



# The Learning Institute

## Blended learning

### Overview

Home schooling and working has given people new experiences. This CPD explores how education can use this opportunity to provide alternative and effective learning experiences away from conventional environments.

### Target audience

Staff and volunteers who are thinking about how they learn most effectively.

### Duration

Approximately 2 hours

The Learning Institute provides opportunities for individuals and communities through high quality education, training and research programmes that challenge personal barriers and promote social inclusion. To find out more, please get in touch.

## Introduction

The recent home learning experience may have prompted us as adult learners to ask questions about what we know, what we need to know and what we would like to know. We may also have begun to reflect on our learning experiences to date, and about how we learn, and what we might have forgotten!

We all have an inbuilt desire to learn and improve our knowledge and this can often be the case when we are supporting children, colleagues or indeed those that are less confident and in need of additional support. Since we left school structured learning experiences may have disappeared, but it doesn't take long to find numerous more formal learning opportunities— in fact the CPD page on The Learning Institute website is trying to offer exactly this!

The following activities offer some thoughts about learning styles based around the term “blended learning”. By the end you will hopefully have thought about new ways of learning that support your life style and perhaps stir a desire to obtain additional qualifications.

## Objectives

- To reflect upon different learning experiences.
- To explore what we mean by “blended learning”.
- To consider how a blended learning approach could support us as adult learners.

## Resources

Pen and paper for note taking

Internet access to following:

- TED talk “Reimagining Classrooms” by Kayla Delzer available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6vVXmwYvgs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6vVXmwYvgs)
- TED talk “Blended learning and the future of education” by Monique Markoff available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mb2d8E1dZjY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mb2d8E1dZjY)

## Task 1

Create a list of your own memorable learning events or experiences that stand out. They may be fond or even frustrating memories.

Think also about your own children or those who you work with. Make a list of experiences when the children shone and also when they were disengaged.

Now begin to find some common themes that allow you to sort these successful and less successful learning experiences. Hopefully these themes will begin to identify some common features.

Lastly, can you now identify four headline statements that continue this sentence starter?:

“**Successful learning** .....

For example, my first statement might be: “**Successful learning** for me has to have a purpose and make sense to my world”.

## Task 2

Consider the following quote by the anthropologist Margaret Mead, “If children do not learn the way we teach, then we must teach the way they learn”.

How does that resonate with your previous four statements?

Watch the inspirational TED talk “Reimagining Classrooms” by Kayla Delzer, available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6vVXmwYvgs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6vVXmwYvgs) [running time approx.13 minutes] and make notes on the following:

- What does she say about her role as teacher and the student as a learner?
- How does she assess her children and how might she use this assessment to inform future learning?

## Task 3

Let us now consider the term “blended learning” and see what that might mean.

Access the TED talk “Blended learning and the future of education” by Monique Markoff, available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mb2d8E1dZjY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mb2d8E1dZjY) [running time approx. 13 minutes]

How do you use technology to support you in your personal and professional world?

Do you agree with Markoff’s analysis of how the computer can contribute to blended learning?

Do you agree with the four headings she proposes that should guide approaches to blended learning?: **Flexibility, mindset, commitment and role of the teacher**

## Task 4

Research on your own what the terms ‘flipped learning’ and ‘face to face teaching’ mean, and consider how this might support a blended learning approach.

Create a mind map outlining the advantages of a blended learning approach. Now, in a different colour, add some of the barriers and disadvantages.

How does this analysis balance out?

Is the case for blended learning compelling or is there a better way to support learning?

## Task 5: Reflection on learning

Note down your response to the final reflection:

- How would a blended learning approach suit your approach to study and professional development?

## Sources

TEDx Talks (2014) *Blended learning and the future of education: Monique Markoff at TEDxIthacaCollege*. 6 May. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mb2d8E1dZjY> (Accessed: 15 May 2020)

TEDx Talks (2015) *Reimagining Classrooms: Teachers as learners and students as leaders: Kayla Delzer at TEDxFargo*. 13 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6vVXmwYvqs> (Accessed: 15 May 2020)

## Further reading and resources

You might want to look at some additional TEDx Talks by Jenn Williams and Jessie Woolley-Wilson:

TEDx Talks (2013) *Flipping the classroom -- my journey to the other side: Jenn Williams at TEDxRockyViewSchoolsED*. 14 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3b9tCmUmA4> (Accessed: 15 May 2020)

TEDx Talks (2012) *Blending technology and classroom learning: Jessie Woolley-Wilson at TEDxRainier*. 17 December. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0TbaHimigw> (Accessed: 15 May 2020)

Furthermore, the following texts\* might interest you

Fresen, J. (2018) 'Embracing distance education in a blended learning model: challenges and prospects', *Distance Education*, 39 (2), pp. 224-240. doi: [10.1080/01587919.2018.1457949](https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2018.1457949)

Stein, J. and Graham, C.R. (2014) *Essentials for blended learning*. Abingdon: Routledge.

\*Please note, these texts are not freely available.

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