National Perspective: Trends and Policies in Blended Learning

David Teeter
Policy Director

www.inacol.org
International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL)

- iNACOL is the premier K-12 nonprofit in online learning
- 4100+ members in K-12 virtual schools and online learning representing over 50 countries
- Provides leadership, advocacy, research, training, and networking with experts in K-12 online learning.
- “Ensure every student has access to the best education available regardless of geography, income or background.”
How well is our current K-12 system functioning?

The critical question is whether we are preparing our students for the knowledge workforce; the globally competitive workforce.

Currently – national high school graduation rate of 68%
80% of jobs are requiring a post-secondary degree or certification

Depends on who you ask
"Silent Epidemic"

Gates Foundation commissioned first study of high school drop outs

- 88% had passing grades
- 69% were not motivated to work hard
- 66% would have worked harder if more had been demanded of them
- 81% called for more real world learning opportunities
Outline of Remarks:

- National Trends in Blended Learning
  - Characteristics of Blended Learning
  - Quality Perspectives
  - Competency and Blended Learning

- Policy Highlights/Issues Around the Country

- Some Perspective on Colorado

- Questions

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Blended Learning
Blended learning

A formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of instruction and content, with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace.

and

at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home.
Tech-rich ≠ blended
New Models Using Online & Blended Learning

Source: Susan Patrick, iNACOL

**T** TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS
- Enterprise architecture
- Learning management system/virtual learning environment
- 1:1 computing
- Broadband internet infrastructure
- New SIS models for standards-based and competency-based approaches

**P** PEOPLE / PEDAGOGY / PD
- Teachers need new skills to teach online
- Administrators need new skills to manage online programs
- New Response to Intervention (RTI) models through blended
- Personalizing instruction allowing students to accelerate at their own pace

**A** ASSESSMENT
- Online / adaptive
- Personalization engines
- Performance-based

**C** ONLINE CONTENT
- Online courses
- Dual enrollment
- Credit recovery
- Common core curriculum

**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**
- Online tutoring
- Technical support
- Registration
- Counseling

**ADVOCACY / POLICY**
- Does every student have access to online learning?
- Policies and funding models
- Remove barriers that limit enrollment

**NEXT GEN MODELS**
Competency-based learning pathways
Characteristics of blended learning
### The Defining Dimensions of Blended Learning Models

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<th>Less Online Instruction</th>
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<td><strong>Instructional Material Level</strong></td>
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Emerging models of blended learning

Rotation
- Station rotation
- Lab rotation
- Flipped Classroom
- Individual

Flex
- Online platform with F2F support and fluid schedules

Self-Blend
- Students attend physical school & take 1 or more courses online

Enriched Virtual
- Students learn sometimes at a physical school, other times remotely
Christensen suggests that by 2019 about half of all high school courses will be online.
A Vision for Blended Learning Which:

- Provides student access to range of blended learning opportunities that will meet their needs.
- Can be transformative:
  - High Quality Content
  - Technology enabling learning, tracking progress, providing real-time data
  - New and effective models allowing differentiated instruction
- Exemplifies Next Generation Learning Models
  - College and Career Ready
- Creates a Student-Centered model of teaching and learning (Competency-based)
iNACOL Strategic Priority on Quality Assurance

“….In partnership with providers of online and blended learning models, establish a set of outcomes-based quality assurance standards and reporting expectations designed to make it transparent when courses and content are effective in improving course outcomes.”
Online course quality criteria adopted by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Cross-referenced to NEA standards

Peer review of standards and then literature review

Feedback from organizations using iNACOL standards for professional development

Experts representing course development, instructional design, research, education and administration reviewed

Revised standards include indicators, reviewer comments and rubrics helpful for course review.
National Standards for Quality Online Teaching: Version 2, October, 2011

http://www.inacol.org/research/nationalstandards/iNACOL_TeachingStandardsv2.pdf

• Revised in 2011
• 11 Quality criteria adopted by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)
• Peer and literature review
• Feedback from organizations using iNACOL standards for professional development
• Indicators: What teachers know, and what they do in evaluation
National Standards for Quality Online Programs: October 2009


- Set of Rubrics and evaluation standards as follows:
  - Institutional Standards
  - Teaching and Learning Standards
  - Support Standards
  - Evaluation Standards
  - Online Program Self-Evaluation Form
Next Generation Models of Online and Blended Learning

- Continuity of Learning
- Blended Learning
- Competency-based Pathways
- Computer Assisted Instruction (Credit Recovery)
- Quality
Cracking the Code: Synchronizing Policy and Practice for Performance-based Learning
Competency-based learning (definition)

1. Students advance upon mastery.

1. Competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students.

1. Assessment is meaningful and a positive learning experience for students.

1. Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.

1. Learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of important skills and dispositions.
Competency based learning and Blended Learning

- **From Seat Time to Student Centered learning**
  - Advancement based on competency: “failure might be part of the learning curve, not its outcome”
  - Blended learning can inherently enable differentiated instruction

- **Harness technology to support students, enable teachers**
  - Blending of pace and path/place

- Competency based learning empowers Innovative Instruction
  - Teachers can flourish in proficiency-based model (Oregon Educational Roundtable report)

- Rich outcomes data is possible: drives reflective teaching, administration, outcomes monitoring and accountability
State Policy Frameworks and Competency-Based Learning
Moving from seat time to student centered growth pathways

• **Seat Time Waivers**: Level 1 (NC and Michigan) Gateway is State Department of Education. Yearly process.

• **Credit Flexibility**: Level 2 (Alabama, Ohio). States flex credit policies. Allows credit recovery and seat-time alternatives.

• **Advanced Competency Based Policy** (NH, Oregon)
  - Elimination of Seat Time (New Hampshire efforts replacing Carnegie Units with set of “competencies”)
  - Oregon Proficiency Project developed tools resources for districts, enabled accelerated learning options/dual enrollment
Competency-Based Partnerships in the Field

• Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) sponsoring innovation lab network so support states, districts, schools

• Many states have initiatives underway reaching to the district level, including KY, ME, NH, NY, OH, WI, WV

• National policy: (includes)
  - CCSSO
  - National Governors Association
  - American Youth Policy Forum
  - National Center for Education and Economy
  - iNACOL (policy objective, “Competency works”)
  - National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)
Teachers and Blended Learning

• Districts have become large arena for innovation

• Blended Learning Endorsed by: (recently)
  - National Education Association (NEA)
  - Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA)
Policy Trends and Developments
Top iNACOL State Policy Issues

• All students have a right to a full range of high quality OL/BL options (both part-time and full-time)

• Move from seat time to competency-based learning

• Equitable and sustainable funding for students and online and blended learning programs

• Teacher pre- and in-service professional development as online educators – licensure and reciprocity

• Development of reasonable and effective oversight and quality frameworks for online and blended learning
Big Trends worth watching:

• District programs – new learning models using online and blended learning within single districts

• Blended Learning & Continuity of Learning

• Policy revision - 16 states pass online learning laws
  – 6 States require online learning as HS graduation
  – Competency-based (Utah, New Hampshire, FLVS)

• Instructional materials and open access - with common core (44 states), districts and states developing materials for PD, content and learning materials are moving toward open policies for content created with taxpayer dollars so it can be shared across schools
State Online/Blended Learning Policy Trends & Examples

- **Online learning HS graduation requirement**
  - Michigan, Alabama, Florida, Idaho, West Virginia, and Virginia:
    - Online learning HS graduation requirement
    - [Georgia legislation signed into law in 2012](#)

- **Fractional and Performance funding**
  - Florida: Funded through performance-budgeting system, funding follows the student (fractional)
  - Utah: Funding follows the student to the course level

- **Utah**
  - Built upon Digital Learning Now (DLN) 10 point framework

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[INACOL](https://www.inacol.org)  
International Association for K-12 Online Learning
State Online/Blended Learning Policy Trends & Examples

- **California, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Kentucky**
  - Course quality: review all online courses against iNACOL online course standards

- **Michigan (2012)**
  - Bill signed into law (SB 619). Expands virtual charter school options to students. Provisions include: eliminating the cap on number of virtual charter schools and on enrollments; requiring virtual school applicants to demonstrate experience delivering high quality education to all students.

- **Georgia (2012)**
  - Governor signed bill creating a clearinghouse of courses created by schools in the state
State Online/Blended Learning Policy Trends & Examples

• **Minnesota (2012 legislative changes)**
  - Teacher quality: Teacher blended and digital learning training certification (SF 1528)

• **Arizona (2012 legislation)** - worthy of note though just vetoed
  - SB1259 would have made several important changes:
    Increased access to online courses (supplemental), Funded online schools through per pupil funding formula and required fractional funding
  - Instituted performance based funding in three installments,
  - established an evaluation process for quality and effectiveness

• **Colorado (2012)**
  - Bill commissioning study on digital learning in public schools
Key Blended Learning Policy Barriers Remain

- **Specific policies affecting blended learning in the US:**
  - Class size/teacher ratios that lock down innovative instructional models
  - "Blended Learning" definitions that can influence how and when student learning can take place
  - Adherence to seat time requirements vs movement to competency/mastery
  - Teacher certification/reciprocity – assuring students have access to capable and highly qualified instruction. Teacher PD. Lift restrictive rules on licensure that have nothing to do with student outcomes
  - Funding models that allow funding to follow the student
  - Allowing online assessment
  - Meaningful systems of quality/accountability that award results (courses, operators)
Colorado Online/Blended Learning

- State students have wide array of online learning options
  - Full-time and Supplemental
  - State virtual school
  - 8 District and 22 multi-district
  - Blended and virtual

- Policies encourage access no class size limits or teacher ratios
  - No class size limits
  - Absence of set teacher/student ratios

- Public Attention has been focused upon
  - Access
  - Ensuring quality
  - An appropriate and reasonable program oversight and accountability
Colorado Online/Blended Learning

• Key Digital Learning Policy Reform Issues.*
  
  - **Multiple count dates** to allocate funding more equitably (than single October 1 count date). And provides incentives for schools to serve at risk students.
  
  - **Enable fractional funding** – rather than the current system. Allow per pupil revenues (PPR) to be broken up by student and time to reach the course level.
  
  - **Change delivery system for Assignment of PPR** - so funding can be delivered to school/course providers, and that money follows the student to programs.
  
  - **Competency, not seat time** as the basis upon which to determine whether a student should earn academic course credit. Demonstrate mastery.

Colorado Online/Blended Learning

• Key Digital Learning Policy Reform Issues.

  - **Reward providers based on competency outcomes as well.** Final installment when student has completed course requirements successfully.

  - **Students should demonstrate competency, largely via end of course exams, if they are to earn course credit.** And multiple opportunities throughout the year to take these, at the time they complete their course(s). Do not bind students by rigid seat time requirements. Allow alternative demonstrations of assessment as well.
Questions

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http://www.inacol.org
http://onlineprogramhowto.org
Extra slides
School of One

• vimeo.com/7964251
### LEVEL OF BLENDED LEARNING

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Carpe Diem Collegiate High School

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-s_O65rWV10](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-s_O65rWV10)
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New Line Learning Models

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnPLrK1USMA
People/Pedagogy/PD

• People – Administrators, Teachers, and Students
  – Must support each other

• Pedagogy
  – Role of Teacher changes in this environment

• Professional Development
  – What skills does an online/blended teacher need
  – What skills do an administrator need to support his/her teachers
  – Current Trends in PD
Role of Online/Blended Teacher

- Facilitate and build an online and F2F community of learners
- Engage learners in a variety of online and F2F environments through reflective and hands-on activities
- Analyze data to assist in individualizing instruction
- Personalize the learning through online discussion and group projects
- Differentiate instruction (i.e. learning styles, adaptive/assistive technologies, pacing, supplemental activities and remediation.)
- Develop and deliver asynchronous and synchronous lessons that use appropriate and effective multimedia design elements
- Student academic integrity issues (plagiarism and the safe and legal use of online resources)
Administrator Role

- Need to know what to look for in evaluating teachers
- Need to understand how technology works to get into the courses
- How to support online/blended teachers
- Requires administrators and policy makers that can make wise decisions about resources
- Allocation and to gather and analyze data that cross traditional categories and sectors.
- Lack of PD for administrators