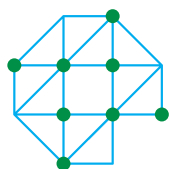


Blend your education

# Shared language

Instruction



## Acceleration plan

Educational innovation  
with ICT



Facilitating professional  
development of lecturers



## Blend your education Shared language

Instruction

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Educational innovation  
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## Shared language

<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Lecturers, support services and managers
<b>FORM</b>	Poster, discussion cards and workshop
<b>TIME NEEDED</b>	90 minutes (workshop)
<b>LEVEL</b>	Course, programme and institution

### Background

Language is important. Clear and shared language is even more important. However, educational practice is steeped in jargon which is not always clear. The concept of blended learning is no exception. The terminology on blended learning is complex and constantly evolving. Without realising it, persistent misconceptions and unexamined assumptions can creep into education, sometimes with dire consequences. Consider, for instance, confusion about the difference between blended and hybrid learning, or ambiguity about what precisely asynchronous online learning entails.

It is therefore essential for anyone working with the concept – especially within large institutions – to develop a clear and shared language on blended learning and constantly remain alert to this.

This is highlighted in several implementation models for blended learning, which include a clear definition and shared language as prerequisites for successful implementation. By developing a common and shared language and creating support for it, discussions, policy documents and other communications around blended learning become comprehensible and meaningful. This product therefore aids in creating a common and shared language.

### Method

This product consists of a poster, several discussion cards and a workshop. All the products are useful for all target groups, from lecturers to managers and support staff. The poster is a standalone product and can be displayed in a team room, for example. The discussion cards are part of the workshop.

During the workshop, participants actively engage with the terminology of blended learning. The number of participants for the workshop is between 6 and 15 people.

The workshop starts with activating prior knowledge, after which a number of terms and their meanings are reviewed and explored in depth with case studies and discussion questions. The workshop concludes with establishing shared language and agreements on how to preserve and share it.

A good facilitator is essential for the workshop. It can be led by an expert in the field of blended learning, but also a workshop leader who does not necessarily have the relevant content expertise. Because the participants will be working together on the shared language, the focus is mainly on the learning process and not on the content.

The workshop is structured as follows:

- 00-05 minutes: Welcome & introduction.
- 05-20 minutes: Activate prior knowledge by asking the following question: 'What words come to mind when you think of blended learning?' To facilitate this process, you can use a tool like Mentimeter or Wooclap, which displays the answer as a Wordcloud. In that case, it is best to limit the number of words to be submitted to two. Briefly discuss the input as follows: What is everyone familiar with? What needs explaining? What similarities are there?
- 20-50 minutes: Getting started with the discussion cards, aimed at exploring the language in depth with case studies and discussion questions.
- 50-70 minutes: Getting to grips with misconceptions.
- 70-90 minutes: Look at the poster and discuss how the shared language can be shared organisation-wide.

To facilitate the workshop, the following sub-products will be used (see annexes):

- Slideshow with instructions accompanying the working forms.
- Poster with overview of the terminology on blended learning.
- Discussion cards with definitions on one side and a case study or question for discussion on the other.
- Discussion cards with four misconceptions around blended learning.

### Using the discussion cards

- Download and print the discussion cards.
- Form groups of 2-5 people and give each group a set of cards.
- Each group reads the definitions on the cards and lays the cards on the table (in a way that makes sense to them). This creates a kind of poster/prompting board.
- Each group now chooses which cards they want to explore further by turning them (or a set of cards) over. On the back is a short case study and/or questions. Participants discuss the case by stating what they find salient about the case, or whether they recognise the situation, etc. The questions are then discussed.

### Talking about misconceptions

- Look at the cards describing four misconceptions. A number of situations are outlined on the back. Which ones are relatable and what does the group think?
- How do you deal with these kinds of misconceptions around blended learning in your organisation?
- Make a list of key areas of concern and share it with stakeholders in the organisation.

### Working with the poster

- Look at the 'Shared Language' poster (see annex).
- Were you able to discuss this terminology during the workshop?
- What definitions or misconceptions do you wish to discuss further?
- Discuss how to create more understanding and support for blended learning in the institution. How do you ensure that the language becomes truly shared? Make specific agreements/action points.

### If you would like to find out more, see the following (in Dutch):

- [Article on blended learning being labelled a hindrance and how to deal with this](#)
- [Which language do you speak? An article on the problematic terminology of Technology Enhanced Learning and Blended learning](#)
- [A short explainer video on blended learning](#)
- [Blog on why a combination of asynchronous and synchronous online learning is recommended](#)
- [Article on the Hybrid Virtual Classroom: Synchronous physical and online education](#)
- [Article on hybrid education: Online and offline simultaneously](#)
- [Wiki page with building blocks for learning in online communities](#)
- [Do's and don'ts for lecturers in synchronous hybrid education](#)

## Justification and sources

As touched on in this product, the blended learning definition issue is complex. There is no consensus, and there probably never will be. That is both the strength and the weakness of the concept. The strength is that it allows everyone to give their own interpretation; the weakness is that people can start to talk at cross purposes when their own interpretation remains implicit.

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The definition used in this product is a relatively broad one and is based on research into definitions of blended learning. The purpose of doing so was to do justice to the many interpretations. At the same time, it is conceivable that a different definition might be used within one's own institution. This is not a problem, as the working forms of this product still hold up in that case and the sub-concepts also remain unchanged. Most importantly, it is about having the right conversation about definitions.

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*The Acceleration Plan for Educational Innovation with ICT is a four-year programme focused on bringing initiatives, knowledge, and experiences for digitalisation together. The programme is an initiative of SURF, the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, and the Association of Universities, and is organised in eight acceleration zones. In the zone Facilitating professional development for lecturers, 16 institutions are working on improving the professional development of lecturers in Dutch higher education.*



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