What is Blended Learning?

Blended learning refers to a combination of instructional delivery approaches. Blended learning integrates traditional face-to-face instruction with various electronic (Web-based) approaches and other activities. Blended learning includes formal and informal activities that promote learning. Blended instructional approach is becoming an increasingly common and desirable. When considering using a blended approach, take into consideration both the strengths and limitations of the various instructional delivery approaches.

How will I Teach?

When considering a blended format, it’s important to not only ask “how will I teach?” but also to ask “what will the learners be reading, hearing, watching, seeing, and doing’’?

Some key questions to consider include:

- Will the virtual collaborations be synchronous (live) or asynchronous?
- Will the face-to-face instruction be formal or informal?
- Will the learning be self-paced?
- What kind of performance support may be integrated?

Rossett, Dougis, and Frazee (2003) recommend that the following approaches be considered when designing blended learning:

*Live face-to-face (formal)* - for example, instructor-led classroom, workshops, coaching (online or face-to-face), mentoring (online or face-to-face), on-the-job (OTJ) training, and demonstrations, among others.

*Live face-to-face (informal)* - for example, assistance by colleagues, work teams, group work, role modelling

*Virtual collaboration/synchronous* - this may include: live e-learning classes, live chats, and e-mentoring

*Virtual collaboration/asynchronous* - for example, emails, online bulletin boards, listserv, online communities,

*Self-paced learning* - for example, Web learning modules, online resource links/interactivities, simulations, scenarios, video and audio clips, CDs, DVDs, Web-based or paper-based self-assessments, books, journal articles, case studies, etc.

*Performance support* - for example, help systems, print job aids, knowledge databases, documentation, performance/decision support tools.
Resources
