

How to design a blended e-learning course

Stephen Bostock, amended Oct 2007

First method – quick start:

What are the problems with the course? Can technology help?
What opportunities does technology give to improve the course?

Second method – more methodical:

1. Write the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) in column 1.
 2. Generating options for teaching-learning activities (TLAs): Write in column 3 the existing or possible *onsite* teaching/learning activities (traditional or other face-to-face teaching/learning).
 3. Write in column 2 the existing or possible *online* teaching/learning activities (e.g. in WebCT).
 4. Selecting options: here are the three tactics for choosing between different options in columns 2 and 3:
 - Deficit - technology provides support for activities not currently supported
 - Substitution - substitute a traditional element with a technology-based one
 - Enrichment - technology duplicates support giving a choice of support/experience suitable for different learning styles.)
- On the form, select one (or more) teaching-learning activity for each intended learning outcome. (Highlight or underline them.)
5. Criteria for a good blend would be (i) alignment with intended learning outcomes (ii) mutually supportive especially online supporting onsite and vice versa (iii) providing a balanced experience suitable for the particular students (iv) empowering for students rather than technology creating barriers.
 6. Now you have a collection of course components (some online, some onsite), aligned horizontally by their reference to the intended learning outcomes, the extent of mutual support between the components could be drawn in as extra lines. Draw links between components where you can design them to be mutually supportive. E.g. using online discussions to prime or debrief face-to-face seminars or lectures, or using online student work or questions within face-to-face meetings.
 7. Further issues that could be discussed are:
 - a) how to account for staff time – making sure your plan does not cost more time than it should, and student learning hours
 - b) how to select a mix of assessment, computer-assisted and traditional, and align these with ILOS and TLAs
 - c) how to consider additional or alternative educational principles in addition to the outcomes-based curriculum development method used above.