Griffith UNIVERSITY

GIHE | Griffith Institute for Higher Education

Getting Started With

Blended Learning

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Foreword

Griffith University has a long-standing and widely recognised commitment to the creative use of technologies for enhancing the quality of student learning. In 2007 the University made the strategic decision to develop and embed a blended learning strategy across the institution. This was an important step, for it recognised the inherent value in blending the best of face-to-face learning experiences with those enhanced by traditional and emerging technologies.

Our students across disciplines and year levels frequently tell us how much they value effective use of technologies in their courses. While they appreciate being able to 'download lecture notes' and 'listen to podcast lectures', the deeper challenge is to integrate technology into curriculum design and assessment as we continue to look for ways to engage students in meaningful, intellectually stimulating learning.

This practical resource is designed for academic staff who want to understand more about blended learning in their teaching and course design. It challenges you to think about the possibilities of blended learning, beyond simply uploading lecture notes online. Using an inductive approach to planning, designing, implementing and reviewing your practice, this guide represents a practical, step-by-step approach to using blended learning in your curriculum. It will be particularly useful for those just starting to explore the possibilities of blended learning designs. It also includes suggestions that will be relevant to the more advanced user of technology in teaching.

I commend this resource to you and wish you well as you continue to push the boundaries in your use of technology to engage and inspire your students.

Professor Kerri-Lee Krause

Director, Griffith Institute for Higher Education
Dean (Student Outcomes)
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Preface

If you are not sure about what blended learning is, or how to go about designing a blended learning course, you may find this document very useful. It aims to provide a description of blended learning in higher education, and to help you work through the necessary considerations in the phases of planning, designing and developing, implementing and reviewing blended learning. It aims to support you in asking the right questions and making the right decisions about blended learning for your course.

Good planning and design is vital for the success of any course, and you are encouraged to use the following sections in this guide to review principles and methods of curriculum design for blended learning before jumping to implementing technology in your course. We envisage that you may not read this book from front to back, but instead dip in and out of sections that are relevant to your needs.

This document primarily serves to help you in thinking about blended learning from a curriculum and pedagogical perspective. More technical information and support is provided via user guides (for both staff and students) relating to a range of blended learning tools and technologies on the Blended Learning Support site.

Where reference is made in this guide to any document or content hosted on the Blended Learning Support site, we provide directions rather than include the direct web link as this link may change after publication.

The Blended Learning Support site is available at:
https://intranet.secure.griffith.edu.au/computing/blended-learning-support

For links to external sites the full web link is provided.

Key Terms

In this document the following terms and symbols are used:

- Course = unit of study / subject
- Learning@Griffith = the learning management system used by the University
- Program = the set of 'courses' that constitutes a degree (e.g., Bachelor of Aviation)
- Program Director = Program Convenor
- School = Department
- ⓘ = more information or further resources
- = important tips, hints or issues to consider

Acknowledgement

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What is blended learning?

Griffith has adopted the term 'blended learning' as the principal means of addressing the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to enhance its learning and teaching activities. In the Griffith context, the following definition is used to inform policy and practice in relation to blended learning:

> *Blended learning is realised in teaching and learning environments where there is an effective integration of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning as a result of adopting a strategic and systematic approach to the use of technology combined with the best features of face to face interaction.* (Krause, 2007)

Why blend?

Blended learning is about effectively integrating ICTs into course design to enhance the teaching and learning experiences for students and teachers by enabling them to engage in ways that would not normally be available or effective in their usual environment, whether it is primarily face-to-face or distance mode. In many cases the act of "blending" achieves better student experiences and outcomes, and more efficient teaching and course management practices. It can involve a mix of delivery modes, teaching approaches and learning styles.

Advances in technology provide new opportunities for teachers to design and deliver their courses in ways that support and enhance the teachers' role, the students' individual cognitive experiences, as well as the social environment; three key elements in successful learning and teaching. Blended learning technologies can:

- Broaden the spaces and opportunities available for learning;
- Support course management activities (e.g., communication, assessment submission, marking and feedback);
- Support the provision of information and resources to students;
- Engage and motivate students through interactivity and collaboration.

So it is not just about using technology because it is available; blended learning is about finding better ways of supporting students in achieving the learning objectives and providing them with the best possible learning and teaching experiences, as well as supporting teachers in their role (including the management and administration of courses). Of course, the integration of blended learning in courses will naturally vary according to such factors as: discipline, year level, student characteristics and needs, course or program learning objectives, as well as the academic's approach to teaching, and confidence and experience in using technology.

Examples of blended learning

- Managing the marking, entering and releasing of grades for a course with over 700 students using an online grade centre in Learning@Griffith creating efficiency and accuracy for multiple markers and the course convenor by reducing double handling, while giving students flexible and timely access to their results and feedback.
- Delivering a lecture to on and off campus students simultaneously using an online virtual classroom tool helps to create a sense of community for the whole group and reduces workload for the lecturer by presenting only once.
- Small group problem based learning activities are managed more effectively and efficiently within a large class by using an online collaborative workspace, allowing for greater transparency in group work assessment as well as providing an archive of resources for current and future students.
- Weekly online practice quizzes to support lecture and textbook material using automatic marking functionality producing immediate and automatic feedback to individual students about their understanding of concepts and avoiding ongoing workload for the teaching staff.

The approach at Griffith

Griffith University has adopted "a more formal strategic view of how to optimise the use of technology in terms of facilitating the goals and objectives of Academic Plan 3: Learning for Success" (Blended Learning Strategy, p.1).

Supporting staff in developing knowledge and skills in blended learning approaches and in the design and delivery of quality blended learning experiences is therefore a key institutional priority.

This formal strategic view has led to the creation of a Blended Learning Strategy and Blended Learning Implementation Plan. It has also led to a number of university initiatives designed to provide a university environment capable of supporting and sustaining blended learning and to provide the necessary support, training and guidance to staff in pursuing a blended approach to their teaching. The initiatives include, for example, the appointment of a Blended Learning Advisor for each Group to provide specialist advice and expertise to help staff achieve their blended learning goals and facilitate the uptake of ICT in courses and programs.

Blended learning modes

Blended learning spans a continuum that covers a wide range of activities between conventional face-to-face interactions and those that are fully online. Griffith's Blended Learning Strategy identifies three modes of operation to indicate the level of use of technology in learning and teaching. The University aims for all courses to achieve "Mode 2" status through its Blended Learning Implementation Strategy.

Mode 1	Technology is used to facilitate course management and resources for learner support. For example, to provide information and resources to students (e.g., lecture notes or recordings, assessment guidelines), and to perform basic administrative functions (e.g., announcements or course emails).
Mode 2	Technology is used to enrich the quality of the student learning experience through interactive learning activities beyond those attainable through face-to-face classroom interactions. For example, utilising technology to support communication and collaboration, assessment and the management of your course.
Mode 3	Technology is used to support learning that is largely self-directed but also involves the use of interactive and collaborative learning activities. In this mode courses are delivered fully online.

For further information please read Griffith's Blended Learning Strategy (2009)[1] and the Blended Learning Implementation Plan (2009)[2].

You may also want to consult Griffith's policy on Course Catalogue, Coding and Other Course Attributes which describes the learning mode values and their definitions, see the Policy Library[3].

Where to go for academic advice, support and training

Academics are encouraged to take advantage of the wide range of professional development events, support, training and resources that are available to them, including:

- Griffith Institute for Higher Education (GIHE)
  - Professional development programs[4]
  - Blended learning elective course (7018GIH), which can be completed as a stand-alone professional development course or part of the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education
  - Resources, Case Studies and Issues Papers on blended learning[5]
  - GIHE Blended Learning Consultant – John Bourke
- Blended Learning Support site[6], which includes
  - User/help guides for both staff and students on a range of tools and technologies
  - Information regarding training and advice on the practical use of ICTs for learning and teaching
- Blended Learning Advisors (BLAs)
  - Arts, Education and Law (AEL) – Karin Barac
  - Griffith Business School (GBS) – Catherine Hodgson
  - Health – Ganeshan Rao
  - Science, Environment, Engineering and Technology (SEET) – Nicole Wall
- Educational Designers
  - GBS Educational Designer – Vikki Ravaga
  - Information Services (Learning and Teaching)[7]

To find the contact details for any of the above people, search the University phonebook available at:
http://www.griffith.edu.au/search/

Contact your relevant Blended Learning Advisor to identify specific support and training opportunities within your School or Group.

Blended learning possibilities

In some ways, blended learning is not new. For all courses there has always been an element of 'blended learning', where different modes of delivery are utilised. Think, for example, of a traditional face-to-face course where there are some on-campus lectures and tutorials, independent study through textbooks and readings, library research and other activities. But the term 'blended learning' nowadays primarily means integrating the use of technology in course design and delivery.

Taking a blended learning approach to your course can be used to support face-to-face teaching, large group and small group learning, self-directed learning, communication between the teacher and individual students or groups of students, as well as between students themselves. You can "blend" ***time*** (e.g., face-to-face vs. recorded lectures), ***place*** (small group tutorial on-campus vs. online discussion forum; traditional field trip vs. 'virtual' field trip using web sites and online chat with industry personnel), ***people*** (podcast of guest lecturers, or virtual classroom to include both on-campus and off-campus students), ***resources*** and ***activities*** (textbook vs. online readings; in-class vs. online quiz).

Figure 1 illustrates just some of the possibilities for integrating blended learning into your course.

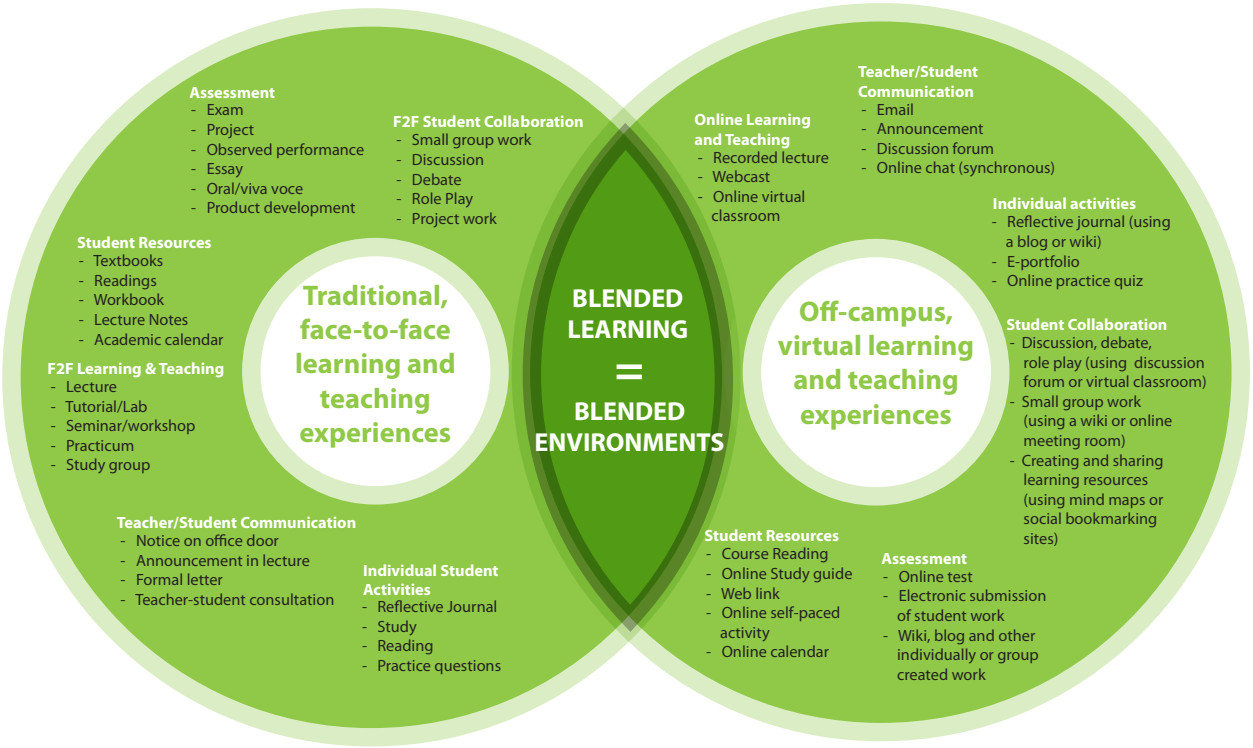

Figure 1: Possibilities for blended learning

There are so many possibilities; do I have to do it all?

Good practice in blended learning (and operating in "Mode 2"), doesn't necessarily mean adopting a wide range of technologies for a particular course. It can mean simply using a few tools, but in effective ways in order to achieve quality in teaching, learning and/or course management.

For example, a teacher may upload lecture notes (and perhaps lecture recordings) on their course site, regularly use the announcement and email functions, and include other information and resources on their course site. This would be considered more like Mode 1 blended learning. However, the teacher may also integrate the use of a discussion board in their course design, including a number of different forums such as a Question and Answer forum between teacher and students, an informal 'students only' forum, as well as a number of topic forums relating to different components of the course where students are required to post comments that form part of the assessment task/s. This would be considered a Mode 2 example of blended learning.

Where to next?

As with the design of any aspect of curriculum, starting first with the course aims and learning objectives and considering how to best support students in achieving quality learning is crucial. In the following sections, we provide guidance in the planning, designing and developing, implementing and evaluating of blended learning approaches.

Endnotes

1 Blended Learning Strategy (2009) – http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/197143/BlendedLearningStrategy.pdf
2 Blended Learning Implementation Plan (2009) – http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/180879/Blended-Learning-Imp-Plan-FINAL_May09.pdf
3 Policy Library – http://www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf
4 GIHE professional development – http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/professional-development-programs
5 Resources, Case Studies and Issues Papers – http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/teaching-learning-curriculum/blended-learning
6 Blended Learning Support site – https://intranet.secure.griffith.edu.au/computing/blended-learning-support
7 INS (L&T) http://www.griffith.edu.au/elements/information-services

Section 2:
The Process of Blended Learning

Introduction

This section offers advice and guidance for staff in the process of designing and implementing blended learning in university courses and curricula.

Taking a considered and programmatic approach to designing technology-enhanced learning experiences is crucial to the ultimate success of such experiences, particularly in relation to quality learning. As with any curriculum, the learning and teaching activities need to be meaningful and relevant for the students' learning. They also need to be clearly valued and supported by the teacher, and well integrated into the whole course experience. "Too often the opportunities and advantages of the use of technology in the learning process are poorly exploited" (Oliver & Herrington, 2003, p.111). Ideally blended learning experiences should be participative, not just interactive (Wild, 2007) so that the processes of cognition and collaboration are both enhanced; "thinking and working together creates learning" (Allen, 2010).

Therefore, good preparation and decision-making is essential not only for efficient use of your time in the construction and maintenance of your resources, but also for the creation of quality learning experiences for your students.

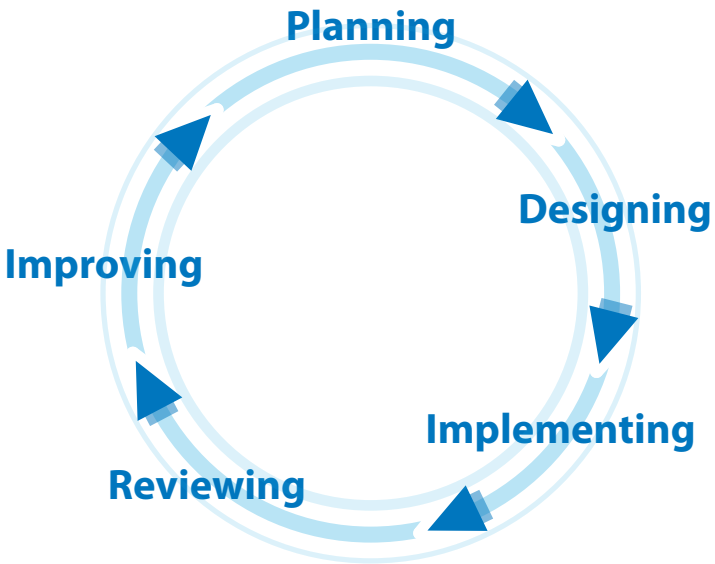

Figure 2: The blended learning design process

Designing for blended learning requires a systematic approach, starting with:

1. **Planning** for integrating blended learning into your course, followed by;
2. **Designing** and **developing** the blended learning elements;
3. **Implementing** the blended learning design;
4. **Reviewing** (evaluating) the effectiveness of your blended learning design, and finally;
5. Planning for the next delivery of your course then involves **improving** the blended learning experience for both staff and students.

Obviously, such a process is not often neat and linear, particularly as the design of a course or elements of a course tends to occur at the last minute or sometimes even once a course has already begun! However, it is useful to keep this approach in mind, with the principles and considerations that are involved in each of the stages, even if you end up moving to and fro between the stages throughout the overall process.

The following sections describe each of the stages outlined above, and include guidelines, tips and links/ references to additional resources such as "how to" guides for using a range of blended learning technologies.

2.1 Planning

Planning is the first stage of the design process. At this point you should think about a number of critical considerations before jumping in to designing the blended learning components of your course. For example, are you developing a new course, taking on an existing course or redesigning a course you have previously taught/convened? What is the broader context for your course, in terms of the program, school, faculty, professional bodies, or the community and what influences do you need to take into account? Finally, what is the typical student cohort like for this course, and are there particular student or group needs you should consider?

The elements of a course (content, resources, activities, assessment) are designed in order to support quality student learning.

So a good starting point for the planning process is to consider **"What so students do when they are learning well in this course?"** and **"What do they need to support this learning?"** In order to answer these questions, you should consider the following:

What is your situation?

If you are designing an online course, visit the GIHE Good Practice Guide to "Going Fully Online" at: http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/teaching-learning-curriculum/blended-learning

- If you are developing a new course:
  - We suggest you first take a look at some general curriculum and course design guidelines. Visit: http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/learning-teaching-resources/curriculum-design, and in particular the "How to Write a Course Profile" guide which includes key aspects of curriculum design.
  - It will be important to have course aims and learning objectives set before considering blended learning opportunities for your course.
  - It is important to ask yourself "*What do I want my students to learn by undertaking this course?*" Begin by asking the following:
    - *"At the end of my course what should a student demonstrate? – that is, what are the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should achieve?"*
    - *"Which of the University's Graduate Attributes are relevant to the knowledge, skills and attitudes I would like the students to achieve?*

      (For more information on the Griffith Graduate Attributes, visit: http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/teaching-learning-curriculum/graduate-attributes)

        - *What learning and teaching activities would best support the students' learning?*
        - *How might the students demonstrate their learning and achievements?*
    - Once you have a set of course aims and objectives you can then start to consider ways in which you might integrate blended learning in the design of the course.
        - *Why do you want to use the online learning environment?*
        - *How do you want to use the online learning environment?*

- If you are taking on someone else's course or redesigning your own course, you need to think carefully about the current course practices. Take time to review the course.
    - Go back over the *course aims and learning objectives*, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks. Are all these elements aligned and do they make sense in combination? For example, do the assessment tasks actually allow students to clearly demonstrate the learning objectives and do the learning and teaching activities specifically support the students' development of the learning objectives?
    - Undertake a *content inventory* - what resources are you using? And in what format do they exist (print, online, audio, video, etc)? Have students had any issues accessing a resource? Could this access be improved?
    - What are the current *teaching strategies*? Identify what is valuable and that which you do not want to lose in moving online.
    - What existing *online strategies* are you using? (e.g., Learning@Griffith tools and functions, or other web sites, technologies, etc).
        - How are you currently using the course site on Learning@Griffith? How have the previous students used the site? Did experiences meet expectations for both you and students?
    - What have your experiences been in *managing the course*? Are there any aspects that you would like to improve either from your own or your students' perspective? (e.g., assignment submission and handling, course communication, assessment guidelines, certain activities or content).
    - What was the *student feedback* from the previous iteration of the course? What worked well, what could be improved, what do you want to do differently and why? It might be adapting some aspect of the course to blended learning mode may help address some issues or problems that you and the students experienced. For example, increasing student numbers may mean that a particular learning activity is no longer feasible in its current form. This may be a good opportunity to adopt a blended learning approach.

What is your course context?

- Course-level considerations
    - What are your current teaching environments? Across multiple campuses? Lecture theatres, tutorial rooms, laboratories, industry/community locations?
    - Teaching team – who will be contributing to the development of this course and its resources? Who will be teaching it? What are the respective roles of the contributors to each of these tasks? What time commitments are involved in development and/or teaching? How long will these staff remain with the course? What teaching experience and level of technical knowledge/ skill do they have?
    - Will a blended learning approach improve student learning outcomes? That is, are you using technology for a clear purpose or just for the sake of it?
    - Will the blended learning elements I design be scalable (i.e., is it still viable if student numbers increase or decrease)?

- Will the blended learning technologies be sustainable? In the short-term, medium-term and long-term future?

- Program, School, Group influences
  - What is the current 'culture' regarding teaching and learning in my School/Faculty? Will blended learning 'fit' within this culture?
  - Is there the infrastructure or resources to support the technologies?
  - Identify whether there are any program, school, faculty or Group-based requirements that may influence your design work such as a Minimum Requirements directive (for example, the Griffith Business School (GBS) Lecture Recording Initiative). Your Blended Learning Advisor and/or Program Convenor will be able to tell you if there are any requirements that need to be considered by you.
  - Are there industry or professional standards which impact on what you include in the course, and how you include it?
  - Identify where your course fits within the broader program of study and check other courses to achieve balance and cohesion with such things as assessment due dates and use of technologies.

Who are your students?

It is always crucial to ask whether the particular 'blend' is appropriate for your audience, as there is a range of characteristics that raise different issues which can impact on the success of your blended learning design.

- Year of study – 1st year students or later year students
  - Have your students already experienced blended learning in their program of study? What level of skill or familiarity do they have with technology in learning? For example, if students were introduced to Discussion Forums in their first year, you could consider designing a more advanced use of this tool as they already will have developed some basic skills in using the technology. However, if it is likely that your students will have little experience using technology in learning then you need to consider working at a basic level when designing blended learning elements for your course.

- Class numbers – is it a large class or a small class?
  - The number of students you have in a class can both constrain and provide opportunities for the use of technology.
    - For example, with the use of instant chat 10 students might be ok as conversation can be open and easily moderated, but with 50 students moderation and management becomes very important and can take away from your capacity to engage in a meaningful way with the students. Having a tutor or assistant to support the moderation process may be helpful, or you may want to break the larger group into smaller discussion groups. Alternatively you could use a discussion forum, which allows you to structure and moderate the student interaction more easily with such numbers.
  - There is a range of ways that you can use technology to make learning and teaching with a large class more efficient and effective. See, for example, the sections on "Student Activity and Collaboration" and "Management and Administration".

- Student type – do you have international students, students from a low socio-economic background, students with disabilities, mature age students, or students with work/family commitments?
  - Language
    - To support ESL (English as a second language) students consider recording your lectures (they often find it useful listening at their own pace and/or several times for clearer understanding).
    - On one hand ESL students' written English is often better than their spoken English so group work online can provide a better means for communication, however you lose the nonverbal and face-to-face communication cues and interpersonal exchanges that can help to make it a positive experience.
    - Be aware of the support services available at Griffith for students, such as the Griffith English Language Institute (GELI)[1].
  - Accessibility
    - It is important not to assume that all students will have access to a range of technology, for example, a broadband internet connection, the latest mobile devices, or a high-end computer. Whilst access is often high it is not often 100% and more over students' skill level varies considerably.
    - Consider how easily aspects of your course can be adapted to suit students with disabilities (e.g., hearing-, vision-, or physically-impaired).
  - Experience and Motivation
    - Will students be familiar with certain technologies already? If not, how might this impact on their motivation and ability to engage with those elements of the course? It is important not to jump to the conclusion that all young people are familiar with and enjoy using technology, just as it is important not to assume that mature age students will have little or no experience with technology.
    - If you have time consider finding out in advance your students' experience with technology (e.g., survey students in one semester before designing new blended learning elements for the next iteration).
    - Remember to provide time and resources for students to gain familiarity and the required skills to use the particular technology before they have to formally engage with it.

For information on the legislative requirements, guidelines and useful resources to assist with the development of accessible learning and teaching materials, visit the:
➲ Blended Learning Support site > Accessibility

Endnote

1 GELI – www.griffith.edu.au/griffith-english-language-institute

2.2 Designing and developing

Once you have reviewed the Planning considerations you can move to designing the blended learning components for your course.

First it is worthwhile briefly reviewing some general design principles which are presented below. You need to keep these principles in mind when either developing an entire course or developing a smaller component in blended learning mode. Then we will discuss a range of ways in which you can integrate blended learning experiences in your course in the key areas of communication, activity and collaboration, assessment and the management of your course.

General design principles

1. Course learning objectives (and including relevant Graduate Attributes), teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks need to correspond with each other.
    - That means (1) course resources and learning and teaching activities need to directly support students achievement of the stated learning objectives, and (2) assessment tasks need to be congruent with the activities and the objectives, and they need to allow students to demonstrate those learning objectives. This is called "constructive alignment" (Biggs, 1999).

Figure 3: The constructive alignment model of curriculum design

2. Activities should be purposeful, and where appropriate and possible, authentic.
    - Authentic assessment tasks mirror as much as possible relevant, real-world activities so that students can demonstrate their competency in a more 'true-to-life' setting.
3. Teaching and learning activities need to be clearly linked in time and content.
    - For example, the timing of tutorial or other learning activities should be obviously connected to the lecture/module/topic progression.
    - Any blended learning element should be clearly integrated with the content and the learning objectives of a course, and should complement the face-to-face and/or individual activities.
    - Establish a clear sequence for engagement in content, activities and assessment tasks.
4. The workload for a blended learning course should not exceed that of a course in traditional mode (a 10 credit-point course equals 10 hours per week).
5. Keep in proportion the time, effort and resources involved in developing blended learning in relation to the impact or importance in the course. For example, don't spend weeks designing and developing a small element of your course unless the pay-offs for you and your students are worth it.

The following questions might help you work through the design process and identify, in advance, any potential issues that need to be addressed.

Specific design questions:	Broader course issues:
➢ What do I want to develop? ➢ Why do I want to develop it? ➢ What do I want students to do? Is it compulsory? ➢ How will it help students' learning? What role will it play in the course? ➢ Why would a student be bothered to engage in the blended learning elements? ➢ How will I know/measure if students have achieved the desired outcomes?	➢ How accessible is the technology for students? What costs, if any, are involved? ➢ What time is needed for planning, design, and development? (Including learning I need to do?) ➢ What organisational support is there for me? For the students? ➢ Will other staff be involved, and in what ways? Will they need training and support? ➢ What are the workload implications for staff and students?

The following Blended Learning Design Worksheet may help you to map and align your objectives, assessments, teaching and learning activities and support resources.

Students struggle with, or drop out of, blended learning courses because:

- The workload is too great – if blended learning and face-to-face elements are not integrated but simply run parallel and independently from each other the overall workload is often far greater than when using only one mode of delivery. Keep student workload at an appropriate level.
- They are provided with inadequate or no support and/or are confused about what is required of them – ensure students are appropriately "oriented" to the course design and given clear guidelines regarding expectations and requirements.
- They experience problems with technology – high tech is often high risk, so make sure you have tested the technology from a student's perspective and provided adequate information and support.

Blended Learning Design Worksheet

Learning objectives:	Ways of assessing the objective (i.e., how can your students demonstrate the objective):	Teaching and learning activities (that will support each objective):	Helpful resources (e.g., web sites, guides, people/ contacts, examples, etc):
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

(Adapted from: Fink, 2005)

Sample blended learning designs

Below are some specific examples of blended learning approaches to support students' achievement of particular learning objectives. Even though these are specific examples the general approach could be applied to a range of contexts.

Example learning objective	Blended Learning approach to support the objective
Identify and classify examples of parasitic mites.	Provide access to an image database from your course site that students can practice their identification and classification skills in their own time as additional to their organised laboratory activities.
Describe and interpret key therapeutic approaches to counselling.	Provide a counselling session video for each approach (these could be provided online as netcasts or YouTube videos). After viewing get students to post their responses to trigger questions through a discussion forum.
Recall key anatomical terms and definitions.	Weekly or end of module online quiz (either for revision or summative assessment purposes) in addition to lecture and text book material. Explore the use of matching or ordering question types as well as multiple choice questions.
Critically analyse different approaches to addressing a public health issue.	Consider a group work activity to facilitate student learning. For example set up a wiki for each group to allow students to work online collaboratively discussing and sharing their analyses and in working through to their preferred approach for presenting to class.

Browse examples of learning designs from a range of disciplines and contexts at: http://www.learningdesigns.uow.edu.au/

Whatever blended learning elements you choose it is important that they are ***integrated*** into the whole course experience.

As part of the design and development phase, consider creating a course map or plan that shows the elements of the course in relationship to one another and how they will be sequenced across the duration of the course. *Figure 4* shows how several elements (face-to-face, online and assessment activities) work together to support the achievement of particular learning objectives.

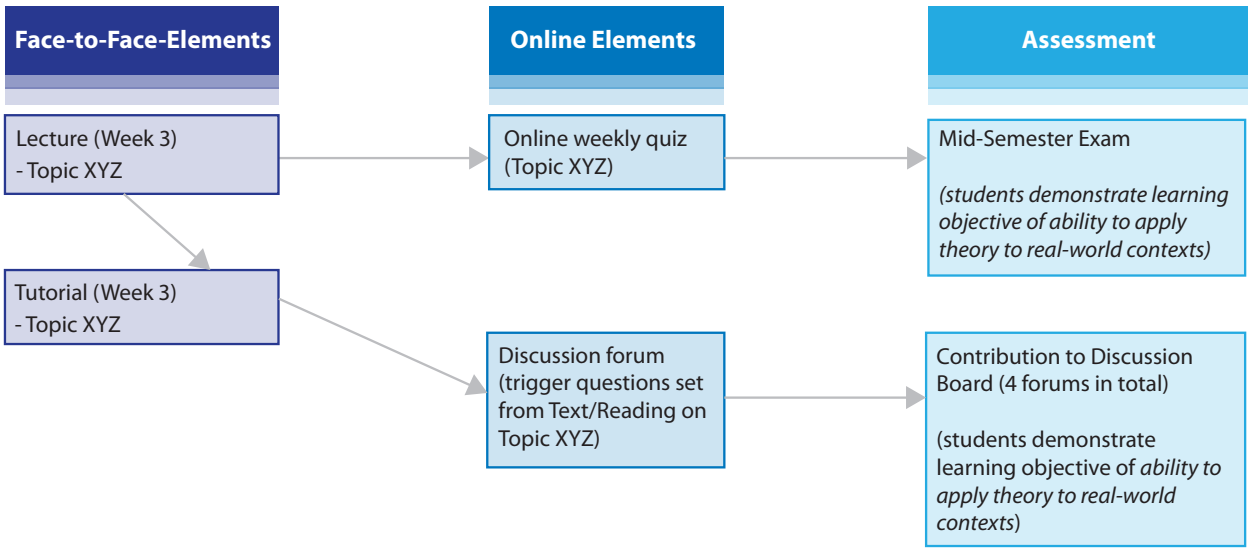

Figure 4: Blending of face-to-face and online learning and teaching activities

Following a constructive alignment approach, the above diagram shows how each element works together to support student achievement of particular learning outcomes – the teaching and learning activities (lectures, tutorials, online quizzes, discussion) are 'aligned', (that is, specifically designed) to support students' achievement of the learning objectives, and provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate their achievement of the objective/s.

If you have already decided that you want to implement some particular technology or tool into your course keep in mind the general design principles and questions for reflection listed above. If however you want to incorporate blended learning into your course but are not sure where to start, you may find inspiration by consulting *Figure 1* and considering the examples above.

Elements of course design:

Course curricula are often conceived of in relation to the following major components; ***content and resources***, ***student activity and collaboration***, ***assessment***, ***course communication***, and ***management and administration***. The following sections will give you a brief guide to the blended learning possibilities in each of these areas with links to additional resources.

Content and resources

In a traditional course the content typically includes the topics of study and the materials associated with them delivered via face-to-face lectures and/or tutorials.

Utilising technology can allow content to be more accessible and flexible to you and your students. For example you can record a class session or host a class online and by putting documents online you can create immediate access to a whole range of materials and resources.

What content should I move online and what are the options for doing so? The following sections outline when and how you might incorporate online content in your course.

When putting course content online it is very important to consider the overall organisation and location of particular components. Students need to be able to predict where they will find different types of materials. If you have a number of content areas, make sure you have a clear and consistent rule for what is located in each one.

Lecture materials

Uploading lecture notes and presentation files to a course web site is a common practice and a very effective way to provide students with ongoing access to these resources.

When putting lecture materials online it is worth considering the following:

- File size and image compression;
- Timing and release of materials;
- Printing costs;
- Format and purpose of materials.

Because lecture materials often include images, diagrams or charts the file size can be very large. This can cause problems for both staff and students when uploading, downloading and accessing these files. There are a number of approaches you can take to deal with file size issues, including; compressing images, converting documents to a PDF format, or uploading to the Learning@Griffith content collection.

Unless it is absolutely necessary, consider converting your PowerPoint presentation into a PDF handout version that has multiple slides per page for uploading into your course site. This reduces the overall file size and printing cost for students and it automatically creates useable lecture notes which may help to encourage students to engage in active note taking.

Although it takes more time, some lecturers create a word document version of their PowerPoint presentation for the purpose of providing lecture notes. This allows the lecturer to purposefully design the lecture notes according to what they want students to do in the lecture. For example you may wish to include some activities at crucial points in the lecture such as solving a problem, discussing an issue in pairs or brainstorming.

When providing materials in different file formats, such as PDF or PowerPoint, make sure that you include a link to the appropriate web site where students can download the software in order to access these files.

To access the help guide, "Reducing image filesizes.pdf", visit the:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Assessment tools > SafeAssign

For more information on the Learning@Griffith content collection, visit the:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Content tools > Content collection

Adobe Reader can be downloaded from:
http://get.adobe.com/reader/

PowerPoint Viewer can be downloaded from the Microsoft web site:
http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/ (search for "PowerPoint Viewer")

Lecture recordings

The recording of lectures is fast becoming common practice in many universities. Generally, this means the recording of audio and whatever is projected on screen (e.g., PowerPoint slides).

Except for fully online courses, lecture recordings are not intended as a complete replacement for in-class teaching episodes. So, why would I record a lecture?

- Because I have international students in my class – when English is not their first language students can benefit from listening at their own pace and/or repeatedly to a lecture. This is because the cognitive load is initially very high for when students have to interpret in a second language what is said before even being able to comprehend and develop understanding. Of course other students will benefit as well particularly if the content is difficult or highly technical.
- For future reference – by recording a guest lecturer or industry speaker you can reuse the presentation across future semesters or courses even simply as an additional learning resource.
- Students sometimes have good reason for not attending class. You can record your lectures and make them available only for a few days after each class to allow students to view the lecture and to keep up with the course, especially if it is critical for the following tutorial or lab.
- Study purposes – students can revisit a lecture during study period. Lecture recordings can be made available at an appropriate time during semester not necessarily after the actual lecture and not necessarily for the whole semester.
- To capture the first lecture of the semester where typically a lot of important information about the course is provided. Often some students are not able to attend this class. Making it available as a recoding may save you time in student consultation and provides the students with a valuable resource.

An obvious concern for any teacher is that recording lectures may encourage students to not attend class and only view the recordings instead. However, viewing or listening to a recorded lecture takes as much or more time as a live lecture, and students will miss out on the opportunity for discussion with their teacher and fellow students. Moreover, if a teacher includes interesting and relevant group activities during class to support learning of the lecture material, students soon learn that missing a lecture is not so enjoyable or advantageous.

There are different ways of recording your lectures either 'in situ' or at your desk.

To discover how to record your lecture, visit the:

➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using lecture capture

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For more information on making the most of recording lectures visit the quick guide "*To record or not to record: Using lecture capture*":
http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/teaching-learning-curriculum/blended-learning

For ideas on making lectures interactive for students, visit:
http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/interactive/index.html

For ideas on facilitating effective note taking for students, visit:
http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/largeclasses/popups/plan5.html

Virtual classroom

What is a virtual classroom? A virtual classroom is a real time, online classroom environment that allows individuals to use audio and video to present content such as a PowerPoint presentation to a live audience. Other features include interactive questioning (polls, quizzes, and surveys), small group "breakout rooms", sharing applications and documents, and an e-whiteboard. Griffith University uses Wimba Classroom as its virtual classroom application, see *Figure 8*.

Virtual Classrooms are really useful for online courses, but are also effective in providing additional access to teachers (and other students) in blended/on-campus courses.

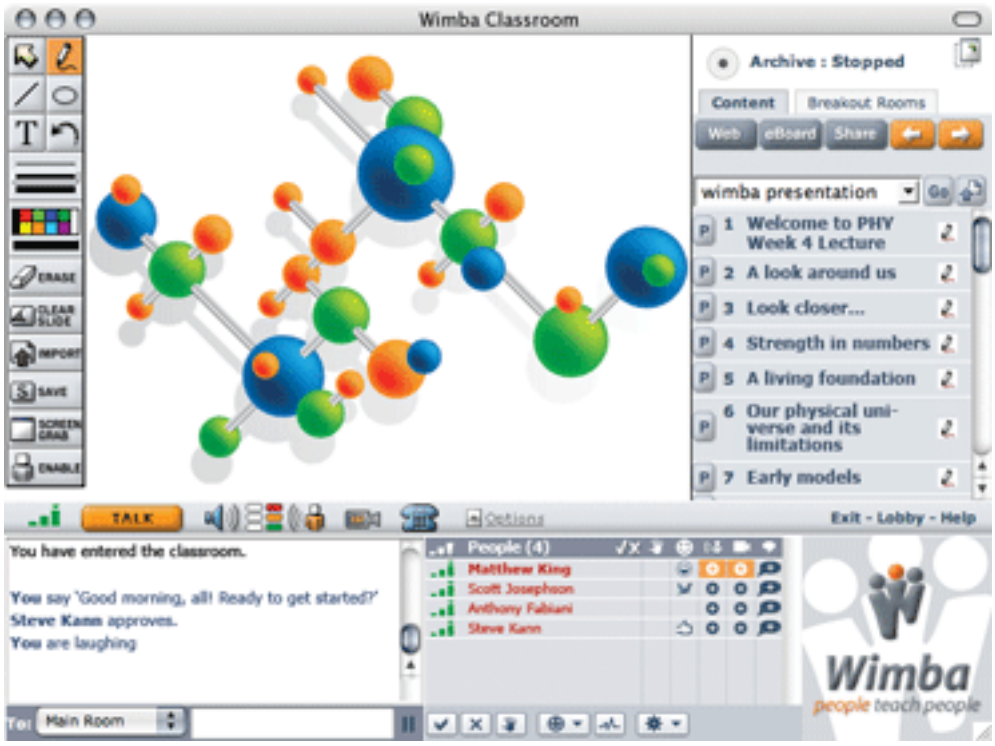


Figure 5: The Wimba Classroom environment

Source: http://www.wimba.com/

Why would I use a virtual classroom?

- Because I want to present a lecture or keep a designated tutorial time when away from campus.
- To facilitate off-campus students in building a sense of community through live interaction using audio and video.
- So that I can 'bring in' external guest speakers or industry professionals from the national or international arena without requiring them to travel to campus.
- Because I have a mixed cohort of on- and off-campus students but I want to allow opportunities for all students to interact as a whole group.
- For recording and archiving a class session, for example a student presentation or a guest speaker.
- To allow off-campus students the opportunity to present their work to the rest of the group in a live setting. This can also be utilised for assessment purposes.
- To allow small groups of students to meet online.
- To facilitate student and supervisor communication and mentoring in RHD and work experience programs.

For access to a range of Wimba guides for staff and students, visit the:

➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools > Wimba tools

Wimba.com user guides are available at:
http://www.wimba.com/services/support/documentation

Webcasts

A webcast is media (audio and video) broadcast over the internet. The idea is that users subscribe to webcasts and can access them using a computer and mobile digital devices, such as iPods or media players or smart phones. A good example of the use of webcasts is how radio and television stations often make their programs available as either podcasts (audio) or vodcasts (video).

Here are some examples of how teaching staff might use webcasts:

- To provide students with an easily accessible recording of lectures or other class presentations (including student presentations);
- Record interviews with experts or other professionals for students to use;
- To provide existing audio or video content but in a readily accessible format.

For more information on webcasts within Learning@Griffith, visit the:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Content tools > Podcasting

"7 Things You Should Know About Podcasts" (Educause Learning Initiative, 2005):
http://www.educause.edu/node/156806

"White paper on lecture webcasting":
http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/resources/PublicationsArchives/StudiesWhitepapers/LectureWebcasting_Jan07.pdf

Information and links to free webcasting software:
http://www.webcastingzone.com/webcasting-articles/free-webcasting.php

Digitised readings/documents

You may already have a range of documents that you use in your course such as journal articles, book chapters, tutorial guides, work booklets, etc. Traditionally these would be made available to students in hard copy or students would be required to purchase them. Documents can now be digitised and made accessible online subject to copyright provisions. Digitising involves converting a document from a paper copy to an electronic format such as a PDF.

Why digitise?

- Because it allows easy distribution of documents.
- It provides timely and ongoing access for students.
- Documents are easily archived and stored for future use.

The university provides digitising services through the Digitisation and Distribution centre. For more information, visit the:

- Griffith Portal > Learning and teaching > Managing your teaching > Learning material distribution

If you would like help in uploading content to Learning@Griffith visit the help guides at:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Content tools > Course readings

For information on copyright matters, visit the:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Copyright

When putting documents online it is worth considering the following:

- What do you expect to be read online? Consider this from the students' perspective;
- Is it valid to be shifting the cost of printing to the student?

- Don't put material online unless you refer to it or integrate it into your course in some way. Tell students what your expectations are of them and their use of the material. It is easy to upload a lot of readings or resources but this can be overwhelming for students;
- Remember to check for broken links at the beginning of the semester if any documents or online content have links to other web pages. Ask students to report any problems;
- Be aware of copyright obligations and issues for all materials (including audio, video, images, etc);
- Be aware of firewall issues for students accessing resources on non-Griffith computers, particularly in a government or other workplace.

Learning support resources

There are many existing online resources that you can utilise to support students' generic skill development as well as students' knowledge and understanding of course specific topics. You can include these resources as adjunct to the core course materials or integrate them as part of the official curriculum as tutorial-type activities which may or may not be assessable.

Learning object repositories

There are numerous repositories that contain sharable and reusable learning resources, often called learning objects (such as online activities, demonstrations, video and audio presentations) that you can freely access and include in your course design. For example, a first-year nursing course might include a writing skills tutorial as well as an online tutorial and quiz to support students' understanding of drug-receptor interactions. To view an example of a reusable learning object, visit: http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/nmp/sonet/rlos/bioproc/drug-receptor/index.html.

By using such resources you save considerable development time and effort and can quickly provide students with additional learning resources that they can access at any time. By using the Learning@Griffith time-release functionality you can nominate when a resource is made available to students.

The library has access to several learning objects databases which you can search to find relevant resources for your course. Some databases are discipline specific and some are general. Visit:

http://app.griffith.edu.au/erd/search.php?main=S98081&sub=S127250

Searching for resources in database can take quite some time and effort so consider how much time you are prepared to invest and perhaps liaise with your Academic Services Librarian or Blended Learning Advisor for advice or ideas.

Generic skills

There is a number of learning resources available at Griffith University to support students' generic skill development in areas such as:

- Library research and information literacy;
- Academic integrity (see also the "Assessment" section in this document);
- Referencing;
- Academic writing.

These resources are in the form of online tutorials, and can be accessed at http://www.griffith.edu.au/library/workshops-training. You can recommend these resources to students for self-directed learning, or you can include them as part of the formal course teaching and learning activities. You may even choose to include the tutorial in your assessment program.

There are also a wide range of student resources available at the Griffith Library web site (as PDF documents). You could either link directly from your course web site to a relevant resource, or upload the document into your course web site (but remember to check for document updates each semester). Visit http://www.griffith.edu.au/library/workshops-training/self-help-resources. Topics include:

- Computing and internet basics;
- Researching (including subject/discipline-specific guides);
- Academic writing;
- Oral presentations;
- Study tips and strategies (including note taking, time management and critical thinking).

Some faculties and schools have developed support resources which can be accessed by students in a range of courses and year levels. For example, the "GBS Resources Bank", which is available in every GBS course site in Learning@Griffith, includes relevant information and resources for business students. For advice see your Blended Learning Advisor or Educational Designer, INS (L&T).

Many courses now include the Griffith Academic Integrity Tutorial in their curriculum. For instructions on how to embed this tutorial in your course site, visit:

➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Assessment tools > Academic integrity student tutorial

Student activity and collaboration

Active engagement with course material is vital for learning. This is based on research that demonstrates how learning is not only more likely to occur but is more enriched (qualitatively better) when students go beyond the passive tasks of listening, reading or viewing. Active engagement can be facilitated through individual as well as collaborative activity as shown in *Figure 6*.

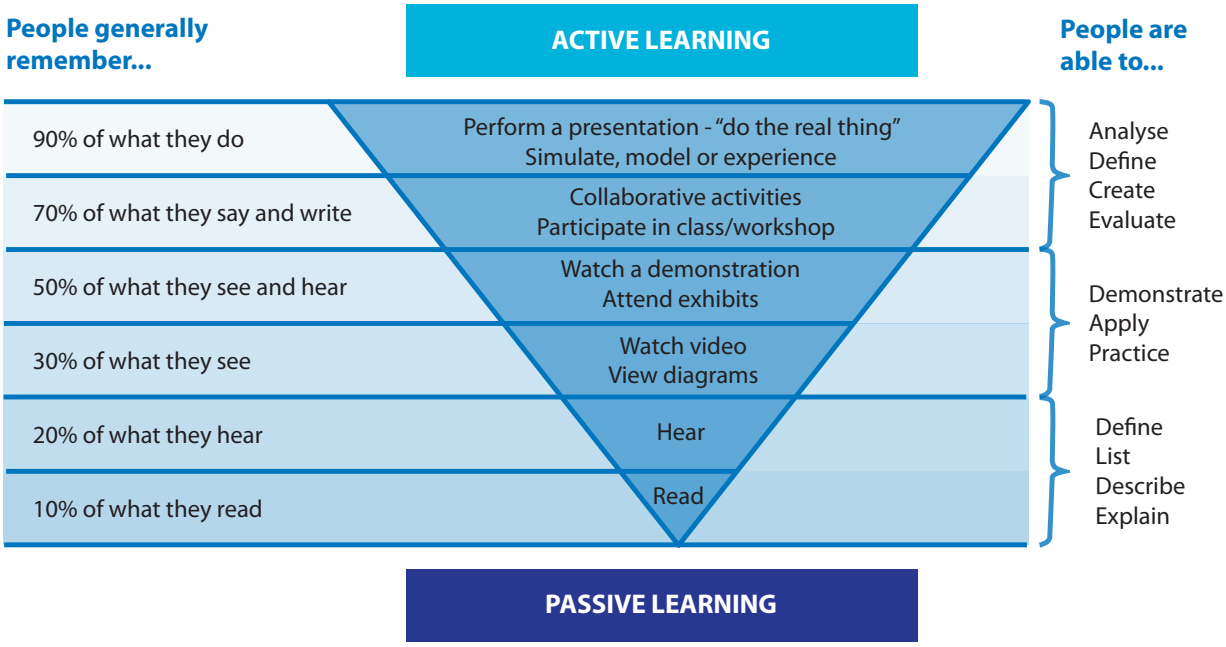


Figure 6: Active versus passive learning

Source: Adapted from http://www.edutechie.ws/2007/10/09/cone-of-experience-media/

Collaborative learning is based on the theory of 'social constructivism'. This theory of learning views the individual's learning taking place because of their interactions in a group. Class discussion, small group work and collaborative learning are all based on this theory. It is argued that student discussion develops students' ability to test their ideas, synthesize the ideas of others, and build a deeper understanding of what they are learning. It also facilitates perspective taking, analysis of ideas, reasoning and critical thinking. Finally, such experiences can support the feeling of community and collaboration among students.

Student activity beyond the classroom should ideally involve a combination of both individual and collaborative activities, as well as both formal and supplementary activity and resources, **to support students in their learning and achievement of the course objectives**.

Why 'blend' student activity?

Some possibilities are:

- Because my student numbers are increasing and I can no longer manage the group work in class;
- So that I can provide my students with additional out of class skills-based practice or learning opportunities such as practical exercises, quizzes, or academic skills tutorials;
- Because university management has cut my teaching budget and we can no longer provide the same amount of small class tutorial time;

- To allow students the opportunity to interact with people beyond the university (e.g., industry experts, workers in the field, overseas-based professionals);
- I want to find better ways of designing and managing group work to support students and to reduce my workload;
- So that I can utilise my students' interest in technology to motivate them to learn;
- I want to maximally support my students' achievements of the course learning objectives without creating too much workload for the course teaching staff.

What blended learning activities should I choose?

The level of learning that students' achieve is often dependent on the type of activities and assessment tasks, and whether they are aligned with the set objectives or desired learning outcomes. One useful framework for considering learning objectives and suitable activities is Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), a hierarchical classification of the different objectives that are typically set for students. *Figure 7* shows the key classifications for the framework, followed by example terms for each.

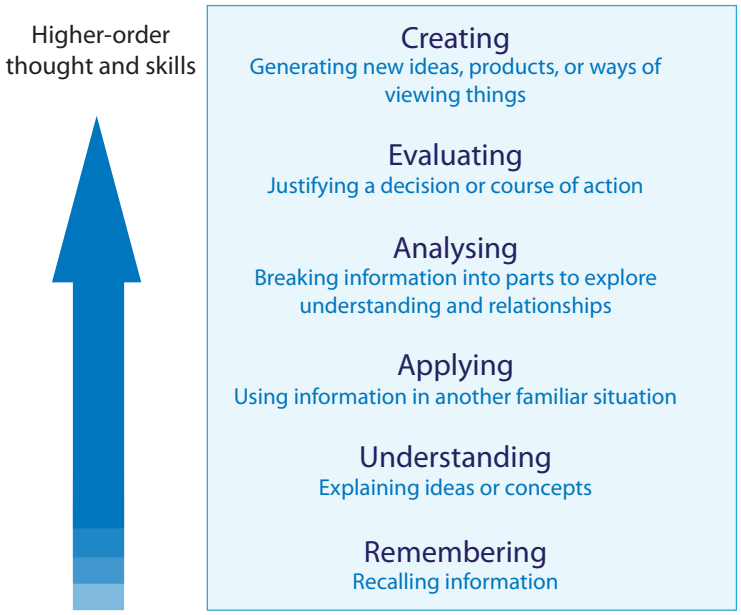


Figure 7: Bloom's taxonomy

Bloom's taxonomy has been recently revised to suit a blended learning environment (Churches, 2008). This revision includes suggestions for tasks that can be used to support particular objectives. For example:

Level of learning	*Types of blended learning activities*
Creating Designing, constructing, planning, producing, inventing	Programming, filming, animating, video/**blogging**, mixing/re-mixing, web publishing, **webcasting**, directing or producing – used to create a film, presentation, story, program, projects, media product, graphic art, vodcast, advertisement, model.
Evaluating Checking, hypothesising, critiquing, experimenting, judging, testing	Debate or panel (using **webcasting**, web conferencing, online chat or **discussion**), investigating (online tools) and reporting (**blog**, **wiki**, presentation), persuasive speech (**webcast**, web document, mind map-presentation mode), commenting/moderating/reviewing/posting (**discussion forums**, **blogs**, **wiki**, chat room, twitter) as well as collaborating and networking.
Analysing Comparing, organising, deconstructing, interrogating, structuring	**Surveying/polling**, using databases, relationship mind maps, online SWOT analysis, reporting (online charts, graphing, presentation or web publishing), mashing, meta-tagging.
Applying Implementing, carrying out, using, executing, editing	Simulation games or tasks, editing or developing shared documents (**wiki**, video and sound tools), interviews (e.g., making **podcast**), presentation or demonstration tasks (using web conferencing or online presentation tools), illustration (using online graphic, creative tools).
Understanding Interpreting, summarising, paraphrasing, classifying, explaining, comparing	Building mind maps, **blog** journaling, **wiki** (simple page construction), categorising and tagging, advanced internet (Boolean) searches, tagging with comments or annotations, **discussion forums**, show and tell (with audio, video **webcasting**).
Remembering Recognising, listing, describing, identifying, retrieving, naming, locating	Simple mind maps, flash cards, **online quizzes**, basic internet searches (fact finding, defining), social bookmarking, Q & A **discussion forums**, chat, presentations.
Source: Adapted from Churches, 2008; retrieved http://www.scribd.com/doc/8000050/Blooms-Digital-Taxonomy-v212	

Many of the blended learning activities mentioned above may be unfamiliar or seem obscure to you. If you are interested in finding out more, go to the document by Andrew Churches (2008) http://www.scribd.com/doc/8000050/Blooms-Digital-Taxonomy-v212. Visual examples are provided for most tools/activities. The activities in **bold** are described in the following sections.

Before deciding on a particular tool/application, it is important to first define your purpose for the activity. Also, don't forget to consider the "General Design Principles" at the beginning of this section. If you know what you would like your students to do, but are not sure of an appropriate tool to use, then take a look at the blended learning possibilities in *Figure 1* of this guide.

An overview of some of the more commonly used tools for designing student activity is provided in *Figure 8*.

Blended Learning Tool	*Educational Purpose*	
	Student collaboration	Individual activity
Wiki	✓✓	✓✓
Blog	✓	✓✓
Discussion Board	✓✓	
Webcasting	✓✓	✓✓
E-portfolio	✓	✓✓
Online quizzes and surveys		✓✓
In-class quizzes and polling		✓✓
LAMS	✓✓	✓✓

Note: ✓✓ = very suitable; ✓ = can be used

Figure 8: Blended learning tools and purposes

Wiki

A wiki is simply a webpage or multiple web pages where users can collaborate to create and edit content including text, images and multimedia elements. Therefore a wiki is a very useful tool for group collaboration. Wikis can be used for a range of student activities, for example:

- Group work projects where students work together on a task or problem which culminates in the development of a collective essay or report, (e.g., a medical diagnosis, a product review or a legal brief);
- Producing collaborative resources (e.g., web site, glossary of terms, annotated bibliography).

A wiki can also be used for individual student activities such as:

- Reflecting on learning experiences during a workplace placement by making entries to an online journal;
- Students create a collection of their work to be used as evidence of their skills and achievements such as in a portfolio.

Wikis can also be reviewed or assessed by peers, teaching staff or industry experts. Please see the section on "Assessment" for more information.

For staff and student guides (both technical and pedagogical) on using wikis in Learning@Griffith, visit:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools> Wiki

"7 Things You Should Know About Wikis" (Educause Learning Initiative 2005):
http://www.educause.edu/node/156807

Blog

Like a wiki, a blog is a web site to which individuals can contribute text, graphics and video. Blogs consist of regular entries such as commentary or a description of events or other material and are displayed in reverse chronological order (the most recent is displayed first). However unlike a wiki the focus isn't on creating a final product but rather it is on building a series of postings. Therefore blogs are commonly used as online diaries created by individuals or groups, but can be used for a range of different student activities, for example:

- A reflective journal (either group or individual);
- Exam review where the teacher posts a question and students then post responses;
- Class/group discussion about a particular event or issue (the teacher might post an initial trigger question or statement, and students then post comments);
- A notification tool for events happening in the course (e.g. similar to Announcements).

Considerations:

- *Legal issues* – be mindful of the public nature of blogs and wikis, and support students in being aware of issues of defamation, dealing with sensitive topics, and appropriate language use;
- *Which should I choose, a blog or a wiki?* This really depends on what you want the students to do. Wikis have the advantage of content being editable and changeable and therefore are good for group work or projects where the aim is to produce something (not chronological) at the end of the process. The content in a blog however is static, and is built up one post at a time which is why it suits activities where the tracking of postings is important.

For more information on blogs, visit:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools > Blogs

"7 Things You Should Know About Blogs" (Educause Learning Initiative 2005)
http://www.educause.edu/node/156809

Alternative blog tools:
http://penzu.com/ http://www.springnote.com/ http://posterous.com/

Discussion forums

A discussion board is an asynchronous communication tool in which discussion forums are created for participants to post and reply to messages over time. They are also known as 'message boards' and can help to facilitate the forming of online communities with a common interest to share information or debate and discuss ideas. A discussion board can have multiple forums and can involve different groups of users. Discussions are organised into forums and threads.

Here are some suggestions for when you might use a discussion forum:

- A communication tool to support group work rather than using email;
- Students debate or discuss a topic or issue, or respond to a newspaper article or journal article, and participation is assessed or forms part of the assessment;
- A role play activity where students contribute to a discussion from the perspective of a particular 'player' (for example, a community forum about a local environmental issue might include the mayor, developer, local council representative, environmental activist and a concerned citizen).

For more information on discussion forums, including user guides, case studies and best practice tips, visit:

➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools> Discussion board

Alternative discussion forum tools:

http://www.tangler.com http://groups.google.com

Webcasting

A webcast is media (audio and/or video) broadcast over the internet. A good example of the use of webcasts is how radio and television stations often make their programs available as either podcasts (audio) or vodcasts (video).

Just as you can create a webcast to communicate material to students, you can get students to create a webcast to communicate material to you and/or the rest of the class. This may be a good way of stimulating creativity, motivating and engaging students in the process of learning. A webcast could be the end product of a group collaboration, where students worked together on investigating a particular issue or carrying out a project. Each group's webcast could be shown to the whole group, and could be self- or peer-assessed.

Information and links to free webcasting software:

http://www.webcastingzone.com/webcasting-articles/free-webcasting.php

"How to make a webcast" (video: 2 minutes duration):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRtXPSHJSRs

E-portfolio

An e-portfolio, or a digital portfolio, is essentially a web-supported repository allowing an individual to create a collection of digital objects that demonstrate their experiences, achievements and evidence of learning. E-portfolios provide students with a structured way of recording their learning experiences and work history, and allow for reflection, planning and goal setting. E-portfolios can be developed quickly and easily to capture live evidence through the use of mobile phones and point-of-view devices, and can include a range of digital evidence such as audio, video, photographs and blogs.

E-portfolios are shareable and so they can be made available to an 'audience' (e.g., teacher, peer, practicum supervisor or prospective employer). This allows the individual student to receive feedback which makes it ideal in a teaching and learning context. E-portfolios are sustainable over a long period of time. They can be created during a program of study at university but used well beyond this time, which is ideal for encouraging engagement in lifelong learning.

Some examples of using an e-portfolio include:

For more information on e-portfolios, visit:
http://www.eportfoliopractice.qut.edu.au/

Currently, Learning@Griffith does not have a dedicated e-portfolio tool, however, the Expo tool can be used at the program level for students to capture and record examples of their work. For more information, visit:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools> Expo

The Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Exchange site provides a list of links to e-portfolio software and resources, available at:
http://www.altcexchange.edu.au/eportfolio-software

Online tests and surveys

Providing practice exam questions or mini ("pop") quizzes as a support for learning is not new. Such tasks support student learning by encouraging the reviewing of content and integrating knowledge learnt, and help to identify gaps in understanding.

However, by utilising online quiz tools such resources can have *flexibility of access* so students can experience them at a time convenient for them and when they need them most (and even over multiple occasions), or at a time during the course that best suits the activity. An online quiz also has *longevity* as it is easily reusable from semester to semester, or even course to course.

Compared to paper-based tests, teaching staff workload is reduced as "marking" can be automatic and feedback can be built into the design such that students can get immediate feedback (both when they respond correctly and incorrectly). Student engagement in the online quiz can also be monitored by teaching staff even if it is not used as a formal assessment task (using online quizzes as formal assessment tasks is discussed in the following section on "Assessment").

The test tool in Learning@Griffith includes a range of possible question types, including:

- Multiple-choice;
- Calculations;
- Either-or responses (Yes/No, Agree/Disagree, True/False);
- Short answer or essay;
- Fill-in-the-blanks;
- Hot spot (students have to identify a location on an image);
- Matching lists;
- Ordering of list items;
- Quiz bowl (where students are given the answer to a question and have to supply the question, similar to the television show Jeopardy).

Online surveys can also be a useful learning activity for students and for teachers. For example, they can be easily used to collect information from your students such as (1) students' interests or goals (2) students' prior knowledge, and (3) feedback about a particular aspect of the course or the course as a whole. You can also use surveys as an integral part of a learning activity where you collect information from the class, and as a group use the data to explore and discuss ideas, or even analyse it.

For more information about online tests and surveys, including both student and teacher help guides for Learning@Griffith, visit:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Assessment tools > Tests and surveys

There are also a number of alternative tools, such as:

http://www.freeonlinesurveys.com
http://www.kwiksurveys.com/
http://www.surveymonkey.com/
http://fluidsurveys.com

For more information about *designing good multiple-choice questions*, see:

http://www.ukcle.ac.uk/resources/assessment-and-feedback/mcqs/
(Higher Education Academy, UK – comprehensive information and resources)

http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/teaching_resources/tips/designing_multiple_choice_questions.html (brief guide to general principles and tips, with examples)

In-class quizzes

Technology can now support quick and effective in-class question activities, such as quizzes, polling (voting) and surveys. There are a variety of different tools available, for use in a virtual classroom, or in a face-to-face environment. For example;

Audience response systems ("Clickers")

- Each student uses a small hand-held device (called a "clicker", a bit like a TV remote) to answer questions posed by the teacher that are presented in a PowerPoint presentation. Students respond anonymously. Using specially-designed software, teachers create the questions for quizzes or voting purposes, and this software then allows the teacher to "collect" the responses that the students make. They can then quickly generate the cumulative summaries of student responses to be shown in real time to the class via PowerPoint, as well as saving and storing responses electronically for later use.
- Each device is numbered, however, so the teacher could use it for formal assessment purposes if appropriate.
- Research has demonstrated a range of benefits of using clickers in the classroom, including greater student engagement, increased student interest, discussion and interactivity; all of which lead to better learning outcomes.

For more information about using clickers, see:

http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Quarterly/EDUCAUSEQuarterlyMagazineVolum/ClickersintheClassroomAnActive/157458

http://lt.osu.edu/resources-clickers/

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxKHXyVtVIA (video – 7 minutes duration)

http://www.ipfw.edu/celt/technology/PDFs/ClickerTips.pdf

http://tlc.ucalgary.ca/resources/library/itbl/using-clickers/using-clickers.pdf

Wimba (virtual classroom)

- Within Wimba, there is a range of additional tools including polls, quizzes and surveys that can be created specifically for a particular online class session.
- For more information on Wimba see the "Content and Resources" of this guide.

There is a range of help guides available for learning how to use Wimba. Visit the Blended Learning Support site

➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools > Wimba tools

LAMS (Learning Activity Management System)

LAMS is an innovative tool for designing, managing and delivering online learning activities. It provides teachers with a user-friendly 'authoring' (i.e., designing) environment for creating sequences of learning activities. These activities can include a range of individual tasks, small group work and whole class activities based on both content and collaboration. There are also real-time student monitoring and tracking facilities.

LAMS allows you to create a learning design or "digital lesson plan" that can be run online with students, as well as shared and adapted amongst colleagues/teachers. A learning design can be stored, re-used, and customised or adapted for other learning contexts or topics. *Figure 9* shows the student view of the homepage of a LAMS activity. The activities or steps contained within the sequence are listed on the left-hand side of the figure.

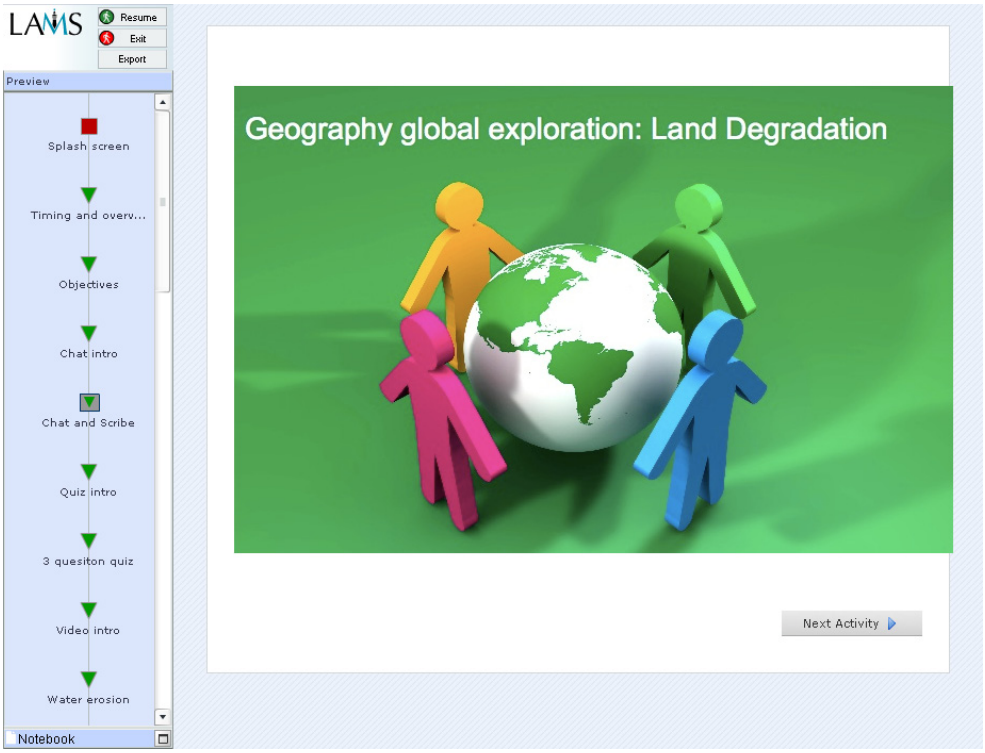


Figure 9: Student view of a LAMS activity

Source: http://lamscommunity.org/lamscentral/sequence?seq_id=1033816 (Author: Matthew Parsons)

There is an extensive range of tools available within LAMS, such as:

- **Noticeboard** – provides a simple way of providing information and content to the learners;
- **Share Resources tool** – allows teachers to add content into a sequence, such as URL hyperlinks, zipped web sites, individual files (PDF, PowerPoint, Flash) and even complete learning objects;
- **Spreadsheet Activity** – teacher provides data in a spreadsheet format for students to work on;
- **Task list activity** – teacher allows authors to create a series of tasks which are marked off as completed by learners. Each individual task may be compulsory or not, or require the completion of other tasks to become available;
- **Notebook** – learners can record their thoughts during a sequence;
- **Q & A activity** – teachers pose a question/s to learners individually, and after they have entered their response, can see the responses of all their peers; there is also multiple-choice/true-false automated assessment and survey tools;

- **Image Gallery** – individuals upload a series of images, and then review and rate them;
- **Wiki Tool** – allows for teacher or students to create content pages that can link to each other and, to which students can make collaborative edits to the content provided;
- **Voting Activity** – teachers provide learners with a list of options to "vote" on;
- **Mind map** – teachers and/or students can create, edit and view mind maps;
- **Video Recorder** – teachers can record instructions for their students and embed them into a sequence;
- **Google Maps** – teachers can create maps or satellite images with annotated place markers., and then as part of the activity, students can add their own markers to the map and view markers placed by other learners;
- **Pixlr** –image editor that has powerful image creation and editing features, and the interface will be familiar to anyone who has used Paint, or more advanced editors like Photoshop or GIMP;
- **Forum** – an asynchronous discussion environment for learners, with discussion threads initially created by the teacher;
- **Chat** – a live (synchronous) discussion for learners (and teachers);
- **Dimdim** – tool for integrating web conferences into a LAMS sequence;
- **Scribe** – not enabled as a stand-alone activity, but is used in 'dual-screen' roles, such as with a chat, forum or submit files activity.

Many elements of a LAMS sequence can be used as part of the assessment program for a course, just as similar tools outside of LAMS can be used. For more information about assessing online activities, see the section on "Assessment" in this guide, and the sections above on individual tools (e.g., discussion forum, wiki, etc).

For more information, including online tutorials/demonstrations, visit:

http://wiki.lamsfoundation.org/display/lamsdocs/Home

Using Web 2.0 technologies for learning and teaching

Many of the tools described above are considered Web 2.0 technologies. These are web applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, collaboration and dialogue on the World Wide Web.

These tools offer a wide range of possibilities for blended learning beyond what a Learning Management System (LMS) such as Blackboard (Griffith University's chosen LMS) can provide teachers and students.

For more information, examples and resources in using Web 2.0 technologies for learning and teaching, visit the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) project site on "Learning in Networks of Knowledge" lead by Dr Matthew Allen.

The ATLC project on using Web 2.0 technologies:
http://altc-link.wikidot.com/start

A guide to the top Web 2.0 applications for learning and teaching:
http://netcrit.net/content/2010handoutallenweb2presentation.pdf

Supporting students working in groups

If you are designing activities that require student collaboration or group work, it will be important for you as the teacher to be mindful of potential difficulties and issues that group work often entails, and to be ready to respond if these arise. Consider the following:

- Provide students with some guidelines or tips and strategies for working successfully in groups (See the brief guide for students on learning in groups);
- Be clear about your expectations regarding the group work right from the beginning; and then encourage your students to do the same by forming a set of "ground rules" to help guide their group.

Resources for teachers and students:

Student guide to online learning (includes learning in groups):
http://learningandteaching.unsw.edu.au/content/blended_learning/blended_guide/student_guide.pdf

Working in groups (A note to faculty, and a Quick guide for students):
http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/wigintro.html
(Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University)

Working in teams:
www.materials.ac.uk/pub/Teams.pdf (Higher Education Academy, UK)

Assessment

Good practice in assessment would tell us that ideally assessment tasks should be designed such that they are actually integral to the process of learning rather than only being about outcomes and grading. Blended learning offers a range of ways in which learning activities can be incorporated into the course assessment program.

Blended Learning technologies also support the ***management of the assessment process*** (submission, grading, and feedback). For more information see the "Management and Administration" section in this guide.

Why blend assessment?

- To monitor student progress frequently and more easily (e.g., online quizzes, individual or group contributions to a discussion forum or wiki).
- To motivate students to engage in learning in an ongoing manner (cf. cramming for an end of semester exam) by using online activities scheduled as part of the course curriculum.
- To make managing and administering assessment more time efficient and accurate. For example, by using online assignment submission students' work will be automatically date and time stamped, and can be downloaded in a batch for marking.
- To enable the design of a more authentic assessment task, or utilise student activity/collaboration during the course for assessment purposes – see the section on "Student Activity and Collaboration" in this guide.

Considerations

When taking a blended learning approach to assessment, consider the following:

- Can you provide opportunities for self-assessment, particularly of knowledge?
  - Or can you provide 'low stakes' assessment (e.g., a quiz) to guide the learner and provide feedback?
- How will you provide feedback on progress and what is the nature and timing of feedback?
  - Are there opportunities for both informal and formal feedback?
- How consistent are the types of assessment with the types of learning activities?
- Do the assessment tasks align with the course aims and intended learning objectives?
- What are the workload implications for staff and students?
  - Are there skills that need to be developed in order to use the technology?
  - Will implementing a blended learning strategy create more workload or can it be made more efficient?
- How will you communicate the purpose and relevance of tasks to students?
- The timing of assessment tasks in your course is important.
  - Are they reasonably spread across the semester?

- Do you know how the timing of assessment in your course relates to other courses within the program that students are likely to be enrolled in?
- Students in early years of a program need to complete tasks early in the semester so you have some way of gauging their need for support. Make sure you know what support is available. If possible, make arrangements with support staff before semester starts so the help comes to the students 'just in time' for them to complete tasks.

- At Griffith there is a monitoring of students at risk strategy (Amber Risk Assessment – ARA) normally conducted during week 6-8 of semester, or after the first assessment task, so it is important to consider the timing of your assessment tasks in relation to this process.

Choosing an online assessment approach

Assessment and learning objectives are intimately tied. One useful framework for considering both is Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), a hierarchical classification of the different objectives that are typically set for students. This is discussed in detail in the section on "Student Activity and Collaboration".

In choosing blended learning approaches to assessment, it is important to revisit your course learning objectives and *consider the nature of what it is that you want the students to demonstrate*. So, if you haven't already considered your course learning objectives and how to best align these with the assessment tasks, take a look at the "Student Activity and Collaboration" section.

Some questions to consider include:

- How will (should) students use the knowledge and/or skills gained in the course in the real-world?
- What will students be doing in the course; that is, what are the learning activities I have designed?
- What needs to be assessed, and why (i.e., knowledge, skills, attitudes, etc)?

For general information and resources relating to assessment practices and principles, visit:
http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/teaching-learning-curriculum/assessment

In particular, read the "*Good Practice Guide: Developing Effective Assessment*", and *"Aligning assessment with learning objectives and outcomes"*.

For a comprehensive guide to choosing appropriate assessment methods, see:
http://www.otl.curtin.edu.au/publications/tlbookchap5.pdf

Assessment of online activity

Many of the tools outlined in the section on "Student Activity and Collaboration" can be utilised as assessment tasks. As with any assessment task, there are several important principles for best practice.

- ***Planning well in advance*** is crucial for the successful implementation of assessment tasks using technology. Before you "launch" an online assessment task, ensure that you have *prepared clear guidelines* for students on:
  1. How to use the technology;
  2. Where to go for technical support and assistance;

3. What is required of them and when;
4. How the assessment task should be 'submitted';
5. How their work will be assessed (i.e., provide a clear set of criteria and standards, or a rubric);
6. When feedback and marks will be provided.

For more information and resources on developing assessment rubrics, visit:

Tips on designing assessment rubrics:
http://hitchhikers.midsolutions.org/course_design/assessment_evaluation/rubics.php

Example rubrics for wide range of assessment tasks:
http://course1.winona.edu/shatfield/air/rubrics.htm

Rubrics for online discussions:
http://www.nau.edu/d-elearn/support/tutorials/discrubrics/discrubric.php

Rubric for assessing wikis:
http://hitchhikers.midsolutions.org/course_design/blackboard/wikis/wikiRubrics.php

- ***Provide sufficient opportunities for students to "practice"*** using the technology in order to gain the skills required for them to use the technology effectively for the purposes of the assessment task. Unless it is part of the assessment, avoid technical glitches and lack of appropriate skills impacting on the quality of students' work.
  - For example, if a learning activity is to be assessed then allow students to experience an introductory or formative exercise first in order to try it out and gain the required skills.
- When the assessment task ***involves group collaboration***, consider what it is you will assess (the outcomes/product or the group process, or both) and be clear about this in your communication with students.
  - If working as a group is important to the successful outcomes of an assessment task, then consider providing in advance some guidance on working as a group (see previous section "Supporting students working in groups" for more information)

Peer and self assessment

Designing assessment tasks to include peer and/or self assessment has many advantages. From a staff workload perspective, it can reduce marking and provide feedback to individual students beyond what might ordinarily be possible with large classes.

However, it can have a much greater impact on student learning. It can foster higher-order thinking skills as students are required to consider criteria and standards and evaluate work against these, and can help to develop other generic skills such as communication, lifelong learning, and autonomy. It can also help to make assessment more authentic (depending on the nature of the task), and can motivate students as they have an "audience" for their work beyond the teacher.

Self and peer assessment can help to develop a sense of community amongst students, and forge a culture of collaborative learning. Students naturally compare their work with others; peer assessment processes can

build on this to provide a supportive and open environment which is monitored and grounded in established criteria and standards.

Technology can assist in the management of peer and self assessment, particularly when dealing with large numbers of students. For example;

- **Self and peer assessment tool** – using your course site on Learning@Griffith you can set up an assessment task for either self or peer assessment or both. The tool enables students to submit work (by either responding to a question online in essay format or by uploading a file), and then for themselves and/or their peers to evaluate according to set criteria. You can include examples of model answers to support students in making their assessments, and can choose from a range of other options such as anonymity, number of markers per submission, etc. Feedback is then available to each student via the My Grades link in Learning@Griffith.
- **SAGE (Student and Group Evaluation) tool** – aims to provide you with an easy tool to set up and manage the process of obtaining, collating, and sharing self and peer feedback regarding *group work*. It allows you to design a range of different self and/or peer assessments in relation to group work, including:
  - Self evaluation of own group work performance, or evaluation of own group;
  - Peer evaluation of other group members;
  - Self and peer evaluation within own group, or;
  - Peer evaluation of another group or groups.

For more comprehensive information on self and peer assessment, including introductory guides, references to resources, and case studies, visit:
http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/teaching-learning-curriculum/assessment/peer-self-assessment

For more information on the self and peer assessment tool, including user guides for staff and students, visit:
➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Assessment tools > Self and peer assessment

For more information on SAGE, visit:
http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/134374/SAGE1.pdf

Plagiarism

The issue of plagiarism is best addressed from the broader perspective of academic writing and integrity: what is academic writing? how does it differ from other forms? what does it mean in a university context? and how do we do it appropriately? This is particularly important for students in their first year of study. Many students simply don't understand what plagiarism really means and they haven't yet developed the skills required for academic writing. Remember some students have come straight from high school where conventions might be different, or have come as mature age students who have had very little experience in formal writing work. There is a range of ways in which you can support students in learning about academic writing and how to avoid plagiarism.

- "Avoiding Plagiarism" presentation (http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/online/learningmodules/avoidingPlagiarism/player.html)

  This presentation (7 minutes duration) provides a brief overview for students and could be shown as part of your course orientation activities. It takes an academic writing perspective and shows when the academic writing process is undertaken appropriately plagiarism does not become an issue. This would be a very easy resource to include in your Learning@Griffith course site.

- The "Academic Writing Tutorial" (http://www.griffith.edu.au/library/workshops-training/self-help-resources/academic-writing-tutorial)

  This is an online self-paced tutorial that facilitates students' skills in the academic writing process. The tutorial comes from an assessment task perspective and is organised into four modules: unpacking the question/task; researching and planning; structuring and writing; and editing and proofreading. The tutorial includes working through examples and students' learning is supported by online quizzes. You can easily include this tutorial as part of your course by integrating it into the blended learning or assessment activities. So that students see this as an important aspect of their learning and a legitimate part of the course, you could consider assigning a small percentage of the final course grade for completion of the tutorial. For further advice, contact INS (L&T).

- The "Academic Integrity Student Tutorial" (http://www.griffith.edu.au/library/workshops-training/self-help-resources/academic-integrity-tutorial)

  Similar to the above, this is an online self-paced tutorial that addresses the issues of academic integrity (and misconduct) more broadly but includes a large component on plagiarism and appropriate referencing. Students are directed through modules on academic integrity policy, forms of academic misconduct, understanding the skills needed to maintain academic integrity, and the process of referencing. Each module includes examples, activities and online quizzes. As explained above, this tutorial could be easily integrated into your course. For further advice, contact INS (L&T).

Can we 'detect' plagiarism?

There are online tools that help to support students in checking their own work to detect possible issues of plagiarism and improve their writing. They rely on text matching students' work with a range of other works such as documents available for public access on the Internet and certain database such as library databases and institutional archives (i.e., containing all assignments submitted electronically by staff and students). Such tools generate a report that provides a percentage of similarity between the student's work and other documents, outlines which part/s of the assignment contains matched text, and lists the sources where the similar or identical text has been found. BUT THEY DO NOT DETECT PLAGIARISM AUTOMATICALLY. Each highlighted match then needs to be considered as to whether or not the text is acceptable.

- **For learning purposes**

  It is best to integrate the use of such tools with a pedagogical purpose. For example, allow students to upload a draft of their work and receive a report in order to review the feedback that will enable them to self-monitor their work. Ideally they would engage in this process *after* they have learnt about appropriate academic writing and plagiarism (see examples above of online tutorials). Enabling students to better understand the issues around academic writing and plagiarism and to take charge of monitoring their own work can help to reduce incidences of plagiarism, and improve student skills in writing and acknowledging sources.

- **For assessment purposes**

  These tools can also be used in more formal way where students submit their final work for assessment and the teacher then receives the text-matching report for monitoring and detection purposes. It is important to recognise that the tool simply matches text, and provides a report that identifies any such

text. But **what it detects may or may not be plagiarism**. For example, certain text will naturally be very close to that found in other sources, such as definitions of concepts, descriptions of apparatus used in experiments, reference lists or bibliographies, etc. Therefore you cannot rely solely on the tool and its report as an indicator of the presence (or absence) of plagiarism, and hence it is unwise to set standards such as "allowable" percentages as part of the guidelines for an assessment task (e.g., requiring students to submit their report along with their assignment and setting an upper limit such as 20% which is an 'acceptable' amount of detected similarity).

Griffith University uses SafeAssign as its text matching software. For more information including help guides on submitting work and interpreting reports, visit:

➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Assessment tools > Academic integrity student tutorial

Communication

Effective staff-student and student-student communication is paramount for the success of any course. Nowadays our ability to communicate with individuals and groups is greatly enhanced through the use of technology.

The impact of communicating regularly with students can be far greater than you can imagine. It can create a sense of care and community within the course and of belonging to the University.

When choosing the most appropriate communication tool consider both *purpose* and *function*, for example:

- Do you and/or the students need to communicate in real time (synchronously)?
- Does the information need to be recorded or archived?
- Will the communication involve one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many?
- Is there a need for urgency or immediacy, privacy?

Netiquette

Communicating online can create a sense of anonymity or facelessness which can lead to inappropriate or ineffective interaction. Netiquette (online communication etiquette), emoticons (text to represent the face of a writer's mood or facial expression) and online lingo (such as the use of acronyms to abbreviate phrases) are used to help people communicate more effectively in this environment. Make sure the students are aware of and understand their roles and responsibilities and the expectations that you have of them (and that they can have of you).

Consider providing students with a netiquette guide or ground rules for communication. For an example, visit the GIHE Tip Sheet for "Netiquette" at:

http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/teaching-learning-curriculum/blended-learning

Staff-student consultations

In all courses staff are required to be available for student consultation. Obviously this can be difficult when students are studying off campus or are on work placements or teaching staff are away from campus. There are a number of online options that can facilitate either one-to-one or group consultations in real time (synchronously). These include:

- Online chat;
- Virtual classroom;
- Phone call or teleconference;
- Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), such as Skype (http://www.skype.com).

Online chat and virtual classroom sessions are recordable while phone calls and teleconferences generally are not.

Course information and reminders

Conveying course information or reminders to students is an important aspect of course management.

Using the Email and Announcement functions within Learning@Griffith makes this timely and easy, particularly with the ability to automatically generate a group email when creating an Announcement.

With smaller cohorts of students, some staff use a mobile phone and SMS text messaging to provide timely information without needing computer access. However, careful consideration should be given to the management of mobile phone use for teaching particularly when using your personal number.

Group discussions

Students having an opportunity to share and discuss various course topics or issues can have a big impact on their success and satisfaction in the course. Because many students have work or other commitments their time on campus is limited and therefore so are opportunities for informal meeting and discussion. Staff can help to create a sense of community amongst students by providing "spaces" for online communication and information sharing. For example:

- Discussion forums
  - Asynchronous (not in real time);
  - Some staff find it useful to set up a "students only" forum or a "students and tutors only" forum as well as an open forum where they can also contribute to the discussion or respond to questions;
  - As with using discussion forums for a teaching and learning activity it is important to consider issues such as purpose, expectations, integration and management.
- Virtual classroom
  - Synchronous (real time) communication tools such as Wimba Classroom can also be used for group discussion however participants need to be online at the same time.

Discussion forums are also addressed in the section on "Student Activity and Collaboration" and you can find more information on Wimba in the "Content and Resources" section of this guide.

For user guides on the Learning@Griffith communication tools, visit:

Announcement user guide:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools > Announcements

Email user guide:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools > Email

Online chat:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools > Online chat

Wimba Classroom:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools > Wimba tools

Discussion board:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools > Discussion board

It is particularly important to note that while students may be frequent users of social networking tools to communicate and interact with others online, they won't necessarily readily move to using such technologies in a teaching and learning context. Generally people communicate and interact online with people they already know, so building in opportunities for getting to know one another first in order to create a supportive and familiar environment for your students will be crucial.

Management and administration

Effective and efficient management and administration is vital for the success of any course and in managing your own workload. In a blended learning environment, this is particularly important because you may not have regular face-to-face contact with all students to deal with any difficulties or issues. On the other hand, working in a blended learning environment can offer a range of strategies and tools to support the efficient and effective management of a course.

Managing your course site

In a blended learning environment your course web site becomes a critical focus for communication, teaching, learning, collaboration and assessment. It is therefore important to have a well-managed site for the effective implementation of your course. Consider the following issues:

- Layout, structure and organisation of your course site
  - Everything on your course site needs to have a clear reason for being there and a clear and logical location. Students need to be able to predict where they will find different types of materials;
  - If you have a number of content areas, make sure you have a clear and consistent rule for what is located in each one;
  - Plan your course structure and the organisation of your site in advance. See the following section for ideas on site organisation.
- Terminology and jargon
  - Avoid confusion for students by using terminology and jargon that is either already familiar to them or that is easy to follow and understand;
  - Be consistent in the use of terminology across all your communications (written and oral, online and face-to-face) and in naming documents and resources, e.g., lecture notes versus handouts. Even simple changes can be confusing.
- Consistency
  - Consistency, consistency, consistency; it is the golden rule for designing a successful blended learning experience!;
  - Make sure that you check all elements for consistency - structure, location of similar resources, colour, headings, terminology, expectations, and requirements. Inconsistency can cause confusion, alienation and disgruntlement in students, which can all lead to poor learning outcomes and experiences;
  - Maintaining a degree of consistency across courses in a program will also help to create cohesion, student familiarity and efficiency in navigating and locating materials on course sites.

Course site organisation

Before building or redeveloping a course site it can be useful to start by creating a course site-map such as the one presented in *Figure 10*.

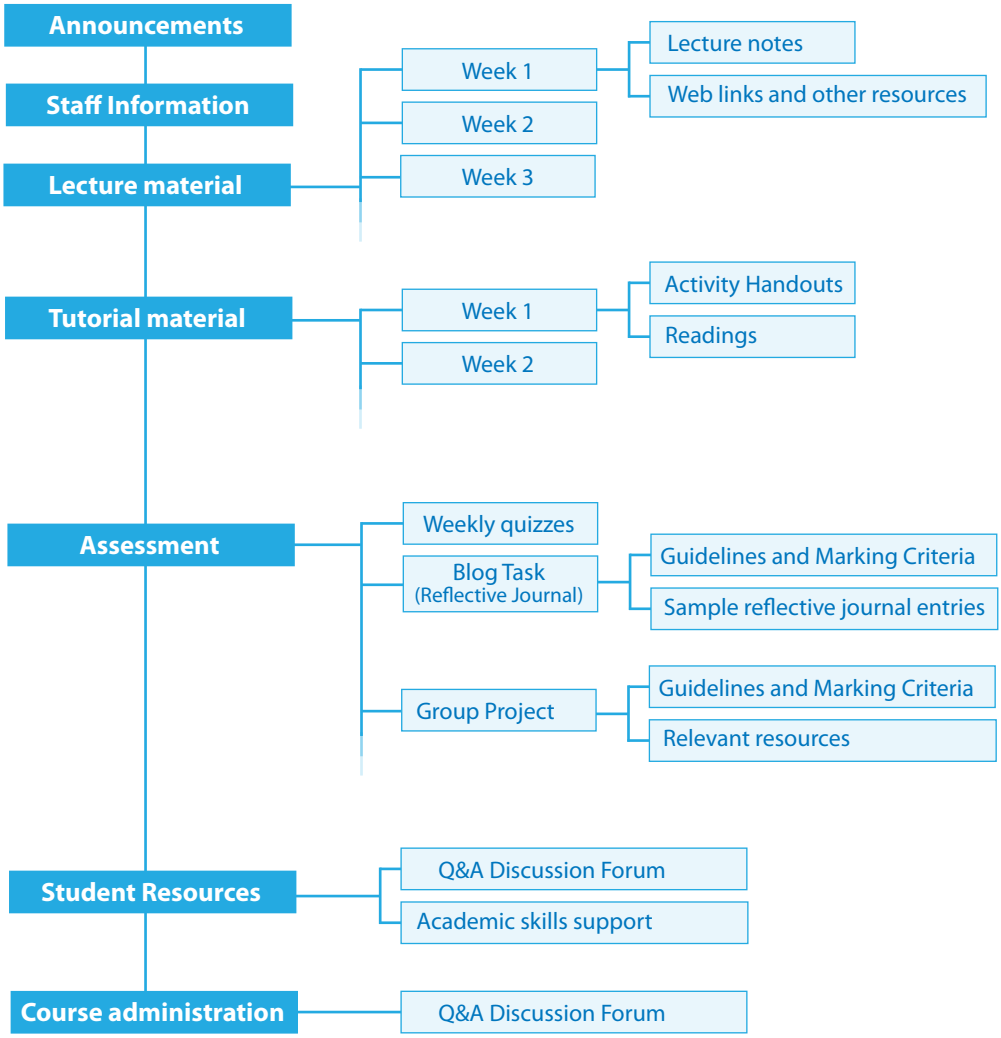


Figure 10: Course site map example

By looking at your course in such a holistic way it will not only be easier to ascertain the necessary structure but you will also be better able to see the relationship between the components and that by implementing some aspects of your course in blended learning mode you may need to make changes in other areas.

- In Learning @ Griffith, Blackboard software relies on the use of folders and items (files) to organise content. Looking at the example course structure in *Figure 10* you can see how the use of folders can be very helpful in organising your course materials both on your course site and in your personal files (electronic or otherwise).
- Plan the organisation of your course materials off-line, and then replicate this structure on your course site. This makes it much easier for you to manage the uploading and making

available of course materials over the duration of the course. Further such replication between your course site and personal files facilitates planning and archiving for future use.

Provide a student version of the course site-map for your students as part of their orientation.

Course site design

Once you have decided on your course structure, consider customising the course site to create:

- A sense of identity for the course;
- A welcoming environment for students;
- Interest and stimulate engagement in students;
- A place where you feel comfortable and engaged as a teacher.

Learning@Griffith offers several options for personalising the way your course site looks, such as changing the colours and style of the navigation bar, organising the course menu, adding a course banner, or changing the availability of tools. Even these simple elements can have a great impact on the feel and usability of a course site.

For more information and a help guide on modifying your course site design, visit:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Administration tools > Course design

Course menu

All course sites in Learning@Griffith have a default menu which can be customised. The example in *Figure 11* shows both the addition and modification of menu items as well a change in the menu colour.

Obviously, what is included in your course menu will be dependent on the elements that you have designed in your course. Refer to your course map for a reminder of the course structure and to see what needs to be included as course materials and activities. Having a clear structure will help students navigate their way around the course site, locate materials quickly and easily, and be more motivated to engage in the course activities.

Figure 11: Learning@Griffith course site menu examples

Consider prioritising or grouping your course menu items to help guide students.

Course banner

A course banner is an image that is uploaded to the course site and it appears above the announcements, which is the default homepage. The example here shows a site with a course banner, customised menu and colour scheme.

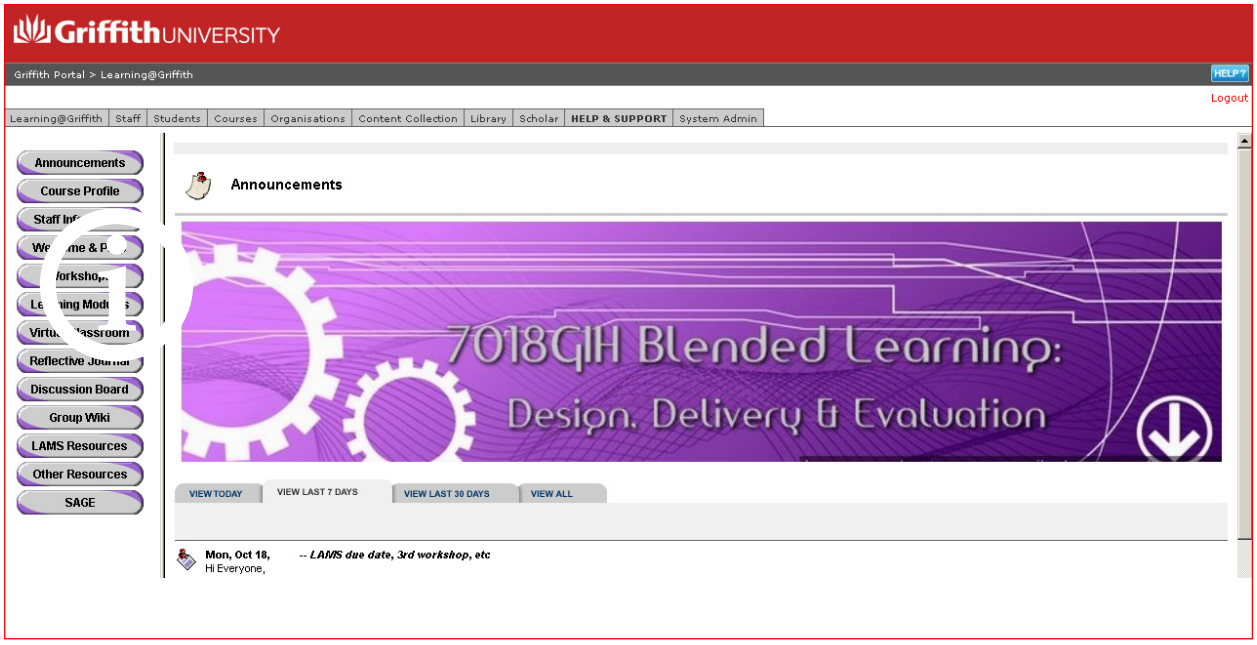


Figure 12: Course banner example

There are a couple of methods by which you can create a course banner yourself, that are quick, cheap and relatively easy.

- There are a number of free banner making web sites, for example http://www.bannerfans.com/ and http://www.puresilvabannermaker.com/ (this site adds a footnote to your banner). Or, search on Google for other free banner making sites.
- You can also use image software such as CorelDRAW or Adobe Illustrator to create a banner or even use some of the functions in MS Word (Auto shapes or Word Art) to generate a design that would then need to be saved as an image using screen capture software (e.g., MWSnap, which is available as a free download from http://www.mirekw.com/winfreeware/mwsnap.html).
- If you have funding you also engage the services of a graphic designer either in-house from INS (L&T) or externally.

Staff information

In the default menu there is a Staff Information area where you can enter names, contact details and other information for teaching staff. Some people change this menu item to "Teaching Team" or a more relevant term. You can customise this area to include photos or other images, and web links.

Making use of this area in your course site can help to create an online presence for staff and to build rapport with students. Some staff like to include interesting information about themselves, their background or relevant work experiences. Depending on your personality, you could also include famous quotes, images or humour relevant to the course or learning context.

Another way of creating staff pages within your course site is to add a new "Content" area and name it Staff Information, etc. By using this method you are not limited to using the designated fields as you are with the default staff information tool. This allows you to be more creative by including multiple images, video, multiple links to documents or other web sites, and by being able to control the look and feel of the area (to keep it consistent with other areas of your course site). You can use this method for creating any other area for uploading content and other items.

For more information on creating a new content area, visit:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Administration tools > Manage course menu

Managing your students

The move to using technology in teaching is often associated with concerns relating to managing the rush of communication that might come from students (email, discussion/chat etc) as well as remaining in control of the learning and teaching process and what students are doing. Some see using technology as creating too much student autonomy or "space" where it may be easy to get off-track in terms of learning and appropriate behaviour, particularly if students are working in groups.

Here are some tips and strategies for managing students in a blended learning environment.

Keeping students on track

- Being clear about the "rules of engagement", that is, your expectations of them and what they can expect from the course and from you (e.g., rights and obligations).
- Giving clear guidelines, in advance, regarding what is required for each particular activity or element of the course.
- Having a clear and definite structure for the course along with a clear rationale (which you communicate to students), such that students can see the path ahead - what you and they will be doing from week to week, and why.
- Monitoring student participation and, where possible, contacting those students who seem to be inactive (see also Griffith's Students at Risk[1] strategy).

Monitoring student progress – Your Learning@Griffith course site provides tools such as the "Performance Dashboard" and "Early Warning System" to assist in tracking student participation and progress.

For more information on the Early Warning System, visit:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Assessment tools > Early warning system

Dealing with "24-7" communication

- Establish clear guidelines about appropriate use of email, and expectations regarding turnaround time for your response (e.g., 48 hours), and inform students right at the beginning of the course (and make this information available in an obvious place on your course web site).
- Set up a "frequently asked questions" (FAQs) area in your course site – usually there are many students who will have the same or similar question, so instead of responding to each student, provide the information to the whole group.
    - If you have run the course before you may be able to create an FAQ from previous experience, and make this available at the beginning of the course (as a document, or additional "content" area on your course site).
    - Alternatively, you can create an FAQ "on the run", by using the discussion board tool and setting up an "FAQ" or "Ask a question" forum. Consider inviting students to respond to questions posted by peers – this can help to create a sense of learning community and supportive environment in the course (for more information on using discussion boards, see the "Communication" section of this document).
- Set up study groups for informal support during the course, and encourage students to seek advice from their group as a first port of call. In smaller classes, you could have about 6-10 students in each group, or with a large class you could expand the group size or use their tutorial group, if this exists.

For more information on creating and managing groups using Learning@Griffith, including teacher and student help guides, visit:

➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools > Group management

Managing assessments and grading

In addition to enhancing student learning, the adoption of blended learning is also about trying to manage things more efficiently and effectively. Managing the assessment process is often a significant part of a university teacher's workload, however, there are ways in which the use of blended learning technologies can support this process by including some automation and reducing the amount of manual handling. These technologies can also have a positive impact on students by facilitating the submission and feedback processes.

As with many blended learning strategies it can sometimes feel that a lot of time and effort is required in the setting up stage. So as with any blended learning application it is important to consider the balance between the initial time and resource investment and the long term gains.

"Blending" assessment submission

Why blend assessment submission?

There are benefits for both the teacher and student in using technology to support the assessment submission process, for example:

- The submission process becomes easier as students don't need to print hardcopies of their work and if using electronic submission they can submit their work off campus and outside office hours;
- Electronic submissions are automatically date and time stamped;
- If it isn't necessary to have a printed hardcopy of the assignment, electronic submission or submission via storage media (e.g., USB memory stick, CD/DVD) is a much greener option;
- When using the electronic submission tool in Learning@Griffith you can restrict submission to a particular time period, it is very clear when students have missed a deadline because they are physically unable to submit. However, if restricting submission remember to inform students of this and send out reminders of the deadline.
    - Also this tool is linked to the online Grade Centre (see "Managing grades and providing feedback") which facilitates the management of assessment marking, feedback and grading, therefore students are able to access their results and any feedback or comments as soon as you have marked their submission and entered their grade;
- Providing feedback can be easier and timelier when using electronic means.

However, it is very important to consider whether it is actually appropriate to use electronic submission for the particular assessment task. And, there are several ways that students can submit their work electronically – via email, or using the Learning@Griffith submission tools. Your choice of the different submission options available will depend on the following issues:

- Is the assignment an individual or group assignment?
    - For a group assignment, will all group members or only one member submit the group's work? If only one student submits, this adds another step in the provision of marks and feedback to all group members (if via email, consider requiring students to Cc: all group members in the submission email in order to facilitate your reply to all group members with marks and feedback);
    - If using SafeAssign (text matching software) a group assignment can only be submitted by one student.
- Do you want the submission to be checked for originality?
    - If yes, then consider using SafeAssign but note that it only works with certain file types (assignments must be in a .doc, .docx, .pdf, .ppt, .rtf, .txt or .html format).
- Will more than one file need to be submitted per student?
    - The Assignment tool in Learning@Griffith is designed to handle multiple files;
    - If not using electronic submission, consider using a different submission media such as USB memory stick or CD.
- Are some of the files in a non-text format?
    - Note that SafeAssign only works with certain file types but the Assignment tool caters for a range of different file types. If it is important to check for originality, consider designing the assessment task so that students upload the text file component to SafeAssign;
    - What format do you prefer to mark in and how will feedback be communicated to students? For example, the Remote Assignment Printing (RAP) process provides an online submission point for students and a printed copy is provided to staff (Please note, students bear the cost of printing).

These issues are addressed on the Blended Learning Support site, where you will also find a range of technical user guides for both staff and students.

For more comprehensive information on electronic submission options, visit:

➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Assessment tools > Electronic assignment submission options

Managing grades and providing feedback

Managing grades and providing feedback electronically is a natural progression from using electronic submission and depending on your course context it can also facilitate the efficient and effective handling of the assessment process.

Learning@Griffith provides an online grade book tool, called the Grade Centre, that manages and stores students' grades for both online and offline assessments. The Grade Centre can be very useful in implementing electronic options for managing the assessment process however, it is not essential. A drawback of the Grade Centre is that it does not link automatically to the University's official method of storing student grades (the Marks Entry Spreadsheet, called MESS report). However it is possible to transfer marks using a special MS Excel MESS toolbar. See your Blended Learning Advisor for more information regarding this process.

Here are some common issues for consideration:

- How do I mark and give feedback electronically?
  - Consider providing students with a template assignment document that includes a cover page and marking sheet. Students can then use the template to complete their assignment and therefore each assignment will automatically have a marking sheet.
  - You can use "track changes" in MS Word to provide feedback throughout a student's written submission and complete a marking sheet electronically. Obviously, with other file types, this may not be so straight forward so you will need to think in advance of how you will manage it. You can then return students' work via email or, if using the Grade Centre, by uploading the marked file.
- What if I am not the marker of an assessment task?
  - If using electronic submission make sure tutors or other staff involved in marking have appropriate access to the course site (Teaching Team or Grader access).
  - If tutorial (or other) groups are to be marked by a particular tutor or individual you can set up a customised view in the Grade Centre (called "Smart Views") to manage assignment downloading and marking according to specified groups. You can create groups and allocate students to a specific group using the group tool in Learning@Griffith. However, this is very time consuming if you have large student numbers in your course, but there may be a reasonable return on the initial time investment.

- What if I have a large class?
  - Some aspects of the electronic submission and marking process may not be efficient with a large class. For example, having 300 students emailing you their assignments would be overwhelming and difficult to keep up with (not to mention, possibly exceeding your email quota). Therefore consider the options that may be workable before the course begins and you find yourself committed to a particular process. Here are some tips:
  - Set up groups and assign Smart Views in Learning@Griffith at the beginning of semester (or get your senior tutor to do this, if you have one). This will help manage the electronic submission and marking (see above);
  - Consider using the Remote Assignment printing option for submission;
  - Investigate the potential for using the MS Excel MESS toolbar to expedite the transfer of grades from the Grade Centre to the MESS report.

For more comprehensive guides on using the Grade Centre, including an informational video and a help guide on creating Smart Views, visit:

➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Assessment tools > Grade centre

For more information on the Grade Centre to MESS toolbar, visit:

➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Administration tools > Grade centre mess toolbar

Endnote

1 See the Academic Standing, Progression and Exclusion Policy, section 2.0 Students at Risk – http://www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf/xmainsearch/f6fe7e8b839feb584a256bdc0000f374?opendocument

2.3 Implementing

Even a well designed blended learning element can fail, or at least suffer significant drawbacks or hurdles, if time and consideration is not given to a range of issues associated with the implementation of blended learning in a course.

Are you ready to implement your blended learning course?

- Have you trialled the blended learning components of your course (and from a student university computer, not just your own)? Do you feel competent in using these tools and in guiding your students in how to use them?
- Have you noted what some of the common problems or difficulties may be for students in using the tools you have chosen? And have you considered how you will deal with these issues if they arise?
- Have you identified the sources of technical support for yourself as well as the students? Have you prepared (or have sourced) student help guides or training activities in the use of the blended learning tools/technologies you have chosen?
- Have you considered what your expectations are of students in relation to the blended learning design? How can you manage student expectations about learning in the blended environment you have designed?

If you feel you aren't quite ready, then you may want to revisit the earlier sections of this document on "Planning", and "Designing and Developing".

Consider enrolling in a workshop or consulting your Blended Learning Advisor for advice (for more information, see the Getting Started section of this document).

Library and IT Help is your primary contact point for assistance with computing and library services both on and off campus. They provide face-to-face, telephone and e-mail help to staff *and* students.

Internal extension: 55555
Brisbane: (07) 3735 5555
Gold Coast: (07) 5552 5555
E-mail: library.ithelp@griffith.edu.au
In Person: Library and IT Help desk in any campus library

Getting your students ready for blended learning

Course orientation

When students are required to study online, even for part of a course, creating an opportunity for students and staff to come together as a group is an important first step in building a successful learning and teaching experience.

So consider designing a formal course orientation program component (e.g., during the first face-to-face or online session) that includes the following:

- **Purpose** – Begin building a common sense of purpose for the blended learning components of the course.
    - Make your rationale for blended learning clear to students – "sell" the course design to the students. Make clear the integration between the blended learning aspects and the rest of the course and how they work together to support students' achievement of the course learning objectives.
    - Give them an idea of why they should engage (e.g., share the relevance it has to their learning in the course, and the broader program of study or future workplace/career, the 'value-adding' it will have for their learning).
- **Expectations** – set clear expectations for students right from the beginning. Use consistent and transparent communication regarding these expectations to help students understand the blended learning process. For example:
    - "Announcements" – use the Announcements function in Learning@Griffith on a regular basis, but advise students when you will generally post notices so they know when to check (e.g., every Monday morning);
    - Set up and suggest a self-help strategy regarding queries (e.g., please check the Frequently Asked Questions page, or the Course Profile, or post a question on the appropriate discussion board), and after these methods have been exhausted, only then send a direct email to the teacher. Don't forget to give students a set expectation about when you will respond (e.g., at least 2 working days for a response);
    - Decide before the start of the course how you are going to monitor students' engagement in the online components of the course and explain this to students;
    - Provide advice and tips on time management, in particular, managing the "blend" of online and other course activities and requirements.
- **Guidelines** – Provide guidelines and tips on how to use the particular tools that you are integrating into the course well in advance, for example:
    - Link relevant Learning@Griffith student user guides to your course web site and alert students to these resources as part of the course orientation (see also "Course Site Orientation");
    - Include reference to appropriate online language and behaviour in relation to your blended learning tools – Netiquette (see "Netiquette" in the "Communication" section of this guide);
    - Show examples of the type of interaction/communication that are appropriate and, if applicable, ensure these examples are consistent with any relevant marking criteria.
- **Community** – Successful learning occurs when students are motivated and engaged, and this is facilitated when students feel part of a group with a shared purpose and meaningful identity. Therefore building a sense of community is important and if not addressed at the beginning can flounder or never occur at all.

- Establish your presence and build rapport with students by sharing something of yourself, e.g., staff information page, welcoming podcast, or getting to know you activities in the first face-to-face sessions.
- Provide opportunities for students to get to know one and other in a meaningful context, e.g., activities that introduce them to each other while being relevant to the course content and purpose.
- Suggest that students extend lively discussions that occur in the face-to-face mode into the online forum. But, don't just leave them to it – consider how you will make use of these, or integrate the online discussion back into the face-to-face environment (e.g., you might take a few notes of the key points made and feed these back to the students at the beginning of the next class).

Consider recording your in-class orientation component (i.e., the first lecture where much of the course "housekeeping" matters are covered) using either the lecture capture software or a webcast. In this way students are able to review this important information at any time. Or you could pre-record what you want to cover if Lecture Capture is not enabled in the teaching space that you will be using. For more information, see "Lecture Recordings" or "Webcasts" in the "Content and Resources" section of this guide.

Course site orientation

As well as an overall course orientation, it is useful to create an orientation resource for your course site. Ideally, this introduces students to the purpose of the site and the various elements that they need to be familiar with and use in their learning.

Purpose, expectations, guidelines and community are all important aspects to consider here and there needs to be a synergy or mirroring between the physical and virtual environments. You could create an orientation page by adding a Content area. Often times this Content area is called "Start Here" or "Welcome". Here are some suggestions of what to include:

- A short recording where you welcome students and provide some motivating and engaging statements to stimulate their interest and briefly explain the important parts of the site;
- If you recorded your in-class orientation, you could also upload it here;
- Provide a student version of the course site-map you have created (see "Managing Your Course Site" in the "Management and Administration" section of this guide). Each of the menu areas could be describe in further detail to explain their role in the overall course design;
- Guidelines that support the effective and appropriate use of the course site and its various elements (e.g., communication protocols, staff and student expectations, etc.).

For more information on creating a new content area, visit:

➲ Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Administration tools > Manage course menu

Preparing students

For successful blended learning, students need to be motivated to engage in the blended learning experience you designed. They also need to feel confident in using the technology and be aware of the "social" aspects of collaborating and communicating in an online environment just as they should in a traditional classroom.

- A lack of motivation can sometimes be due to the student not seeing a clear and relevant purpose for the learning activity.
  - Take the student point of view:
    - Why should a student be bothered to go to your web site? Reply to a question in a forum? Watch a video? Complete a survey? Have you explained how these tasks are related to the objectives / outcomes or the assessment tasks?
  - Students need clear answers to the reasonable question: "What do you want me to do with this stuff?"
    - Make sure students know about the resources and understand how they are to be used. For example are students supposed to summarise readings? Compare articles? Identify trends?
- Give plenty of lead-in time when expecting students to use a specific technology for the first time particularly if it forms part of the assessment program. For example, if using a new tool or technology consider giving students some practice before the actual assessment task is due.
  - Make sure students know where to get technical support (if not from you) – perhaps provide them with a tip sheet for frequently experienced problems, especially if using a tool not supported by Learning@Griffith. For all Learning@Griffith applications you can direct students to the relevant student help guides or to more general support information (e.g., getting started as a student) available on the Learning@Griffith Support site: https://intranet.secure.griffith.edu.au/computing/blended-learning-support/
  - Consider 'modelling' what it is you want students to do to give them a clear sense of what is expected of them.
  - Provide practice exercises to support the development of students' skills and familiarity in using the particular blended learning tool (and give plenty of lead-in time for these to be completed).

Supporting and sustaining student learning

Providing ongoing guidance for any student activity is important but perhaps more so when it is conducted online and away from the usual face-to-face contact. In an online environment, students often perceive fewer opportunities to seek guidance or reassurance. Therefore, consider how you are going to be "visible" online and provide students with feedback and reactions to their work.

- After the initial course orientation where you have tried to motivate students to be engaged in the course activities it will be important to continue to promote and encourage students' use of the blended learning components. For example:
  - Consider sending quick reminders to students via email or the chosen method of communication;
  - Be involved in the online activities yourself, or involve other staff such as tutors (e.g., initiate discussion topics, give brief feedback during an activity);
  - Consider breaking up a task into smaller components and give feedback on some or all of these components rather than simply at the end.
- Monitor student participation, identify students who don't appear to be engaging and initiate some communication with them.

- Give recognition of students' engagement in the course both online and in class. This helps to validate students' efforts and the contribution of the various course activities to their learning.
- Create synergy with blended and in class activities by incorporating feedback or reflections, summarise what has been done, share insights, follow-up on outcomes or establish links to next part of the course.

A good ending

As with any course, it is important to tie up any loose ends before students leave the course or move on to another part of the course.

- Have students received feedback on all course activities?
- Are you aware of any outstanding work that needs to be completed by students?
- And if so, is there any issue with students accessing this online tool beyond a certain date (e.g., have you set date restrictions on tool availability?)

Just as it is good to have a course orientation and welcome students to the course, it is worth considering having a final debrief and farewell. This is a good opportunity to re-emphasize the blend of learning and teaching that comprised the course and to highlight how course learning outcomes have been achieved. This helps to validate the efforts made by students in engaging in the online components particularly.

2.4 Reviewing (evaluating)

As with any course, obtaining feedback about various aspects of the course experience (including content, design, learning and teaching activities, assessment) is a crucial part of the course design process, as well as being important to your own ongoing professional development in curriculum design and teaching. Gaining timely and well-tailored feedback will help you review different aspects of the course, and consider where improvements can be made to enhance the course for future iterations.

When should I evaluate?

It is not necessary to wait until the very end of a course to conduct an evaluation and obtain feedback from students. Preferably, you should collect feedback for continuous improvement throughout the course so consider building in evaluations at different points throughout. Ideal moments to collect feedback are at mid-semester, following key assignments, or at the end of a unit or module. Most students appreciate the timely opportunity to comment on issues they feel are important.

What should I evaluate?

Evaluating in the blended learning environment entails the same basic elements of a course, however, because of "blend" and the use of technology, these will present an additional range of issues to gather data about. Herrington et al (2001) propose a model of evaluation for online learning and teaching which is based around the three main areas:

- *Pedagogies* - the learning activities which underpin the unit;
- *Resources* - the content and information which are provided for the learners; and
- *Delivery strategies* - issues associated with the ways in which the course is delivered to the learners.

It is also important to keep in the mind the initial questions posed when you began designing the course: *What do I want my students to learn? What am I going to use to help them learn?* Obviously, one of the most important things is whether students learnt what was intended, and you already determine this mostly through the assessment tasks. However, it can also be useful to ask students about their perceptions of what they learned, how they learned, and what the experience was like.

Ideally, you would collect information about the blended nature of the course, including such things as accessibility, usability, consistency, and integration, as well as information relating to good pedagogical practices. For example, using the well-known good practice principles by Chickering and Gamson (1987), you might evaluate whether in a blended learning course, there was:

- Student-staff contact, cooperation among students, and active learning;
- Prompt feedback, realistic timeframes/deadlines for tasks;
- Clear, reasonable but also challenging expectations;
- Respect and opportunity for diversity of talents and ways of learning.

Also, Griffith University has outlined a comprehensive set of "Principles to Promote Excellence in Learning and Teaching Practices at Griffith University", which can help to guide the evaluation of a course. These principles are:

1. Create an *engaging*, *motivating*, and intellectually stimulating learning experience;
2. Encourage the spirit of *critical inquiry* and *creative innovation* informed by current research;
3. Emphasise the importance, relevance, and *integration of theory and knowledge with professional practice* to develop solutions to *real world issues*;
4. Provide learning *experiences* that develop *inter-culturally* capable graduates who can make a difference as *socially and ethically responsible* global citizens;
5. Value and recognise *individual and cultural diversity* through the provision of an inclusive context of support and respect for all students;
6. Enhance student engagement and learning through *effective curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment strategies;*
7. Continuously improve teaching practice through academic staff professional development, and critical reflection informed by a range of evaluation approaches.

For more ideas about evaluating blended learning using these principles (Chickering & Gamson, 1987), visit:

http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/selt/eval_online.html, or
http://www.tltgroup.org/programs/seven.html

For the full guide to Griffith University's principles to promote excellence in learning and teaching, visit:

http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/learning-teaching-principles

How should I evaluate?

The quality of responses is likely to be much better when the experience is fresh in your mind as well as the students, and when students are not overwhelmed with a long list of questions. Also feedback obtained while the course is in session allows a vigilant teacher to make adjustments in their teaching that are tailored to the group's specific needs.

There are four key avenues by which you can collect and evaluate data – yourself, your peers (e.g., other tutors), your students' experiences, and your students' learning. This approach is known as the 4Q Model of Evaluation (Smith, 2008a), and is represented in *Figure 13*. These four 'quadrants' of possible feedback are described in the following sections (adapted from Bath & Smith, 2004).

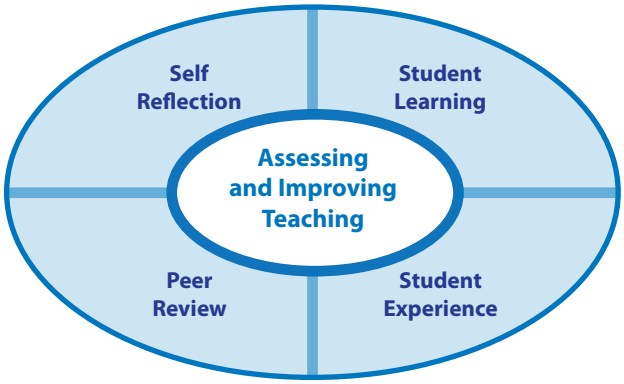


Figure 13: The 4Q model of evaluation

Self-evaluation

Reflecting on what we do, and why we do it, is an important part of any professional practice, and such "reflective practice" allows us to gain an understanding of our strengths and weaknesses, what is going well, and in which areas we can improve. Just as course design involves a process of planning, designing, developing, implementing and reviewing, *reflective practice involves an ongoing cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting.*

To begin, you might ask yourself: What is my espoused theory of teaching? Is my current practice in keeping with my theory? Am I using technology in a pedagogically sound way? How can my theory help me teach more effectively? What within myself or in my context is preventing me from teaching the way I should be?

Below are some methods of obtaining self-reflective data:

- ***The Teaching Perspectives Inventory*** (TPI) can help you collect your thoughts and summarize your beliefs and approaches regarding teaching. The TPI is quick to complete – it usually takes no more than 10-15 minutes to answer all the questions and to automatically score your results. You may also choose to print out your profile sheet to help you visualize and interpret your scores. To access the Teaching Perspectives Inventory, visit: http://www.teachingperspectives.com/html/tpi_frames.htm
- ***Teaching journal*** – it can be very useful (particularly as a new teacher or when teaching something new or in a new context), to keep a journal about your teaching experiences. This can be in the form of a kind of 'diary' (or a blog), where you write about certain events or personal thoughts, reflecting on these experiences, and considering what you can learn from them. It is helpful to keep in mind the 3-stages of recalling the experiencing, reflecting and then learning, as detailed in *Figure 14* (see Boud, Keogh, and Walker, 1985).

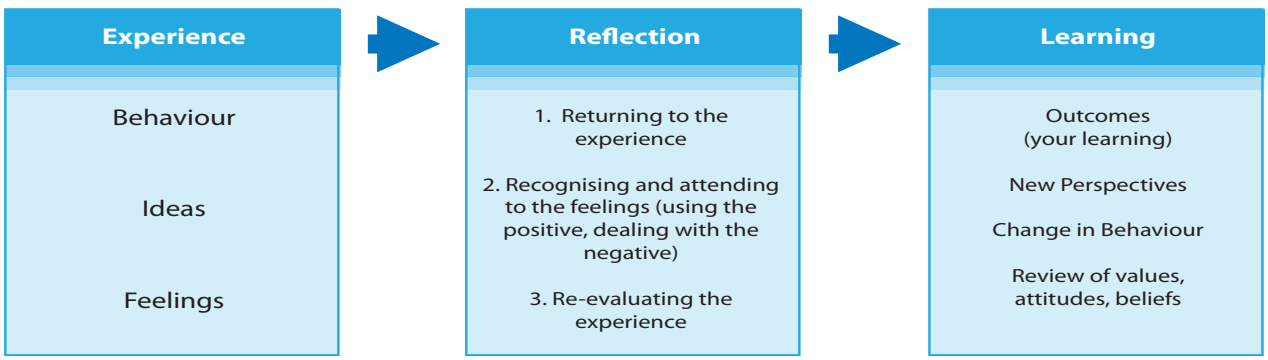


Figure 14: The process of reflection

Create a reflective journal blog by using either:

Expo tool in Learning@Griffith, visit:

- Blended Learning Support site > Using Learning@Griffith > Communication and collaboration tools > Expo

Free, openly available blog sites, for example:

http://penzu.com/ http://www.springnote.com/ http://posterous.com/

Remember to set your blog to "private" if you don't want the whole world to see it.

Peer evaluation

- ***"Classroom" performance*** – obviously in a blended learning environment, this may or may not mean in a physical classroom; you may be teaching in a virtual classroom such as Wimba. In either case, ask a colleague (usually someone who is an experienced teacher, but not necessarily in your program/school/discipline) to sit in on your class and give you feedback. Be specific about the aspects of your practice that you want to be observed and commented on – this makes it easier for the observer to give useful feedback to you.
- ***Learning materials*** – similarly, if you have developed some materials and resources (either print, web, other media) for use by your students, you can ask a colleague to comment on these materials in relation to certain aspects as requested by you (for example, whether they are they interesting, well constructed, clear, etc).

For more information about obtaining feedback from peers, visit:

http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/evaluations/PeerReview/guidebook.html (University of Queensland)

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/firstwords/fw43.html (Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom)

http://www.flinders.edu.au/teaching/quality/evaluation/peer-review/ (Flinders University, South Australia)

Student learning

- ***Student's self-reported knowledge*** – sometimes it can be very helpful to get feedback from students about their learning as a way of getting feedback about your teaching. For example, if you have spent a session on a particular concept and you want to know whether your approach was effective in helping students to understand that concept, try using one the of the following "Classroom Assessment Techniques" developed by Angelo and Cross (1993) – for example:
  - "The Muddiest Point" – At the end of a class/task/activity, ask students to respond to this question – "What was the 'muddiest' point in this class. In other words, what was least clear to you?". From students' responses you can then gauge how effective the session was in facilitating student learning, and perhaps identify where any major problems occurred (e.g., if the majority of students comment on the same aspect as being the muddiest point). You then have the opportunity to address this the next time you meet with your students;
  - "The Main Points" – Sometimes students have difficult discerning what the main points are in a lecture or reading. Ask them to "Write down the main idea of this lecture in one or two sentences" or "Write down the top 5 points from this lecture". You can then easily check what messages student received, and have the opportunity to clarify these at the next lecture, on the discussion board etc.
  - Some possible methods of implementing the above techniques are:
    - On a piece of paper (for face-to-face sessions);
    - Using a course blog (set to anonymous) (e.g., Learning@Griffith tool, or alternative);
    - Via online survey (e.g., Learning@Griffith tool, or alternative).

    For further information on the course blog and survey tools see the "Student Activity and Collaboration" section in this guide.
- ***Student work*** – similarly, you can get an idea of your students learning from their performance on assessment, in-class, out-of-class, or online activities. This information can also help you to pinpoint where you may need to think about your course design and how effective it is in facilitating student learning. For example, if your students complete an in-class or online quiz and most get the questions about facts correct, but many fail the questions that require application of knowledge to solve a problem, then you may need to think about how you approached this aspect of the learning material with students.

Student experiences

Students are a very important and reliable source of information about how well a course is designed, delivered, and experienced. They are often the best source of information about classroom or online processes and activities, assessment tasks, as well as the interpersonal aspects such as having a sense of community, collaboration, motivation, enthusiasm etc. There is a range of methods in which you can obtain information from students about your teaching, both formally and informally, such as a short poll, discussion forum or chat, or a more comprehensive survey. You aren't limited to using only one method, and at only one point in time. Below are some of the common methods used to obtain student feedback:

- ***Informal feedback*** – As the formal student evaluation questionnaire is best conducted towards the end of a course, there are other more informal methods that can be used very quickly and easily at any time during a course. For example;
  - **The Minute Paper** (Angelo & Cross, 1993) – At the end of a class/activity, ask students to respond very briefly (in one minute!) to two questions: "What did you find most useful about the session today?" and "In what way could the session be improved?". This is a very efficient and effective way of obtaining instant and manageable data to which you can respond. You can quickly sort through

responses to get an idea of the key themes that are common in the student group, and then feed this back to the group. Remember it is very important to "close the loop", and to respond to the students, noting any actions or changes that you are going to make as a result of the feedback.

- This technique can be implemented using a piece of paper, course blog (set to anonymous) or online survey (see 'Student's self-reported knowledge' above for more info).

- Alternatively, consider using a "**Suggestion Box**" for getting feedback either on how a particular session went, or about how the course (or particular aspect/s of the course) is going in general.
  - Again, this could be implemented using a course blog or online survey.

➢ ***Student Evaluation of Teaching/Course Questionnaire*** – Most universities encourage their staff to use student evaluation of teaching/course methods, and often there is a standard tool that staff can access.

- At Griffith University, the formal student evaluation system is called Evaluations@Griffith, and is accessed via the Griffith Portal. These tools are quite limited however, containing only 6 standard questions (which includes 2 overall rating questions) plus 2 open-ended questions (What did you find particularly good about this course? How could this course be improved?), and allowing up to 3 additional questions to be added by an individual course convenor.
- It is recommended that these questionnaires be supplemented by other evaluation methods, particularly if you wish to obtain detailed or specific feedback about certain aspects of a course.

For more information on student evaluation, visit:

http://www.griffith.edu.au/gihe/teaching-learning-curriculum/evaluation, or
https://intranet.secure.griffith.edu.au/projects/course-evaluations

➢ ***Customised course survey*** – In addition to, or instead of, using the formal University course evaluation questionnaire, you can design your own course survey. Nowadays, many surveys are conducted online even in a traditional face-to-face course, but online methods are obviously ideal in a blended learning environment.

- Carefully consider what you want to evaluate, or obtain feedback about.
- Construct questions that are clear and simple.
- Do not ask about more than one aspect in the same question (e.g., "The assessment was relevant *and* fair" – the answer could be quite different for both aspects, that is, the assessment may have been relevant but it may not have been fair).
  - If both aspects are important, break it into 2 questions.

One framework for constructing student evaluation questions is called "Design-focused evaluation" (Smith, 2008b). This method utilises students' experiences of learning and teaching designs and activities, and focuses questions on students' awareness of the effectiveness of those strategies for facilitating the intended learning outcomes. A focus on design and activity makes this method particularly useful for blended learning environments.

Such questions require two parts:

1. *Methods* (or Teaching and Learning Activities – TLAs) component (that part which comprises the teaching and learning activities and assessment); and,

2. *Learning* component (that part which comprises the learning that was meant to occur as a consequence of engaging in the TLAs).

The two parts are joined by a grammatical conjunction; for example:

- "*The flight simulator session on bad weather landings* (TLA component) *helped me to learn how to* (grammatical link) *land the Boeing 747 in bad weather* (Learning component)."
- Students would then respond to this question using a typical rating scale where for example, 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree".

Further resources for designing and conducting student evaluation:

Sample evaluation questions/topics for blended learning:
http://vudat.msu.edu/questions_topics/

Sample online course evaluation survey:
http://www.learningandteaching.unsw.edu.au/content/blended_learning/blended_resources/survey_online.pdf

GIHE Good Practice Guide for evaluation:
http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/119006/GPG-dev.pdf

Design Focused Evaluation (available online via the Griffith University library catalogue):
Smith, C. (2008). Design-focused evaluation. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 33*(6), 631-645.

Principles of student evaluation

The basic principles and guidelines for evaluating courses are relevant no matter what mode of study, year level, or student cohort.

- Ethics:
  - Guarantee anonymity – students need to be confident that any written feedback they give is anonymous;
  - The right to non-participation – let students know that their participation in the evaluation process is completely voluntary, and ensure that the process allows for this option;
  - Procedural integrity – be mindful of the power relationship between you and your students, and ensure that there is enough "space" or separation between yourself and the collection of feedback data (this relates to the issue of anonymity).
- Timing:
  - Timeliness – students tend to give more accurate feedback when the experience is still fresh;
  - Consider getting feedback early on in the semester, so that you have an opportunity to address any aspects before it is too late!;

- Halo-effect (euphoria or disappointment) of grades – so gather feedback before final grades.

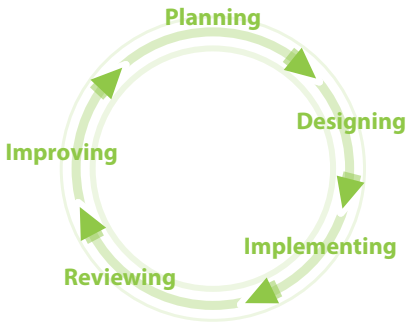
- Method and Purpose:
  - Match method to purpose – think about your questions, what you want to know, and make the method of inquiry appropriate (e.g., if you want rich description of how students' experienced something, you might adopt a qualitative rather than quantitative method; on the other hand, if you want to collect data over several course iterations to then standardisation may be important and using quantitative methods may be more suitable);
  - Efficiency – matching method to cohort size;
  - Don't ask about things you cannot change, or do not intend to change;
  - Only ask questions that students can answer from their own experience;
  - Keep questions simple, direct, and concrete, regardless of the method of data gathering;
  - Be aware of the difference between different types of questions and make sure you choose the right kind for your purpose (open-ended - can't be answered with either a yes or no, it requires explanation; yes/no; opinion/rating questions).

- Process:
  - Find a way to communicate the value of "closing the loop" with students, even if you will not have the opportunity to do so with these students – provides a sense of purpose, meaningfulness to their participation in the evaluation (e.g., important for your development, to make improvements to the course, etc);
  - Always be prepared to respond to feedback and inform students of the actions you will and will not be making on the basis of it, and why;
  - Don't overuse students as sources of evaluation data (and don't make it too onerous to participate);
  - Think ahead to how you are going to use the findings. For example, if you intend to publish, make sure you get ethical clearance first. Will you use it for personal promotion? Benchmarking with colleagues at another university?

Section 3: Conclusion

Summary

The aim of this guide has been to present an introduction to blended learning design for higher education, and to briefly take you through the process of integrating technology into your learning and teaching practice. We have structured this guide around the notion of engaging in a systematic process of planning, designing and developing, implementing and reviewing; good practice for any curriculum design endeavour.



For each stage in this process we have attempted to provide guidance, key principles to underpin practice, and an overview of the commonly used tool and technologies for use with course content and resources, student activity and collaboration, assessment, communication, and the management and administration of learning and teaching.

We live in a world that is constantly changing; it can change so quickly that some of the technologies we refer to here may have evolved since the date of publication. However, the underpinning principles of good curriculum design rarely change, even with the integration of technology. The following principles highlight key aspects of the process of designing technology-enhanced learning (adapted from JISC, 2009a);

- Where technology is used, it should extend the potential for learning, and not be used simply for its own sake.
- Quality learning occurs when there is coherence and alignment between the technology, course environment, learning objectives, teaching and learning activities, and assessment demands of a course.
- Effective practice in blended learning requires selecting the most appropriate tools for the purpose; that is, the learning to be achieved.
- The adoption of blended learning should ideally exploit the capacity of technology to promote active and participative learning in both face-to-face and online contexts.
- When unfamiliar technologies are integrated into learning designs, the rationale and benefits need to be clearly communicated to students.
- Even advanced users of technology look to their teachers for guidance on how to use technology in learning; so ensure there is appropriate support for students in using the technology for learning.
- Ongoing review and evaluation, drawing on a range of perspectives, helps to ensure quality learning experiences for both staff and students.

Throughout this guide we refer you to online resources, help guides, and further reading. At Griffith University you also have the opportunity to work with a Blended Learning Advisor in your Faculty. Most importantly, we also encourage you to talk

to colleagues, share your own ideas and experiences, and learn from each other; after all, that is what we encourage our students to do!

Feedback

The authors welcome and encourage your feedback on any aspect of this guide or your experiences with blended learning. Feedback can be submitted to the GIHE general enquiries phone number, (07) 373 55982, or emailed to gihe-register@griffith.edu.au.

Thank you,

Debra Bath
John Bourke
October, 2010

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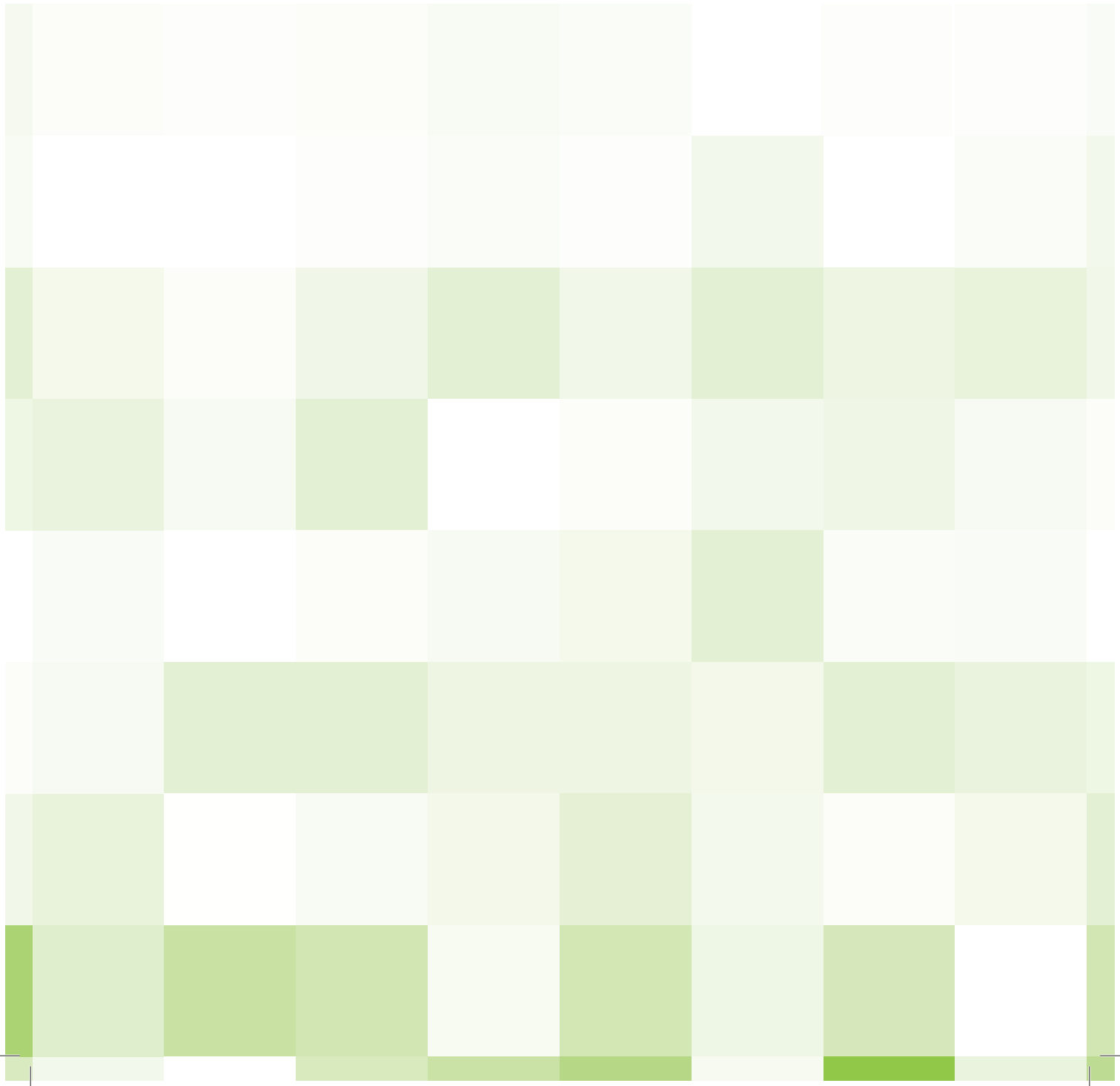
Glossary

Asynchronous	Not occurring at the same time. *See also antonym:* Synchronous
Blackboard	Blackboard provides e-learning software to manage e-learning and online communities, and provide transaction processing and e-commerce solutions. Griffith University uses the Blackboard Community System software for its Learning@Griffith system. *See also:* Learning@Griffith.
Bloom's Taxonomy	A hierarchical classification of learning outcomes from 'remembering' to 'creating' (Bloom, 1956).
Collaborative Learning	A process of constructing knowledge through interaction with others in a cooperative environment.
Constructive Alignment	The purposeful alignment of learning objectives, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks.
Content Collection	The content collection is a file repository system for Learning@Griffith. The system allows files to be stored and managed in the one location. Files stored in the content collection can be accessed simultaneously from any course via a direct (and permanent) link.
Course Profile	The course profile is the official course document and contains statements about: what the learner can expect to learn by studying the course; how learners are expected to engage with the course's learning activities; how the course's learning objectives contribute to attainment of graduate skills; how learning achievements are to be demonstrated and evaluated within the course. *See:* the "Course Approval and Review Process" in the university policy library: http://www62.gu.edu.au/POLICYLIBRARY.NSF/mainpagex?openpage.
Face-to-face	Usually refers to the on-campus environment (aka F2F).
Formative	When referring to a learning task, this means the task does not contribute to a student's overall grade in a course but is for facilitating learning and providing feedback during the learning process. *See also:* Summative.
GIHE	*See:* Griffith Institute for Higher Education.
Griffith Institute for Higher Education	The Griffith Institute for Higher Education (GIHE) is Griffith University's academic development unit. The GIHE is a premium provider of evidence-based professional development programs and resources for academic staff, and a leader in higher education research.
ICT	*See:* Information and Communication Technology.

Information and Communication Technology	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the term used to describe those technologies that manage information and support communication.
L@G	*See:* Learning@Griffith.
Learning@Griffith	Is Griffith University's online learning management system and is delivered using the Blackboard Community System software. *See also:* Blackboard, *and* Learning Management System.
Learning Object	"Any entity, digital or non-digital, which can be used, reused or referenced during technology supported learning" (IEEE-LTSC 2001).
LMS	*See:* Learning Management System.
Learning Management System	An information system delivered via web-based software that supports the management, administration and online delivery of courses and learning content.
Offline	Use of a computer when not connected to the internet.
Online	Use of a computer when connected to the internet.
Online Submission	Online submission is usually referred to in relation to student assignments (assessment). Online submission allows students to submit their assignment via their Learning@Griffith course site. It means that students do not have to physically attend the campus to drop off their assignment.
RSS	RSS is often expanded as Really Simple Syndication. It is used to publish, or "feed", frequently updated information such as news headlines, weather reports, or blog site entries. Users subscribe to these web feeds and receive regular or timely updates that are read via web-, desktop- or mobile device-based RSS "reader" software. For example, the Griffith University homepage allows people to subscribe to a News feed and/or an Events Calendar by clicking on an RSS icon that initiates the subscription process.
Summative	When the task is formally marked or graded and contributes to a student's overall grade in a course. *See also:* Formative.
Synchronous	Where the activity or event occurs at the same time. *See also antonym:* Asynchronous.
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol is technology that allows telephone calls to be made over the internet.



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