

Chapter 36

Shifting a Face-to-Face (F2F) Course to the Blended Environment: A Framework for Transference

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ABSTRACT

Many educational experts predict that in the future blended learning will become far more common than traditional Face-to-Face (F2F) or online learning. With this in mind, instructors are being asked or required to move F2F courses to a blended environment. When doing so, there are a variety of issues to consider. Thus, a framework for transference is necessary. This framework includes the seven principles for good practice for undergraduate education. This chapter covers the essential topics to help educators conduct a successful transference and uphold the quality of their courses.

INTRODUCTION

Blended learning is utilizing teaching practice that combine teaching methods which incorporate both face-to-face and online components (Blackboard K-12, 2009; Watson, 2008). Other terms such as “hybrid learning, distributed learning, connected learning, and outside-inside learning” (Eiter &

Woll, 2011, p. 2) are used to identify blended learning. The challenge is to find the right mix of these two components for a successful blended learning environment (Kerres & DeWitt, 2003). This chapter will help educators have a clearer understanding of strategies for delivering content in a blended environment based on Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) seven principles for good prac-

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tice in undergraduate education. Information will also be provided to help educators learn to modify course content for blended delivery and engage students in the learning process. The chapter will be based on the following three objectives:

1. Compare and contrast learning methods for the blended environment.
2. Describe strategies for modifying course content for blended delivery.
3. Implement effective teaching methods in a blended environment.

The connection between F2F and online components in blending learning is necessary for a smooth transition. Good facilitation skills are essential elements; however, there are other key factors. It is essential to make sure the layout of the online course matches the instructor's teaching style. This will make it easier for the facilitator to guide students through the content. It is also important to evaluate course content and then look at the delivery methods to be used to deliver content. When moving the content from a F2F environment to a blended environment, these questions should be asked:

- What do I want the student to learn?
- What is the best way to present the content?
- How can I use the strengths of the online medium, while minimizing the weaknesses?
- How can I create interaction – student/content, student/student, student/instructor?
- How will I assess the success of the learning?
- What process will I use to assess the course structure and make appropriate changes?

In answering the preceeding questions, instructors perform a course audit. This audit includes analyzing the content to help determine how to answer each question. When changing course delivery from F2F to blended, the instructor cannot simply create PowerPoint presentations and hope

students will review them, then read the book, and find success in learning. Instructors must also reflect on how they traditionally teach their F2F classes and how they will alter their teaching for the blended environment and connect all the elements.

BACKGROUND

It is important for instructors to do their homework before converting a course from a F2F environment to a blended environment. There are many factors to consider during the transference process. Moving content to a blended environment is not simply about transferring content - it is about transforming content.

The instructor should utilize the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987) as they teach in any environment. The seven principles are listed below.

- Encourage contact between students and the instructor.
- Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students.
- Encourage active learning.
- Give prompt feedback.
- Emphasize time on task.
- Communicate high expectations.
- Respect diverse talents and ways of learning.

However, the instructor should keep in mind that the following items are crucial to the success of the blended course. A quality blended course should:

- Be student centered.
- Combine the best elements of online and F2F learning environments.
- Be well-organized, easy to navigate and have an aesthetic design which presents and communicates course information clearly throughout the course.

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