

**Module1: Unit 1**

**Foundations of Blended Learning and Collaborative Teaching**

# Introduction to Blended Learning and Collaborative Teaching Methods

## 1.1 Foundations of Blended Learning and Collaborative Teaching

### *What is Blended Learning?*

The coordinated blending of online and in-person education is known as blended learning. Students in these classes learn "in part online, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace," according to the Christensen Institute.

You must be able to thoughtfully mix online and in-person learning activities if you want to use blended learning to teach. Due to the fact that each teaching strategy has advantages and disadvantages of its own, this might be challenging. Because this kind of education incorporates online learning into the student experience, it calls for more than just the inclusion of technology in the classroom. As a result, you must possess a wider range of abilities than you would in a regular classroom.

[What is…Blended Learning?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bwhR1ZKGRE&ab_channel=MBRUniversity)

Online and offline encounters should be combined, as mentioned in Video 1, so that they complement one another rather than existing in isolation.

### *Context in the European Union*

Moreover, the European Commission also sees blended learning as a good method to implement, especially after the Covid-19 crisis. That is why they published the proposal for a [Council Recommendation on blended learning](https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/council-recommendation-blended-learning-high-quality-inclusive-primary-secondary-education_en) to support high quality and inclusive primary and secondary education.

Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya **Gabriel** said: *"Striving for a vision of better quality and inclusive education and training is by no means limited to the COVID-19 context. There is an opportunity now to learn and move forward from the most recent experiences. Today's proposal maps a vision of the education we want to see in Europe. One that supports the overall goals of the European Education Area and Digital Education Action Plan to promote quality and inclusion, green and digital education across Europe. The recommendation aims to guide Member States in strengthening the preparedness and outreach of their education systems to the benefit of pupils and students, their families and the pedagogical staff.”*

The Commission offers a plan for integrating learning environments and tools in primary and secondary education and training that can contribute to the development of more resilient education and training systems, in addition to short-term actions to address the most urgent gaps made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Foundations of Blended Learning*

It's crucial to keep in mind that combining online and in-person instruction can be done in practically countless ways. Having said that, teachers frequently employ a wide variety of blended learning strategies. It is beneficial to become knowledgeable about the many models and choose the one that best suits your teaching philosophies, the culture of the school, and the requirements of your students.

According to BLU (Blended Learning Universe) we can find several blended learning models that can be implemented in education in many different ways, in general is a combination of one or more of the followings:

* Station Rotation
* Lab Rotation
* Individual Rotation
* Flipped Classroom
* Flex
* A La Carte
* Enriched Virtual

**Station Rotation**

Students can rotate through stations on a set timetable using the station rotation paradigm, where at least one station is an online learning station. Since primary school teachers are accustomed to rotating around stations, this technique is most prevalent there.

[How and Why to Integrate Station Rotation into Your Classroom](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oY5iXxqe_WU&ab_channel=McGrawHillPreK-12)

**Lab Rotation**

With this concept, schools can utilize their current computer laboratories and make flexible scheduling agreements with paraprofessionals and instructors. Students can rotate through stations on a set timetable using the Lab Rotation model, just like they can with a Station Rotation. Here, though, virtual education takes place in a special computer lab.

**Individual Rotation**

Students can rotate around stations using the individual rotation model, but they do so according to unique schedules that are created by the teacher or a computer algorithm. Students merely cycle to the activities listed on their lists, as opposed to rotating to every station as in other rotation models.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.blendedlearning.org%2F&source_ve_path=Mjg2NjQsMTY0NTAz&feature=emb_share&v=-s_O65rWV10>

**Flipped Classroom**

The conventional link between class time and homework is reversed by the Flipped Classroom concept. Teachers use class time for teacher-guided practice or projects, and students learn at home through online coursework and lectures. With this strategy, teachers can accomplish more in the classroom than just give lectures.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.blendedlearning.org%2F&source_ve_path=Mjg2NjQsMTY0NTAz&feature=emb_share&v=G_p63W_2F_4>

**Flex**

Students can switch between learning sessions on flexible timetables based on their needs according to the Flex model. In a Flex approach, online instruction serves as the foundation for student learning. Instructors offer assistance and guidance on a flexible, need-based basis as students progress through the course material. Students can have a great deal of control over their education using this arrangement.

[Technology, Space and Learning at Summit Public Schools: Sierra](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=7&v=YYHg_ldkjNM&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.blendedlearning.org%2F&source_ve_path=MjM4NTE&feature=emb_title)

**A La Carte**

In addition to traditional in-person classes, the A La Carte approach allows students to enroll in an online course with an online teacher of record, giving them more scheduling freedom. One of the most common models in mixed high schools is A La Carte courses, which can be a wonderful alternative when schools are unable to offer specific learning opportunities, like an Advanced Placement or elective course.

**Enriched Virtual**

As an alternative to full-time online study, the Enriched Virtual model enables students to finish most of their schoolwork online at home or on the weekends, but they still need to attend class in person for mandatory in-person instruction with teachers. Enriched Virtual programs, in contrast to the Flipped Classroom, typically don't demand everyday presence at school; some may just call for attendance every other week, for instance.

### *What are the competences required in Blended Learning?*

The Blended Learning Universe (BLU) report of the Christensen Institute presents the findings of a study that was conducted to determine the most critical competencies for blended teaching, aside from the fundamental technological competencies and effective teaching dispositions. The BLU study identified four essential competencies unique to blended learning:

* Online Integration: the capacity to successfully integrate online and in-person learning is known as online integration.
* Data practices: the capacity to track student progress by using digital technologies to keep an eye on performance and activity levels.
* Personalization: the capacity to create a learning environment where students can adjust their objectives, speed, and/or learning path is known as personalization.
* Online Interaction: facilitating online interactions between and with students is known as online interaction facilitation.

### *Collaborative Teaching*

*“Two heads are definitely better than one and by sourcing ideas from each other, you have a better chance of coming up with a strategy that will allow your business to overcome a setback or challenge.” - Richard Branson*

### *What is Collaborative Teaching?*

The method by which two or more teachers instruct, guide, and mentor the same group of students together is called collaborative teaching.

But why, exactly, is collaborative teaching such a big deal? Basically, because it's a really great thing that pupils are exposed to multiple ideas and points of view at once.

The fact that collaborative teaching produces better outcomes is another reason it's fantastic. In essence, when teachers collaborate, kids learn and grow more than they would on their own.

### *How can you approach Collaborative Teaching in the right way?*

There are certain guidelines to follow when applying the collaborative teaching method. Without these steps, it is likely that the implementation in the classroom will not go smoothly and problems will arise, both with the other teacher and towards the students.

Some of the tips that can be followed when implementing this approach in the classroom are:

1. Understand what the students' needs are:

As we all know, the most important thing in a class is the students, without them there is no class. That is why it is one of the most important points and should be understood before the class together with the other teacher.

It is a good idea to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each particular class and stipulate which methods can work best with them. A good way to find out is to ask the students directly.

1. Prepare the lessons together with the other teacher:

As mentioned, the best way to get it right is to share ideas. Sharing the responsibility of being in class with many students helps to implement this approach. Therefore, the two teachers should sit down and prepare the lessons together, this will ensure that they are both on the same page and aiming for the same thing, and they will be able to bring new ideas and activities to each other to implement. It is a win-to-win.

1. Talk to the teacher before classes:

It is not a good idea to go into the class and teach the class the way you think is best, as you are not the only teacher who will be there and this can create confusion and misunderstandings between you. That is why it is best to talk to the teacher before the class and to understand each other, but above all to agree on a common working method.

1. Define the objectives of the classes:

While we all agree that the goal of all teachers is for students to learn and to teach them new things, you may prefer to do this in different ways or using different methods. If you both agree, great, otherwise you should try to find a middle ground between the expectations you both have.

### *Types of Collaborative Teaching*

"Co-teaching is a specific service delivery option that is based on collaboration," according to Marilyn Friend and Lynne Cook in their book *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals.* Co-teaching is a service delivery option that aims to provide students with a variety of learning opportunities to satisfy their educational needs.

Co-teaching involves two or more certified professionals who contract to share instructional responsibility for a single group of students primarily in a single classroom or workspace for specific content or objectives with mutual ownership, pooled resources and joint accountability. (Friend & Cook 2016).

Six Approaches to Co-Teaching:

1. **One Teach, One Observe**

One benefit of co-teaching is the opportunity for more in-depth observation of students participating in the learning process. Using this method, for instance, co-teachers can decide ahead of time what kinds of specific observational data to collect during instruction and can come to an agreement on a method for doing so. The teachers should next examine the data collectively.

1. **One Teach, One Assist**

A second method of co-teaching would have one professional maintain lead teaching duties while the other moved around the classroom, discreetly helping students as needed.

1. **Parallel Teaching**

Sometimes, all students needed was a little more guidance from the teacher or an increased chance to answer questions. When teachers engage in parallel teaching, they split the class into two groups and impart the same knowledge to each at the same time.

1. **Station Teaching**

Teachers divide the material and the students in this co-teaching method. After that, each teacher instructs one group on the material, then repeats the lesson for the other group. Students may be able to work alone at a third station, if suitable.

1. **Alternative Teaching**

There are times when a few students in a class group require particular attention. When using alternate teaching methods, one teacher oversees a large group of students while the other works with smaller groups.

1. **Team Teaching**

In this method, two educators provide the same lesson at the same time. This is referred to as having one brain in two bodies by some educators. Some refer to it as tag team instruction. The majority of co-teachers believe that this method is the most difficult yet rewarding way to co-teach, but it also depends the most on the teaching styles of the teachers.

### *The Role of Digital Technologies in Education*

One essential element of the **United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** is high-quality education. It seeks to guarantee that every student receives an inclusive, high-quality education. Digital technology has emerged as a vital instrument to accomplish this goal. With the use of these technologies, it is now feasible to locate emission sources with ease, stop additional harm from occurring by switching to more energy-efficient fossil fuels and lowering their carbon footprint, and even eliminate excess greenhouse gas emissions from the environment. The goal of digital technology is to reduce or eliminate waste and pollution while increasing production and efficiency.

The educational system has been significantly impacted by these technologies. The usage of digital tools in education has expanded as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. The entire educational system has undergone a paradigm shift as a result of these digital technologies. It involves not just educating but also co-creating, assessing, and mentoring. For pupils, technological advancements in education have made life easier. Students now use a range of software and resources to prepare presentations and projects rather than pen and paper. An iPad is quite light in weight when measured against a pile of notebooks. An e-book is simpler to use than a large book. Research interest is heightened by these techniques.

The globalisation of education has already made digital technologies necessary. Online platforms were available for delivering classes, sharing resources, conducting assessments and managing the day-to-day activities of academic institutions. However, the use of these platforms was proactive. The COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to use e-learning to sustain the education system. Developed countries were well prepared to deal with this difficult situation. However, developing countries made a great effort to address this need. At this crucial moment, digital technologies have emerged as the saviour of education.

The current situation in the world demonstrates the importance of coming together internationally in the education system. Skills such as problem solving, creating thinking structures and understanding processes are skills that students will need for professional performance. They are also preparing for a more unpredictable and changing future where technology will be crucial. The traits and skills students acquire will be critical to their professional success. Digital resources and tools enhance the classroom environment and make the teaching-learning process more engaging. They also provide each educational institution with more flexibility and personalisation of the curriculum according to the needs of each student.

By using technology in the classroom, children can be more engaged in learning. Children are quite accustomed to using electronic devices these days, so incorporating them into education would certainly help to pique their interest and increase their participation. Incorporating technology in education offers students an engaging learning experience that allows them to stay interested in the subject without being distracted. The use of projectors, computers and other advanced technological devices in the classroom can make studying fascinating and entertaining for students. By setting class assignments that incorporate technological resources, oral presentations and group participation, students' learning can be more dynamic and engaging. Participation can go beyond words.

Learners can be more proactive and at the centre of the process when using computers and other digital devices. The instructor acts as a guide in this process and has the ability to evaluate the efficiency of learning. Learners can download the necessary information or upload their content thanks to the wealth of digital resources available. Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis, podcasts and blogs allow students to produce content, collaborate with others, evaluate each other's work and move towards co-learning. Digital technologies make classroom tactics such as gamification or approaches such as flipped classrooms more effective. Learning landscapes have evolved as a didactic tool that combines various techniques and allows each learner to present different pathways. Technology makes teaching more meaningful and inspiring.

[3 M's - Media Method Modality and Their Roles in Educational Technology Use](https://youtu.be/vZ56_tcvocY)

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### *Additional material:*

# 3 M's - Media Method Modality and Their Roles in Educational Technology Use (<https://youtu.be/vZ56_tcvocY>)

Blended Learning Explained by McGraw-Hill (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oY5iXxqe_WU>)

Blended Learning Explained (MBRUniversity channel) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bwhR1ZKGRE>)

Carpe Diem Schools (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.blendedlearning.org%2F&source_ve_path=Mjg2NjQsMTY0NTAz&feature=emb_share&v=-s_O65rWV10>)

Technology, Space and Learning at Summit Public Schools: Sierra by NAC Architecture (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=7&v=YYHg_ldkjNM&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.blendedlearning.org%2F&source_ve_path=MjM4NTE&feature=emb_title>)

What a 'flipped' classroom looks like by PBS NewsHour

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.blendedlearning.org%2F&source_ve_path=Mjg2NjQsMTY0NTAz&feature=emb_share&v=G_p63W_2F_4>)