Developing Blended Learning in Library Instruction to Cultivate Research and Critical Thinking Skills in the Undergraduate Student Population

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DEVELOPING BLENDED LEARNING IN LIBRARY INSTRUCTION TO CULTIVATE RESEARCH AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT POPULATION

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WHAT WILL BE DISCUSSED TODAY?

- What is Blended Learning? Why?
- What is the goal of Blended Learning?
- What are the other names for Blended Learning? Related Terms?
- Why is Blended Learning the “hot topic” at all levels of education today?
- What are the advantages of Blended Learning? Disadvantages?
- What is needed for successful blended learning?
- What does Blended Learning mean for Instruction Librarians?
- How can Instruction-Librarians implement blended learning?
- What are the Learning Styles in Information Literacy?
- What is the Learning Cycle in Information Literacy?
- Blended Learning + Information Literacy – What this looks like?
- How to keep the momentum increasing and expanding?
WHY BLENDED LEARNING?

- Student-centered approach
- Student’s individual learning styles are addressed
- Student takes ownership of his/her own learning
- Student interacts with peers and the instructor
- Student learns using a variety of print, digital, and media learning tools
- Student engages in activities that are self-directed
- Student controls the pace of learning activities
- Student is held to standards and provide teachers with data (data-driven instruction)
- Student participates in different classroom activities such as whole class share, small group work, pair-share, turn-and-talk, gallery walks, etc.
- Students participate in peer evaluations
- Students from academically & linguistically diverse backgrounds benefit from blended learning
- Students are developing multiple literacies by using multiple intelligences.
-- GOAL --

BLENDED LEARNING

- Supports each student’s maximum academic and personal success
- Each student will be able to acknowledge his/her own learning
- Each student will develop confidence that he/she is able to learn
- Each student will be motivated to learn more and more
BLENDED LEARNING: NAMES & RELATED TERMS

Other Names
- Personalized Learning
- Differentiated Instruction
- Data-driven Instruction
- Networked Learning

Related Terms
- Tiered Learning, products, materials, homework, & lessons
- Learning Contracts
- Scaffolding
- Interest groups
- Differentiated Materials
- Graphic Organizers
- Varied Questioning Strategies
- Collaborative & Individual learning
WHY IS BLENDED LEARNING NECESSARY TODAY?

21st-century learner
- Efficiency seeker
- Grab-and-go culture
- Multitasker
- Technology-centered & driven
- Varied educational backgrounds
- Varied literacy skills
- Varied cultural & linguistic backgrounds
- Speed is a priority!
ADVANTAGES OF BLENDED LEARNING

- Differentiated teaching and learning tools are used
- Teacher can provide individualized instruction to those who are not as advanced
- Students benefit from collaborative and individual learning experiences
- Students’ attitudes toward learning improve as they take ownership of their own learning with confidence that they can learn
- Students enjoy using evolving information & communication technologies as learning tools → builds confidence in learning as well
- Data-driven teaching and learning due to evolving technologies
- Personalized learning benefits students with special talents, particular interests, or specific skills
- 24/7 access due to variety of learning tools: online, in-person, synchronous, asynchronous
- Students work at their own pace because it affords flexibility.
- Increased communication among students and with teacher.
- Administrators find blended learning to be cost-effective.
Not all students will be self-directed and engaged in group, pair, or individualized activities

Some students may fall behind & not be able to catch up: Drop-outs!

Evolving technologies must be up-to-date and compatible – potential issues with increasing bandwidth, compatibility, access codes, communication among different types of software, increasing IT costs, etc.

Certain students may contribute more to group assignments than others

Extroverted students may dominate group work & not share the tasks – teacher must provide parameters to avoid this

Students’ reflections without synthesis to the lesson are not useful learning tools.

Online discussion boards must have parameters, guidelines, and structure to be effective learning tools.

Not all students will be self-disciplined to complete online assignments or shared tasks.
WHAT IS NEEDED FOR SUCCESSFUL BLENDED LEARNING?

- Clarify key concepts and generalizations to ensure that all learners gain powerful understandings.

- Use assessment as a teaching tool to extend versus merely measure instruction (e.g., pre-test, formative, summative).

- Emphasize critical and creative thinking as a goal in lesson design.

- Engaging all learners is essential.

- Provide a balance between teacher-assigned and student-selected tasks. A balanced working structure is optimal in a differentiated/blended classroom. (Hall, 2002)
WHAT DOES BLENDED LEARNING MEAN FOR INSTRUCTION-LIBRARIANS?

- Anticipatory Slips
- Graphic Organizers
- Poster Paper
- Post-its to move ideas around
- Exit Slips
- Prompts or Guided Questions

- Small-group work
- Think pair-share
- Turn-and-talk
- Individual work
- Whole Class Share
- Hands-on activities
- Customized lessons
- Follow-up after the lesson
- Communication with students and teaching faculty!
HOW CAN INSTRUCTION-LIBRARIANS IMPLEMENT BLENDED LEARNING?

- **Ice breakers**: Get to know students!
- **Brainstorming**: Put ideas on paper!
- **Exploring keywords**: Thinking of different terms
- **Keyword Exercise**: Moving words around--eliminating function words
- **Knowledge Checking**: Evaluations, polls, exit slips, etc.
LEARNING STYLES CONTINUED…

- **Theorist**
  - goes through activities step-by-step;
  - prefers structure

- **Pragmatist**
  - likes to try out ideas to see how they actually work in practice
  - enjoys practical activities they can use outside of the classroom.
LEARNING STYLES: INFO LIT SESSIONS

- **Activist**
  - enjoys hands-on activities
  - wants to be involved as much as possible
  - moves quickly from one activity to another

- **Reflector**
  - observes other people’s actions before engaging;
  - may need further guidance.
LEARNING CYCLE

EXPERIENCE → REFLECT → APPLY → CONCLUDE
LEARNING CYCLE – INFO LIT

▶ **Experience:** initial step

▶ **Reflect:** where students have an opportunity to review the experience

▶ **Conclude:** where they can summarize key points from the experience

▶ **APPLY:** *Student can plan for the next steps and think about how they will relate what they have learned to their future studies.*
BLENDED LEARNING
+
INFO LIT LEARNING CYCLE

**Students**
- Hands-on Database
- Practice work on their research topic
- Use worksheet & handouts as guides

**Instructor-Librarian**
- Walk around the room
  - Ask students what they think
  - Is it too easy? Too difficult?
- Distribute handouts with prompts, graphic organizers, open-ended questions, etc.
  - Summarize steps.
DESIGNING MATERIALS/LESSONS

- **Communicating** with teaching faculty ongoing
- **Perusing** the research assignments & syllabi
- **Following up** with students who need more help
- **Referring** students for other academic support
The POWER of Asking Great Questions
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