HOW TO EFFECTIVELY DESIGN BLENDED HIGHER EDUCATION?

C. Vanhees, M. de Smet, L. Eeckhoudt, K. Adriaens & D. van Gucht
Research Project Effective Blended Higher Education

THOMAS MORE

MAKE BLENDED LEARNING MATERIALS ACCESSIBLE

- Verify whether all students have the required tools and a stable Internet connection.
- Verify whether all students are sufficiently technically proficient to use the tools. Provide support as needed.
- Refer students to existing facilities provided within the program, or centrally on campus.

MONITOR THE STUDY LOAD

- Watch over the total anticipated study load of course units. Do not exceed it.
- When transferring to blended formats, avoid simply adding more learning materials, exercises, and test formats to existing lessons. Replace thoughtfully and purposefully.
- Set a clear schedule for yourself and the students. How much time is required for the different learning activities?

CHOOSE BASED ON YOUR LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Formulate clear learning objectives for your course unit before you start your blended design.
- Match your didactic approach, and then the type of blend and learning activities to the learning objectives.
- Provide sufficient time and space to practice the newly acquired knowledge and skills with students. A flipped classroom, for example, explicitly provides room for practice sessions.

1

PROVIDE CLEAR INSTRUCTION AND STRUCTURE

- Provide students with a clear and defined overview of the contents, structure, and learning objectives of your course unit.
- Make explicit connections between the new subject matter and students' relevant prior knowledge. Brush up on that knowledge as needed.
- Discuss the blended approach with your students, and frame its goals, benefits and expectations. Describe clearly what is expected of students during both online, and face-to-face sessions.

2

SUPPORT THE ORGANIZATION OF THE LEARNING PROCESS

- Be conscious of the self-regulatory skills expected of students in blended learning formats. They require explicit support to develop these skills.
- Explicitly inform students on effective learning strategies, and model their use.
- Support students in the organization of their learning activities, and steadily decrease that support as they become more competent.

3

FACILITATE INTERACTION

- Use work formats that encourage interaction, collaborative learning, and peer feedback, such as think-pair-share and group work.
- Ensure that the interaction formats encourage students to actively cognitively engage with the learning content.
- During online sessions you can use forums or breakout rooms, for example. It is important to follow up on these as teachers.

4

PROVIDE SUFFICIENT, FOCUSED FEEDBACK

- Make sure your learning objectives and success criteria are clear to students. Also verify whether students interpret them as intended.
- Visualize students' study progress. Regular, process-oriented feedback with concrete support provides guidance for learning, and clarifies what is expected.
- Make sure your feedback gets students thinking, and then working.

5

START REGULARLY WITH A LOW-THRESHOLD QUIZ

- Regularly start your class with a lowthreshold quiz to activate students' prior knowledge, and gain insight into possible gaps or misunderstandings.
- In addition, they will remember lesson content better due to the active retrieval of information from longterm memory.
- Alternate with other forms of retrieval practice, such as oneminute papers, braindumps, or thinkpairshare.

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