

Blended Learning:

A Report on the ELI Focus Session

Veronica Diaz, Associate Director, EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative

Malcolm Brown, Director, EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative

ELI Paper 2: 2010

November 2010

Abstract

On September 15 and 16, 2010, the ELI teaching and learning community gathered for an online focus session on blended learning. This white paper is a synthesis of the key ideas, themes, and concepts that emerged from those sessions. This white paper also includes links to supporting focus session materials, recordings, and resources. It represents a harvesting of the key elements that we, as a teaching and learning community, need to keep in mind as we work to refine the blended instructional delivery model in higher education.

Introduction

On September 15 and 16, 2010, the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI) community gathered online for a focus session on blended learning. The focus session included keynote presentations, project reports, and discussions, all exploring the current state of blended learning and its future prospects. In this document, which is a synthesis of these focus session activities, we attempt to capture the key ideas, themes, and concepts that emerged from the sessions, while linking these summaries to the focus session materials, recordings, and resources. This paper represents a harvesting of the key elements that we, as a teaching and learning community, need to keep in mind as we work to refine the blended instructional delivery model in higher education.

Focus Session Themes

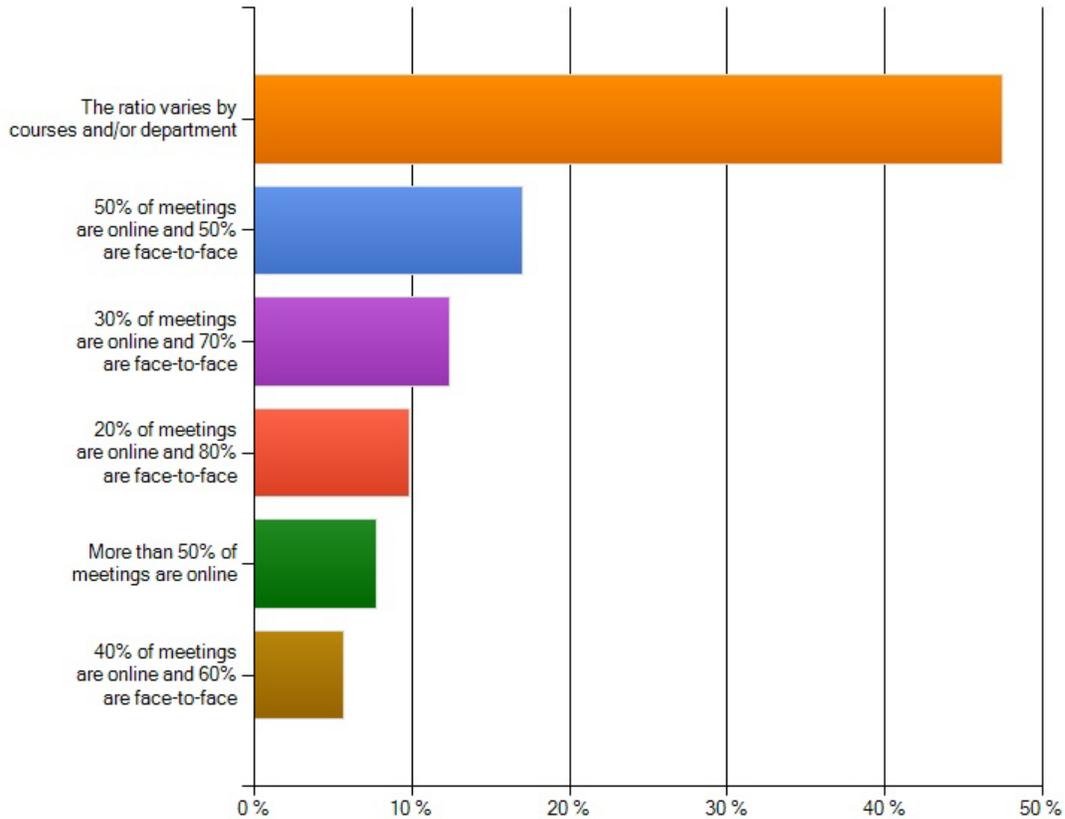
Over the past 10 years, blended learning has matured, evolved, and become more widely adopted by institutions of all types. This evolution of the instructional model, the complementary use of learning technologies, and the institutional implementation experience have opened new possibilities for curriculum design, especially the ability to design a course that uniquely blends face-to-face (F2F) and online interaction, allowing institutions to address learners' specific needs and customize the learning environment rather than rely on a one-size-fits-all approach.

Blended learning is an expansive topic area, and in organizing this focus session, we were interested in assembling a program that was relevant to attendees and served to update our thinking in several critical areas. After polling the ELI and blended learning practitioner community, we arrived at four themes: research and quality assurance, logistics and administration, faculty development, and course design. Each of these themes, of course, focused on blended learning exclusively. It might be worth noting that although all the topics were of interest to our participants, faculty development and course design were preferred—perhaps an indication of an area where continuous improvement is needed.

The ELI Community and Blended Learning

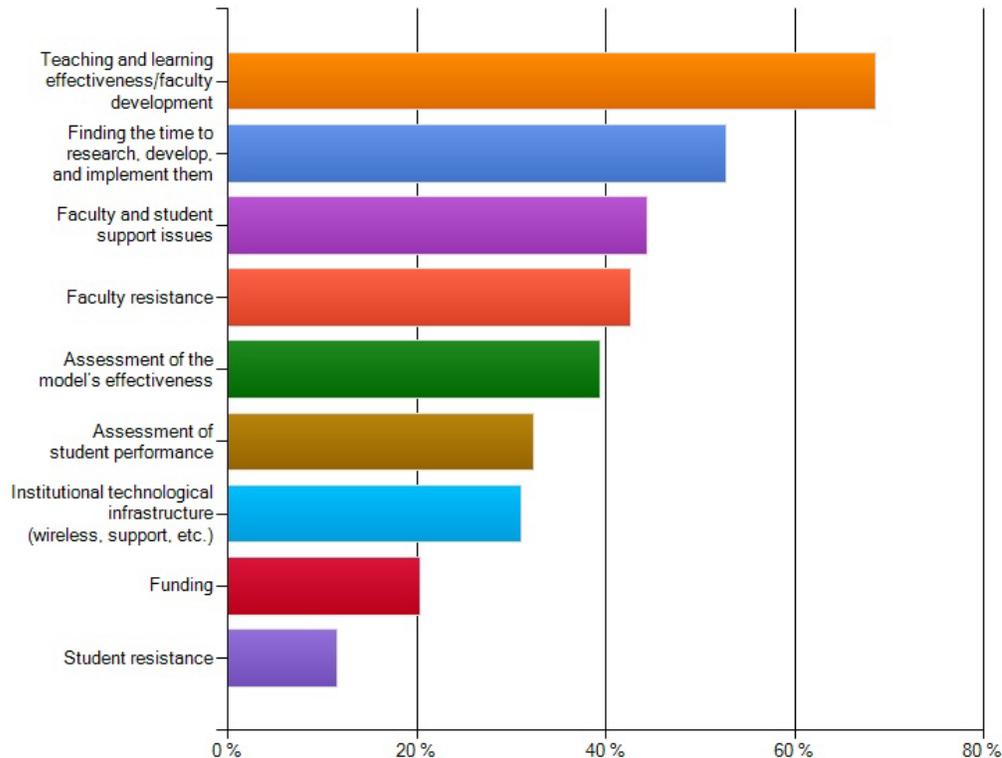
To better inform discussions and focus session activities, ELI administered a short, pre-event survey to our participants (N = 228). Although the results of the survey are not nationally representative, about half of our respondents indicated that up to 10 percent of their course offerings were in a blended format, and 30 percent indicated that up to 40 percent were blended. We also asked participants to describe the typical ratio of the face-to-face and online meetings for their blended learning courses. Overall, close to half of respondents indicated that significant variation exists by courses and/or department in the ratio of F2F and online meetings, and nearly 20 percent indicated that the ratio of online and F2F meetings is 50/50 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Blended Course Ratio of Face-to-Face and Online Meetings



When asked about the current or anticipated challenges in implementing the blended learning instructional model, participants cited “teaching and learning effectiveness/faculty development” and “finding the time to research, develop, and implement blended courses” as among the top challenges (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Primary Blended Learning Challenges



Participants also identified the following challenges:

- Knowing/understanding what faculty members are doing in the blended environment and capturing their best practices
- Effective communication strategies to faculty members, students, and administrators regarding the definition of blended/hybrid
- Developing and using a model for course design, delivery, assessment, and faculty member preparation to teach a hybrid course
- Issues with the software used to schedule courses and rooms
- Lack of a shared vision, strategic plan, or institutional strategic goals related to blended learning
- Availability of technology infrastructure throughout the institution
- Course management system problems

What Is Blended Learning?

Blended learning mixes F2F and non-F2F activities, some performed synchronously, some asynchronously. As such, blended learning provides the flexibility to address a broad range of curricular and institutional needs, opportunities, and goals. The ways in which blended learning is implemented at a given campus, such as the ratio of F2F and non-F2F elements, are highly context-dependent. More concrete definitions of blended learning, ones that are appropriate to your institution, college, or department, need to emerge from local curricular and institutional goals and priorities.

A superficial understanding of blended learning is that it simply adds non-F2F elements into the traditional course structure. But this most often results in a dysfunctional phenomenon known as the “course-and-a-half.” Schools may be particularly susceptible to this trap if the added online elements are simply based on the latest technology, which can give a false impression of true innovation. The move to blended learning calls for a thorough reassessment and reengineering of the course. The two aspects (F2F and non-F2F) must be integrated. It is important that the faculty development process encourage (if not require) instructors to undertake a thorough reassessment of course goals, priorities, and content. Several of the presenters urged us to consider the transformative opportunity involved when we undertake to move from the F2F to the blended instructional delivery model, which is an opportunity to rethink how to teach and how to learn—an opportunity to learn how to learn, as one presenter put it.

The presenters also urged against making the assumption that the F2F and other class meetings were somehow fundamentally different. It might be easy to assume that face time is for team and class work and that the non-F2F meetings are for individual work. Several of the presenters noted that the non-F2F class meetings and activities could, by using the right kind of technology, be quite interactive and team-oriented. The presenters emphasized that the F2F and non-F2F class meetings are both about learning and can be interactive, social, and collaborative, but most important, they must be integrated and complimentary.

Focus Session Keynote

- *Teaching Presence: Creating and Sustaining Communities of Inquiry in Blended Learning Environments*, Norman Vaughan, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Teaching & Learning, Department of Education & Schooling, Mount Royal University; and D. Randy Garrison, Professor, Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre, University of Calgary. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p56665953/>; Q&A: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p67222742/>.
- Presentation slides and resources for all sessions can be found at <http://www.educause.edu/Resources/Browse/ELIFF10/39333>.

Research and Quality Assurance

As blended learning continues to mature as an instructional delivery model, one area that has both improved and received increased attention from institutions is research. In various presentations throughout the focus session, we learned of research in various areas:

- Modeling effectiveness, especially to determine the best F2F-to-online ratio
- Student learning and engagement
- Student progression, completion, and success in blended courses and programs
- Instructor competencies well-suited for blended learning
- Student access: enrollment growth, attrition, and graduation rates
- Learning effectiveness: student outcomes (however defined)
- Faculty satisfaction and their perception of their teaching
- Student satisfaction and their perception of their learning
- Cost/benefits (across the institution)

Growth in the area of research and quality assurance has contributed to significant improvements in the blended learning model. Because the success of a blended learning program is highly dependent on the institutional context in which it exists, those institutions that have been active in pursuing a comprehensive and systemic research initiative—often over several years—have benefitted significantly. The first step is, of course, to consider what is meant by quality. Is it defined by accrediting standards? By an external rubric, such as Quality Matters? By the institution as a whole, or by a college or a department? Coming to agreement on these questions is a necessary step.

Effective research initiatives collect data at several levels—individual (students and faculty members), program, department, college, and institution—and have mechanisms in place to compare the data from blended courses to F2F and online offerings and across disciplines. Some more experienced institutions have evolved their research into predictive modeling where they are able to understand the variables contributing to blended student success and then direct resources and intervention strategies accordingly.

Several institutions are collecting information about students' level of satisfaction with blended courses. Findings here indicate that students select blended course options primarily for reasons of convenience. However, students do seem to be slightly more satisfied with blended courses than with fully online courses, and the more they take blended courses, the more satisfied they become. This may be an indication that over time students develop their skills and abilities and become more successful at navigating the blended course. Students report satisfaction because of convenience, reduced logistical demands, increased learning flexibility, and technology-enhanced learning. All of this, as one of our speakers noted, translates into the reduction of opportunity costs for pursuing an education.

Areas of student dissatisfaction include reduced F2F time, technology problems, reduced instructor assistance, feeling overwhelming, and increased workload. Despite the benefits of greater flexibility, students still lament the loss of F2F interaction.

A study conducted at the University of Central Florida revealed that components related to student satisfaction fall into seven areas:

- Low levels of ambivalence
- An enriched learning environment
- Clear role expectations and rules of engagement
- High commitment levels
- Low levels of ambiguity
- High levels of engagement
- Learning latitude or flexibility

Focus session presenters shared examples from various studies on specific strategies and technologies they were using in their blended courses. For instance, one study revealed that viewing recorded lectures did result in higher grades. An interesting caveat here was that viewing the webcasts did not impact grades of highly academically resourceful students, but it did support low-resourceful students, if the lectures were viewed in a certain way: Students had to allocate sufficient time to viewing and view the entire lecture over time, as opposed to all at once or at the last minute. One conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that technology can serve to facilitate and encourage the addition of structured time on task. Something like reviewing video lectures can be more engaging and interesting to students than reviewing their notes and can also add structure to the process of studying by somewhat imposing a start and end time.

Presenters from another institution discussed a detailed quality assurance process they have used to prepare for accreditation processes. Their process includes gathering evidence and documenting the way they offer support in the following areas:

- Student support and resources
- Online organization and design
- Instructional design and delivery
- Assessment and evaluation

This comprehensive process of offering assistance to students and faculty members in developing an online pedagogy further speaks to the importance of full institutional support for the blended learning model.

Presenters from yet another institution shared a process by which they measured the student experience in blended learning courses at three points during the term. At the start of the term, they conducted a readiness/expectations survey on each of the following areas:

- Flexibility
- Instructor responsiveness
- Student satisfaction
- Interaction
- Technology and technical support
- Student learning
- Course management

In the middle of the term, they performed a learning-outcomes assessment (customized for each participating course) along with a mid-semester feedback opportunity used by faculty members only. At the end of the course, three surveys were administered: a final student survey, a survey of students who dropped the course, and a faculty member interview/survey. Although the student sample size was relatively small, approximately 500 students from 11 courses, the comprehensive survey strategy serves as a good model to assess students' learning outcomes and experience in blended courses, along with the faculty's experience.

The important point here is to devise an assessment strategy that has the potential to benefit both instructors and students and to develop the plan collaboratively as a team with instructors and researchers working side by side. Using an approach with three methods at three different points in the course, as was done in this case, produces an informed picture of the course's success as a blended one. Offering the faculty member adequate support for performing these types of assessment and doing so in a collaborative manner can often result in productive data collection and continuous improvement processes.

Focus Session Resources: Research and Quality Assurance

- Research and Quality Assurance Plenary Session: *Research and Quality Assurance in Blended Learning*. Charles D. Dziuban, Director, Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness, and Patsy D. Moskal, Associate Director, Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness, University of Central Florida. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p46212505/>; Q&A: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p52546007/>.
- Research and Quality Assurance Project Round 1: *Implementing a Blended Learning Approach: Factors Influencing Students' Academic Outcomes*. Brenda Smith-Chant, Associate Professor, Psychology Department, Trent University. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p12288112/>.
- Research and Quality Assurance Project Round 2: *Defining Quality in Blended Programs*. William Wisser, Instructional Designer, Simmons College. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p12288112/>.
- Research and Quality Assurance Project Round 3: *Assessing Online/Blended Learning in Resident Instruction Courses at a Large, Research-Intensive University*. Suzanne Weinstein, Director of Instructional Consulting, Assessment and Research, The Pennsylvania State University. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p12288112/>.
- Research and Quality Assurance Project Round Q&A with speakers: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p20534670/>.
- Presentation slides and resources for all sessions can be found at <http://www.educause.edu/Resources/Browse/ELIFF10/39333>.

Logistics and Administration

As noted earlier, successful blended learning programs are highly dependent upon the institutional context within which they reside. This means that beyond what takes place in the blended classroom, both F2F and online, the entire institution needs to be involved to adequately support students in this mode of learning, just as is done in traditional F2F learning models.

Launching Institutional Blended Programs

Some presenters from the focus session had considerable experience in developing and launching campus-wide blended programs. From those cases, we learned of several key considerations in deploying successful initiatives:

- **Blend design issues:** Determining how the F2F and online components of courses will vary by department, by college, or across the institution and the implications of that variation for scheduling, marketing, enrollment, etc.
- **Seed and completion funding:** Central support for the development of blended courses, which can be especially critical for those degree or certificate programs that intend to be entirely blended. Sometimes, blended programs attract students who rely upon the flexible delivery format and are not able to attend F2F courses. Completing the development or redesign of courses for an entire program can help students progress and complete programs.
- **Cross-institutional communication:** Developing a guide or a resource describing the budgeting model, policy considerations (intellectual property and its consistent application), marketing efforts (connecting with central marketing efforts to extend communication reach), and other

components of the blended model to ensure consistent levels of information across the various campus units. Inform your leaders so they can help inform the entire institution.

- **Blended program council:** An advisory group that serves as a peer network to explore and disseminate information about what other blended programs are doing across campus. This can be particularly useful to help communicate best practices, especially related to faculty development.

Maintaining and Supporting an Effective Program

Once blended programs are in place, successful initiatives take steps to ensure ongoing success. Below are some of the areas that participants mentioned as critical to be maintained and continuously examined.

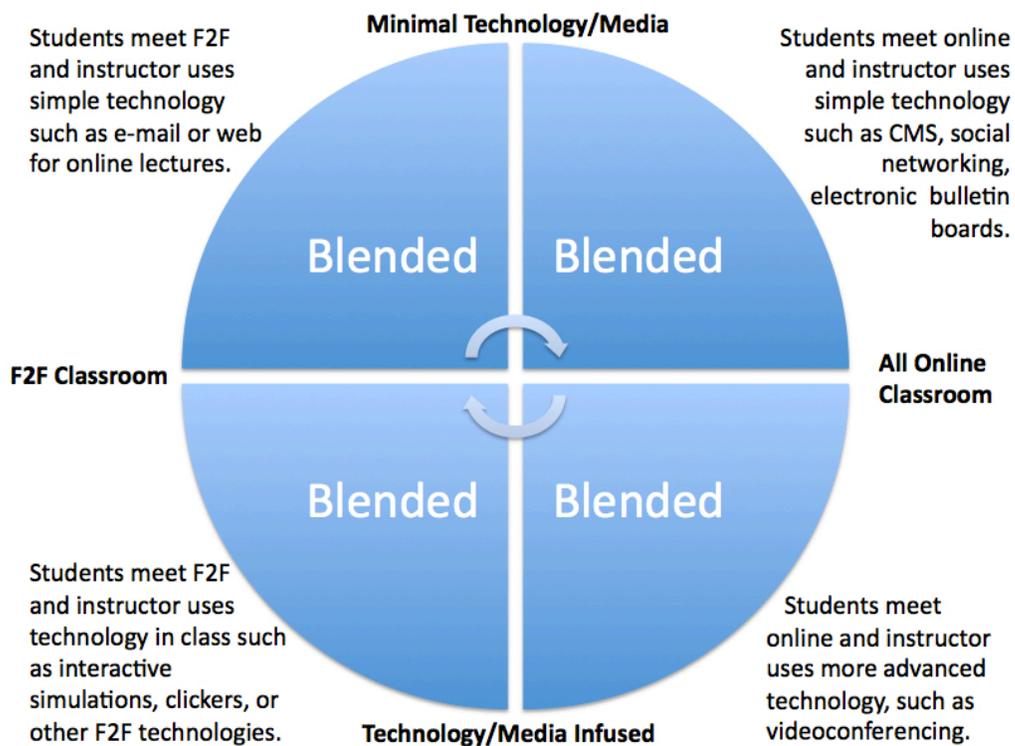
- Be aware of changes in the marketplace and how they might impact your blended programs, especially those that are occupational in nature or are connected to external certifications or licenses. Some institutions recommended the review of blended programs every three to five years.
- Understand the need for your blended courses. Keeping track of enrollment trends is important to meet student demand for classes, accommodate growth, and ultimately help students complete programs with minimal delays due to course availability.
- Collect information on student and faculty member satisfaction. Understanding and regularly collecting data on the student blended course experience can help inform future improvements and investments. Faculty member satisfaction is equally important and can also help direct campus-wide faculty development programs, course development and redesign efforts, and other support mechanisms.
- Understand and support effective scalability. Several institutions in the focus session noted that their blended courses and programs were in high demand and that they were working on scaling their current efforts. Doing so is not a trivial matter and, as mentioned earlier, involves the whole campus if done correctly. Stable technology infrastructure, faculty/professional development, instructional design support, student support services (extended into evenings and weekends), physical space, and funding are among the considerations for expansion. We learned that many motivations exist for participating in and implementing a blended program. The faculty may do it for pedagogical or curricular reasons, and institutions may be motivated by other reasons: space savings, access, cost, etc. There is a place for all interests, and to effectively scale these programs the faculty and institutions need to work together.

Defining Blended Learning

Earlier we discussed the importance of arriving at some consensus, at least at the institutional level, on what is meant by “blended.” This does not mean that the same definition or formula has to be used across the institution but that some careful thought and consideration should inform the definition, which should then be clearly and consistently communicated across the institution—internally and externally to those being served.

Figure 3 helps illustrate some of the variation that can exist in the blended model. This graphic representation of “blended” was developed by the focus session presenters in conjunction with the Sloan Consortium, and it highlights the way in which the extent of technology use can differentiate between the various blends.

Figure 3. Variations of Blended Learning Programs



Again, arriving at the “blended” definition should be a joint venture. Faculty members are typically concerned about their own courses and programs but do not always have an institutional perspective. To scale up and support broader blended learning initiatives from the work of early adopters (those who were initially involved in developing and delivering blended courses) requires institutional commitment and resources.

Pedagogical Approaches

Significant variation among blended courses and curriculum means also that similar variation exists in the pedagogical approaches and technologies employed. This is another area where cross-institutional collaboration or communication, especially with faculty development and course design, can result in broader improvements. Below are some pedagogical focus areas that can help inform those involved in course design about the integration and use of learning technologies.

- Content: course/learning management systems, media, multiuser virtual environments, or virtual worlds
- Reflection: blogs, journals
- Social/emotional: F2F interactions, synchronous online interactions
- Collaboration/student-generated content: wikis, document-sharing tools

- Dialectic/questioning: discussion tools, video chat
- Synthesis/evaluation (assignments and assessment): papers, tests, student presentations (PowerPoint, YouTube), electronic portfolios

Student Services

Because blended learning programs include a F2F component and are not entirely online, it is often assumed that existing student services will adequately meet blended students' needs. Although students may indeed be on campus periodically, this will of course vary with the online and F2F ratio of the course and also with the time of their F2F meetings. This is an area that may benefit from surveying or some other mechanism to collect data and examine what is offered for F2F students and for online students in order to discover the gaps and possible efficiencies. Several institutions have adapted their student services—orientation, tutoring, advising, admissions, registrar, and bookstore—to better meet the needs of their blended students.

Another often-overlooked area is communication and internal marketing to student services. It's critical to keep those who work directly with our students informed about the local implementation and model of blended courses, which is usually very relevant to the work they do and can assist in providing better services to students.

Focus Session Resources: Logistics and Administration

- Logistics and Administration Plenary Round 1: *Administering Blended Programs: A Campus-Level Perspective*, Laura Pedrick, Special Assistant to the Provost for Strategic Initiatives, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p24059289/>.
- Logistics and Administration Plenary Round 2: *Blending with Purpose*, Anthony Picciano, Professor and Executive Director, The Graduate Center (CUNY). Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p24059289/>.
- Logistics and Administration Plenary Round 3: *The iDEAL Makeover: A University-Wide Transition to Blended Courses*, Maria Cesario, Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Administration, and LeeAnn Stone, Instructional Designer, Brandman University. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p24059289/>.
- Logistics and Administration Plenary Round Q&A with speakers: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p63674717/>.
- Presentation slides and resources for all sessions can be found at <http://www.educause.edu/Resources/Browse/ELIFF10/39333>.

Faculty Development

Student success is the overall goal: providing students with a richer, more flexible learning environment that can contribute to greater success, completion, and satisfaction. The faculty are the linchpin to achieving that overall goal. Hence, faculty development is an item of fundamental importance to the success of a blended learning program. Faculty success as instructors means student success as learners.

What competencies are needed for the faculty as they transition from the familiar F2F context to the blended learning model? A competency is a constellation of behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs. Faculty development consists of identifying and prioritizing the needed competencies and implementing a development program that will equip instructors with those competencies.

Many, if not most, faculty have spent the majority of their academic lives in the traditional course model, the model in which they were most likely taught. They participated in fully F2F courses as undergraduate and graduate students and have probably taught most, if not all, of their courses using the traditional F2F model. For some, the move to blended learning is a major shift, necessitating a careful rethinking of their lesson plans, as most faculty will need help in recognizing and then exploiting the new opportunities.

Penn State University conducted extensive research to identify the important competencies for blended learning. Their work was based on extensive faculty surveys of those with teaching experience in online contexts. They identified seven competencies and ranked them according to importance as reflected in the survey responses. They also used the survey to identify typical ways that an instructor will exhibit the competency.

- **Active learning:** This involves planning and implementing tasks that engage the student in an active role. Examples of behaviors that model this competency include “the instructor encourages students to interact with each other by assigning team tasks and projects where appropriate” and “the instructor encourages students to share their knowledge and expertise with the learning community.”
- **Course administration and leadership:** This entails a firm grasp on how to operate and manage the mechanics, logistics, and administrative aspects of the course. Illustrative behaviors include “the instructor clearly communicates expected student behaviors” and “the instructor is proficient in the chosen course management system.”
- **Active teaching, teaching presence, and responsiveness:** An instructor is visible and active in his/her teaching and communicates to students that their success is a priority. Example behaviors include “the instructor shows caring and concern that students are learning the course content” and “the instructor provides prompt, helpful feedback on assignments and exams that enhances learning.”
- **Multimedia technology:** This competency relates to instructors attaining a degree of facility and agility in incorporating new media into class activities and assignments. Instructors would exhibit this competency when they use “multimedia technologies that are appropriate to learning activities.”
- **Classroom decorum:** This competency relates to maintaining the overall learning environment of the course. A few of the ways this competency can be observed include “instructor helps students resolve conflicts that arise in collaborative teamwork” and when the instructor provides “a good model of expected behavior for all course communication.”
- **Technological competency:** For this competency, the instructor is comfortable working with the technology needed to have the course move forward. This is manifested when the instructor is comfortable and confident with the technology used in the course.
- **Policy enforcement:** This refers to ensuring that there is academic integrity in coursework and that participants adhere to institutional policies.

Penn State’s program also applies guiding principles when constructing development opportunities for faculty members:

- **Emulate the student experience:** Use the blended learning model to teach instructors how to teach blended learning courses.
- **Provide a safe environment:** Provide ways for the faculty to experiment and fail constructively.

- **Set realistic expectations:** Show examples of good teaching but not “heroic” teaching.
- **Model best behaviors:** Use your best instructors to teach the faculty.
- **Create a learning community:** Enable instructors to learn from one another through their actual experiences.
- **Connect F2F:** Enable regular and direct “faculty-to-faculty” exchanges to foster and encourage best practices.

Establishing faculty learning communities or faculty support networks is a valuable method for diffusing the blended learning model, particularly if an institution is just getting started with moving courses to the blended mode. Peers, especially colleagues who have already had blended learning experience, are important for both support and feedback.

The alignment of support organizations is another important consideration. Support, and the way it is delivered, can greatly help or hinder the development of blended learning courses. It is obviously counterproductive if support organizations are in competition or in disagreement over the model. The alignment of support organizations is of institutional importance.

Focus Session Resources: Faculty Development

- Faculty Development Plenary Session: *Prepared for Success*, Lawrence Ragan, Director, Faculty Development for the World Campus, Penn State University. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p55313269/>. Q&A: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p71683974/>.
- Faculty Development Project Round1: *Faculty Development*, Polly Miller, Faculty, E-Learning Faculty Coordinator, Estrella Mountain Community College. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p63998870/>.
- *UMBC's Alternate Delivery Program: Supporting Hybrid Course Redesign*, Karin Readell, Director of Instructional Technology, UMBC Division of Information Technology, University of Maryland Baltimore County. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p63998870/>.
- *Closing the Loop: How to Redesign a Course for Blended Learning*, Alan Aycock, Acting Director, Learning Technology Center, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p63998870/>.
- Faculty Development Project Round Q&A with speakers: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p63674717/>.
- Presentation slides and resources for all sessions can be found at <http://www.educause.edu/Resources/Browse/ELIFF10/39333>.

Course Design

The blended learning model has a wealth of options, allowing instructors to design course plans uniquely suited to the discipline and to the students. But this very flexibility introduces a new set of challenges. The very term “blended” implies a range of components, ingredients, and options. The design of those elements in the context of a course is obviously crucial for success.

One innovative approach is the “HyFlex” blended learning model. The term “HyFlex” combines the words “hybrid” (another name for the blended learning model) and “flexible.” In a traditional blended course model, all students participate in F2F events on some days and all students participate in non-F2F events on others. The HyFlex model enables students to choose their mode of participation from

week to week and in some cases from topic to topic. Both “on-ground” and online options are always available. Indeed, students can elect to participate in both modes at the same time. All the issues of course design for blended learning are present in the HyFlex model; it is then a useful point of departure when considering the broad topic of course design for blended contexts.

While several institutions are experimenting with the HyFlex model, the model was initially developed and studied by Brian Beatty at San Francisco State University. At the focus session, Beatty shared the motivation behind implementing the HyFlex model, which gives students options to control the “pace” of their lives and adapt to work requirements as well as activity requirements (such as athletic events). The model enables the institution to support distributed students without maintaining a self-contained online degree program, which may then aid in removing bottlenecks to student graduation and completion.

The principles underlying the HyFlex model include

- giving learners choices about how to conduct their own learning, which deepens engagement by imparting a sense of ownership of their learning process;
- providing learners full equivalency in all participation modes;
- equipping students with the technology skills and access needed for all participation modes; and
- utilizing products from all learning activities across all participation modes.

In this approach, all students have full access to all course materials and can make decisions from week to week as to which participation mode will work best with their learning and scheduling requirements. At San Francisco State, they have found it valuable to include some activities common to all participants, such as participation in online discussions. They have also found that the HyFlex model works for both seminars and lecture courses, provided presentation-capture capability is available in the physical space.

Beatty shared some research he has done on the HyFlex model. On the question about which mode his graduate students tended to select, he found that across courses, two-thirds consistently opted for F2F and 22 percent for online. He has also solicited opinions from his graduate students about the HyFlex approach and found that 80 percent preferred blended classes and 60 percent welcomed the choices that the HyFlex model offers. He found no significant correlation between participation mode and final grades, as long as the students were participating in one mode or the other.

Some additional key points about moving to the blended learning model arose during the focus session project rounds. One key to success is making good decisions about what content is amenable to online work and what content is better delivered F2F. When designing the course, it is vital to set aside the time needed to make these decisions carefully. Working with instructional designers to help with choices and with student support is also important. Students as well as instructors need to transition to the blended learning model, so providing students with access to assistance throughout the term—supplying as many “scaffolds” as possible, as one presenter put it—is critical to a successful experience.

One presenter commented that the move to blended learning enabled him to reevaluate the criteria underlying the course grade, and he found that he had moved from a heavy emphasis on information retention to other ways to measure student learning. Finally, good learning comes about when students accept responsibility, so it is important to look for ways to encourage students to take that responsibility—another aspect of blended learning that might be new to many students.

Focus Session Resources: Course Design

- Course Design Plenary Session: *Connecting Online and On-ground Learners with HyFlex Courses*, Brian Beatty, Chair and Associate Professor, Instructional Technologies Department, San Francisco State. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p71839654/>;
Q&A: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p85472484/>.
- Faculty Development Project Round 1: *Blended Learning in Large-Enrollment Courses*, Mark Laumakis, Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Faculty in Residence, Instructional Technology Services, San Diego State University. Full session video recording: <http://www.educause.edu/Resources/BlendedLearninginLargeEnrollme/213766>
- Faculty Development Project Round 2: *Design, Deliver, Learn! The Unique Experience of Designing and Teaching a Hybrid Chemistry Course*, Deepa Godambe, Associate Professor, Chemistry, William Rainey Harper College. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p91374006/>.
- Faculty Development Project Round 3: *Maximizing Content Coverage and Learning in a Blended Biology Course*, Gerald Bergtrom, Professor of Biological Sciences & Instructional Design Consultant, Learning Technology Center, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. Full session video recording: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p91374006/>.
- Faculty Development Project Round Q&A with speakers: <http://educause.adobeconnect.com/p43513021/>.
- Presentation slides and resources for all sessions can be found at <http://www.educause.edu/Resources/Browse/ELIFF10/39333>.

Additional Focus Session and Related Content

ELI Focus Sessions (<http://www.educause.edu/eli/events>) generate a significant amount of content around their themes. We encourage the reuse of this content, which often includes discussion questions, thematic scenarios, podcasts, speaker recordings, and readings to conduct and facilitate campus events.

These items for the 2010 Online Fall Focus Session on blended learning can be found at <http://net.educause.edu/Proceedings/1026953>. Below you will find additional resources including a reading list and discussion guides.

- *ELI Blended Learning Resource List*, includes websites, reports, articles, and research: <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELIFF10res.pdf>.
- *ELI Blended Learning Discussion Prompts (individual)*: http://net.educause.edu/section_params/conf/eli103/discussion_prompts_individual.doc.
- *ELI Blended Learning Discussion Prompts (team)*: http://net.educause.edu/section_params/conf/eli103/discussion_prompts_team.doc.
- *ELI Blended Learning Activity Prompts, Day 1 and 2*: http://net.educause.edu/section_params/conf/eli103/activity_prompts_FINAL.doc.
- *ELI Blended Learning Reflection Worksheet*: http://net.educause.edu/section_params/conf/eli103/reflection_worksheet.doc.

- Presentation slides and resources for all sessions can be found at <http://www.educause.edu/Resources/Browse/ELIFF10/39333>.
- Full presentation recordings (audio and video) can be found at <http://net.educause.edu/1026921>.
- ELI Discovery Tool: Blended Learning Workshop Guide: <http://www.educause.edu/blendedlearning>.
- 7 Things You Should Know About the HyFlex Course Model can be found at <http://www.educause.edu/ELI7Things>.

Appendix: Challenges in Blended Learning Theme Areas

Below is a list of challenges, sorted by blended learning theme areas, which focus session participants identified as areas they continue to improve upon. During the focus session, these topics served as discussion prompts where participants contributed ideas, solutions, or approaches they had explored or implemented locally. These points can be used to initiate conversations or discussions at an institutional or departmental level or even with faculty members or staff who support blended learning.

Logistics and Administration Challenges

- Scaling up blended learning models to accommodate large-enrollment courses
- Implementing blended learning in a way that addresses budget issues and physical space limitations
- Marketing blended learning courses in a way that is clear and differentiates the model from other course types
- Achieving consensus on the F2F-to-online time ratio in blended courses
- Approaches to faculty development and course development funding

Research and Quality Assurance Challenges

- Managing blended learning data collection from diverse sources (instructors, departments, other units)
- Identifying important/relevant blended learning data for the institution, units, and individual instructors
- Developing methods for measuring blended course effectiveness and implementing improvements
- Funding/supporting research and quality assurance work

Faculty Development Challenges

- Getting the faculty to undertake a thorough redesign of their courses
- Course design or redesign funding
- Development of summative and formative assessment strategies appropriate to the blended learning model
- Determining and organizing the competencies needed to design and implement effective faculty development for blended learning

Course Design Challenges

- Sorting out the intellectual property issues associated with blended learning course development and maintenance
- Determining how quality is defined, and identifying elements of successful blended learning courses
- Effective use of technology in the blended course
- Effective models for team development of blended learning courses