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, Douglis, 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

Bersin, J. (2004). The blended learning book. San Francisco: John-Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Rossett, A., Douglis, F. & Frazee, R. V. (2003). Strategies for building blended learning. Retrieved from Learning Circuits on May 16, 2011 from http://ablendedmaricopa.pbworks.com/f/Strategies%20Building%20Blended%20Learning.pdf