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BLENDDED TEACHING GUIDE 2022

INSPIRED BY GREATNESS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

What is Blended Learning?

The UKZN Approach

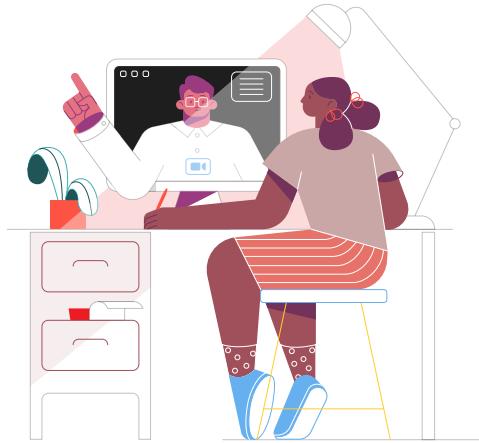
Successful Blended Teaching

Instructional Design @ UKZN

UKZN Resources

Conclusion

INTRODUCTION



The Higher Education landscape is undergoing an exciting transformation in practice. With these changes there is need to *explore* and *rethink* the way we envision and deliver quality learning experiences for students.

This guide is designed to provide UKZN lecturers and academic support members with simplified descriptions of Blended Learning, Blended Teaching, details on the UKZN approach towards Blended Learning delivery and resources for personal use in pedagogic practice. Finally, the guide provides an overview of the Instructional Design service at UKZN and contact details for Instructional Designers.

Welcome and congratulations on joining the digital transformation journey!

WHAT IS BLENDED LEARNING?



Traditional Learning

- Verbal communication
- Physical presence
- Scheduled contact sessions
- Participation driven by vocal students

Blended Learning

- Needs clear objectives & standards
- Structure & engagement is important
- Requires immediate feedback
- Lecturers facilitate, monitor & assess

Up to 25% online delivery

Online Learning

- Students choose when & where to learn
- Curriculum is delivered by LMS only
- Students collaborate from anywhere
- May lead to student isolation

Blended learning is a term often used interchangeably with online learning and hybrid teaching. Blended can also be situations where some of the components of the course are delivered online and some are conducted face-to face. It is generally accepted that blended is a purposeful and directed mixture of delivery modes. It requires a way of teaching that uses multiple mediums (Anderson, 2008). Some of the learning requires that the student controls the path and pace of engagement while some learning happens in the lecture theatre. It does not represent a displacement of content.

A face-to face or contact course can be blended if it uses a flipped classroom approach and is supported by technology. Blended can also be situations where some of the components of the course are delivered online and some are conducted face-to face. This blend is also known as *hybrid*.

WHAT IS BLENDED LEARNING?



Advantages of Blended Learning

- Lecturers are able to save lesson prep and tweak easily for different classes
- Student engagement can be promoted through a variation of lesson activities
- There is less need for printing (*save the planet one tree at a time!*)
- Lecturers can focus their efforts on guiding the student learning experience
- Students are able to customise their learning based on their needs
- Grading is more automated in many cases, saving the lecturer's time
- Technology can allows lecturers to monitor student progress and challenges

Important Considerations

- Digital Literacy – especially for students attempting to gain access to course materials with a poor internet connection or outdated device.
- Group work must be well managed. This includes providing students with group dynamic guidance.
- Blended Learning delivery requires intensive and comprehensive planning.
- The process of adapting for Blended Learning is not randomised. There is **method** to the process.

WHAT IS BLENDED LEARNING?

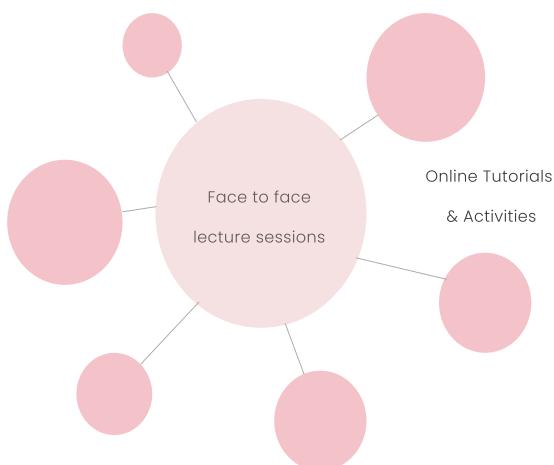


There are various models through which learning can be blended. An important one is the [RASE Blended Learning Model](#) (Churchill, 2017). It identifies 4 key elements of Blended Learning as being; Resources, Activities, Support and Evaluation. These may be organised in different ways depending on the context, nature of the module and content as well as the lecturer's approach.

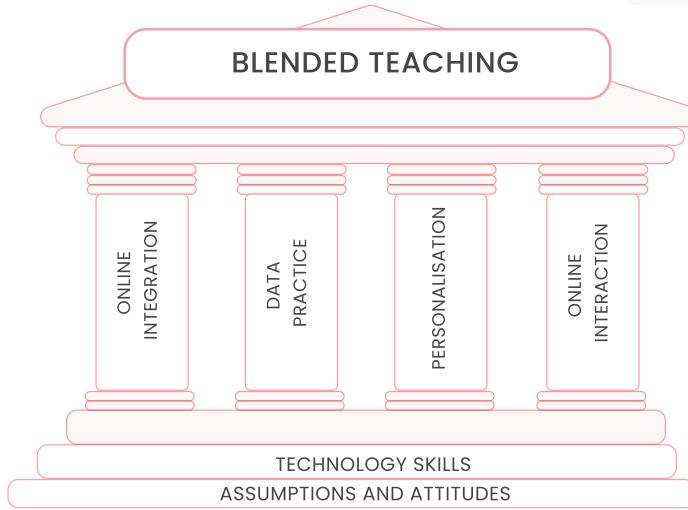


In this form of Blended Learning the contact sessions sequentially alternate between face to face and online. With neither being the primary anchor for the module.

In this type of Blended Learning, the face to face session are the anchor for the module. Ongoing online tutorials and activities are linked to face to face lectures as integrated supplementary instruction.

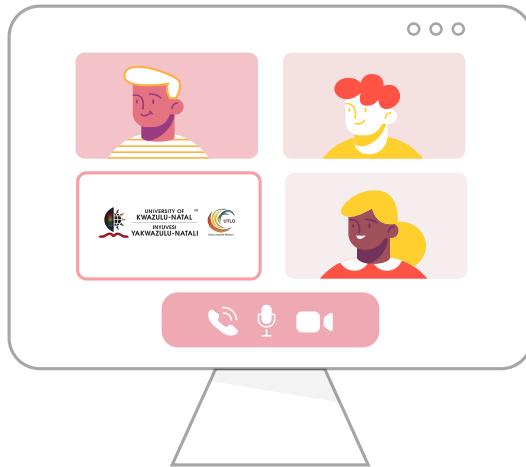


WHAT IS BLENDED TEACHING?



Blended Teaching can be described as lecturing that directly complements blended learning delivery. In practical terms, Blended Teaching refers to lecturing that encompasses the; integration of online tools; personalisation of aspects of the learning process; the promotion of interaction across different formats and; use of data to inform, review and improve practice (Smith, 2020). The effectiveness and impact are founded on the ability of the lecturer to take on a new pedagogical orientation that encompasses innovative approaches to lecturing. Assumptions and attitudes towards technology, the role of students and lecturers in learning are a key determinant to whether the goal of creating and delivering effective and impactful blended learning experiences can be achieved. Another determinant is the skills to use the digital technologies that facilitate the delivery of blended learning.

WHAT IS BLENDED TEACHING?



Making the transition into Blended Teaching does not happen overnight. However, due to the nature of blended learning delivery, minor adjustments have the potential to make a significant improvement to the quality, value and experience provided for students. When initiating this change, it is important to ask a series of fundamental questions.

- What are the learning goals and objectives for Blended Learning delivery?
- What content will be made available?
- How can lectures, practicals and assessment be adapted?
- How will students be kept engaged in their learning?
- How will communication with and among students be carried out?
- How will the lecturer know that delivery has been effective?

What follows is a brief overview of some options that lecturers have in responding to each of these questions within their own practice.

WHAT IS BLENDED TEACHING?



We've recently introduced a Learning Management System at the university. Can I just upload my presentation slides and call it a day?

Creating and maintaining a module LMS page is a critical part of delivering a cohesive and meaningful Blended Learning experience. Your use of the platform should link to the attainment of the module's learning objectives. This content can be created in different formats in order to maintain the interest of students. *Instructional guides, audio and video lectures, podcasts, open books, infographics, 60 second video explainers*, and a host of others.

The goal is to make sure that the content is interactive, and gives students multiple avenues of understanding. Students should be able to perceive the connection between the module page content and activities with other activities within the module, such as attending lectures or tutorials. Carefully consider and plan; what kind of content and activities you will be placing on the page; how will it be organised and timed, as well as; how it will directly connect to and encourage the active participation of students in the other elements of the module.

WHAT IS BLENDED TEACHING?



I don't know what kind of activities I can use to ensure that my students have a worthwhile Blended Learning experience. What are my options?

One of the key opportunities provided by Blended Learning is the multiple types of activities that you, as a lecturer, have at your disposal. Making use of these various options allows you frame your module goals into your practice more directly. Depending on this, you may select individual, paired or group activities that can take place face to face or online for the purpose of reflection or revision.

There are a few that have become an important part of the Blended Teaching Toolkit. These include among others:

Case Studies	Product Creation	Online Presentations
Scenarios & Role Plays	Games & Puzzles	Online Demonstrations
Concept Mapping	Online Readings	Blog & Journal Writing
Screen Captures	Diagnostic Quizzes	Online Interactive Task

WHAT IS BLENDED TEACHING?



I have a large class and it has always been a struggle to get students to actively engage in module activities. How can Blended Learning help?

At the core of student engagement is the Student-Lecturer relationship. Creating a personable and open space for interaction is therefore incredibly important for engagement conditions to be ideal. There are a number of strategies that a lecturer may use, however, if this environment is not conducive there will be ongoing challenges. In addition to the environment created, there are strategies that may be used to further promote active learning.

- Ensure clarity & purpose for students' learning
- Create challenging learning tasks
- Set up structures for students to learn with & from one another
- Provide space for students to be creative
- Gamify the learning process
- Fill dead time

WHAT IS BLENDED TEACHING?



I'm struggling to link and adapt my module's learning objectives to assessment in the blended learning mode. How do I get started?

It all begins with how students actually learn. Clear learning objectives are important for determining what kind of activities would provide the progressive pathway that students need to fully attain knowledge of subject matter. The Revised Bloom's Taxonomy is a useful tool for mapping this learning curve in module assessment tasks across 6 levels of difficulty.



(Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)

Pro Tip: Rubrics remain a key element of assessment. They allow you to identify where key challenges are and also limit the administrative hassle of providing detailed feedback to students. Distribute the rubric *before* assigning the assessment.

WHAT IS BLENDED TEACHING?



Communication is a real challenge within my module. I feel like all I do is repeat myself but still have students being left behind. Help!

This a common challenge for lecturers across different modes of delivery. In Blended Learning, the role of communication is that more important, because the mode requires that students have a consistent understanding of what, why and when to be well equipped for the learning process. There must be a module communication plan.

This plan will provide clarity on the Lecturer-Student, Student-Student and communication that will take place during the course of the module. From introductions, announcements, instructions, scheduling, Q&A sessions, weekly emails to chats and even social media interaction. The consistency of these communications will create the social presence needed to keep students aware and engaged.

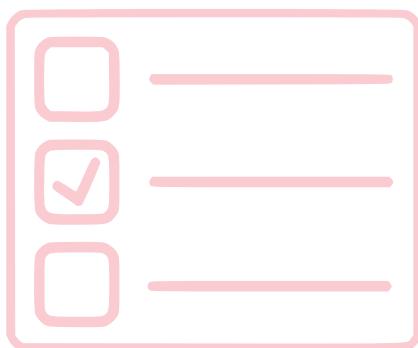
Pro Tip: In order to ensure the effectiveness of your communication and develop the students' own budding communication skills, provide students with a Netiquette Guide and refer to it as feedback.

WHAT IS BLENDED TEACHING?



I really feel frustrated about not being able to monitor what students think about the class. How do I know my module delivery is actually effective?

The evaluation of the Blended Learning delivery provides a critical point for reflection and improvement. It requires that you as the lecturer identify key periods which may provide important insights into what is taking place within the module. The strategies implemented may be introduced prior to the module beginning (diagnostic), at the mid-point of delivery or at completion. It is accepted practice to integrate these strategies within the learning process in order to encourage responses. Here are a few ideas for data points:



- Pre-module survey
- Mid-semester survey
- Online focus groups
- Assessment results
- Responses to assignments
- Verbal feedback from students and tutors

THE UKZN APPROACH

The University of KwaZulu Natal has adopted the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach. This is a set of principles that provide teachers with a structure to develop instructions to meet the diverse needs of all learners. The approach provides a framework to plan, design and implement curricula that accommodates the needs and abilities of all learners and aims to eliminate unnecessary hurdles in the learning process. UDL guidelines promote the development of curriculum that includes: multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression, as well as multiple means of engagement. Each of these objectives provides options that may be integrated into the Blended Learning delivery, as well as goals related to student accomplishment.

Representation

- Provide options for:
- Perception
 - Language and symbols
 - Comprehension

Action & Expression

- Provide options for:
- Physical action
 - Expressive skills and fluency
 - Executive functions

Engagement

- Provide options for:
- Recruit interest
 - Sustain effort and persistence
 - Self-regulation

Knowledgeable

Goal-oriented

Motivated

SUCCESSFUL BLENDED TEACHING



The three key elements noted above, ensure that Blended Learning delivery is sufficiently thought through and addresses the identified learning and engagement needs for students. In a well-designed module there is alignment between the intended learning outcomes, the teaching approaches, educational activities and the assessment tasks. First determine the final outcome then move on to the evaluation and assessment criteria and finally design the Blended Learning strategy that aligns learning resources and activities to learning objectives to accomplish the set goal.

Are you ready to begin taking your module to the next level but not sure where to start? No need to worry! UKZN has a number of resources to assist you on your journey.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN @ UKZN



In support of promoting, supporting and advancing Blended Teaching & Learning within UKZN, Instructional Designers have been appointed and assigned to Colleges to support staff members in their blended learning delivery. Specifically, the Instructional Designers are tasked with:

- Promotion and support for Blended Teaching according to quality standards.
- Design, development and evaluation of curriculum, teaching methods, assessment techniques for various modes.
- Providing training on blended learning experience design.

If you require any assistance with the components of Blended Teaching outlined within this Guide, please feel free to get in contact with the Instructional Designer assigned to your College to get the ball rolling. They are looking forward to your call.

 Click on avatar for profile



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UKZN RESOURCES

UKZN has also developed and made a number of useful resources available in order to assist staff members chart their path within the digital transformation journey.

University Teaching Online Platform

University Learning Online Platform

E-Learning for Lecturers Self-Paced Course

Instructional Design website

CONCLUSION



The Higher Education landscape has experienced significant changes in contemporary times. The ability of universities to deliver quality learning experiences across different modes has become a crucial determinant of institutional quality considerations as well as the overall student experience.

UKZN has been actively responding to these shifts by providing the necessary support and other resources for further integration of digital technology into teaching and learning practices.

In providing clear descriptions and clarifications on the concepts of Blended Learning, Blended Teaching, the UKZN Approach of Universal Learning Design, as well as the key characteristics of successful Blended Teaching practice, it is hoped that this guide provides your individual journey with the necessary impetus for the digital transformation journey.

Once again, the Instructional Design is at your service and looking forward to collaborate with you in the design and development of meaningful Blended Learning experiences

Regards

The UKZN Instructional Design Team



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