

Blended Delivery Resource Guide

Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom

A Project of the College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading

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Introduction

Ontario's colleges are known for their student focus and responsiveness to changing students' interests and needs. As students express a greater desire for education and training that is more flexible and convenient, colleges are determined to develop more flexible learning opportunities and options. Several colleges now offer programs and courses in blended or hybrid delivery mode, combining traditional face-to-face classroom instruction with integrated online learning activities. It is anticipated that this trend will increase.

This Resource Guide is one component of the project "Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom". The primary purpose of this Blended Delivery Resource Guide is to serve as a basic, practical "how to" guide for program managers, faculty and support staff in AU/LBS programs who are considering a transition to blended delivery. It provides definitions and information about required resources, including extensive online resources. Section 5 provides specific information for faculty considering course redesign for blended delivery.

For those considering blended delivery, it is important to access the resources at your college. All colleges have instructional support units or Professional Development departments that can provide the initial and ongoing support required for the successful transition to blended delivery.

Additional information about the project can be found on the College Sector Committee website at: <http://www.collegeupgradingon.ca>. This includes the literature review and the college specific survey information that form the primary and secondary research of the project. More than 40 college faculty and managers participated in Blended Delivery workshops in June 2011, providing suggestions for this Resource Guide. Faculty from six colleges participated in a three day Blended Delivery training seminar and then piloted a course or module during the fall 2011 semester. All of these activities and reports helped inform and shape this Resource Guide.

Section 1: What is Blended Delivery?

Defining Blended Delivery

Blended delivery combines both classroom-based and web-based activities.

The terms blended delivery, blended learning, and hybrid delivery are generally used interchangeably. For the purposes of this guide, the term blended delivery will be used.

Here are several recognized definitions for blended delivery:

1. Dziuban et al:

The term “blended learning” refers to courses that combine face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning and reduced classroom contact hours (reduced seat time). The latter point is an important distinction because it is certainly possible to enhance regular face-to-face courses with online resources without displacing classroom contact hours.

2. University of Calgary Teaching and Learning Centre:

Blended learning is the integration of face-to-face and online learning to help you enhance the classroom experience and extend learning through innovative use of information and communications technology. Blended strategies enhance student engagement and learning through online activities to the course curriculum and improve effectiveness and efficiencies by reducing lecture time.

Garrison and Vaughan, authors of *Blended Learning in Higher Education*, state that:

Most importantly, blended learning is a fundamental redesign that transforms the structure of, and approach to, teaching and learning. The key assumptions of a blended learning design are:

- *Thoughtful integration of face-to-face and technology mediated learning*
- *Fundamental rethinking of the course design to optimize student engagement*

It should also be noted what blended delivery is not. According to the University of Manitoba, blended delivery is not:

- A conventional f2f (face-to-face) lecture based class, where the PowerPoint slides used for the lectures or course notes are put online
- A conventional f2f lecture or seminar based course in which online discussions are enabled as an option for students. The discussions are not assessed nor do they replace any f2f activity.
- A conventional f2f lecture based class, where all assignments (e.g. papers) and tests (e.g. multiple auto-marked quizzes or exams) are completed and submitted online
- An online course with no f2f component
- A conventional f2f lecture/seminar course in which students are required to do internet research for an assignment
- A fully online course with scheduled technology mediated synchronous communication
- A course is offered completely online, but the final exam is f2f at a specific location at a specific time.
- Restructuring and replacing traditional class contact hours

How does your college define blended delivery?

Many Ontario colleges have stated that more programs will be available in blended delivery formats and, in fact, have declared college wide goals in this regard. While blended delivery is often thought to be two thirds classroom or face-to-face time plus one-third online time, your college may define blended delivery differently. Check this before you begin. Also, check how your college schedules blended delivery courses. Knowing your college's definition and scheduling of blended delivery is critical before you begin.

Why blend?

Optimizing student learning and maximizing physical resources are the main reasons to provided blended delivery instruction.

Section 2:

What Do Students Say About Blended Delivery?

What advantages does it provide students?

Many postsecondary institutions are embracing and promoting blended delivery because of students' changing needs. Blended delivery provides four main benefits for students:

Flexibility and Convenience: Most often, students describe the main strength of blended delivery as flexibility and compatibility with work and family responsibilities. Blended delivery provides the “best of both worlds” with scheduled classroom or face-to-face interaction and the convenience of online instruction.

Satisfaction and Engagement: Research studies indicate that the results for students in blended delivery courses are generally positive, equal to or better than those of students in traditional classes or in solely online courses. Increased student engagement is often cited as a key consequence of a well designed blended delivery course. The development of “soft skills”, time management skills and increased computer literacy are also cited as positive results. Students who are reluctant participants in class are often more comfortable and more engaged in online activities.

What challenges might students experience?

Blended delivery also presents challenges for students. The four main challenges are:

Technology and Confidence: Technical issues can quickly erode the confidence of adult learners in a blended delivery course. While most colleges offer their students technical support, a Learning Management System, and open access computer labs, the students may still face challenges with home internet connections, which can interfere with learning.

Learning Preference and Time Management Skills: Participating in a blended course will be a first for many students, creating apprehension for those who are more comfortable with teaching methods “they know”. The rhythms of blended courses differ from traditional classes and will force some students to make the transition from a traditional passive student in the classroom to that of a more active, collaborative learner online.

Students new to blended delivery may equate fewer classroom hours with less work, which is far from the case. The development of time management skills and discipline are often cited as challenging for students new to blended delivery courses.

Section 3:

What Resources Are Required to Get Started?

Administrative Support:

The decision to proceed with blended delivery requires administrative support from both the department head and the college. This support includes development time for course redesign, training, ongoing professional development and access to technology and to technical support.

Training and On-Going Professional Development:

In addition to familiarity and comfort with the technology, training is required to teach faculty how to properly plan and manage a blended delivery course.

College Professional Development departments are the main resource for in-service training. Ideally, faculty intending to deliver blended courses will:

- be proficient using the college’s learning management system (LMS)
- participate in blended delivery training as a student and then
- design their own course, with assistance, for blended delivery

To restate: Ideally, before developing a blended delivery course or module, the teacher will have technical expertise, experience as a student in a blended course, and guided assistance during the redesign phase.

Development Time for Course Redesign:

Changing a course from the traditional in-class delivery mode to blended delivery mode is not just a “cut and paste” exercise for faculty; it’s transformative. Blended delivery is not simply the addition of PowerPoint presentations or other web links, as noted in Section 1. Ensuring that classroom and online learning activities are integrated and meaningful requires time for proper planning and redesign.

LMS – Learning Management System:

Access to your college’s LMS is critical. Stable, reliable learning management systems are required. While other tools and freeware exist, access to the LMS used by the entire college allows for better technical support and also provides students with experience and practice for future postsecondary studies.

Technical Support:

By using the LMS, the faculty and the students will have access to the college’s technical support.

Security/Confidentiality

Some learning materials and, in particular, some freeware sites are U.S. based. Check your college's policy regarding the use of these sources, especially as to the effect using these sites may have on the privacy of student personal information stored on the sites. This is another good reason to use your college LMS, not a freeware or other third party site.

Section 4:

Definition & Description of Commonly Used Terms

4G	Fourth-generation telephone technology. Features high-speed wireless access with a very high data transmission speed, of the same order of magnitude as a local area network (LAN) connection.
Active Learning	Learning brought about by a person participating in a learning exercise. This method of learning involves students doing things (action) and thinking about the things they are doing (reflection) in order to come up with a solution to a problem. Online tools such as discussion forums, wikis and interactive videos can be used to promote active learning.
Asynchronous eLearning	Computer-assisted training where the instructor and participants are involved in the course, class or lesson at different times; that is to say, not synchronized. Asynchronous methods allow participants to access training materials 24/7, even when other students and/or the instructor are not present.
Blended Delivery	Refers to a delivery mode that integrates face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning, resulting in reduced classroom hours.
Blog	Derived from the term "Web Log". A web site in which only one individual or group can create an initial post (message) and participants respond to the post e.g. blogger.com .
Collaborative Learning	A method of instruction in which a number of students at a range of performance levels work together in small groups towards a common goal. Students are responsible for one another's learning as well as their own. For examples of online collaborative learning, go to: http://www.collaborationideas.com/
Courseware	Educational material assembled for use by teachers. Commonly developed by textbook publishers and made available to teachers and students when they purchase the accompanying textbook. Courseware may be designed to operate either standalone or as a component within an LMS such as Blackboard.
Creative Commons Licensing	An alternative to copyright. It fills in the gap between full copyright (no use is permitted without permission) and "public domain" where no permission to use is required. Instead, it allows a creator to license the use of his/her material for a specific range of activities e.g. noncommercial use. See wiki.creativecommons.org for more details.

Discussion Board	An asynchronous online communication tool that allows a person to post a comment or question online; others, who are members of the same discussion board, may read the post and respond by adding their comments. A useful tool for collaborative student- instructor and student-student interaction outside the classroom.
Distance Learning	Allows instructors who are remote from learners to provide instructional guidance and leadership. Typically uses eLearning, but may also employ television broadcasts and printed documents.
eLearning / E-learning	A term that covers the fields of online learning, web-based training, and technology-delivered instruction i.e. using the Internet to provide interactive learning and training.
Face-to-Face (f2f)	Traditional teacher-led classroom-based teaching.
Firewall	A device or software application that attempts to keep your computer secure by stopping undesirable Internet traffic from entering your computer and private information from being sent from it. However, depending on how it is set up, a firewall may inadvertently block valid traffic - so be sure to check that all materials you add to your LMS are not being blocked. If something is being blocked, contact your IT department for advice.
Flash	A popular software application used to add animation, video, and interactivity to web pages - developed by Adobe Systems. Educators should be aware that Apple mobile products such as the iPhone and iPad do not support Flash and thus Flash may no longer be a suitable platform to develop online educational content. Look at using HTML 5 instead.
Flipped Classroom	A course in which students watch or listen to your (or someone else's) lectures <u>outside of classroom time</u> . Then, once back in the classroom, the time is used to address difficulties that students had with the lectures, to assist students with their "homework"; and allow students to work in small groups on assignments or projects. The flipped classroom is a great model to keep in mind when designing your blended delivery course. For an engaging video describing the flipped classroom, go to www.ted.com and search for "Salman Khan". Also, check out the free available resources at the Khan Academy.

Formative Assessment	The continual assessment and coaching of a student throughout a course. For the teacher, formative assessment provides continuous feedback to help them make beneficial changes in their instruction. For students, formative assessment makes them aware of how well they are mastering the learning objectives as they move through the course. In blended learning, short online quizzes can be used as formative assessments to gauge the level of understanding of a class or student. The quiz results can then be used to identify topics or concepts that need further work.
HTML and HTML5	HTML is the computer language used to create web pages. The latest version, HTML5, now supports the development of multimedia (video and animation) and could eventually replace Adobe System's Flash on the Internet.
Individualized Instruction	Systematically designed learning activities and materials specifically chosen to suit a student's individual interests, abilities, and experience - usually self-paced.
Instructional Designer	A professional who performs consulting and development chores necessary to create instructional materials. Often specially trained.
Learning Object	A learning object is a resource, usually digital and web-based, that can be used and re-used to support learning. Most possess the following characteristics: a learning objective, content and activities that support the objective, and assessment activities that reflect that expectation. Also, a learning object usually take less than 15 minutes to complete; and finally, it can exist on its own and be provided to the learner in a just-in-time and as-needed fashion.
Learning Objective	The desired outcome for a training event i.e. what the training should accomplish in terms of performance that learners should exhibit in order to be considered "competent".
Learning Outcome	Learning outcomes specify what learners' new behaviours will be after completing a learning experience - i.e. new skills, knowledge, attitudes, and ways of thinking. Outcomes must be observable and measureable.
Listserv	An early electronic mailing application that automatically redistributes e-mail to names on a mailing list. Users can subscribe to a mailing list by sending an e-mail note to a specific mailing list. The listserv software automatically adds the names and email addresses and distributes future e-mail postings to every subscriber on the list.

Listservs give users access to open discussions with an almost unlimited number of people on a wide range of topics.

LMS (Learning Management System)

A software (web) application that provides instructors with a way to create and deliver content, monitor learner participation, and assess performance. An LMS incorporates interactive features such as discussion forums, wikis, video conferencing, online tests. Examples include Blackboard, Angel, Moodle, Desire2Learn, & Sakai.

Micro-blog

A micro-blog differs from a traditional blog in that its content is typically smaller in size (i.e. the message is kept brief), allowing users to exchange elements of content such as short sentences and individual images - perfect for mobile communications devices such as smartphones and tablets. Twitter and Tumblr are examples of micro-blogs.

Open Source Software

Software developed in a public, collaborative manner and made available under a relaxed license agreement that permits users to freely study, change, improve and distribute the software. Copyright restrictions are either relaxed or non-existent. Common examples of open source eLearning products include the learning management systems Moodle and Sakai. Although free, implementing open source software typically requires a great deal more technical support from your college than for an equivalent commercial product. For details on open source software, go to the Educause site www.educause.edu and search for "Open Source Software in Education".

Podcast

May be either audio or video files that can be downloaded over the Internet and played at a later time. A teacher recording lectures or presentations could post them to either their college's LMS, or an Internet site such as YouTube or Apple's "iTunes U".

RSS Feed

An Internet service that automatically delivers (i.e. "pushes") new content to a computer or mobile device (e.g. smartphone or tablet) as soon as it is published. For more information on how this tool can be used effectively in blended delivery, go to: http://sites.wiki.ubc.ca/etec510/Using_RSS_Feeds_to_Enrich_Learning

Seven Principles

The complete title is "The Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education". Described by Chickering and Gamson in 1986 and is a concise summary of the kinds of teaching/learning activities that are most likely to improve learning outcomes. These principles apply directly to blended delivery. Go to <http://www.tltgroup.org/seven/home.htm> for details on how to apply these principles to online education.

Soft Skills

Personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job

performance and career prospects. They include leadership, interpersonal communications, problem solving, and decision making.

Streaming Media	Media (audio and/or video) that is being viewed or listened to as it is being sent over the Internet. No need to transfer an entire file beforehand. Similar to watching a television program or listening to radio. Many educational videos employ streaming.
Summative Assessment	The measurement of how effective the learning experience has been. Takes place after the learning experience e.g. a final exam.
Synchronous eLearning	Computer-assisted training where the instructor and participants are online at the same time (synchronized). Online chats and web conferencing are examples of synchronous eLearning.
Time Management Skills	The development of processes and work habits that make students more productive and, therefore, more successful in meeting course deadlines. These skills are especially important in a blended learning environment.
Twitter	A service that allows users to post brief messages (140 characters max), called a "tweet". Publically available to many people simultaneously, tweets can be used to augment a lecture, share resources, and allow students in a course to interact with one another.
Web 2.0	Originally, a person's experience on the web was as a passive audience member (Web 1.0). New services clustered under the umbrella term "Web 2.0" provide the ability for <u>interactive participation</u> on websites e.g. social networks such as Facebook, discussion forums, wikis, blogs, and Twitter.
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	A collection of integrated tools that deliver online learning. The tools enable the management of online learning, a method of sharing resource materials, student tracking, and assessment activities. A VLE may be provided as a single product (e.g. Blackboard, Angel) or as an integrated set of individual tools, some of which may be open source.
Wiki	Any collaborative website that allows participants using a web browser to modify, add, and delete content. A great tool to support collaborative learning. For an excellent example of a Wiki, go to Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org) - once there, search on "wiki" for more details.

Section 5: Practical Advice for Teachers - Samples and Examples

1. Introduction

As stated in Section 3 (*What Resources Are Required to Get Started?*), it is very important that you receive adequate training prior to offering a blended course. This includes gaining a good comfort level with technology in general; receiving training and gaining experience with the various tools in the Learning Management System at your college; and ideally, participating as a student in a blended delivery course/workshop (offered by your college's PD department).

It is also imperative that you be given time and support for the re-design of the course being offered, otherwise the online component may be seen as 'tacked on' and just 'extra work' by the students, rather than an integral part of the course as a whole. The development of a blended course involves transforming your methods of teaching from 'delivering material' to making students active participants in their own learning. This is true for both the in-class and online components.

2. Organizing Your Online Course (in the context of an LMS)

Most Learning Management Systems provide a variety of content areas for you to make course materials available to your students. These materials could include lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, links to online resources, online assignments, and quizzes.

It is probably easiest to think of a content area as a container where you can store virtually any type of course material for students to access. For example, many Blackboard courses have at least two content areas: *Course Information*, and *Course Documents*. These names are indicative of the material expected to be stored there, although you have complete freedom as to what material is placed in each area. Usually, *Course Information* contains the official college course description (e.g. topics, learning objectives, and how students will be graded) and other general material related to your course, such as class schedule, student expectations etc.. *Course Documents* contains the 'meat' of your course, including course notes, handouts, PowerPoint presentations, etc.

! Find out what content areas your LMS contains and if there are guidelines to how each area can be set up and used in your course.

Prior to adding any material to your *Course Documents* area, it is important to first determine how you want to organize the information such that students can easily navigate to the learning materials they need to access. Most Learning Management Systems use a system of folders and/or units; therefore, you must determine the folder structure much as you do when organizing files in your personal computer.

There is no “one best way” to organize your information; however, a few suggested methods are described below. No matter which method you select, it is important that it be logical and that you stick with the structure throughout the course.

! Choose a logical organization for your course and stick to it for the duration of the course.

A. Organizing Content by “Course Unit”

In this method, create top-level folders in the *Course Documents* area that follow the units specified in your course outline. See figure 1 below for a hypothetical *Introduction to History* course. In this example, a folder is created for each unit in the course. Within each main folder, a set of subfolders (Course Notes, Homework & Assignments, and Handouts) is created. Document files are then stored within the appropriate folders as indicated.

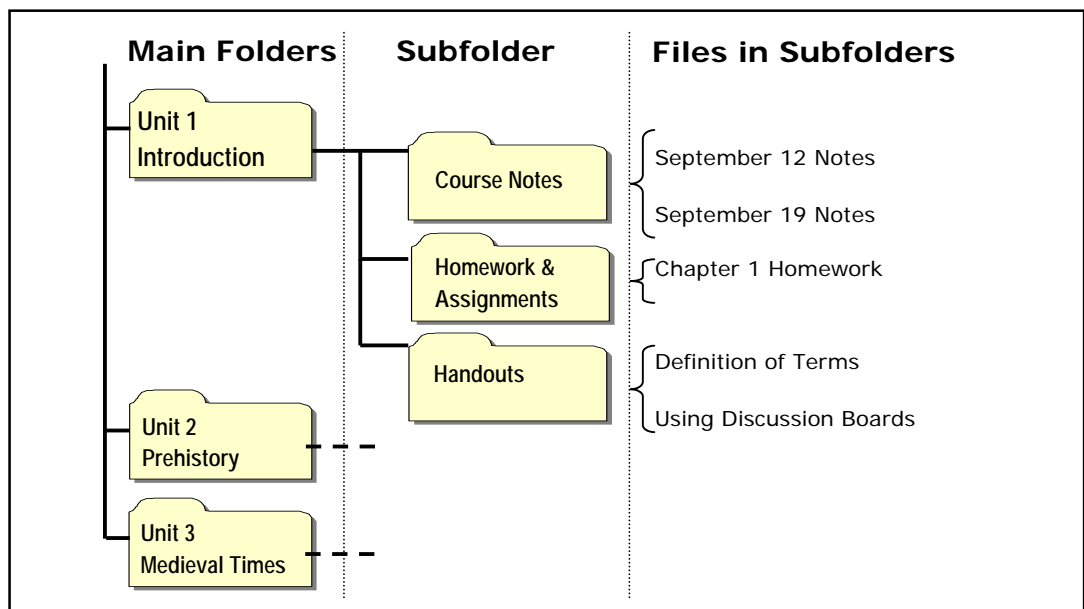


Figure 1: Organizing Content by Course Unit

B. Organizing Content in “Chronological Order”

This method is identical to organizing by Course Unit as shown above, except Units are replaced by Weeks (or ranges of dates) as the main folders. This method is most commonly used with online courses or courses where the exact timeline of events in a course has been predetermined. See figure 2 below for an example of this method:

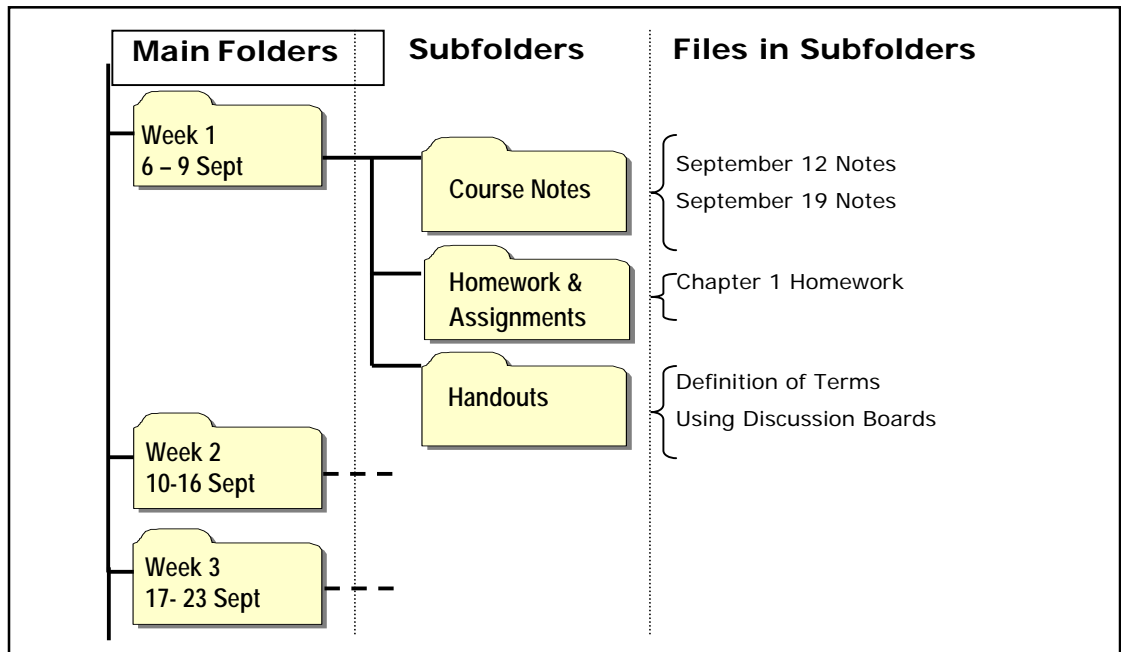


Figure 2: Organizing Content in Chronological Order

C. Organizing Content by “Type of Material”

As shown in figure 3 below, this method organizes course material by "type or classification". Each major classification (Course Notes, Homework, etc.) is broken down into Units, but could just as easily be broken down by "Weeks".

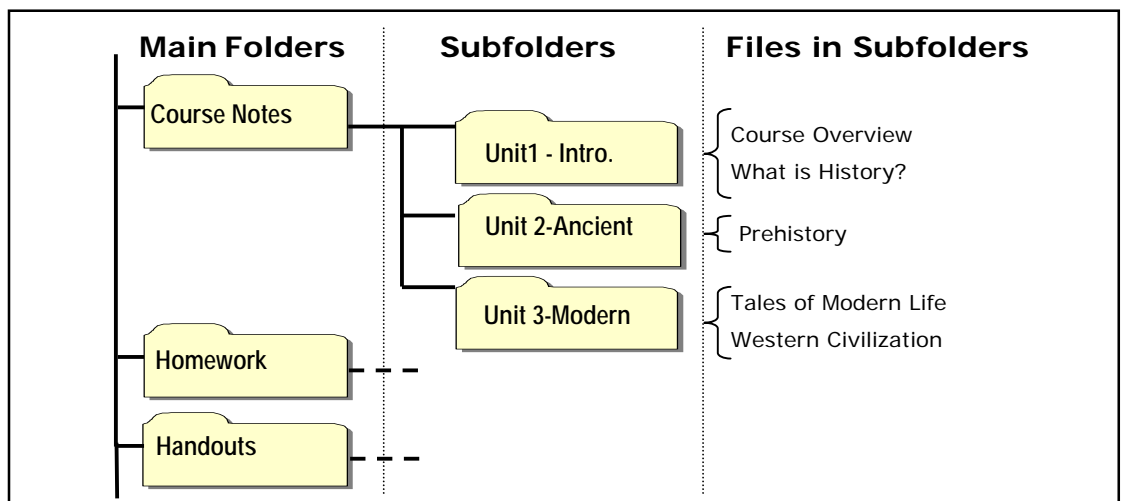


Figure 3: Organizing Content by Type of Material

3. Preparation/Tips

Now that you have decided on an overall organization for your online course, it's time to think about developing content and activities that will make best use of the online and in-class environments. The tips below are adapted from material prepared by the Learning Technology Center at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (http://www4.uwm.edu/ltc/hybrid/faculty_resources).

★ Tip Prior to starting the development process, make sure you know exactly how your college schedules blended courses. There are a variety of different scheduling models, and the model used will have a significant impact on how you develop your course. Here are just a few examples:

- ❖ The most common model is to spend a part of each week in-class and a part online - for example, two hours in-class and one hour online each week.
- ❖ Some teachers/colleges prefer to rotate between a block of weeks in-class, followed by the same number of weeks online throughout the whole semester – for example, two weeks in-class followed by two weeks online.
- ❖ Another option is to spend the first couple of weeks in-class, followed by a block of time exclusively online, then a final wrap-up of the course in-class - for example, four weeks in-class, eight weeks online, followed by three weeks in-class.

★ Tip Start small (and early) and prepare simple learning activities that meet the learning outcomes of a single module of your course. For example:

- ❖ A common mistake is to try too much, too soon, resulting in burnout for yourself and your students. Some teachers end up creating a 'course and a half', using too many new, and often confusing, technologies.
- ❖ Remember that online activities often take longer than expected.
- ❖ As you gain confidence working in the blended environment, you can start to experiment with different online activities and technologies. These can be incorporated gradually into your blended course.

- ★ Tip** Keep your focus on designing online activities that engage your students, not on simply delivering content.
- ❖ Don't just use the online course as a repository for lecture notes, reading assignments, etc. as a 'convenience' to your students. Similarly, try not to just lecture from these same notes or readings in the classroom environment. This will probably lead to your students skipping class, and is certainly not a blended course. Instead, create activities where the students must demonstrate they have read the material prior to class – for example, by completing a short online quiz, or by posting questions about areas causing difficulty to a discussion board or wiki. See the *Examples & Techniques* section below for more specific tips and techniques.
- ★ Tip** Ensure that you integrate the online and in-class components of your course.
- ❖ If you do not connect what happens online with what occurs in the classroom, you will end up with two parallel but unconnected courses. This is a problem for you and your students!
 - ❖ Think carefully about which learning outcomes could be better achieved online and which better achieved in-class. Then focus on developing challenging and interesting online activities that will complement what happens in the classroom.
 - ❖ For an interesting 'take' on this, read the article by Bill Tucker on 'flipped' classrooms at: <http://educationnext.org/the-flipped-classroom/>
- ★ Tip** Don't reinvent the wheel - take time to investigate what resources are already available for your course.
- ❖ Check out online activities available from your textbook publisher.
 - ❖ Investigate Learning Object repositories and other links (see subsection I on page 28).
 - ❖ Search for discipline-specific websites for available content.
 - ❖ Talk to instructors in your subject area and to those with experience in blended learning to discover possible resources.

★ **Tip** Make sure that you explain very clearly to your students the blended course format and provide help for them when they encounter difficulties.

- ❖ If possible, at the beginning of the semester give them a schedule of in-class and online activities, along with due dates for assignments, and refer to it on a weekly basis. If you don't have the time to be quite that organized the first time delivering your blended course, give your students a schedule of assignments on a month-by-month basis.
- ❖ Recommend to your students that they set aside a specific time each week to work on their online assignments. This will help them develop time-management skills, and make them aware that out-of-class time does not equate to 'free time'.
- ❖ Be much more explicit with explanations of online activities than you would be with an in-class assignment. This is a new way of learning for many students and can be quite intimidating.
- ❖ Provide them details on how to get help (e.g. online documents, tech support) in case they encounter difficulties logging into your course, accessing course materials, or performing online activities.

4. Examples & Techniques to Integrate the Online & In-Class Components

A. The Seven Principles

The "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education", originally published in the *AAHE Bulletin* (Chickering & Gamson, 1987), provides an excellent framework for evaluating teaching in traditional, face-to-face courses. However, these principles are equally relevant to blended courses, in that they stress the following:

- i. **Student-Faculty Contact**
- ii. **Active Learning**
- iii. **Co-operation Among Students**
- iv. **Prompt Feedback**
- v. **Time on Task**
- vi. **High Expectations**
- vii. **Respect for Diversity**

Using these Seven Principles as a guide, you should be able to design activities that engage your students with their learning, make full use of the power of the online world, and successfully integrate the online and in-class components.

Suggested Readings:

"Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" (Chickering & Gamson) at: <http://learningcommons.evergreen.edu/pdf/Fall1987.pdf>

"Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever" (Chickering & Ehrmann) at: <http://www.tlgroup.org/programs/seven.html>

Note: For each activity and example described below, specific principles that apply from the "Seven Principles" appear in braces to the left of the activity. For example, in the Welcome Announcement activity described below, *Active learning*, *Time on task*, *High expectations* are the three principles that apply.

B. Beginning of Semester Activities

A good place to start is with some simple icebreaker activities at the beginning of the semester to ensure that your students are interacting, engaged, and involved in their learning as soon as possible. These will help to make the online environment an integral part of their learning experience and will eliminate some of their fears and doubts about becoming an online learner.

How/Where to Begin?

Create a Welcome Announcement in your online course (voice and/or text) that:

Active learning
Time on task
High expectations

- ❖ Welcomes your students to the course
- ❖ Takes them on a short tour of the online course, pointing out the different areas and their contents. If you have the tools available, this points them to one or more simple online activities to be completed before the next in-class session or in the first week. It is important that these activities are mandatory and have a short timeframe.

Sample Beginning of Semester Activities

Active learning
Prompt feedback
Student-faculty contact

- ❖ **Create a short online quiz** - this could simply contain a few fun questions, or could be a very valuable tool to help you find out about the students' previous experience in your subject area. It also gives students the opportunity to take a quiz in a non-threatening environment.

Student-faculty contact
Respect for diversity

- ❖ **Send a short email through your LMS to all your students with one or two specific questions and ask for a reply** - this will confirm that students are able to successfully access and use their college email. Also, the questions posed could help you find out the students' expectations for the course and any perceived problem areas.

Student-faculty contact
Cooperation among students
Respect for diversity
Active learning

- ❖ **Create a fun 'Getting to Know You' forum in the Discussion Board** -where you introduce yourself briefly and give 3 pieces of information about yourself – for example, your favourite hobby/movie/book/flavour of ice cream/place to visit etc.. Students then must respond in kind with their own short bios and favourites, and also comment on two other students' postings. In the following face-to-face session, you can create some short activities where they form groups based on their answers to the questions.

Cooperation among students
Active learning
Time on task

- ❖ **Set up a scavenger hunt** - where the students navigate through your online course to locate certain items (the names of required readings, homework assignments, online quizzes, etc.), and make a note of exactly where they found them. This could be done in small groups and the first group to email you with the correct answers is the winner. This helps students to become familiar with the organization of your course and hopefully will remove anxiety about participating in a blended course.

C. Using Online Discussions

A Discussion Board can offer an important way for you and your students to stay connected in a blended course.

Why Use?

Respect for diversity

- ❖ Provides the opportunity for all students (second-language, those with disabilities, and even the most introverted) to participate in discussions. These students often do not have a 'voice' in the face-to-face environment.

High expectations
Time on task

- ❖ Allows for more in-depth and thoughtful responses, since students have flexibility in when they post their contributions.

High expectations
Active learning

- ❖ Allows students to reference (and provide links to) external sources of information in their postings.

Student-faculty contact
Cooperation among students

- ❖ Provides the opportunity for students to pose questions and ask for help from other students, as well as the instructor.

Advice for Successful Discussions:

- ❖ Make participation in the discussions compulsory and part of the students' grade. If participation is optional or counts for very little of the overall grade, most students will not participate – sad, but true!
- ❖ Clearly define your expectations when students post responses. This should include spelling, grammar, 'tone', format, and writing style. It could also include the minimum level of participation expected in each discussion topic.
- ❖ Use the initial Icebreaker Discussion to point out to students when their responses are inappropriate either in content or style.
- ❖ Make sure your expectations are reasonable given the overall workload of the students in your course and in other courses.

Sample Learning Activities Using the Discussion Board

*Active learning
Student-faculty contact
High expectation
Time on task
Prompt feedback*

- ❖ **To help you focus the in-class lecture/discussion**
Students are assigned material to read (lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, or textbook chapter), and are then expected to post responses to the following questions prior to the face-to-face session:
 - What topic gave you most difficulty? Why?
 - What question would you have liked to ask the instructor during your reading?

You can then use the classroom time to concentrate on the identified problem areas. Your students will learn very quickly that the more time and effort they put into their responses, the more benefit they will receive from the face-to-face session.

*Active learning
Cooperation among students
High expectation
Time on task*

- ❖ **To ensure that students are prepared for class**
Students are assigned material to read (lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, or textbook chapter), and then expected to develop and post two or three multiple-choice questions, with answers, to the discussion board. You can then quickly create a short online quiz using some of these questions, and students do this at the beginning of the in-class session.

Class time is then used to discuss and elaborate on the content – either as a class or in small groups.

Active learning
Cooperation among students
Student-faculty contact

❖ **To develop students’ problem-solving skills**

Create a ‘General Help’ discussion board where students can post questions about course-related problems and encourage other students to respond with suggested solutions.

Note: Make sure you monitor the postings closely. After reviewing them, continue the discussion in the classroom.

Student-faculty contact
Active Learning
Cooperation among students
High expectations
Time on task

❖ **To reinforce and further explore material from the face-to-face session**

This technique is very useful when new, difficult material is introduced during the in-class session. You can use the online environment to discuss, reinforce and further analyze the content, by requiring students to post responses to your questions, and also to others’ responses.

This can be taken a step further by having a student or group of students summarize the online discussion for the next face-to-face session.

D. Using Online Groups for Collaborative Learning

Why Use?

Online groups can be used very effectively to facilitate in-class group work and to help overcome many of the problems usually encountered, such as: lack of time to meet, incompatible work schedules, and unequal participation by individual group members. Online group areas help students work together and organize their activities by providing private discussion boards, chat areas, document exchange areas, group email and group task areas. Some Learning Management Systems also provide group blogs and wikis. An added bonus is that you can view all of the activities in each of the group areas, and can step in quickly when a group is becoming dysfunctional or a member is not participating.

Check out Sheridan College's Group Work Learning Object at:

<http://www-acad.sheridanc.on.ca/learningobjects/LO4/GroupWork/>

Sheridan's Centre for Curriculum and Faculty Development has created this excellent Learning Object to help teachers set up and manage groups in face-to-face and online environments. Since it is available under a Creative Commons License, you can use any of the resources in any way you see fit.

In general, group areas can be used very effectively to:

- allow students to review or critique each other's work before submission.
- facilitate student collaboration on a paper or project.
- conduct manageable discussions in courses with more than 10 or 15 students.
- provide private discussion forums to help teams prepare for group presentations, debates, etc.

Sample Learning Activities Using Online Groups

❖ To promote critical thinking:

Students are expected to read some material and are given two or three questions to discuss in the group discussion board. Questions are designed to help the students reflect on the readings and apply their critical thinking skills. The group leader then summarizes the responses and posts this to the class discussion board. The instructor can use these summaries as the basis for in-class discussion.

Cooperation among students
Active learning
High expectations
Time on task

Cooperation among students
Active learning

❖ **Collaborating on learning:**

Group members work together to post weekly summaries of the course material, as well as sample test questions on the group discussion board. You can check this material for completeness and accuracy, and as an incentive give a few bonus marks for the ‘best’ summary and use it for review in-class before tests.

Cooperation among students
Active learning
High expectations
Student-faculty contact

❖ **Writing reports:**

Each group member is assigned a section of the report and initially works independently on it. Once they have completed this, all members then post their sections to the group discussion board and the group collaborates to improve the clarity, accuracy, completeness and organization of the combined report. At this stage, you can work with each group in-class and offer suggestions and help. Finally, each team posts the completed report to the class discussion board and each student is then expected to post comments on other group submissions.

Cooperation among students
Student-faculty contact
Active learning
High expectations
Respect for diversity

❖ **Critiques:**

Each group member posts the first and subsequent drafts of his/her essay to the group discussion board, and other members offer constructive advice and suggestions. This is especially useful in ESL or first year English classes. Many teachers say that students seem to find the prospect of writing online somewhat less intimidating than handing in a formal essay. Better still, there are multiple opportunities for feedback on their ideas both in-class and online from you and their peers.

As one teacher said after using discussion boards in her blended delivery course:

“I especially appreciated the Discussion Groups I had set up. They really helped to establish a sense of continuity between class contact hours and allowed students to reflect on material and ideas we did cover in class”

E. Using Online Quizzes and Tests

Why Use?

- ❖ They are a very valuable tool to help you determine the level of your students' learning and progress throughout the semester.
- ❖ All Learning Management Systems provide a mechanism for creating online quizzes/tests and printed versions quickly and easily.
- ❖ Depending on the options chosen, students can receive immediate feedback to their answers.
- ❖ Students can see quiz/test results immediately in the online Grade Centre.
- ❖ Most textbook publishers provide test banks of questions that can be imported easily into LMS quiz generators.
- ❖ Quizzes can be used as learning opportunities for students if they attempt them repeatedly.

Check your textbook publisher's website to find out if there are test banks that you can use. If using publisher test banks, always review the questions and answers supplied before using them to ensure they are meaningful and that the answers are correct!

Sample Learning Activities Using Online Quizzes and Tests

Active learning
Prompt feedback
Time on task

❖ Practice for Tests:

Use online quizzes to provide your students with the opportunity to practice ahead of scheduled in-class tests. This is very easy to do if you have a 'pool' of questions from the publisher. Students are allowed multiple attempts and the questions are chosen randomly from the test bank. There are no grades associated with the practice quizzes – the more often the students take the quiz, the better prepared they will be.

Active learning
Prompt feedback
Time on task

❖ Homework Assignment:

Assign an online quiz that your students must complete as a homework assignment prior to class. Most Learning Management Systems allow you to specify a date and time range that the quiz will be available to the students. Once students have completed the quiz, they are given immediate feedback with the correct answers, and possibly, page references in the textbook. This helps students review difficult material and prepare them for the in-class session. You can then use class time to deal with problem areas, misconceptions, and to summarize content.

Note: to ensure students complete the quizzes, consider giving them credit (even 1%) for doing so.

Active learning
Prompt feedback
Time on task

❖ **Formal Supervised Online Testing**

Students take the online test in a controlled setting - in a supervised lab with a time limit. To prevent cheating, questions can be presented randomly to students, and the only feedback they receive is the final grade at the end of the test. At a later time, you can permit the students to review their answers to the test, or you can review the test in the next in-class session.

As one professor using online quizzes stated:

"I find online quizzes are a great way of reinforcing theory. They also give my students another good reason to make positive use of the textbook. I like them!"

F. Online Submission of Assignments

Why use?

Giving your students the ability to submit assignments electronically provides convenience for all of you: you do not have to wade through stacks of papers (MS Word documents, spreadsheets, etc.), and students don't have to rush frantically into college to push papers under your door before the deadline. Most Learning Management Systems provide a mechanism for electronic submission with a variety of different names; we will refer to it as the 'Assignment Manager'. Note that these assignments can be in almost any format, but the most common are usually text files (e.g. MS Word), and spreadsheets (e.g. MS Excel).

In general, online submission of assignments provides the following benefits:

Prompt feedback

❖ When you use the Assignment Manager to create an assignment in one of the content areas of your course, a column is automatically created in the Grade Centre. Once the assignment is graded, the students can view their grades immediately.

Time on task
High expectations

❖ On your LMS, you can set and specify availability dates for the assignment. This allows students to submit their work until the "due date". Your LMS may even allow late submissions and apply a "late penalty".

- [*Time on task*] ❖ Students can retrieve the assignment directly from your course anytime and anywhere there is Internet access.
- [*Prompt feedback*] ❖ Each assignment that is submitted has a time and date stamp; the student can check the Grade Centre to ensure that the file has indeed been uploaded, and you can also see which assignments are ready to be graded.
- [*Time on task*
Student-faculty contact] ❖ You can retrieve and grade an assignment directly from the Grade Centre. You can also type some comments for the student.

❗ **Post your assignments in a consistent place in your online course and provide your students with detailed step-by-step instructions on how to retrieve the assignments and submit their work.**

G. Using Wikis

Why use?

Basically, a wiki is a website where contributors can easily add, delete or generally change the content which has been put there. No technical knowledge is required for a group of students to work together to create team websites with text, graphics, sound, videos, and links to other websites or pages. Just think about Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>) – this is a prime example of what can be done by a group of interested and knowledgeable people using a very simple tool. Most Learning Management Systems have built-in wikis now, but if not, there are many products that can be installed as ‘add-ons’ and integrated completely into the LMS environment. There are also many free wiki tools on the Web, including Wikispaces and Google Sites.

In general, using wikis in your online class has the following benefits:

- ❖ Students can work together to create, revise, and reorganize content quickly and easily – no knowledge of special software or programming is required. New pages can be created with a click of the mouse.
- ❖ Since the wiki is on the Web, students can work on it at any time from any location with an Internet connection.
- ❖ Every contribution and revision by students is recorded in the wiki history – nothing is lost. It is also possible to view and revert to previous versions of the wiki page if necessary - a very nice feature in the case of inadvertent deletion of content!

- ❖ You can check the wiki history to determine a particular student's contribution to the website. This is a very useful feature when disputes arise regarding who did what in a group project.

! **Check out this 5 minute eClip** from Common Craft for a simple explanation of wikis: <http://www.commoncraft.com/video/wikis>

Sample Learning Activities Using Wikis

*Active learning
Cooperation among students
Student-faculty contact
High expectations*

- ❖ **Course wiki:**
Set up a wiki that is available to the whole class and invite all students to contribute links to online resources they have found useful. Encourage them to add short descriptions of these resources as well. Other students (and you) can add comments expressing their opinions of these links. If you use some of these links during class, students will be more motivated to contribute to the wiki. At the end of the course, students may be able to download the wiki and so have a very useful resource to take away with them - check out your LMS to see if this is possible.

*Cooperation among students
Time on task
High expectations
Active learning*

- ❖ **Group project wiki:**
Set up a wiki for each project group in your class. Students can use this as the central organizational space for their project: to set up agenda items for face-to-face meetings, to store meeting notes, to upload files and references, and to collaborate on developing presentations and reports. With the wiki's versioning capability you can easily see the evolution of each page as students add, modify and delete content. During your face-to-face meetings with the group you can use the wiki to discuss the quality of each student's contributions. This type of collaborative project helps promote pride of ownership in the team's activities.

*High expectations
Active learning*

- ❖ **e-Portfolios:**
Set up a wiki for each student where s/he can upload materials during the semester to create an e-portfolio 'on the fly'. As stated above, the wiki can contain any combination of text, pictures, videos, sound clips and links to other online resources, and can prove valuable when used as a presentation tool during interviews for jobs.

H. Using Blogs and Journals

Why use?

A blog is an online personal journal in which the owner can post his/her thoughts, opinions, and reflections for others to see. Most blogs allow viewers to make comments on the posts. Like wikis, blogs are very easy to use, requiring no prior knowledge of specialized software - many blogging tools provide themes or templates that allow you and your students to create professional-looking webpages in minutes. However, there is no versioning capability in a blog; it is essentially a sequential listing of postings, with the most recent at the top. Most learning management systems have built-in blog/journal tools now, but if not, there are third-party products that can be installed as 'add-ons' and integrated with the LMS environment. There are also many free blog tools on the Web – Wordpress, Edublogs, and Blogger, just to name a few.

In general, using blogs and journals in your online class has the following benefits:

- ❖ A private blog – usually called a journal - offers students the opportunity to reflect on course content and communicate privately with you.
- ❖ When you configure the blog as a group tool, students can view each other's posts and make helpful suggestions and comments.

 **Check out this 5 minute eClip** from Common Craft for a simple explanation of blogs: <http://www.commoncraft.com/blogs>

Sample Learning Activities Using Blogs and Journals

*Prompt feedback
Student-faculty contact*

❖ **Private reflective journals:**

Use the blog tool to create a private reflective journal for each student in your writing class. Now, instead of trying to decipher bad handwriting (and grammar) and scribbling your comments in the margins, you can read the students' submissions online and respond much more quickly and easily. Since students only require an Internet connection, they also have more flexibility in when and where they create their journal entries. Online reflective journals often create a closer connection between students and teachers, and this carries over into the face-to-face environment.

Cooperation among students
Student-faculty contact

❖ **Public blog:**

You can choose to make blog entries public, allowing all students to view all entries. For example, you could create a public blog with a series of questions asking for opinions on how to improve the evaluation process in your course. Students can read other students' entries and build upon them.

Student-faculty contact
Time on task

❖ **Project journals:**

Journals are ideal for individual projects. For example, in a Creative Writing course, the owner of each journal posts an initial draft of the project and you add comments. In this manner, the students are able to refine a section of a writing assignment over a period of time, using your guidance and suggestions. The student can also comment on his or her entries to continue the conversation with you online. Of course, the conversation can also be continued in the classroom.

I. Learning Objects/Online Resources

Why use?

Learning objects and online resources are readily accessible. There is an almost overwhelming amount and variety of online resources available to you now; so, it is well worth your while to investigate some of these before creating your own online activities. There is no point in reinventing the wheel! Here are just a few suggestions.

Publishers' Resources:

Most publishers provide a multitude of resources for teachers and students – from electronic test banks and PowerPoint slides to complete websites with interactive activities and simulations. If you are not sure what resources are provided with a specific textbook, check the preface, contact the publisher's representative or investigate the publisher's website.

Learning Objects and Repositories:

Learning objects (small units of learning) can be incorporated very easily into your online courses to provide a wide variety of interactive learning opportunities for your students. The majority of learning objects are stored in repositories (online searchable libraries), so the biggest problem most faculty encounter is figuring out where to find them! While most learning objects are free, some sites require you to sign in with a user id and password. Here are just a few:

- ❖ Wisconsin Online Resource Centre
<http://www.wisc-online.com/>
 This is a digital library of over 2000 objects developed primarily by faculty from the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), with the help of multimedia technicians. Free access, but you must create a user ID.
- ❖ MERLOT Online Repository
<http://www.merlot.org/Home.po>
 This is a searchable collection of peer reviewed, higher education, online learning materials created by registered MERLOT members.
- ❖ The Maricopa Learning Exchange
<http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/mlx/index.php>
 This is an electronic warehouse of ideas, examples, and resources (represented as "packages") that support student learning at the Maricopa Community Colleges.

Other Useful Sites

- ❖ Acadia University Library Tutorials
<http://library.acadiau.ca/help/tutorials.html>
 This site contains some excellent animated tutorials on research skills, how to find credible sources, how to quote correctly, etc. These should be required viewing for all of your students!
- ❖ The Official Website of the Nobel Prize
<http://nobelprize.org/educational/>
 You don't have to be a genius to understand the work of the Nobel laureates. These games and simulations, based on Nobel Prize-awarded achievements, will teach and inspire your students while they are having fun!
- ❖ eClips
<http://www.commoncraft.com/>
 Five minute, very entertaining videos from Commoncraft on current trends in technology (Wikis, Blogs, Twitter etc.). Try one - you might become addicted, but your college will have to become a member if you want to embed clips in your online course now.

❖ MIT's Open Courseware Site

<http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>

Free lecture notes, exams, and videos of over 2000 courses from MIT. There is a wealth of useable material here, not all of which is suitable for college students, but you will be surprised by how much you can use.

5. Thoughts on Evaluating the Blended Course

It is a good idea to get student feedback throughout the semester, not just at the end - especially important when delivering a blended course for the first time.

Carol Twigg's National Center for Academic Transformation (<http://www.thencat.org>) suggests inviting students to participate in focus groups to discuss the redesigned course or particular aspects of the course. Again, we have to think about whether the teacher and/or the students would feel comfortable in this environment. Another thought on this would be to set up an anonymous Discussion Board and pose a simple question every so often: e.g.

- *What one thing would you like to change in the course so far?*
- *Tell me one thing you like and one thing you dislike/would like me to change/ about online discussions -or "online groups" or "online quizzes"... or any other tool you are using.*

Ongoing course evaluation doesn't ensure the success of the course, but the more that students are involved in what happens during the course, the better the results will be!

Section 6:
Checklists

Blended Delivery "How to Get Started" Checklist for Teachers and Managers

Here are a few points to consider as you get started:

Blended Delivery - Getting Started	√
There is both departmental and college support to proceed with Blended Delivery	
College PD department offers training and support for Blended Delivery	
Teacher and students have access to college LMS	
Teacher has gained proficiency with the college LMS	
Teacher has participated, as a student, in blended delivery training	
Teacher has designed his/her own blended delivery course, with assistance	
Development time for course redesign has been allocated	
Technical support is available for teacher	
Technical support is available for students	
Check your college's definition of "blended delivery"	
Check college rules for the scheduling of blended delivery. For example, does your college use a "2 hour in-class and 1 hour online per week" model or does it use a schedule that alternates several dedicated weeks in-class followed by several dedicated week online.	

Checklist for Teachers

Here is a checklist of tasks to think about as you are developing and delivering a blended course:

Task	✓
Get training on how to use your LMS	
Find out what content areas your LMS contains and if there are "How to Use" guides	
Use some of the features of your LMS with your regular in-class courses prior to trying blended learning	
Participate in a blended delivery workshop at your college	
Choose a logical organization for your online blended delivery course and keep it for the duration of the course	
Prior to starting the development process make sure you know exactly how your college schedules blended courses	
Start small (and early) and prepare simple learning activities that meet the learning outcomes of a single module of your course	
Focus on designing activities that engage your students, not on delivering content	
Ensure that you integrate the online and in-class components of your course	
Don't reinvent the wheel - take time to investigate what resources are already available for your course	
When creating activities for your students apply the 7 <i>Principles</i> described by Chickering & Ehrmann in "Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever"	
When using online discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make participation in the discussions compulsory and part of the students' grade • clearly define your expectations when students post responses • ensure your expectations are reasonable given the overall workload of the students in your course and other courses 	
Before using online groups, check out Sheridan College's Group Work Learning Object at: http://www-acad.sheridanc.on.ca/learningobjects/LO4/GroupWork	
Before creating online quizzes and tests, check your textbook publisher's website to find out if there are test banks that you can use	
When using online submission of assignments, post your assignments in a consistent place in your online course, and provide your students with detailed step-by-step instructions on how to submit their work	
Check out this 5 minute eClip from Common Craft for a simple explanation of wikis: http://www.commoncraft.com/video/wikis	
Check out this 5 minute eClip from Common Craft for a simple explanation of blogs: http://www.commoncraft.com/blogs	

Section 7: Additional Resources

Related Online Resources

Two documents preceded this Resource Guide and are available on the College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading website: www.collegeupgradingon.ca

1. *Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom Project – Blended Delivery: A Literature Review, May 2011*
2. *Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom Project – Blended Delivery: Report of Survey Results, May 2011*

The report about the pilot courses/modules delivered at six colleges during the fall 2011 term is also available on the above website: *Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom Project – Blended Delivery: What We Learned from Pilots at Six Colleges, January 2012.*

In addition to the above online resources, these additional references seem particularly useful for faculty:

Garrison and N. Vaughan, *Blended Learning in Higher Education: Framework, Principles, and Guidelines*. San Francisco, CA. John Wiley & Sons, 2008

College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading. (2008). "ACE Program"
Website: www.collegeupgradingon.ca/ace.htm

Chickering and Gamson. "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education"
Website: www.iub.edu/~icts/pdf/sevenPrinciple_fall1987.pdf

NWT Literacy Council. (2008, September). *Using Technology in the Classroom: A Great Way to Engage and Inspire Learners*. NWT Literacy Council. Yellowknife, NT, Canada.
Website: www.nwt.literacy.ca/digital_literacy/why_use/using_technology_classroom.pdf

Mossavar-Rahmani and Larson-Daugherty. (2007, March). "Supporting the Hybrid Learning Model: A New Proposition," *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching* [Web], vol. 3, no. 1.
Website: jolt.merlot.org/vol3no1/larson-daugherty.pdf

Snyder and Shibley. (2009, March). "Blended Learning Course Design," Magna Publications. Madison, WI. Faculty Focus Magna Publications. Madison, WI.
Website: www.facultyfocus.com/white-papers/white-paper-blended-learning-course-design

Napier, S. Dekhane and S. Smith. (2011, February). "Transitioning to Blended Learning: Understanding Student and Faculty Perceptions" *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks (JALN)*, vol. 15, issue 1.
Website: sloanconsortium.org/jaln/v15n1/transitioning-blended-learning-understanding-student-and-faculty-perceptions

J. Ausburn. (2004). *Course Design Elements Most Valued by Adult Learners in Blended Online Education Environments: An American Perspective*. Educational Media International. United Kingdom.
Website: test.scripts.psu.edu/users/k/h/khk122/woty/OnlineAdultLearners/Ausburn%202004.pdf

B. Tucker. (2011). *The Flipped Classroom*. EDUCATIONnext (Winter 2012, Vol 12, No. 1).

Website: educationnext.org/the-flipped-classroom/

B. Clark. (2011). *Blended Delivery: A Literature Review*. College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading.

Website: http://www.nald.ca/library/research/csc/movtech_review/movtech_review.pdf

University of Iowa Writing Center. (2009). "*The Art of Netiquette*"

Website: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/writers/handouts/Netiquette.shtml>

Here is a highly recommended and "classic" book on using Blended Delivery:

R. Garrison and N. Vaughan, *Blended Learning in Higher Education: Framework, Principles, and Guidelines*. San Francisco, CA. John Wiley & Sons, 2008. Book.