

Syllabus: Teaching Students in Blended Classrooms

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course prepares educators to teach in blended classroom environments. Participants will learn effective strategies for engaging, instructing and assessing students in blended environments and explore the ways blended learning can effectively support standards-based teaching and learning in all subject areas. Participants will learn techniques to foster student collaboration in an online learning community through discussion and group projects. In addition, participants will learn to meet the learning needs of all students by selecting and using a variety of teaching strategies that aid in personalizing learning for students. During this course, participants will learn about and practice using tools to teach critical thinking skills, explore student academic integrity issues and the safe and legal use of online resources. Additionally, participants will learn about and practice using instructor tools in a course management system. Course content includes online readings, web-based and multimedia activities, and facilitated online discussions.

Upon successful completion of this course, participants will be prepared to teach in blended learning environments.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

During this course, participants will learn skills and strategies to:

- Identify the models of blended learning environments.
- Select a model for implementation in their own classrooms.
- Design coherent instruction by creating group projects that promote problem-solving and collaboration in a blended environment.
- Use course management system instructor tools, and other tools, to organize and manage the online portion of the blended learning environment.
- Demonstrate knowledge of resources for teaching and for student use.
- Facilitate online discussions and utilize effective questioning techniques to clarify and extend students' thinking.
- Promote student engagement in a blended course
- Use teaching strategies to address the different ways students learn in a blended environment.
- Select, design and use online assessment strategies aligned with established learning goals.
- Become familiar with the concepts that the “teaching of technology literacy skills should not be separate from the curriculum” and demonstrate an understanding of the Technology Literacy Standards.

MAIN CURRICULUM THEMES/CONTENT:

- Understanding the instructional shifts that need to take place when moving to a blended learning classroom
- Identify the various models of blended learning strategies for engaging students in student-to-teacher, student-to-student, student-to-content and student-to-online resource interactions
- Using the Course Management System's Instructor Tools
- Leading Meaningful Online Discussions
- Strategies for meeting the diverse learning needs of students in blended courses
- Assessment strategies for blended learning environments

ASSESSMENT:

Participate Actively in Course

- Participants will complete all required course activities and readings.
- Participants will visit and post in the online discussion board at least once per week of the course. Participants are expected to allow a minimum of two hours per week for the online discussion.
- Weekly postings are due each week before the start of the next week's session; participants are evaluated on the timeliness of postings in addition to content.
- Contributions to the Online Discussion: Participants are expected to actively participate in each session's online discussion according to the discussion criteria and actively build the course learning community.

Planning Template for Blended Students:

- Participants will submit a 3–5 page Blended Learning Classroom Plan that uses instructional strategies learned in the workshop.
- The plan should address:
 - Participant expectations for a blended learning environment, separate from a traditional classroom;
 - Strategies to engage students in an online learning community;
 - Plans for student online activities, discussions, and assessment;
 - Technology skills needed and a collection of online teaching resources.
 - Experimentation Course: Participants are expected to complete a series of hands-on facilitation activities in an online course environment using a selected course management system's tools.

Evaluation of Learning: Participants will submit a 3-5 page self-assessment of their participation and learning in the course.

- The self-assessment will include reflective responses to the following questions:
- What were your greatest challenges and successes as a learner in this online course?

- Based on this experience, what strategies will you employ to help your students in a blended environment?

Grading Criteria:

- Session Preparation and Online Discussion Contributions 30%
- Annotated Discussion Postings 10%
- Planning Template for Blended Learning 30%
- Experimentation Course 10%
- Evaluation of Learning 20%

Schedule and Expectations:

This course is scheduled to take approximately 45 hours. Participants are expected to complete all assignments and actively participate in discussion forums. Participants needing assistance should contact their facilitator promptly.

Statement of Academic Honesty:

All students are held to high standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism, whether intentional or

Learning Resources:

The instructor will provide access to all articles and videos to participants for review and analysis.

Session One: Orientation

Session Two: Introduction to Teaching Students in Blended Courses

Session Three: Models of Blended Learning

Session Four: Engaging Students in the Blended Learning Community

Session Five: Using the Course Management System's Instructor Tools

Session Six: The Power of Online Discussions

Session Seven: Managing Diverse Learning Needs

Session Eight: Assessing Students

Course Content/Outline/Requirements – Weekly topic schedule and assignments due:**Session One: Orientation and Course Overview**

Description: This Orientation session is designed to help participants get to know the basics about online learning in general and this course in particular. They will learn about the benefits of online learning as well as strategies to have a successful experience in an online course.

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By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify the qualities of successful online learners, with a particular emphasis on time management strategies
- Identify their own learning style and consider how it will impact their online course experience
- Understand the overall course goals, requirements and expectations

1. Complete an Orientation Survey
2. Complete a Learning Style Inventory
3. Explore the Course Environment
4. Read and respond to the introductions from online colleagues.

Session Two: Teaching Participants in Blended Courses

Description: In this session, participants will learn the benefits of blended learning and the instructional shifts that need to take place when moving to a blended learning classroom. Participants will review the continuum of instructional time provided by blended learning and make preliminary plans for how they can make the most effective use of the expanded time and space. Participants will also complete Part I of the Planning Template for Teaching Students in a Blended Environment.

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Be able to identify the benefits of blended learning
- Identify instructional shifts that need to take place in a blended learning environment
- Become aware of the instructional continuum of blended learning to be able to fully use the available instructional time

Session Three: Models of Blended Learning

Description: This session introduces models of blended learning and invites participants to identify the type of blended learning either currently implemented in the participants' classroom or school, or, if participants are new to blended learning, to identify the type of blended learning participants will implement in their students' classroom. Unlike the instructional continuum that focuses on instructional time, the models described in the readings in this session are about how blended learning can be organized.

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Identify organizational models of blended learning
- Select a model that most closely reflects how blended learning is currently implemented in their classroom or school or one that they think will best fit their classroom

- Become more knowledgeable about strategies for online teaching and learning that support blended learning models

Session Four: Engaging Students in the Blended Learning Community

Description: The advantages of blended learning include the participant's ability to personalize learning for students and to engage them in extended learning and collaborative activities. According to iNACOL, one of the characteristics of blended learning is increased interaction student-to-teacher, student-to-student, student-to-content and student-to-online resources. This session explores strategies to engage students in these types of interactions. Participants will also learn strategies for developing group projects that engage students in problem-solving activities. Additionally, participants will add to their final project.

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Identify strategies to engage students in learning through the use of online resources and activities
- Manage online collaborative group projects
- Plan a group project that may include both face-to-face and online collaborative activities

Session Five: Using the Course Management System's Instructor Tools

Description: This session focuses on specialized preparation for the technical aspects of using participants' course management system. All course management systems function differently at the instructor level than they do at the participant level. During this session, participants will have the opportunity to learn about and experiment with the basic instructor-level features, including the ability to create news items, synchronous chats, and discussion forums. In the online discussion, participants will share questions and tips with their course colleagues about what they learned.

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand the course management system's tools and functions in designing and implementing tasks central to the facilitation of the online component of their blended course
- Demonstrate proficiency in the use of the tools and functions central to the online component of their blended course

Session Six: The Power of Online Discussion

Description: This session focuses on the power of online discussion to promote participants' reflection and exploration of concepts related to lesson goals, and to provide a valuable window into students' learning in blended learning courses. Participants will learn to use strategies for developing meaningful dialogue in an online learning environment, leading students to reflection and greater understanding of course content. Participants will develop questioning techniques and consider both student-to-student and teacher-to-student interaction in the online learning community.

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By the end of this session, participants will:

- Identify strategies to effectively facilitate discussion online
- Understand how to compose a discussion question that generates thoughtful and substantive participant responses
- Be able to strategically address challenging discussion scenarios

Session Seven: Managing Diverse Learning Needs

Description: In this session, participants will learn strategies for meeting the diverse learning needs of students in blended courses. According to the iNACOL Standards for Quality Online Teaching, a participant should know how to accommodate curriculum to include all students and understand how to use assistive technologies. In addition to reading about the Individuals with Disabilities Act and students with special needs in the online classroom, participants will explore different tools to differentiate instruction and provide assistive technologies. In the discussion board participants will discuss their plans to accommodate their students in the blended classroom in the discussion forum.

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand the Individuals with Disabilities Act
- Identify strategies for supporting their students' different learning needs in a blended environment
- Become familiar with at least one technology tool to differentiate instruction or accommodate special needs
- Evaluate how student learning profiles could aid teaching and learning

- UDL Toolkit, Karen Janowski and Joyce Valenza,

(<http://udltechtoolkit.wikispaces.com/>)

- Blended Learning in K-12/Blended Learning in Grades 9-12, Wikibooks,

(http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Blended_Learning_in_K2412/Blended_Learning_in_Grades_912#)

Session Eight: Assessing Students

Description: This session focuses on assessment strategies for blended learning environments. Participants will also learn to use course management system instructor tools to create and employ a variety of effective assessment strategies for monitoring student learning, including student self-reflection. Participants will demonstrate their skill in using these tools in a simulated course environment.

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By the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand different means of assessing students in a blended environment
- Demonstrate proficiency in the use of online assessment tools
- Consider the different ways in which they will evaluate their students' performance using these online assessment tools

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