

Best Practices Guide for Converting Face-To-Face Learning to Blended Learning

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Pre-Planning Strategies



The best way to develop an effective online learning environment is to follow the ADDIE method to ensure that all areas are covered in the learning environment. Below is a checklist to use for pre-planning converting your face-to face learning to a blended learning environment.

- Identify which LMS or course delivery method that is best for your course.
- Identify your learners and their learning characteristics.
- Revise the objective and goals of the class for effective instruction
- Identify which elements should be taught online and those that should be delivered in a face-to-face setting.
- Identify activities for both online and face-to-face class time
- Ensure you use visual or auditory media to expand upon online lectures.
- Use visual clues in online environment (graphics, tables, etc)

Encouraging Collaboration

In an online environment it is important to facilitate collaboration amongst students.

Remember that interaction is not necessary. “Interaction is important, and the potential for all involved in teaching and training to be able to confer is essential” (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2012, p.82). It is important to “select methods of teaching that provide learners with enough interaction to keep them on task while encouraging them to explore their learning experience” (Simonson, et. al., 2012, p. 204).

To encourage collaboration within the classroom provide students an area in the classroom where they can ask the instructor questions to get clarification on questions. Another way to encourage collaboration is to ask students questions related specifically to their discussion posts encouraging them to respond or asking them to elaborate further. Providing students with a group project to allow them to get to know their classmates better and work together allows for collaboration. Just make sure the project is relevant to the objectives and goals of the course.

How will your role change as an Instructor?



- As you change from a face-to-face environment to an online environment “instructors need to take a back seat and gently guide the learners in their process by monitoring the discussion and entering it to prod participants to look at the material another way or to gently steer the conversation back on course” (Eaton, 2003, p. 89).
- Since you are no longer in a face-to-face setting and can see who is taking notes, you can not see visual clues of whether a student is bored or confused instructors must use “increased written presentation skills, some technical competencies, virtual management techniques, and the ability to engage students through virtual communication (Eaton, 2003, p.90).
- Rather than being the sole provider of education, as in a face-to-face setting, the instructor becomes part of a “team” that facilitates learning. The student is not dependent on the instructor alone to provide the learning material. In an online setting students have access to not only their class material, but tons of other online resources where they can find information on their class material.

How to be a successful Facilitator



When moving from a face-to-face learning setting to an online setting your role changes from that of a trainer to a facilitator. Your role is to monitor each students' online activity, ensure students are engaged in the learning process, and keep students on task. Below are some tips to help you be a successful facilitator.

1. Make sure you KNOW your lesson plan and be familiar with all activities and assignments for the class. Not knowing the lesson plan can lose the attention of the learner (Psikurich, n.d.).	2. Participate actively in discussions. Stay in communication with your students and monitor their progress throughout the course.
3. Remember each student learns differently.	4. Set clear expectations for learners.
5. Learn the technology you will be using within your classroom. Make sure you are familiar with all the functions. Also, learn the technology from the students perspective to know how they will be using it.	6. Make sure your learners know you care about their success.

How to be a successful Student



1. Be self-motivated and disciplined in your online educational journey.	2. Communicate effectively through your discussions and expand upon your writing skills.
3. Dedicate yourself to your education.	4. Be willing to share your work experiences, life experiences, and educational experiences. Be open to new ideas and input from other students.
5. Use effective time management skills to manage your school, work, and personal life.	6. Stay on track, do not get behind. If you do communicate with your instructor to get caught back up. Don't give up!
7. Learn the software and technology being uses in your classroom to be an active participant	8. Take responsibility for your own learning experience.

Opportunities for Enhancement

Not all material will need to be re-developed when switching to an online delivery format. However instructors need to ensure that the materials already established fit into the new format. When using existing material instructors must pay attention to copyrighted material such as photos, videos, images, etc. when using pre-existing material rather than creating new material (Simonson, et. al, 2012). Threaded discussions will be used to enhance the learning environment as well multi-media technology that is relevant to the course objectives and goals. Provide supplemental readings and videos, outside of the actual lecture, to enhance the learning experience.

References:

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