

Blended Learning

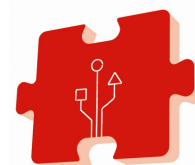
Staff Quick Guide



Version 2 [Feb 2010] Produced by the LTEU Learning Technology Team:

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About this guide

There is a growing bank of advice and resources on blended learning and on using new technologies within the blend. This guide uses a variety of sources to provide staff with:

- a. A **Blended Learning Considerations and Options Guide** in five parts which can be completed at the outset of the course or module planning process to aid thinking about why, how and what technology could best be integrated in to the blend.
- b. An **Online Learning Delivery Checklist** of best practice for courses that have already decide on a blended approach with a strong element of new technologies and are in the process of planning and development.
- c. A list of **Further Resources and Reading**

It will be useful for staff to consult with their Faculty Learning Technology when completing the questionnaires in the guide, to discuss questions regarding technologies, their availability, suitability and support.

What is blended learning and where is it going?

“Blended learning involves increasing flexibility: options for what, how, when, and with whom they participate in the course”. (Collis, 2005)

“Blended learning does not need to imply more methods of delivery, merely better methods of delivery” (Epic 2009b)

Staff are increasingly interested in the idea of blended learning. This is not a new concept, educators have always mixed different dimensions of learning – where, when, how to facilitate learning. The Epic White Paper on blended learning (2009a) explains that “there have been six major waves of technological innovation in learning: writing, printing, broadcast media, consumer storage media, PC and CD-ROM and Internet technology. With each of these innovations, new forms of blended learning arose.”

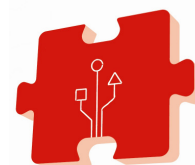
What is new to this matrix of options is the range of technologies now available, their capacity to embrace all the other technologies that have gone before, and the drivers for more flexible learning which these technologies can then facilitate.

The Government is increasingly looking to sector to provide more flexible means of delivering higher education. However, they acknowledge that to use of new technologies requires a range of skill sets and can be resource intensive. As a result collaboration between staff and between institutions will only increase.

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Blended learning with technology – considerations and options guide

This section can be completed at the outset of the course or module planning process to aid thinking about why, how and what technology could best be integrated in to the blend.

a. The learning

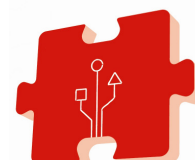
Briefly outline the nature of the learning and any initial thoughts you might have on how this could impact on the role of new technologies in your programme.

Notes	Impact on using new technologies
Subject:	
Objectives:	
Duration:	
Locations(s) of learning:	
Attendance:	
If current course, what is working well?	
If current course, what is not working well?	
If a current course are existing materials and resources in electronic format?	
If new course will there be time given for the development of online resources?	
Summary/conclusion	

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b. The learners

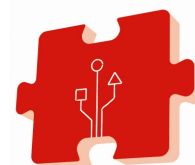
Consider the nature of the learners, and what impact their situation and experience could have on how you use technology in your course/programme.

Notes	Impact on using new technologies
Numbers:	Large numbers bring greater economies of scale when using technology
Level:	
Experience/background:	
Technology experience (will students be comfortable with technology?)	
Technology access (do students have easy access to technology where they will undertake learning?)	
Summary/conclusion	

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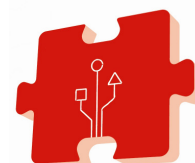
c. Institutional resources

Use of new technologies in education can be extremely costly, and much of the investment is required “up front”. The importance of these questions increases with the amount of new technology you are planning to use in your programme. Consultation with other departments early on in the planning process is key.

Notes	Impact on using new technologies
Can staff be given time to develop learning materials and activities for online delivery and/or could they be purchased?	
Do staff have the skills to develop and deliver an online course or is staff development required?	LTEU can help with staff development
What technical and e-learning support could staff call on in the institution?	Talk to LTEU and Computing Services
What support is available to students if they are learning away from campus and/or out of “office hours”.	
If you want to deliver a programme or part of a programme online does the institution have the tools to enable you to achieve all you require?	Talk to LTEU and Computing Services
Summary/conclusion	

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d. Reasons for considering using new technology

Thinking about why you are considering the use of new technologies in your programme should highlight where it will be essential to integrate new technologies and where it would be desirable. Educators' motivations for integrating technologies tend to fall into four areas:

- **To enhance learning and teaching** (e.g: active learning, collaborative learning, quality of resources, quality of assessment and feedback)
- **To make efficiencies** (e.g. improving processes)
- **To develop student skills** (e.g. graduate skills, digital skills, employability)
- **To increase flexibility** (e.g. attracting new students, supporting work-based or placement learning)
- **To manage increasing student numbers**

It is highly likely that most if not all of these could be motivating you to look at new technologies. Most "traditional" campus-based programmes started using new technologies to enhance learning and teaching, but in doing so many bolted on the use of technology, increasing staff and sometimes student workload. It is increasingly acknowledged that programmes need to integrate and replace delivery mechanisms rather than adding to them.

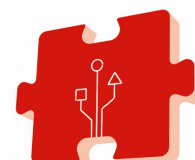
Ranking the importance of these motivations (high, medium and low) should prove helpful and indicate where it will be helpful to make use of new technologies: **in the induction process, the learning teaching and assessment (LTA), administration and support.**

If you are working with an existing course, your comments in section 3a) on what is working well and not so well in your course should assist completion of this section.

Motivations	Consider using technology in:	H/M/L
Enhancement	LTA, and possibly induction	
Efficiencies	Administration and possibly induction, LTA and support	
Student skills	LTA	
Flexibility	all areas: induction, LTA, admin and support	
Student no.s	all areas: induction, LTA, admin and support	
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e. Aligning available new technologies to support elements of your course

You should now have an idea of which elements of your course would benefit from the integration of new technologies. Now complete the relevant sections based on this, and list possible options for consideration.

Pre-arrival/induction

Some technology options	Notes, thoughts and potential options
course promotional website online registration and computing account activation pre-course online area with info and tasks option social networking group introductory tasks using VLE, find, add etc online "getting to know you" via a discussion board	Note initial options, their pedagogic function, and where staff time and development would be needed

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

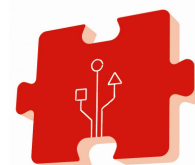
Your choice of technology options will depend on the nature of the learning, the learners, your reasons for using technology.

Some technology options	Notes and potential choices
Remembering: online resources (docs, presentations) re-usable learning objects websites e-journals/databases podcasts videos online f2f session highlights computer aided tests and assessments classroom voting systems student online reflection/PDP	Note initial options, their pedagogic function, and where staff time and development would be needed
Understanding: searching and critical analysis student generated resource bank student online reflection/PDP re-usable learning objects discussion on resources found computer aided tests and assessments and feedback	

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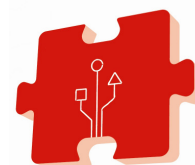
<p>classroom voting systems tutor feedback blog online seminars via video conferencing</p>	
<p>Applying: student presentation student blog student website online problem based learning/WebQuest group project using a wiki group presentation using a wiki computer aided tests and assessments and feedback discussion on work-based, practice issue student online reflection/PDP virtual worlds/gaming tools computer games</p>	
<p>Analysing: student online reflection/PDP online discussion computer aided tests and assessments and feedback virtual worlds/gaming tools computer games</p>	
<p>Evaluating: student online reflection/PDP online discussion or formal debate online survey tool</p>	
<p>Creating: student presentation student blog student website student video presentation/diary student online reflection/PDP online scrapbook/blog virtual world</p>	

Using Anderson, 2001, Bloom revised

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Administration and communication

Some technology options	Notes, thoughts and potential options
course announcement on VLE course announcements sent as txt message tutor contact details and profile on VLE student profiles on VLE Online tutor office hours via video conferencing	Note initial options, their pedagogic function, and where staff time and development would be needed

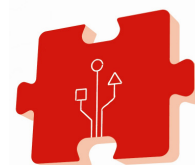
Support

Some technology options	Notes, thoughts and potential options
online FAQs/glossary (tutor and student generated) online tutorials via video conferencing links from VLE to graduate skills resources use of Turnitin plagiarism detection service	Note initial options, their pedagogic function, and where staff time and development would be needed

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2) Online Learning delivery checklist

If your course is primarily at a distance there is a growing bank of best practice which you should factor in to your design and delivery. Below is a brief checklist containing key suggestions:

Introductory information and “ice-breaker” activities on using the technologies and online resources provided at outset of course

Students made aware of expectations for participation online

Students provided with self assessment on online learning skills

The online course contains:

- Profiles, contact details, availability and working hours of academic staff
- Contact details of administrative staff
- Profiles of students
- Course information and administration details including timeline
- Learning activities as well as resources
- Estimate of time needed to undertake activities
- Opportunities of interaction and collaboration
- Links to appropriate e-resources
- Links to support and help mechanisms
- Feedback and assessment

Online information and activities are structured, easily navigable and “chunked”.

The online environment is organic with both staff and student contributing as the course proceeds

The course a variety of learning methods and media

Milestones and motivators are in place

Online learning environment layout and design is consistent and accessible

Use of images also conforms to accessibility guidelines

Use of video, audio and images is designed for optimal accessibility and speed

3) References and resources

- Collis, B. (2005) *ICT for Blended Learning* Available at http://www.cellbiol.eu/docs/ICT_for_blended_learning_Collis.pdf
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