



University of Birmingham

Blended learning refers to the enhancement of learning through the creation of learning designs that combine face-to-face and online elements.

Dziuban, Hartman and Moskal describe blended learning as a, "pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialization opportunities of the classroom with the technologically enhanced active learning possibilities of the online learning environment" (2004). Or as the University of Calgary put it, "blended learning is an approach to course design that brings together the best of both face-to-face and online learning."

It is an approach that has application for campus, distance and placement students alike.

"The blended learning approach is not intended to supplant either of the individual approaches – online and face-to-face – but rather to build from each to create a new, more effective learning experience for students," explains Dr. Randy Garrison, Director of University of Calgary's Learning Commons.

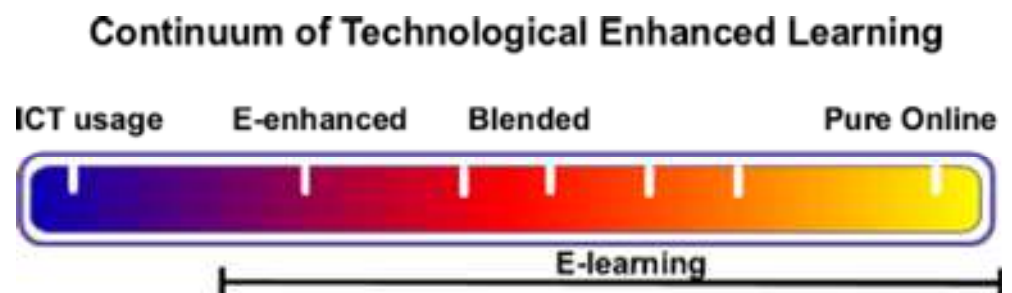
Aims of Blended Learning Designs

A blended learning design aims to:

- thoughtfully integrate face-to-face and online learning technologies to support a more active and enquiring based learning approach
- support a fundamental rethinking of the programme or module design to optimise student engagement
- support learning activities that extend outside face-to-face sessions thereby promoting and supporting learner independence
- assist students in being better prepared for face-to-face sessions
- restructure and replace some traditional class contact hours by implementing online virtual class contact hours in both synchronous and asynchronous modes

Is It Blended Learning?

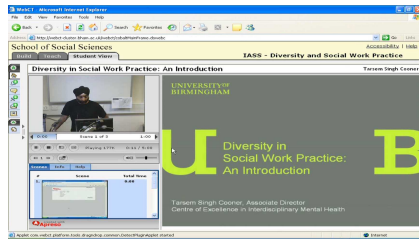
The Continuum of Technological Enhancement Learning image below (adapted from the University of Glamorgan) attempts to provide a context for blended learning:



- **ICT usage:** a mixture of traditional face-to-face teaching combined with the use of basic ICT (eg. Word, PowerPoint, Excel and e-mail).
- **E-enhanced:** online resources on WebCT (ie module handbooks, announcements, MCQs and lecture notes), eWhiteboards, Visualisers and Voting Tools are used, often optionally in conjunction with traditional teaching and learning.
- **Blended:** includes the use of discussion boards, wikis, blogs, online assessment tests and interactive learning materials alongside face-to-face delivery.
- **Pure Online:** modules or programmes are delivered and moderated entirely online.

Give Me an Undergraduate Example

The BA Social Work programme at Birmingham University created an enquiry-based blended learning design to deliver a Diversity in Social Work module to eighty campus-based students. Due to a significant increase in student numbers the module was re-designed to ensure that all students had an opportunity to engage in reflection-in-action at critical learning stages with the support of tutors and peers.



Using online lectures (captured using Echo360), workbooks, discussion forums in WebCT and face-to-face lectures, students working in small groups engaged in problem-based learning activities over an eight week period. Students were able to collaboratively reflect, reframe and reinterpret existing knowledge, values and beliefs in a way that would have been difficult in such a large cohort using traditional teaching methods.

Give Me an Postgraduate Example

A postgraduate qualification for teachers of the visually impaired is delivered to distance students via traditional paper based materials at the University of Birmingham. The students meet together face-to-face as a cohort twice a year at the University. An enquiry based learning strand was introduced that connected and ran through all modules - delivered using the WebCT virtual learning environment.



Students were required to engage in small groups with a number of online scenarios, working together to complete each task (2 weeks per task). Students utilized discussion boards and real-time chat to communicate and help them discuss, manage and administer each task. The tutor monitored the discussions and provided feedback to each group on the result of their tasks.

Created by Danielle Hinton, College of Social Sciences, University of Birmingham © and licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5 License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5>

Where Can I Go for More Information?

- **Orienting Students to Blended Learning TALT Guide**
University of Birmingham
- **Blended Learning Unit CETL**
University of Hertfordshire
<http://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/learning-and-teaching/blended-learning-institute/home.cfm>
- **International Blended Learning Conference WebCast Recordings & PPT**
University of Hertfordshire
<http://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/learning-and-teaching/blended-learning-institute/conferences/home.cfm>
- **Blended Learning and Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges**
Charles Dziuban and Patsy Moskel, University of Central Florida. Baruch College, New York, NY., 2005.
<http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~rite/Presentations/Chuck%20Dziuban-Baruch%20College.ppt#9>
- **Creating opportunities for students in large cohorts to reflect in and on practice**
Cooner, T.S. (2009) Early View. *British Journal of Educational Technology*.
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122213369/HTMLSTART>
- **Contact your College E-Learning Team**