

The Hybrid Learning Model: Best Practices

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The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed us into a new educational era, one in which online learning has become the new norm. Since March, faculty and students at Pacific Dugoni have been teaching and learning remotely. While not perfect, the efforts of our faculty and supporting staff are recognized by students. In a recent survey conducted by the University with students across the three campuses, the results demonstrated that Pacific Dugoni students' perception about their Spring Quarter online learning experiences are positive.

As we continue to teach online in the **Summer Quarter**, below are some suggested best practices to continuously improve our online course offerings.

- Conduct at least some class sessions **synchronously**. Research shows that online students may feel isolated from the instructor and peers, and that occasional live meetings foster a sense of connectedness.
- Pre-recorded lectures should be **chunked, that is, divide** content into shorter segments to make it easier for students to digest the information. A Voicethread presentation with 20-30 slides is better accepted by students than a presentation with 70 slides.
- You are encouraged to explore the uses of **advanced features** of online learning tools to promote active learning. Below are some examples:
 - Zoom/Webex: Using virtual breakout groups for small group activities; using the built-in polling tool to do self-assessment.
 - Voicethread: Using the live annotation tool to engage students and help them follow the presentation.
 - Canvas: Using the built-in rubric tool to provide rich feedback to students.

Blended/hybrid learning at Dugoni

The implementation of online learning is consistent with the Dugoni school's Strategic Plan of providing students with high quality learning experiences with technology. As we plan for the future (i.e., after we are out of the COVID-19 pandemic), it is recommended that we retain some online learning components by adopting the traditional blended/hybrid learning approach. Blended learning is an instructional model that combines both face-to-face and

online learning. A key feature is that **a portion** of the course is delivered online, which results in **reduced classroom seat time**. Blended learning takes the best of both the physical and online learning environments. It makes learning more flexible and personalized for students by giving them some **control over the time, location, and pace** of learning.

Several guidelines must be considered in designing and implementing blended learning:

- The portion of the course to be delivered online **varies**, depending on the nature of the course, content, and faculty teaching style. A 10-week course might meet 8 times in the class and 2 times online, 2 times in the class and 8 times online, or 5 times in person and 5 times online.
- The online portion of the course can be **synchronous or asynchronous**. You can conduct live meetings with Zoom/Webex, or deliver the lesson asynchronously with tools such as Canvas, Voicethread, SoftChalk, or videos.
- Promote **active learning** in the face-to-face and online environment.
- Facilitate **interaction** in the face-to-face and online environments, including students' interactions with the instructor, classmates, and the content.
- Encourage informal interactions with students through designated virtual open office hours.
- Improve your **online teaching presence** by participating in the online discussions, answering students' questions, providing timely and personalized feedback, and so on.