



Converting to Blended Learning

GUIDE

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Introduction

Before converting learning materials to a distance learning format it is imperative to understand the background of online education. Distance education is defined as an institution base, formal education where the learning group is separated and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources, and instructors” (Simonson, Smaldino & Zvacek, 2015, p.30). They are four concepts that embrace the definition. First, the idea that distance education is institutionally based. Second, idea is the separation between the teacher and the student by time or location. Third, idea is interactive communication by asynchronous or synchronous interaction and finally, the idea of connecting the learners, resources and instructors. (Simonson, Smaldino & Zvacek, 2015, p.33).

There are many types of online formats. However, the main ones are online, blended also called hybrid, and web-facilitated. A distance learning course content is at least 80% delivered online (Simonson, Smaldino & Zvacek, 2015). While blended or hybrid course will vary by need but is typically between 30%-79% facilitated online. More information on blended courses will be available in this manual. Lastly, a web-facilitated course is when web-based technology is used, but only about 29% of the course content is delivered online (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2012). A blended learning format is a substitute to the traditional face-to-face classroom. It combines online learning and face-to-face classroom environments. A successful learning system provides a learning

environment where student interact with each other and are able to reach the learning outcome. With careful planning is where this type of environment student learning is achieved (Simonson, Smaldino & Zvacek, 2015). This guide has been developed to assist the trainer in adapting part of the face-to-face course to a blended training module that includes delivering the content online.

PRE-PLANNING STRATEGIES

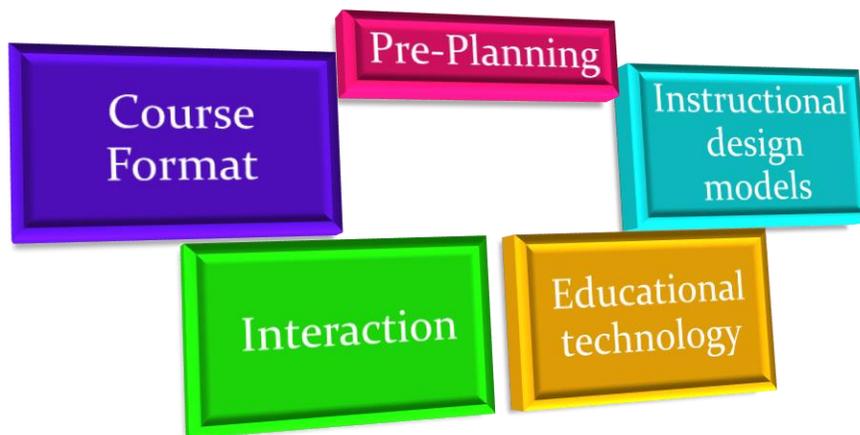
The first step should be the pre-planning stage by using the ADDIE or the Kirkpatrick's Four Level Training Evaluation Model. Specifically concentrating on the needs of the learners and with early development planning. In addition, the trainer needs to consider the following components for a successful online course: the learners, the content, the method of delivery, the material, environment, and the technology necessary for learning to occur (Simonson, Smaldino & Zvacek 2015, p.129). The planning process of converting materials to a distance education format is equally as important as the planning process of a traditional course and understanding the basic principles of instructional design can help to ensure that what is developed serves the purpose, meets the needs, is attractive, well organized, is delivered in a suitable mode, and is constantly evaluated and improved (Morrison, Ross, Kalman, & Kemp, 2011, p.5).

Many corporations have converted the face-to-face learning sessions into blended learning by using and following eLearning best practices that assist to achieve excellent change. Face to face courses should not be copied and pasted into an

online learning format because the instruction shifts to visual presentations, engaged learners, and precise timing of presentations of information (Simonson, Smaldino & Zvacek, 2015). It is important to be aware that they are two very different learning environments which requires different instructional strategies and formats.

“Moving content online is not simply about *transferring* content - it is about *transforming* content” (Gutierrez, 2012).

When converting from a traditional training to blended learning there’s several considerations to take.



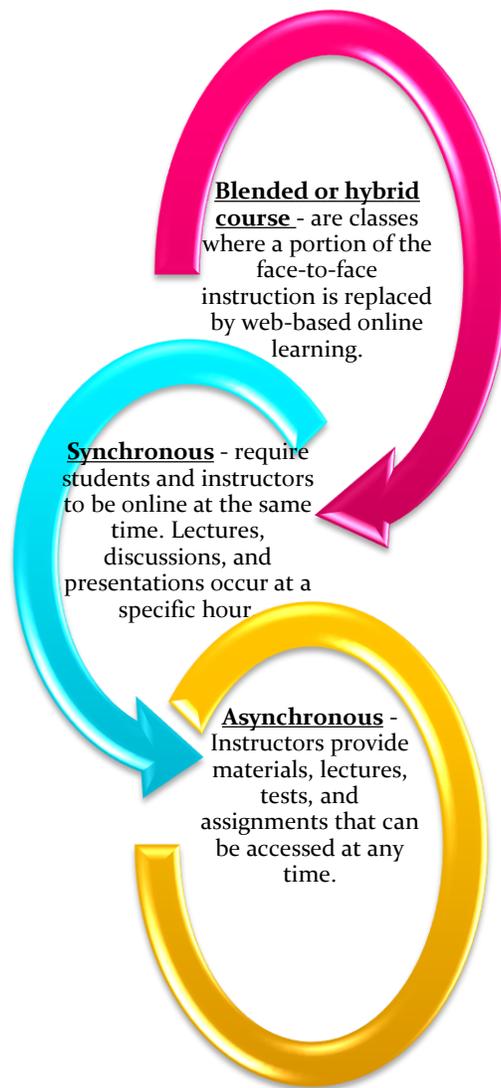
COURSE FORMAT

Synchronous Learning: A real time, instructors led online course which involves the participants by logging on at the same time and interact directly. This format is typically supported by media such as video and audio conference.

Asynchronous Learning: Contradictory of a traditional class, learners communicates directly with the content through the technology system, and there is flexibility in time and access by permitting control of the location and the pace.

Blended: This format combines synchronous and asynchronous learning

In this scenario and consider the needs of your learner it is best to use the blended or hybrid course format.



INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN MODELS

It is important to conduct proper research to find the best instructional design model. The use of instructional design model can make sure that learning occurs safely, surely, systematically and expeditiously than might otherwise occur.

Likewise, it will ease the learning process such that the learners need less time, take less risk and put in less amount of energy as compared to those who learned from the raw world without any support.

The ADDIE model is a framework that lists the generic processes which instructional designers and training developers use. It describes a guideline for building effective training and performance support tools in five phases. Analysis. Design. Development. Implementation and evaluation.



Analyze	Design	Develop	Implement	Evaluate
Pre-planning; thinking about the course	Design your course on paper	Develop course materials and assemble the course	Begin teaching	Look at the course outcomes with a critical eye
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of course • Audience • Goal • Objectives • Identify content • Identify Environment and Delivery • Instructional Strategies • Assessment Strategies • Formative Evaluation • Constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the learning units of Instruction • Identify content and strategies for an individual unit of instruction • Write instructions for the learning unit • Name the menu items for a learning module 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on design phase • Build content, assignments, assessments • Build course structure • Upload content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of course • Expectations • Initiate instruction • Interaction • Ask for feedback early on (formative evaluation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the students achieve expected learning outcomes? • What have you learned? • How can you make the course better?

Source: Instructional Design Using the ADDIE model table Retrieved from: <http://raleighway.com/addie/>

INTERACTION

Provide instructional objective for the interaction because learning objectives build a firm foundation for your course; and create course alignment to ensure students accomplish the learning objectives.

Interaction is a central portion of an online education and e-learning best practices. Without direct and clear interaction, there is no use of an e-learning adaptation. There are three types of interactions.

•Learner to instructor- The interaction is between the instructor and the learner and happens via discussion board, feedback, and email. “Consistent interaction with your classroom—on a personal and group level—helps support academic expectations among students and gives you a presence they can count on.”

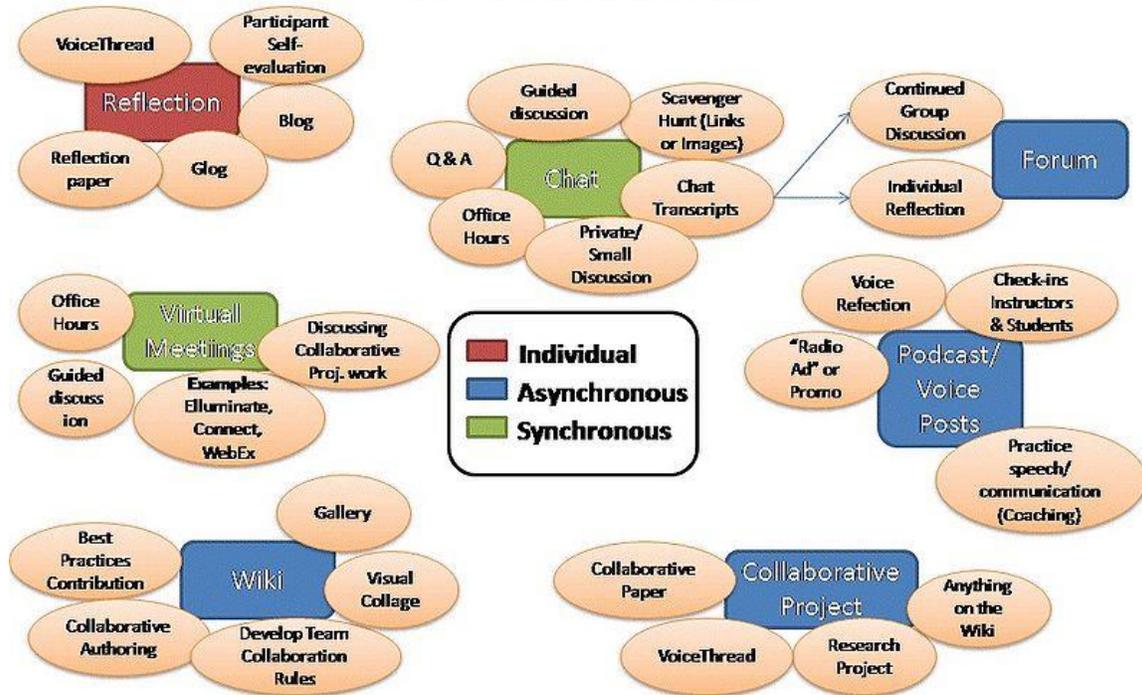
<http://facultycommons.com/three-types-of-interaction-that-foster-student-engagement/>

•Learner to Content- Is the communication between the course content and the learner. “Experts state that remarkable learning can be achieved if the learner relates to the content and develops a sound understanding of it. Assignments, activities, goals, and assessments implemented within your course should reinforce active learning—that is, the process through which students actively assimilate rather than passively absorb learning material.” (3 Types of Interaction That Foster Student Engagement, 2013).

•Learner to Learner- While instructor interactions remain vital, encouraging peer-to-peer communication is just as essential. The learners engage in a discussion originated by the instructor. “These discussions relieve the students feeling isolated from one another and instead create a dynamic sense of community. These discussions can occur in various formats such as discussion forum, and group projects.” (3 Types of Interaction That Foster Student Engagement, April 2013).

There are various online resources (such as those listed below) that enhance the authenticity and collaborative nature of blended learning.

Possible Learning Activities for an Online Course

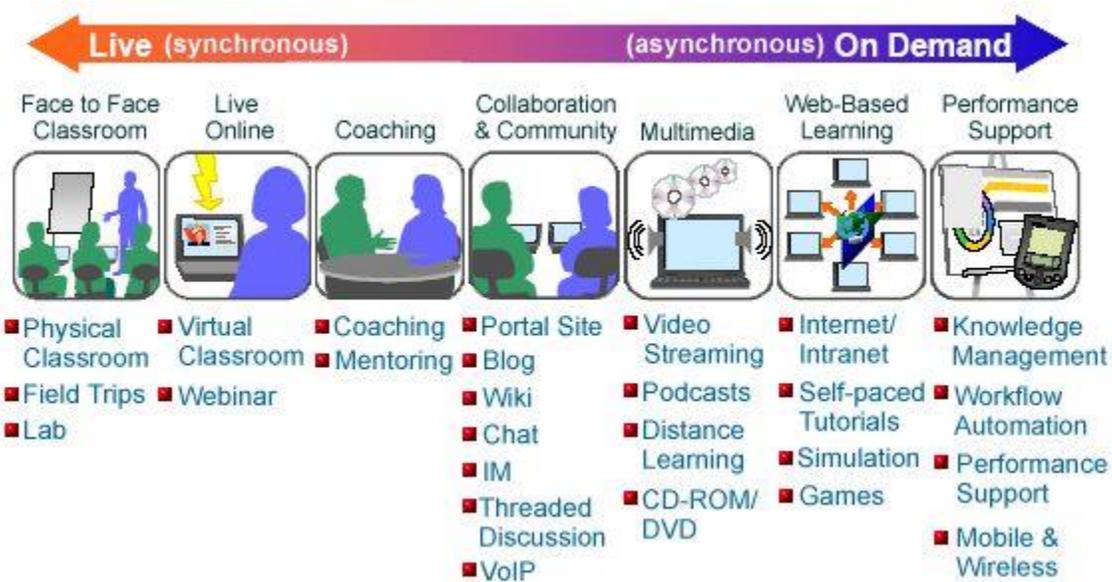


Source: Blended Learning in a Second Language Environment. (2011, June 30).

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

When converting instructional materials from a traditional format to a blended learning format, the content should be enhanced to increase learning and interaction among students, encouraging online communication. Enhanced to the content can be accomplished by using a variation of technology tools such as,

video, graphics, blogs, and more. Technology tools are an important role in improving the content because it is not “what technologies are used, but how they are used, what information is communicated using the technologies” (Simonson, Smaldino, Zvacek, 2015, p.115). The table below provides a list of examples of educational technologies that can be used in accordance to the different types of interaction:



Source: Aysun Güneş, (March 2013). Are we all ready for “BLENDED LEARNING”? Retrieved from: <https://languageteachingtips.wordpress.com/about/>

CHANGE IN ROLES

Instructor role in a Web-based course is different from one in the traditional classroom. In the traditional course, the instructor often takes center stage and becomes a lecturer; in a Web-based format, the instructor becomes a facilitator. Not only is the role of the instructor noticeably different in a Web-based course, but so is the interaction that occurs

between the instructor and the students. However, the interaction between the student and teacher is still crucial in the Web-based classroom as it is in any traditional environment. (Thurmond and Wambach, 2004). Because with blended/hybrid learning the learner can still meet in a face to face learning environment, some of the more traditional teaching practices still occur. However, a majority of the teaching will be online and become more student centered rather than teacher centered. Teachers in the blended learning should be prepared to:

- Assess, analyze and combined data
- use data as a fundamental part of the planning process for each student, and the whole class.
- use benchmark tests and other assessments to direct instruction at different levels -individual, group, class. (Armes, 2012).

Blended learning involves more than simply changing class time with online course elements or accompanying an online course with face-to-face meetings. To be successful, the online and face-to-face methods need to be integrated by taking into account the learning objectives and the affordances of each method and consciously linking what occurs in each mode.

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