

A guide to planning a blended learning curriculum 2020-21



Introduction

The current global COVID-19 pandemic has caused a sudden sea-change in how our teachers have had to deliver elements of their curriculum. At little notice, we have had to adapt what would have been delivered face-to-face in a classroom or workshop environment into something that is beamed remotely into our students' homes.

Whilst the latest Government guidance tells us that "[it is our plan that all FE learners, whether young people or adults will be able to return to further education settings in September and experience a full education](#)", this will not be a complete 'return to normal'. Either way, we have discovered that remote learning methods have many advantages and will probably continue to now play a pivotal role in the safe and successful delivery of curriculum going forwards.

This guide, aimed at teachers, is designed to help you think about what aspects of planning you may need to consider, alterations you may need to make, and the best ways to go about your planning in view of the latest thinking on blended learning pedagogy. It is divided into sections as follows:

1. **Understanding key terms**; this section helps to identify the meaning of key terminology relating to blended learning
2. **Understanding curriculum & sequencing**; a reminder of how important 'curriculum' is under the new [Ofsted EIF](#) and how teachers should go about planning it
3. **Balancing face-to-face with online**; some key considerations to make in how you will balance campus-based delivery with remote learning
4. **Synchronous / asynchronous online delivery**; how you can seek to make the best use of you and your students' time when using remote learning strategies
5. **Induction**; Advice on what curriculum induction should look like
6. **Suggested reading***; a section which will reference further information which is likely to be helpful to you in planning a blended curriculum

**This guide has hyperlinks throughout. Use these links to access further information and detail as required.*



Section 1 – Understanding key terms

Blended learning, on-line learning, remote learning etc... are terms you have probably heard used interchangeably. In planning a blended curriculum, a helpful start is knowing what each of these terms mean – particularly if this will impact whether it will be classed as ‘guided learning hours or not’.

Here are the organisation’s glossary of terms:

| Forms of learning | Meaning / scope | Notes |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Classroom-based learning | Classroom-based learning refers to all learning that takes place on or at sites or learning environments designed or created for teaching students. This includes College campuses, the classrooms and workshops within them, and locations selected away from the College to give students experience in realistic or actual working environments. It might be teacher-led or facilitated, student-centred learning or on occasion flipped learning. It might also be referred to as on-site learning and face-to-face learning. | These sessions will always be timetabled, and attendance recorded in registers. |
| Remote Learning | Remote Learning has emerged to describe emergency measures to move instruction from physical schools, colleges and universities to homes in both online and offline modes. | |
| Digital Learning | Digital learning is any type of learning that uses digital technologies. Digital technologies are electronic tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store or process data. Well known examples include social media, online games, virtual learning environments and mobile phones. The term digital learning is interchangeable with Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) which is used more commonly in HE. Digital learning can take place in classrooms, but is more commonly associated with online learning. | |
| Independent Learning | Independent Learning can take various forms, each of which could be classroom-based (or be carried out in College libraries or resource centres) or be remote/hybrid, whether online or paper-based. Courses might state that students are advised or required to undertake so many hours of independent learning each week in order to learn, practise and master everything the course involves. Independent learning takes two main forms: | |
| | Directed Independent Learning is where the teacher has set one or more students specific research or work to complete, usually within a specific time period (although it could be more flexible than that). It might involve, for example, internet research or completion of activities in Moodle. It is always initiated by the teacher, whether it involves a single topic or a whole unit/module. It can be on site or remote, including online. Where a teacher instructs them to set time aside using Moodle to catch up on several lessons missed through illness, we would categorise it as directed independent learning. | Should always be timetabled and some funding streams might require it to be recorded in registers, although there may be flexibility for students to complete the work at a time which suits them better. |
| | Independent Self-Study is where a student decides to undertake additional learning on their own initiative. It’s often more motivated students who choose to put additional time into extending or reinforcing their knowledge, understanding and skills. It may be on site or remote, including online. It could take the form of wider reading, internet research, watching documentaries on TV/PC or | Is not normally timetabled or recorded in registers, but it can make a very valuable contribution to a |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| | completing additional/extension work made available by teachers in Moodle. | student's overall learning experience. |
| Online Learning | Online learning is learning that takes place online using a computer or mobile device to access the internet. It refers to learning that is facilitated wholly using digital tools. It's a term used most to describe students accessing online resources, activities and experiences outside of the traditional classroom environment. In the light of Covid-19, this term is being used more narrowly to refer to the delivery of live online lessons (sometimes referred to as 'emergency remote learning'). Online learning can be teacher-led or be undertaken by students without a teacher being present or involved (i.e. independent learning). | For funding purposes, it's very important to accurately categorise and record the form of online learning taking place. |
| | a) Teacher-led online learning. This is likely to be in the form of a 'virtual classroom' and may be led by a teacher/tutor to a group of students or one-to-one. This type of learning is also known as 'synchronous' (it occurs live, online, in real-time). | Online lessons or tutorials and/or virtual lessons should always be timetabled and recorded in registers. |
| | b) Online, directed, independent learning. This type of learning, whilst directed by a teacher or tutor, takes place without the teacher/tutor present. It can be synchronous (see above) e.g. it could be peer-led, or 'asynchronous' (resources accessed at any time and are not presented 'live') | Should always be timetabled and some funding streams require it to be recorded in registers, although there may be flexibility for students to complete the work at a time which suits them better. Participation will be tracked via Moodle or receipt of students' work. |
| | c) Online independent self-study. This is additional learning that a student has chosen to do, free from any formal direction from a teacher or tutor. | Not normally timetabled or recorded in registers, but it can make a very valuable contribution to a student's overall learning experience and how much progress they make. |
| Blended Learning | Blended learning is when traditional classroom teaching is combined with online learning. It typically involves a 'blend' of face-to-face and digital experiences. Blended learning can encompass teacher-led learning and independent study. It can be designed to allow the student to have more control over the time, pace and style of their learning. | |
| Hybrid Learning | Hybrid Learning approaches build on the successes of classroom-based, flipped, blended, remote, distance and online to intentionally create student-centred experiences which are profoundly personalised, relevant and engaging. | |
| Distance Learning | Distance Learning occurs when teachers, students and classrooms are separate and uses a range of approaches, including online, usually over significant physical distances. | |
| Flipped Learning | Flipped Learning is a pedagogical approach that inverts the traditional method of the teacher leading learning, instead handing | |

| | | |
|------------------------|--|--|
| | responsibility over to the student. Flipped learning can be used in the classroom or in online 'lessons'; or can combine the two e.g. students receive and engage with material prior to the classroom learning through videos/ tutorials delivered online. | |
| Work Experience | <p>Work Experience encompasses:</p> <p>Work Placement where a student attends employer premises and completes specific work-related tasks, hours are allocated according to programme of study requirements. In some instances, a work-based assessor may also complete subject-specific formative and summative assessments. The student is required to complete a log of their learning and complete all relevant paperwork associated.</p> <p>Industry Placement where the student attends employer premises and completes meaningful business-related activities. The student must complete a minimum of 315 hours with no more than 2 employers. The student is required to complete a log of their learning and complete all relevant paperwork associated.</p> <p>Employability Skills/Studies refers to learning that takes place, usually on site and face-to-face, designed to develop students' employability-related knowledge, skills and attitudes. It can be teacher-led or facilitated, student-centred learning.</p> | <p>Work experience is always planned into a student's timetable and the hours recorded on ProMonitor and the individualised Employability tracker.</p> <p>Work Placement (WP) should always be timetabled attendance and recorded in registers. Industry Placement (IP) should always be timetabled attendance and recorded in registers. Employability Skills (ES) should always be timetabled attendance and recorded in registers.</p> |



Section 2 – Curriculum and sequencing

One of the biggest shifts in Ofsted's approach to evaluating the overall quality of education within a provider is that there is now a far greater focus on curriculum structure and sequencing. More than ever, now that there is likely to be a blended or hybrid approach to your delivery, you will need to think very carefully how you plan your schemes of learning and how you will sequence your delivery to make the most of campus-based or remote learning.

Here's a reminder of what Ofsted look at when making an overall judgment of the Quality of Education:

A new quality of education judgement



Quality of education

Intent

- Curriculum design, coverage and appropriateness

Implementation

- Curriculum delivery
- Teaching (pedagogy)
- Assessment (formative and summative)

Impact

- Attainment (qualifications and assessments)
- Progress
- Knowledge and skill development
- Destinations

Click here: [Planning and sequencing a curriculum video \(2.5 mins\) by Ofsted](#)

Paul Joyce HMI, Deputy Director, Further Education and Skills, on why the word 'curriculum' can be applied to any training, education or learning programme.



1. **Balancing face-to-face with online;** some key considerations to make in how you will balance campus-based delivery with remote learning (e.g. half a class in, half out – record it / live broadcast)

<https://www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/49891-fully-online-learning-deliveries-more-of-the-same-or-a-new-pedagogy>

Perhaps, an illustration of the possible contrasting styles of teaching and learning might be helpful. The subject is the interview research method, what Bernstein (1996) calls the 'what' or content/specification. The 'how' refers to the way the content is delivered.

Face-to-face delivery

In a face-to-face, interview research method might be delivered in two parts: an explanation of the method followed by a discussion or simulated tasks to further the learners' understanding of the topic.

A three-hour session follows the knowledge acquisition and application approach that Bernstein calls sequencing. Even for a flipped teaching, where pre-session sources are made available, and the 'acquisition' aspect could be delivered by way of a quiz, presentation, etc. regarding the salient features before venturing into the detailed aspects of the topic.

Both of the above teaching approaches involve a sequential plan. The emphasis is on the acquisition and not the application of the new knowledge. You can imagine the issues regarding conducting interviews in the application part of the session.

Online delivery

In a fully online course, this topic ('what') might be delivered over two weeks. The relevant learning resources might be offered in the first week for the learners to engage with the content. This independent approach to learning could be facilitated via Discussion Forums to engage the learners to post questions and answers either individually or collaboratively in teams depending on the relevant educational contexts such as cohort size, previous knowledge of the learners, number of tutors etc. The deliverers could monitor this activity. The goal of this topic might be to report back with some findings of interviews during the two-week duration culminating in a Collaborate or Microsoft Team session. The session might be organised individually or in teams to present the results on interviews.

Figure 1 Programme, delivery mode and pedagogy

| Programme | Campus | Hybrid | Online |
|---------------|---|---|---|
| Delivery mode | Face-to-face | A mixed-mode delivery which might be classified as 'more of the same using digital technologies' and 'move towards fully online provision'. | Fully online approach that is supported by digital technologies |
| Pedagogy | [Student-centred] social constructivism | A pedagogic spectrum of 'More of the same using digital technologies' and 'Move towards fully online'. | Activity Based Pedagogy (ABP) |

2. **Synchronous / asynchronous online delivery**; how you can seek to make the best use of you and your students' time when using remote learning strategies

- The importance of assessment

3. **Induction**

Essentials, Sense of community

4. **Suggested reading***; a section which will reference further information which is likely to be helpful to you in planning a blended curriculum

<https://www.greatteaching.com/> Great Teaching Toolkit: Evidence review

Case study?

The University of Northampton moved to a blended learning model back in October 2018 – it was a planned, progressive and really positive experience for students and tutors. Basically how to do it in an ideal world. I think it would make a great case study to back up yours earlier points – just a thought?

Commented [JS1]: <https://blogs.northampton.ac.uk/learn-tech/2020/03/18/surviving-and-thriving-in-the-world-of-online-teaching/>

Column 4 in the MESH guide might be a little heavy going but useful for further reading?

Commented [JS2]: <http://www.meshguides.org/guides/node/880?n=982>