced concerns.

Surveys reveal neutral or positive impacts of BL on social aspects of teacher-student relationships. However, focus groups reveal some nuanced concerns.

- Teacher and student surveys reveal **minimal or positive BL impact on social culture**
- However, **some teachers feel that time constraints have reduced opportunities to establish social relationships with students**

Overall, teachers expressed that BL has not impacted how well they know their students personally

Teacher surveys suggest that **that BL has not impacted their social relationships with students**

# Some teachers felt that BL has increased available time to make personal relationships

*I feel like with more small group time, you have the ability to share out personal connections when you're doing reading...I'm hearing personal stories in that time. Over time, you know your students a little bit more.*

- DePaul K-2 Teacher

*I feel like I do very much know like their interests and their personalities because I take more time to be with each (student).*

- Saint Anne K-3 Teacher

# DePaul 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders reported stronger relationships with teachers in 2015

Percent of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade DePaul students responding “usually” or “always or almost always”

|               | I feel safe and comfortable with my teachers at school | My teachers notice if I’m having a bad day | My teachers care about me |
|---------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| Year 1 (2014) | 67%  | 49%  | 78%                       |
| Year 2 (2015) | 78%  | 61%  | 89%                       |

# But some teachers felt that changes have reduced available time to make personal relationships with students

*Because we are constantly transitioning and trying to keep transitions tight and quick there is not as much down time where we are just sort of chatting. It feels to me like I don't know them personally as well as I did last year and maybe that's something to intentionally put in more of next year.*

*- DePaul 3-5 Teacher*

*I have 10 more kids than I have last year, and that has been rough. I feel like I maybe don't know this class as well as I knew my last class. More personally, I feel like I know them the same academically, but personally I feel like I was able to engage more intimately with them last year...because of less kids in groups, and more time with those groups instead of trying to get six different groups with me and they're 12 minutes long versus 4 and they're 20 minutes long.*

*- DePaul K-2 Teacher*



# Social Culture and Relationships

## Finding 6:

**Some teachers note that limited time** reduces their ability to make and maintaining social relationships with colleagues. However, **site managers can be a valuable resource.**

Time is tight in schools, which can reduce teachers' capacity for making and maintaining social relationships. However, site managers can be a valuable resource.

- Some teachers and students felt that **workloads and tight schedules has reduced the amount of time they have for professional development and collaboration**
- **Without sufficient planning time and support, teachers feel stretched** and have sacrificed collaboration and socialization

# Many teachers feel that heavy workloads and tight schedules have led them to sacrifice socializing with their colleagues

*I spend more time in my classroom now (compared to spending time with colleagues)... because I'm looking at data things all the time. Right before I go to bed, that is something I do.*

- Saint Anne 4-8 Teacher

*We see these numbers, that's all we're doing. And I just feel that ... That is one thing that has taken a lot of time away from the social part of being a teacher, sharing, and it's changing.*

- Saint Anne 4-8 Teacher

# And that they have had too little time for professional learning and collaboration

*I still feel really stretched for time... We were told we were getting an extra hour at staff meetings and that has almost never been used for (collaborating and) analyzing data.*

*- Saint Anne 3-5 Teacher*

*The time that we do have for (collaboration), I love. It's definitely not what I thought it would be, because I thought we would have a chance to do it much more frequently.*

*- Saint Anne 4-8 Teacher*

# Site managers help to support teachers' understanding of BL and data use

*I don't think we would have been as successful (getting teachers invested) at all [without the site managers]. The site manager's job is a very key piece, and to go through those, to be there daily, to go through those things with the teachers, I think it was invaluable.*

*- First year blended school principal*

*I think having a longer period of time [meeting with the site manager] would definitely help with being able to practice (BL-related) skills and be more comfortable with them.*

*- DePaul 3-5 Teacher*

# Social Culture and Relationships

Finding 7:

**Parent understanding** and support of BL  
is **linked to intentional messaging** and  
collaboration around data

Parent understanding and support of BL is linked to intentional messaging and collaboration around data

- **Parents don't understand what BL is** and its objectives **without clear explanations**
- **Data can help parents to understand BL and focus parent-teacher conversations**

# Parents don't understand what BL is and its objectives without clear explanations

*I think the initial thought is that they are just on a computer. I'm very clear when I'm talking to [parents], especially parents new to the school, that it's not about logging into Google and being able to use a computer. It's actual learning-based lessons with standards and that it's made specifically for them, so that they're working on what they need to work on. Most new parents that I had this year, which was I think 4 or 5, had no idea what blended learning was. I definitely had to explain it to them. I think my current parents know what its purpose is.*

- DePaul K-2 Teacher



*I didn't notice this with my class last year, but with my class this year, some of the parents are a little resistant to so much use of technology. I think it's because **they don't quite understand how it's used**, what we're doing, or they're expecting some different outcome out of blended learning*  
- Saint Anne 4-8 Teacher

*I feel like they want to know more. **Parents want to know more**. As we do these designated learning tours...parents should be able to come to one.*  
- Saint Anne K-3 Teacher

# Data can help parents to understand BL and focus parent-teacher conversations

*I feel like before the parent interaction would be at report cards, and it would be that they got an O or they got a U and that's that... Whereas now I feel like the conversation is much more ongoing. I can say, "This is reading and this is how they are in phonics and this is how they are in vocab and this is how they are in nonfiction comprehension." It's less daunting, like if I was a parent hearing, "Your kid's bad at reading," versus (more specific feedback)... **It not only is more meaningful conversation with the parents, I think it gives them more tips for what they can do.***

*- DePaul K-2 Teacher*

# Summary of Key Findings

## Academic Culture and Outcomes

- BL can help to **academically focus** teacher-teacher and teacher-student **relationships**
- **Instructional approaches have shifted** in BL classrooms
- **Most teachers and students do not report having more 1:1 time** together, but 1:1 time varies
- BL **engages students** through a variety of mechanisms

# Summary of Key Findings

## Social Culture and Relationships

- **Overall, BL has neutral or positive impacts on social aspects of teacher-student relationships,** but some teachers have nuanced concerns.
- **Without sufficient support,** some teachers feel that they have **little time for collaboration and socialization**
- **Parents' understanding and support of BL is linked to intentional messaging** and collaboration around data

# Key Takeaways

BL appears to positively impact schools' academic cultures

Teachers and students perceive BL to have had mixed impacts on social relationships in schools

Implementation is hard– there is stress on teachers and never enough time. Site managers appear to be essential in alleviating some of that stress.

Proactive and clear communication with parents about BL systems and data can prevent headaches down the road

# Implications

It is important to continue tracking both academic and implementation outcomes in the long-term

Schools should explicitly consider the costs and benefits of decreased project-based learning time.

As Seton continues to monitor and support implementation, it is important to think deeply about how to best manage teacher stress, keep BL fresh and engaging for students, best introduce new staff to BL, manage Seton's growth and ability to support schools

# Implications

As implementation challenges continue, Seton and schools should **message patience and persistence while providing consistent, attentive support.**

- Some implementation challenges are inevitable, so it is important to manage teacher and leader expectations
- Site managers and 1:1 professional support can add critical capacity and help to manage teachers' stress levels