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U5 Blended Learning

If you are going to focus on changing how students learn, then you have to ensure that the learning space accommodates that learning.

- Dr. Justin Tarte

The blended learning model is all about providing students with the opportunity to learn in a way that not only best fits their needs, but also instills a strong self-motivated work ethic. Students often return post-graduation and say that one of the things that held them back the most during their college/career years is not having well developed self-discipline skills. Offering blended learning courses helps to address this very real concern with 21st century students.

What benefits does Blended Learning provide students?

Emphasis on...

- Student centric learning
- Independent learning skills
- Time management skills
- Flexible scheduling based upon content/student needs
- Enhanced communication skills
- Differentiated learning

Inclusion of...

- Competency Based Learning
- Technology

What does this look like for students?

Enhanced communication skills:

- Online courses:
 - provide an opportunity for students to develop increasing skills in virtual communication
 - require a lot more reading and writing than traditional face to face classes by their very nature
 - As students complete their assignments, they also increase their skills in written communication. For example, students must read and navigate the course site, follow directions, compose responses, and other such activities.
 - A traditional face to face course will provide students with practice interacting with others, presenting using the latest technology to share ideas, and honing

speaking and listening skills.

Increased Digital Fluency:

- Research has shown us that although students know how to adapt to new technology, they are not as fluent with technology as a resource.
 - Online classes provide students with full immersion into this virtual world. Students must be able to access the course, utilize its features fully, and perform a host of other tasks online. As students advance through the curriculum, they also continually augment their technical skills, becoming increasingly fluent. Elearning offers students a chance to demonstrate what they can do utilizing technology.
 - Traditional face to face courses provide students some in-person, real time guidance on developing tech skills, such as “electronic research and analytical skills.”
 - A traditional face to face gathering also provides students with the opportunity to utilize the technology synchronously as a team rather than in isolation from a home computer.

Strengthened Self-Motivation:

- Because students must be self-motivated and disciplined to succeed in an online course—there is no teacher standing over them to help them stay on task, virtual learning provides an excellent way to build these skills. Students must be able to plan their time and course projects in order to do well. In short, online classes demonstrate that a student can work independently and without direct supervision.
- Face to face classes provide students the opportunity to work in-person with others to plan, manage, and complete a project. Students should be able to explain what their role on the team was and how the workload was balanced to accomplish their goal.

Source: 4 Benefits of Online Learning, Michael Keahley,
<http://www.bestcollegesonline.com/blog/2012/11/09/4-benefits-of-blended-learning/>

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