

At a Glance

On-Line Learning and Blended Learning

The use of on-line and blended learning is on the rise in schools all over the country. In 2000, roughly 45,000 K-12 students took an online course. In 2009, more than 3 million K-12 students did. Michael B. Horn in “Disrupting Class” predicts that 50 % of all high school courses will be delivered online by 2019.

Most of the growth in the use of online learning is in blended learning environments. Blended learning is any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick and mortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace. So blended learning is a combination of online and offline work. There are currently 6 major models of blended learning approaches.

1. Face-to-Face Driver: Face-to-face teacher delivers most of the curricula. The teacher deploys online learning on a case-by-case basis to supplement or remediate a student’s education, often in the back of the classroom or in a technology lab.
2. Rotation: Within a given course, students rotate on a fixed schedule between learning online in a one-to-one, self-paced environment and sitting in a classroom with a traditional face-to-face teacher.
3. Flex: Uses an online platform that delivers most of the curricula. Teachers provide on-site support on a flexible and adaptive, as-needed basis through in-person tutoring sessions and small group sessions.
4. Online Lab: Relies on an online platform to deliver the entire course, but in a brick-and-mortar lab environment. These usually provide online teachers, and paraprofessionals supervise. Often students in an online lab program also take traditional courses and have typical block schedules.
5. Self-Blend: Students choose to take one or more courses online to supplement their traditional school’s catalog.
6. Online Driver: Uses an online platform and teacher to deliver all curricula. Students work remotely and face-to-face check-ins are sometimes optional and sometimes required.

In Waterloo, we are currently using on-line learning in the following programs:

- PBD Academy at East and West High Schools
- Expo Alternative Learning Center (Expo High, WEB-C, STAR-C)
- High School Credit Recovery
- Middle School Acceleration
- High School Acceleration
- High School and Middle School -to resolve schedule conflicts

The model we are using is a variation of the online lab model, where most of the curriculum is delivered online with some offline work. In all cases a teacher is the facilitator for the learning.

Our use of online learning will continue to expand as we creatively find ways to meet the needs of our students.

What Is Moodle?

Moodle is an open source Course Management System (CMS) that universities, community colleges, K–12 schools, businesses, and even individual instructors use to add web technology to their courses. More than 30,000 educational organizations around the world currently use Moodle to deliver online courses and to supplement traditional face-to-face courses. Moodle is available for free on the Web. The name Moodle has two meanings. First, it’s an acronym (what isn’t these days?) for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. Moodle is also a verb that describes the process of lazily meandering through something, doing things as it occurs to you to do them, an enjoyable tinkering that often leads to insight and creativity.

Our Moodle site is hosted at: <http://webdev.waterloo.k12.ia.us/moodle>

You can log in and create an account using your normal district username/password.

A first-time user tutorial video can be found at: <http://www2.waterloo.k12.ia.us/looTube/video/get-video?video=a0502>

If you are interested in setting up a Moodle course for your students, please contact Ron Morlan: morlanr@waterloo.k12.ia.us

For more about online learning contact: Mary Meier, Executive Director of Career and Secondary Programs meierm@waterloo.k12.ia.us