

LMHS Blended Learning FAQ

What is Blended Learning?

Blended Learning is sometimes called hybrid learning, web-enhanced instruction, mixed-mode instruction, or technology-mediated instruction. Students involved in Blended Learning will interact with course content using a combination of the best face-to-face and digital instructional methods available to teaching and learning.

What is the primary difference between traditional instruction and Blended Learning?

A primary difference students will experience with Blended coursework is that frequent digital (electronic) engagement with course content will be required. A second notable difference is that Blended courses will meet at the same time daily, but will have variable expectations regarding days of face-to-face attendance per week. Students will be taught the same content, held to the same standards, and summatively assessed in the same manner as students taking a traditional version of a course.

Does Blended Learning work?

The short answer is yes, without a doubt. The U.S. Department of Education examined the effect of online/blended learning in an exhaustive 2010 study. An excerpt from this study appears below.

“A systematic search of the research literature from 1996 through July 2008 identified more than a thousand empirical studies of online learning. Analysts screened these studies to find those that (a) contrasted an online to a face-to-face condition, (b) measured student learning outcomes, (c) used a rigorous research design, and (d) provided adequate information to calculate an effect size. As a result of this screening, 51 independent effects were identified that could be subjected to meta-analysis. Key findings include:

Students who took all or part of their class online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction. Learning outcomes for students who engaged in online learning exceeded those of students receiving face-to-face instruction, with an average effect size of +0.24 favoring online conditions. The mean difference between online and face-to-face conditions across the 51 contrasts is statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level.

Instruction combining online and face-to-face elements had a larger advantage relative to purely face-to-face instruction than did purely online instruction. The mean effect size in studies comparing blended with face-to-face instruction was +0.35, $p < .001$. This effect size is larger than that for studies comparing purely online and purely face-to-face conditions, which had an average effect size of +0.14, $p < .05$.”

<https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf>

Are there other advantages for students taking Blended coursework?

Students participating in Blended coursework must exercise time management and independent study skills valued in higher learning and work. Blended Learning also creates personalized learning opportunities less available to those receiving instruction through traditional methods.

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What courses will be offered in the Blended format?

Advanced English III, Algebra IIA, Earth and Space Science, English III, General Biology, Introductory Psychology, Spanish IV, and World History will be offered in a Blended format for the 2018-2019 school year.

Why has my student been scheduled into a Blended Learning section of a course?

Each student scheduled into a Blended section of a course either selected the *Blended* option during course registration or his or her counselor manually scheduled the student into the section after discussion with and consideration of suitability for the student. Once the term has started, students may choose to be reassigned to a traditionally-taught section of the course no later than the end of the third day of the term. Though it is possible for students to transfer to a traditional section after this point, defined additional conditions must be met and administrative approval granted.

What will be expected of students in Blended courses?

Students in both Blended and traditional courses will be expected to achieve proficiency with the same set of defined course standards. Students in Blended courses will interact with course content in a different manner than students in traditional courses. The activities in which students engage to achieve standards proficiency will be related to the method(s) of delivery.

What curriculum will be used?

Blended sections of courses will use the same curriculum as traditional course sections. Students will be taught the same content, held to the same standards, and summatively assessed in the same manner as students taking a traditional version of a course.

When will students meet with the teacher?

The full section of students will meet with the teacher no less than three and up to five days per week on a schedule communicated in advance by the teacher. For days on which the whole class is not required to be in attendance, some individual students may not meet requirements for release due to lagging progress, or a teacher may require attendance of select individuals for specialized work.

What will students be doing when not meeting with the teacher?

Students may be interacting with course content electronically or in small group settings. Some students may choose to use allocated release time in other ways, returning to engage with Blended coursework at times thought to be more favorable to personal requirements.

Where will the students be when they are not with their teacher?

Freshmen and sophomore students may remain in the classroom or engage in independent learning in one of Linn-Mar High School's designated learning commons at times they are not scheduled to be with their teacher. The Pride Rock Commons, South Commons, Library/Upper Commons, Learning Center, Study Commons at the Main Office, and West Commons are all designated as learning commons for Blended student use. Freshmen and sophomore students must remain in a designated learning space for the duration of each independent learning period and may not leave the building. Unrestricted

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junior and senior students will have time release when not scheduled to be with their teacher. Junior and senior students may also use one of the designated learning commons listed above or leave the building to learn at a time and place of their choosing.

How are Blended Learning courses graded?

Both traditional and Blended courses will be graded using the same summative assessments and category weightings. Blended course grades will be equivalent to traditional course grades for the same course.

What type of interactive electronic device will be required for participation?

Students in LMHS Blended coursework will always have access to a school-provided laptop computer during scheduled Blended class time. Students must also have outside-school access to an interactive electronic device. It is expected that each student manage their own needs in this area. Students are encouraged to procure and use a personal device, though it will be possible to check out a device overnight from the High School Library on a limited basis. Interactive electronic devices must allow students the ability to input text (at times, several paragraphs or a few pages), read text, view video clips, and access the internet. It is suggested that devices have, at a minimum, a keyboard for input and 4 GB of RAM (working memory).

What if students are found outside of approved areas on days and at times of Blended release?

Student who are not where they're supposed to be during unscheduled class time will be permanently assigned to the classroom. In most cases, this means that the student will be reassigned to a traditionally taught section of the course.

Are provisions in place for students who have limited outside access to internet connectivity?

Lack of outside internet connectivity will be a hurdle for some students, though not a barrier. Several public entities and businesses in our community provide free internet access to patrons. Linn-Mar is committed to providing a Blended Learning program open to all and will either provide for or assist students in finding connectivity on a case-by-case basis.

If a student starts in a Blended section, but wants to change to a traditional section at a later date, is this possible?

It is possible for students to transfer to a traditional section of a course after beginning in Blended, provided all practical efforts to improve student success have been exhausted and space is available in a traditional section of the course. As with all courses at LMHS, the teacher will provide supplemental academic assistance as a first step to support unmet student needs. If a student is unable to make satisfactory progress with supplemental assistance, administration will approve transfer to another section.