



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WITH IMPLEMENTING BLENDED LEARNING IN TODAY'S SCHOOLS



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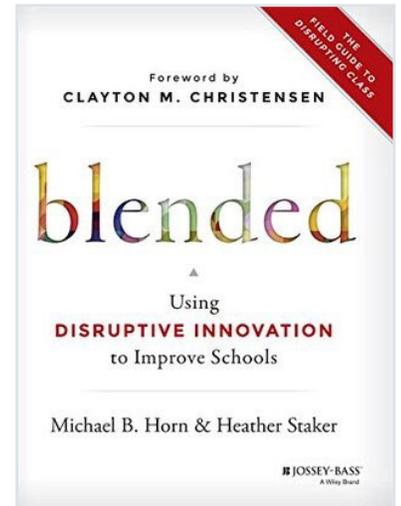
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According to “**Blended: Using Disruptive Innovation to Improve Schools,**” by Michael Horn and Heather Staker, blended learning is a formal education program;

- 1** delivered at least in part through digital learning, with some flexibility for students to choose the way they want to learn,
- 2** at least partly in combination with a physical classroom and teacher and
- 3** with opportunities for students to learn through activities that capitalize on different learning modalities.

While there are many ways to apply blended learning to a curriculum, some of the most popular examples include flipped classroom models, where students learn online at home, then spend in-class time practicing with a teacher available to assist them; or rotation models, where students move between learning stations, with at least one station being a digital space where students can access a variety of learning resources.



53%

of education leaders agree that blended learning is a high growth initiative in the next two years.

However, implementing blended learning in today's schools comes with various challenges. In this eBook, we will outline key challenges with blended learning and how to overcome them.

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Lack of Team Buy-In

Educators are wary about initiatives and buzzwords that divert time and attention away from their teaching and provide immaterial benefits. To ensure educators embrace the shift from a purely traditional approach, schools and districts need to outline and prove the benefits of blended learning.

Creating a tech team among staff can help advise the teachers and students with questions as they come up. Identifying technology champions among your staff (and students) can help provide support on some of those more frustrating but essential teach problems.

Consider these other factors to persuade your staff to give blended learning a try in their classrooms:

- ▶ Comparison to schools in your district that implemented blended learning and the positive results they've had
- ▶ Availability of professional learning opportunities
- ▶ Access to grants and incentives
- ▶ Ability to customized and personalize learning

Benefits of Blended Learning

- ▶ Promotes teacher effectiveness
- ▶ Increases student engagement
- ▶ Shifts instruction from teacher-led to student-driven

Information overload

Nowadays, with a few clicks of the computer mouse, any teacher can retrieve an overabundance of information. From lesson plans and posters to online games and videos, educators have a variety of resources at their fingertips. Each resource comes with its own set of features and benefits and picking resources for today's classroom can be an overwhelming task in addition to the tasks that already come with teaching.

The lack of time is a primary objection to new approaches since the preparation of resources requires some upfront planning on the teachers' part rather than constructing lessons as they go. Balancing student learning, results, and fun elements in a classroom is a monumental task for today's educators.

Each educator has a different style so choose resource that suit you. If your days are filled with group or class activities, make sure you can access a resource library with videos and engagement tools that can be used on front-of-class displays such as an interactive whiteboard (IWB) or flat panel (IFP).

Rather than having a mix of technology and many online resources, consider using a small number of online resources that hosts curriculum-aligned content, engaging games, and a digital gradebook so that implementing blended learning in your school remains a positive experience for both teachers and students alike.

Consider quality over quantity and use resources from trusted and referred online providers. Curriculum alignment is probably the most helpful when faced with information overload and those endorsed by accredited institutions or recognized as award winning by education experts.



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Keeping students engaged

80% of teachers say their primary goal with using digital tools is to engage students in their learning.

Student engagement goes beyond ranging from supporting students who need intervention as well as challenging those who have mastered the current level.

With the rapid changes in technology, it is imperative that both students and teachers have access to* the tools they need, anywhere – anytime.

With the rise of digital natives, our methods of instruction also need to adapt to meet their needs beyond providing traditional curriculum-aligned activities. By offering a healthy mix of ongoing feedback, engaging games, and a range of support tools.

By making sure that the new generation of learners is engaged, these students are likely to absorb and retain lessons for longer. Providing real-time constructive feedback can empower students to take ownership of their learning and set the pace and speed at which they learn.

Managing progress

Shifting to a blended learning approach involves changing how success is measured. Traditional methods such as using a paper gradebook to monitor progress can slow down your day by adding extra hours for marking and assessment. Ensure that your technology mix includes assessments aligned to your regional standards and data insights for your class that provides clear visibility of your students' understanding.

Equip students for success by sharing the recent progress of your whole class, and reviewing the results of individual students, and results by activity to make informed decisions about the next steps in learning.

Recommended metrics to measure progress include:

- ▶ Time spent online within the resource
- ▶ Activity scores according to subject
- ▶ Average class improvement scores



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Lack of ongoing support

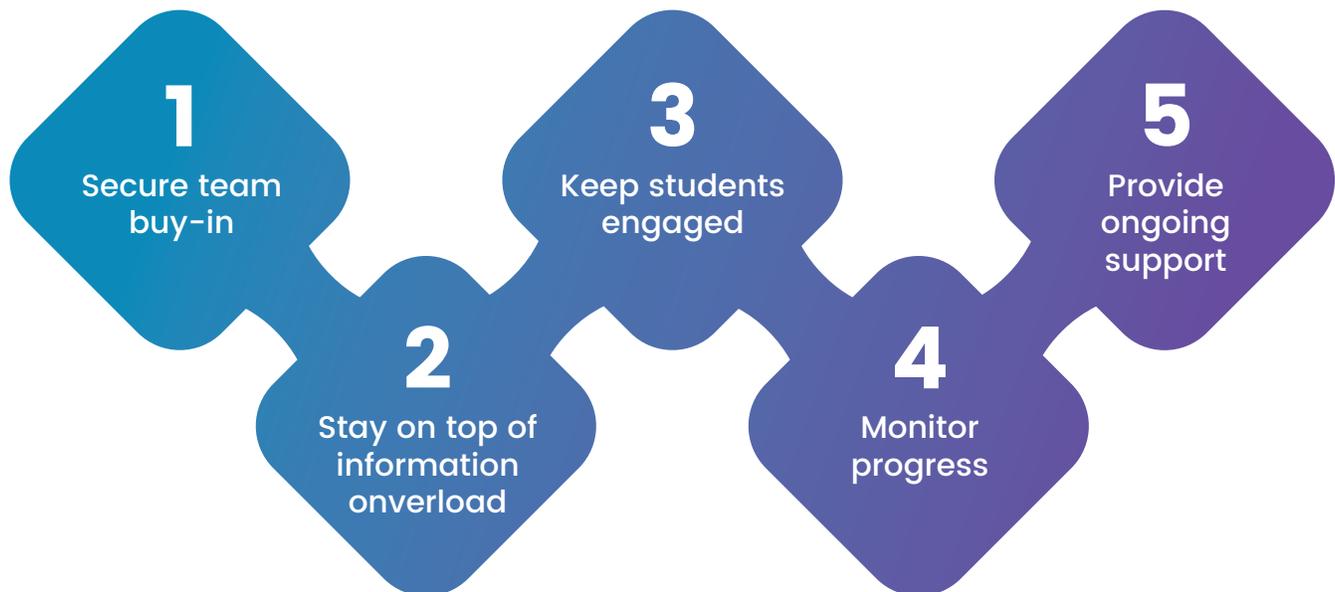
When teachers do not have appropriate and ongoing support to change to a blended learning model, and/or support for keeping the network, devices, and programs current, a system will not work. Perhaps the most underrated aspect of any blended learning program is the long-term support plan, for both traditional and digital resources.

Educators can only achieve their best when they are empowered and have school and district leadership that supports them. Innovation cannot thrive in cultures of stagnation and resistance. Expertise emerges in environments where failure in the service of progress is not something to be feared. It is encouraged, it is welcomed, it is expected. Systemic success lives where support, communication, shared decision making, and technology are omnipresent.

We have included a sample letter to your administrators and/or parents to help support blended learning. This is a useful tool to garner support for implementing a blended learning model in classrooms. (See Appendix A)

Roadmap to Blended Learning Success

As blended learning gains more traction in today's classrooms, we hope that the solutions outlined in this eBook to help you navigate the hurdles in your implementation.



*Studies have found a decrease in attention span making it more difficult to keep students focused for long periods of time.

Appendix – Letter of Support for Blended Learning

To whom it may concern:

Blended learning is a teaching method that incorporates digital learning with traditional teaching methods. With the use of technology, implementation of standardized curriculum outcomes, and shrinking budgets and funding, more schools are implementing blended learning models.

We are writing this letter in support of implementing blended learning resources in our classroom/school/district. Blended learning has multiple benefits, including:

- ▶ **Cost savings:** A blended learning environment costs approximately \$2,382 less per student than a traditional in class environment. It also saves on printing costs since the resource is hosted digitally vs printing worksheets.
- ▶ **Teacher effectiveness:** With the use of digital tools, teachers save up to 10 hours off their marking and assessment time. Digital resources such as Mathletics include a digital gradebook and curriculum-aligned activities in addition to a vast resource library of eBooks and virtual interactives.
- ▶ **Student engagement:** A recent study shows that 59% of teachers reported that students were more motivated to learn in a blended learning environment. With the rapid changes in technology, our methods of instruction also need to evolve to meet the needs of 21st century learners and implementing blended learning environments will empower educators to meet student needs and personalize their learning.

Blended learning is proven to be more effective than the traditional classroom model. It has the power to increase information retention rate up to 60%. When students are actively participate in their own learning, learning is transformed.

We thank you for your support of this initiative.

Regards,

«Your Name»

«Title, School/District Name»



About Mathletics

Mathletics is a captivating online math learning space providing students with all the tools they need to be successful learners, both in the classroom and beyond. Powerful courses are aligned to state-based standards including the Common Core, TEKS and MAFS, for students in Kindergarten through High School.

The newly revamped student experience includes age-appropriate learning spaces and includes access to a diverse range of learning resources including eBooks, videos and games. Student-driven learning is made easy with content grouped by topic and difficulty. Powerful diagnostic tools put data at the teacher's fingertips and dynamic results provide an immediate snapshot of the latest student progress.

Mathletics is designed for students and educators by passionate ex-educators and curriculum experts with the aim to make learning and specifically Math fun for all.

powered by



3P Learning

Learn more about us at mathletics.com