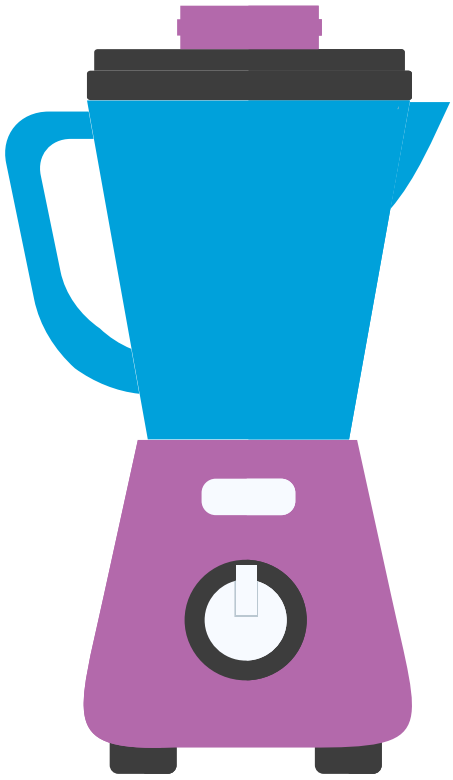
Blended Learning: Fundamentals of the Planning Process

A How-To Guide from Edmentum

Your partner in blended learning

At their core, blended learning models are designed to help infuse technology effectively into the learning process and personalize learning experiences for every student.

This workbook has been developed to help you determine the most appropriate blended learning program for your school or district, build a plan for a successful rollout, and navigate the implementation process.



Blended learning defined

The Christensen Institute definition of blended learning is a formal education program in which a student learns:

- at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace;
- at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home;
- and the modalities along each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.

Blended learning models

The majority of blended learning programs resemble one of four models:

Rotation **Flex** **A La Carte** **Enriched Virtual**

Rotation model

A rotation model involves learning in which students rotate on a fixed schedule or at the teacher's discretion between learning methods, at least one of which incorporates an online component. Other rotations might include activities such as small-group or whole-class instruction, group projects, individual tutoring, and pencil-and-paper assignments. In this model, students learn mostly during regular school hours on the brick-and-mortar campus, except for any homework assignments. This model includes four sub-models: Station Rotation, Lab Rotation, Flipped Classroom, and Individual Rotation.

Station Rotation

In station rotation, students rotate through all stations within a classroom or group of classrooms.

Benefits:

- Easy to implement in a single classroom
- No need to modify set schedules
- Only requires access to a small number of mobile devices
- Doesn't require a large amount of space

Considerations:

- Requires classroom management for efficient rotations
- Works best when longer blocks of time are available

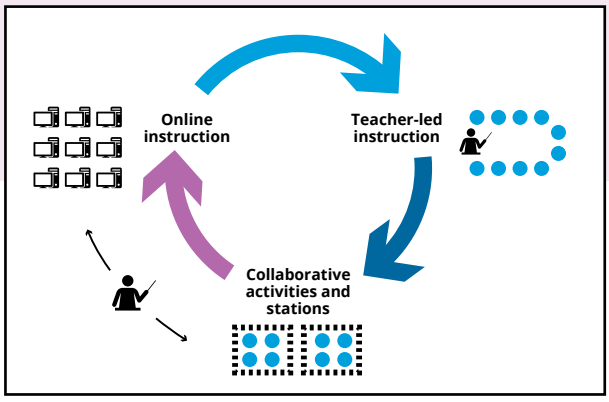


Image source: Clayton Christenson Institute

Lab Rotation

In lab rotation, students rotate to a computer lab for online learning.

Benefits:

- Suitable option when no classroom devices are available
- Students access online learning at the same time
- Educators can easily pull students for 1:1 instruction

Considerations:

- Computer lab time needs to be scheduled
- Daily lab access may not be available

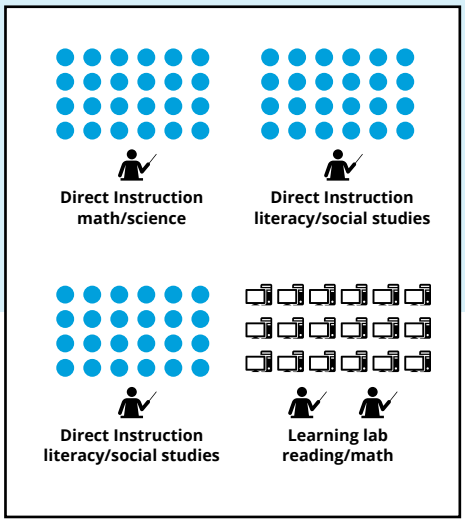


Image source: Clayton Christenson Institute

Flipped Classroom

In a flipped classroom, learners receive direct instruction online in place of traditional homework and then attend the brick-and-mortar school for face-to-face, teacher-guided practice or projects.

Benefits:

- Easy to implement on a class-by-class basis
- No need to modify set schedules
- Doesn't require major modifications to classroom layout
- Great use of 1:1 technology

Considerations:

- Students need access to devices and Internet at home
- Students must be held accountable for completing lessons at home

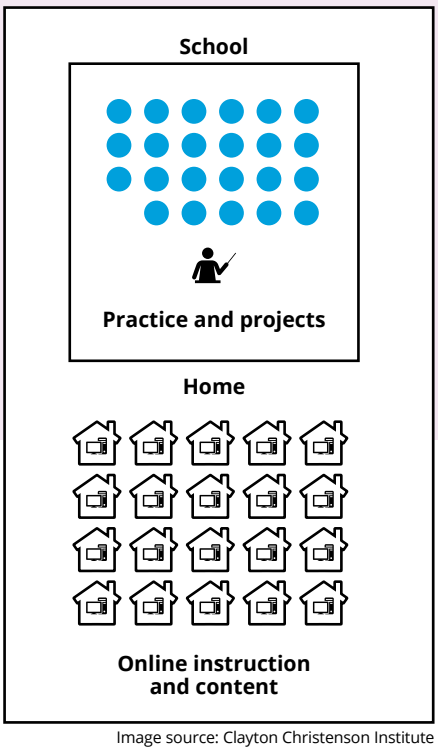


Image source: Clayton Christenson Institute

Individual Rotation

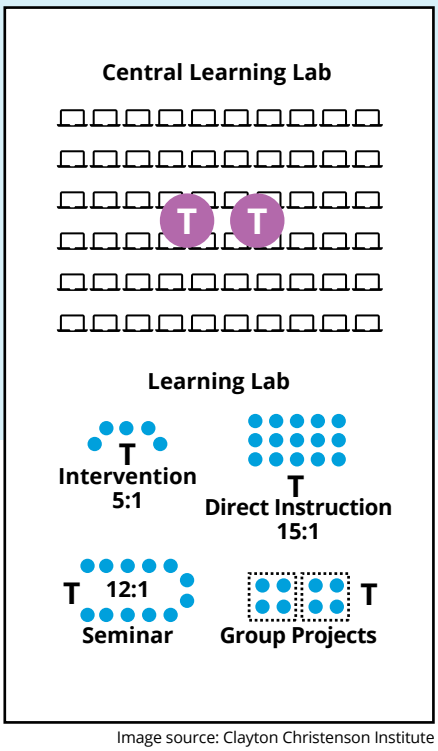
In individual rotation, each student has an individualized playlist of skills and activities to complete. An algorithm or teacher(s) sets individual student schedules.

Benefits:

- Provides a fully personalized learning experience
- Makes great use of 1:1 technology
- Excellent for team teaching
- Ideal for implementation across an entire grade level or school

Considerations:

- Requires space and scheduling modifications
- Works best when multiple educators and longer blocks of time are available
- Works best in a 1:1 technology setting



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Flex model

In the flex model, learners move on an individually customized, fluid schedule. Students learn mostly on the brick-and-mortar campus, and instructors provide face-to-face support on a flexible, as-needed basis through small-group instruction, group projects, and individual tutoring.

Benefits:

- Provides a fully personalized learning experience
- Makes great use of 1:1 technology
- Excellent for team teaching
- Ideal for implementation across an entire grade level or school

Considerations:

- Requires space and scheduling modifications
- Works best when multiple educators and longer blocks of time are available
- Learners must take ownership over their learning

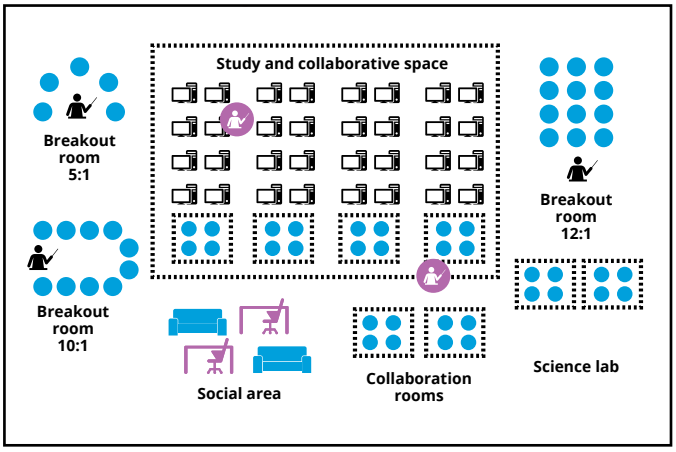


Image source: Clayton Christenson Institute

Implementation examples:

Students begin by completing an online tutorial independently. Throughout the learning journey, teachers will meet regularly with each student to discuss his or her progress. At the culmination of each learning experience, students will take an online mastery test before advancing.

A La Carte model

In the a la carte model, learners take one or more courses completely online and also take some courses face to face at their brick-and-mortar campus or learning center.

Benefits:

- Easy to implement on a student-by-student basis

Considerations:

- Students must be able to successfully learn in a completely virtual setting

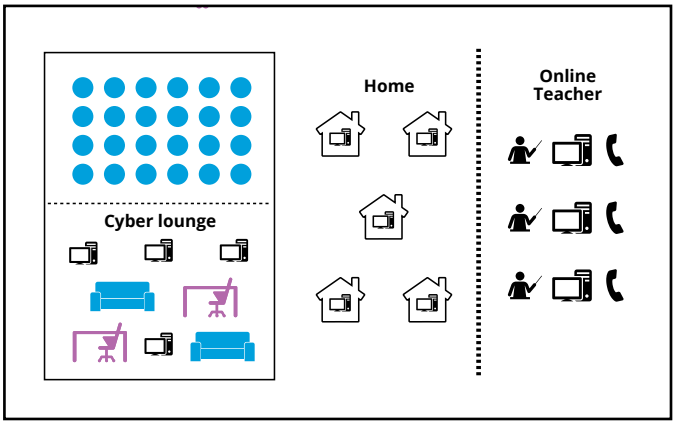


Image source: Clayton Christenson Institute

Implementation examples:

Students may choose to complete electives at home while working on their core courses in a traditional brick-and-mortar school. Throughout the learning process, students and teachers communicate in person, through email, and via online learning programs.

Enriched Virtual model

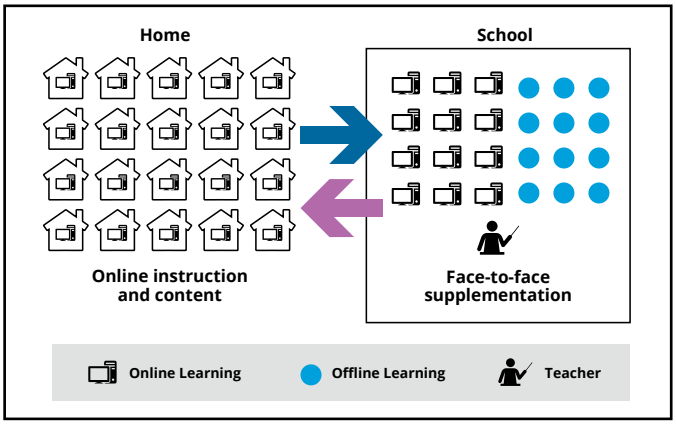
In the enriched virtual model, all learning occurs online and mostly in a remote location, away from the brick-and-mortar school. In this model, learners participate in face-to-face sessions, but these sessions are usually not every school day.

Benefits:

- Students are able to manage their learning on their own schedules
- Educators can teach more students than in a standard brick-and-mortar setting
- Educators can work across multiple campuses
- Students still receive face-to-face support

Considerations:

- Requires schedule modifications
- Complete shift from the traditional school setting
- Students need access to devices and Internet at home



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Implementation examples:

Students begin by meeting as a class to introduce a new course. Following initial kickoff, students complete the rest of their lessons at home. Students have the opportunity to work in a classroom if they so choose or require assistance.

Choose the right model for you

When considering which blended learning model makes the most sense for your specific situation, review the following questions:

- What are the goals of the program?
- Can the schedule and space be modified?
- What technology is available?
- Will students have access to technology/Internet at home?
- Is online learning going to be the backbone of student learning or a supplement?
- Will the program be implemented across an entire school/district or on a class-by-class or student-by-student basis?

Whether you're ready to make a big splash or simply dip your toe in the blended learning pool, there are different implementation options available. Many schools begin implementing models in smaller segments or pilot programs, perhaps with a group of teachers, specific grade, or single school location.

Check out these free online courses to teach educators across your school or district about blended learning and how to implement it. You can also visit the Blended Learning Universe for additional educator resources that will help you start off on the right foot.

Attaining implementation success

When deciding to go forward with a blended learning implementation, it is best to consider what elements are needed for your success, in the school as well as in your online curriculum partner.

As you identify a suitable digital partner, start by evaluating offerings according to the different criteria listed below.

School-based elements

- School or district buy-in
- Professional development
- Program vision and model
- Flexibility
- Hardware
- Infrastructure
- Change adaptability for teachers
- Space (and flexibility with space)

Online curriculum elements

- Assessments (formative, interim, and summative)
- Progress data
- Teacher resources for whole- or small-group instruction
- Individualized learning path based on assessment data
- Content that can be assigned to students
- Grouping tools
- Interactive and engaging platform
- Teacher management tools
- Standards based content and standards map
- Student data available to all stakeholders
- High-quality instruction and courses that may augment first-time instruction
- Directives for project-based learning
- Support for time management
- SIS/LMS integration capabilities
- Communication platform (asynchronous and synchronous)

Your planning team

Having the right people involved is critical to the success of your blended learning program. Recruit a cross-functional team that represents the varied interests and specialties of your school or district. This could include:

- Administrators
- Teacher groups
- PTA members
- Technology directors
- CTE directors
- Finance directors
- Special education directors
- Alternative education directors
- Department leads
- Interventionists
- Virtual program directors

Which blended learning model is right for me?

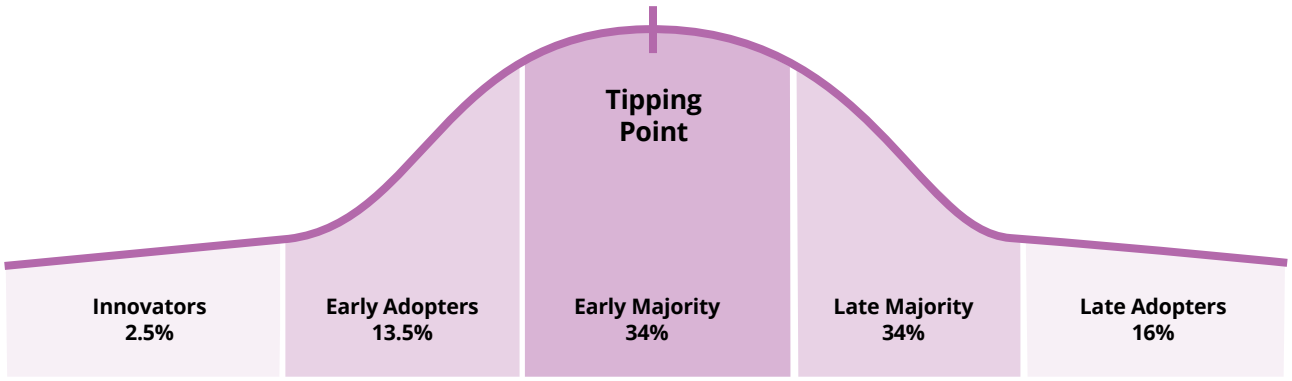
What does each model mean to me?

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

Which model will work in my school?

Model	Technology Resources	Software Resources	School Culture	For me
Station Rotation	Computers < students but always available	Teacher Web presence required	Group differentiation possible	☐
Lab Rotation	Computers >= students but limited availability	Teacher Web presence required	Shared computers are easily scheduled	☐
Flipped Classroom	Computers available outside the school	Teacher Web presence required	Students complete homework	☐
Flex	1:1 student-to-computer count	LMS Required	Schoolwide experimentation accepted	☐
A La Carte	Enough computers to support full online learning	LMS Required	Independent learning possible	☐
Enriched Virtual	1:1 student-to-computer count	LMS Required	Independent learning possible	☐

Identify your early adopters



From the book Diffusion of Innovations by Everett Rogers

What type of teachers do we have at my school?

Type	Description	Teacher Names
Innovators	- Willing to take risks - Willing to "try anything" - Very social	
Early Adopters	- High degree of opinion leadership - High social status - More discreet in adoption choices	
Early Majority	- Adopt an innovation after a varying degree of time and success	
Late Majority	- Adopt an innovation after the average participant - Skeptical about an innovation	
Late Adopters	- Last to adopt an innovation - Averse to change - Focused on "traditions" for sake of traditions	

Pre-implementation planning

Use this sheet to capture your pre-planning information. First consider all of the items of this list before moving onto the official timeline on page 11.

What does my program look like?

Pilot start date:

End of pilot date:

Full rollout date:

Leadership team *(list names of stakeholders)*

Innovative teachers *(list names of stakeholders)*

Your educational goal

Target metrics *(target and timeframe)*

Blended learning model

Benchmark used to evaluate success *(assessment or other instrument to measure progress)*

Digital curriculum provider

Technology platform

Technology/hardware assessment *(# of machines, type, ratio needed, funding needed)*

Existing technology infrastructure concerns *(any infrastructure upgrades needed)*

Build your blended learning project timeline

Activity	Approximate Start Date
Program Planning and Leadership Team Building Choose goal, targets, model, pilot scope, and evaluation benchmark	
Curriculum and Technology Planning Choose digital curriculum and identify new technology needed	
Leadership Training Train leaders on evaluation rubric and teacher expectations	
Staff Onboarding Initial introduction to pilot	
Community Outreach 1 Market program and meet with pilot parents on purpose and goals of the program	
Install and Configure Digital Curriculum and Technology Initial setup of software and load users and courseware	
Staff Training 1 Train staff on pedagogical change and school environment change	
Staff Training 2 Train staff on assignment, student monitoring, and data gathering	
Pilot Project Begins Student orientation, initial learner days, and issue baseline benchmark	
Mid-Pilot Benchmark	
Mid-Pilot Review Meet with stakeholders to review benchmark successes and failures	
Community Outreach 2	
Policy Building Provide time for stakeholders to discuss project and building unified policies	
End-of-Pilot Benchmark	
End-of-Pilot Review	
Build Staff Development Plan	
Build Final Policies	
Community Outreach 3	
Begin Full Rollout	

Your blended learning partner

Edmentum is founded in innovation and committed to being a trusted partner to create successful student outcomes everywhere learning occurs. We can give you the resources—and the expertise—to leverage the power of effective learning solutions.

1. Program Needs Analysis
Review blended learning strategies and best practices

2. Program Design & Planning
Build a customized implementation plan based on your program's goals

3. Implementation & Onboarding
Tailor onboarding process to meet the specific needs of your educators

4. Professional Development
Continuous support focused on preparing and sustaining a blended classroom

www.edmentum.com/resources

We also provide a variety of resources on our website that can help you implement your solution.

Success Stories
Discover the success that schools and districts achieve in partnering with Edmentum.

Videos
Visit our video library, and view clips of industry thought leaders, customer testimonials, and product overviews.

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Hear how online education is redefining the 21st century classroom.

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Dig through the data behind why our products work and how to use them more effectively.

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