

## Blended Courses

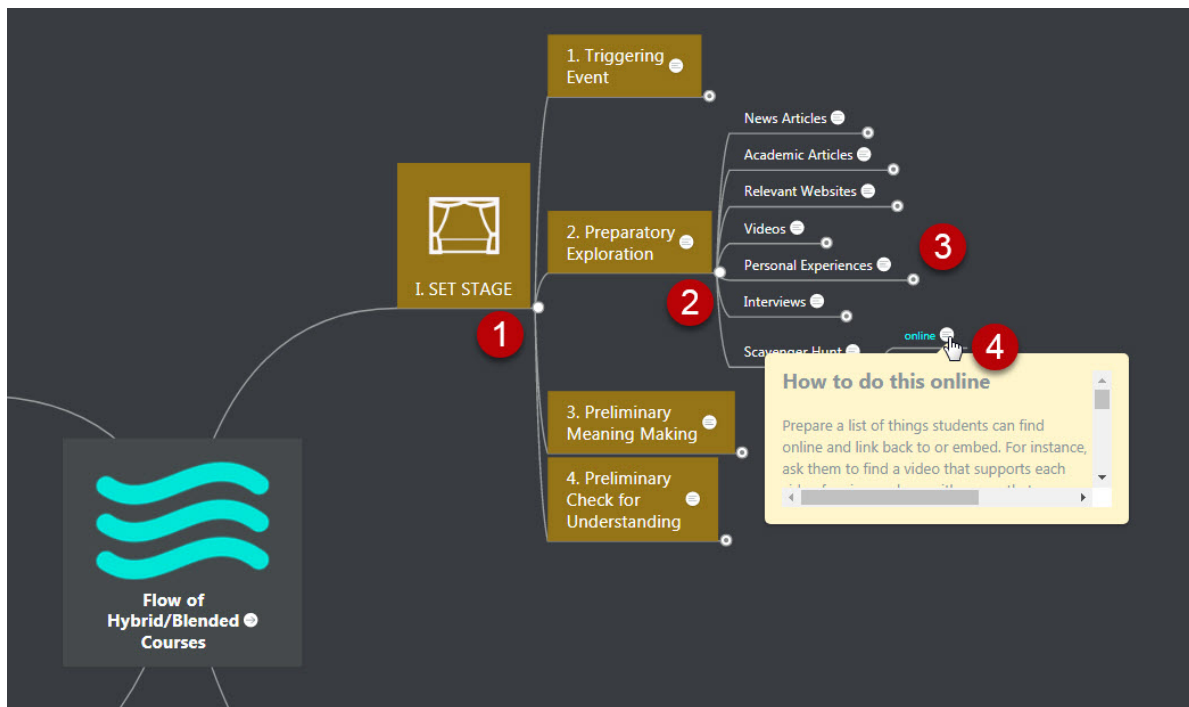
Definition: A blended course is the integration of online with face-to-face instruction in a planned, pedagogically valuable manner that builds on the strengths of each delivery mode.

## Re-Design

Most blended courses are redesigns of an existing face to face class, although there are a few cases where an existing online course is redesigned for blended learning. Course design, alternately, suggests a brand new course.

Re-design requires that the instructor reimagine the course, following a backwards design model.

- Begin with the learning outcomes. What should students be able to do by the end of the course?
- Move to assessment methods. How will the instructor know if students have achieved the learning outcome? What will they be able to observe about student performance?
- Identify learning activities that will motivate and support that learning. What is best done online? What is the best use of face to face time?
- Align learning and assessment activities.
- Carefully stage and integrate the online and face to face components to get the best of both modes.



This map, created by Mark Anthony, Jayme Jacobson, and Jane Snare, Seattle University, proposes a thoughtful way of figuring out what kinds of activities will support learning.<sup>1</sup>

It can further help instructors identify what activities are best carried out on online and what kinds of activities are best carried on face to face. This [Blended Flow Activity Kit](#) uses the scaffolding of the backwards

design model as it walks instructors through the process of creating learning units that blend online instruction with face to face instruction, making the best possible use of both modes.

Here is one example of portion of a course:

				Assessment
Given Pythagorean theory, learner will design a skateboard ramp for a designated area.	1. Read chapter	Outside of class	1. Develop proposal 2. Complete Design	1. Skateboard ramp design meets criteria.
	2. Solve word problems	Outside of class		
	3. Share ramp design proposal	In class		

**Table 1. Course Alignment Example (McGee and Reis)<sup>2</sup>**

## Delivery

**Student preparedness:** Communication with students before the course begins can establish the conditions for student success. Early communication should include first and foremost a welcome letter, and then clear guidance on what technology students must have available to begin the course, links to instructions on how to use the course management system, practice exercises to get them familiar, and the number for the course management system helpdesk.

**Expectations:** Let students know what they can expect from the course. How much work online? How and when for face to face? What will happen when you meet face to face? How much time should they expect to spend in class? What are your expectations for communicating respectfully with each other both online and face to face? The clearer your expectations, the better the chances students can meet them.

**Student engagement and belonging:** Post your own picture or avatar, as well as some personal information about yourself on an introductions discussion board. How long have you been at UT? What drew you to the field? What was your go-to comfort activity during the lockdown? Then instruct students to share some things about themselves that they are comfortable sharing.

**Active Learning:** Both online and face to face student meetings should include three kinds of learning interactions: Student-instructor, student-student, student-content. Build active learning strategies into both venues, and connect them to each other.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Anthony, Jayme Jacobson, Jane Snare. *Innovating with Purpose: The Blended Flow Toolkit for Designing Blended/Hybrid Courses*. Educause Learning Initiative, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Patricia McGee and Abby Reis. "Blended Course Design: A Synthesis of Best Practices." *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*. 16: 4 (2012).