Introduction

In blended learning programs, students interact with digital curriculum for a portion of instruction in addition to direct instruction with their teacher. This changes the role of the teacher and the structure of lesson plans. Because students engage with the curriculum directly, teachers have time to personalize instruction, to utilize data to identify areas of weakness, and to develop targeted instructional interventions that keep students learning.

Program Factors

The flexibility of Apex Learning® digital curriculum allows for great variation in implementation design. Consider the following factors when planning your program.

Curriculum Needs

Select the digital curriculum best suited to your program goals.

Tutorials

- Enhance original instruction.
- Provide remediation or targeted test preparation.

Classroom teachers use Apex Learning Tutorials¹ as a component of blended learning lesson plans. Content modules focus on standards-aligned objectives with an innovative structure — Learn It, Try It, Review It, Test It — to offer choice, build knowledge, develop critical thinking, and deepen understanding. Prescriptive pretests identify mastered learning objectives and those which require additional focus, providing teachers with actionable data.

Comprehensive Courses

- Provide alternative original credit options for students ready for high school course work.
- Provide structured remediation of foundational skills in science, math, reading, and writing.

Each Apex Learning course is a complete course of study with breadth of standards coverage, depth of instruction, and integrated formative and summative assessment. Each course is integrated with an extensive learning management system and Grade Book to empower teachers to monitor student progress, facilitate communication, and support online submission of student work.

Location

Digital curriculum can be completed on-site, or through a combination of on- and off-site instruction.

Staffing

Consider the following options when planning staff allocations. In each case, students are best served by highly qualified teachers in the subject area.

- **Highly Qualified Teachers**: Schedule time in-class with a highly qualified teacher for each subject area.
- **Teacher’s Aide & Teachers**: Schedule time for a remediation or resource period with a paraprofessional for supervision, motivational support, and assessment proctoring. Students have access to subject area teachers for targeted instruction and tutoring during regularly scheduled class periods.

¹ Apex Learning offers Common Core and Texas Tutorials. Learn more: [http://apexlearning.com/curriculum/tutorials](http://apexlearning.com/curriculum/tutorials)
Blended Learning Implementation Models

Model 1 — Differentiate and Personalize to Increase Competency through Rotation

Students rotate on a fixed schedule between online and face-to-face instruction. Digital curriculum is used to enrich, differentiate, and personalize. The online portion may be completed in or outside of school and may include 2 or 3 of the following components:

1. Individualized learning plan
2. Small-group instruction (Teachers pull 3-5 students for targeted instruction)
3. Whole-group instruction (Teacher-led, synchronous instruction)
4. Project-based learning or hands-on application

Watch this Tutorials Clip: Rotation Model² (1:57)

Model 2 — Increase Time for Meaningful Application and Practice with Flipped Classroom

Provide more time in class for application and collaborative activities such as projects and labs by moving lecture outside of class time. Students complete instructional modules outside of class from any device with internet access. Students then engage in teacher-guided practice activities or projects on campus during the school day.

Teachers may vary the frequency of flipped lessons by choosing to flip lessons daily, weekly, monthly, or by unit.

Watch this Tutorials Clip: Flipped Classroom³ (1:19)

Model 3 — Increase Engagement during Whole-group Instruction and Review

Incorporate multimedia and interactive elements from the Learn It, Review It, Try It and Test It activities into whole-group instruction using the interactive whiteboard to make instruction more engaging.

Watch these Tutorials Clips: Enhance Traditional Instruction⁴ (0:57) & Make Lessons Interactive⁵ (1:11)

Model 4 — Individualize and Differentiate Guided Practice with 1:1

Leverage the Learn It, Review It, and Try It, and Test It activities during synchronous instruction where each student has access to their own device.

Watch this Tutorials Clip: Differentiate Instruction⁶ (1:24)

² http://www.brainshark.com/apexlearning/clip_rotation
³ http://www.brainshark.com/apexlearning/clip_flip_class
⁴ http://www.brainshark.com/apexlearning/clip_enhance-instruction
⁵ http://www.brainshark.com/apexlearning/clip_interact-lesson
⁶ http://www.brainshark.com/apexlearning/clip_differentiate
Best Practices:

Model 5 — Support English Language Learners

Scaffolds and support features make academic content accessible to all students as they improve language skills and learn academic course content at their own pace. Students complete modules that correspond to their academic classes within the resource period of the school day.

Watch this Tutorials Clip: English Language Learners7 (1:14)

Model 6 — Remediation and RTI with 1:1 Computing

Each student is presented with an individualized learning plan derived from prescriptive unit pretest results. With content developed specifically for the standards, Tutorials in math and English language arts offer direct instruction, practice, review, and assessment to build the required knowledge and skills.

Watch these Tutorials Clips: Unit Recovery8 (1:21) & Support Struggling Students9 (1:21)

Model 7 — Increase Achievement on High-stakes Exams with Test Preparation

Increase exam scores by providing a robust prescriptive review and preparation resource aligned to high stakes exams. Students may complete modules to prepare before the exam or to remediate before a re-test.

Watch these Tutorials Clips: Test Prep10 (1:41) & RemEDIATE After Assessment11 (1:31)

Model 8 — Coursework for High School Credit

Students take individual courses for credit recovery or original credit. Instruction is primarily delivered with Comprehensive Course digital curriculum and a highly qualified teacher provides instruction and feedback. Courses may be completed in a blended classroom setting or at a distance.

View the Apex Learning Comprehensive Course Catalog: http://www.apexlearning.com/catalog

Best Practices for Blended Learning Teachers

Implement the following best practices to maximize student outcomes in your program.

1. Embrace the Role of the Blended Learning Teacher

Just as with traditional instruction, teachers working with digital curriculum should hold appropriate teaching credentials and subject-area certifications. Effective blended learning teachers:

- Provide teacher-led direct instruction, including individual and small-group remediation.

7 http://www.brainshark.com/apexlearning/clip_esl
8 http://www.brainshark.com/apexlearning/clip_unit-recovery
9 http://www.brainshark.com/apexlearning/clip_struggling
10 http://www.brainshark.com/apexlearning/clip_test-prep
11 http://www.brainshark.com/apexlearning/clip_remediate
Best Practices: Blended Learning Programs

- Encourage and help students set goals to plan and pace their learning.
- Understand the structure of digital curriculum content and assessment.
- Provide an orientation to each student.
- Differentiate instruction based on assessment data.
- Provide timely formative feedback on student work.
- Regularly communicate progress, performance, and attendance with students, parents, and staff.

2. Design Lessons That Maximize Teacher-Directed Instruction

Incorporate the following classroom strategies to realize the greatest student outcomes:

- **Whole-Group Instruction – Mini-Lessons:** Review district pacing, course standards, unit objectives, and course content to prepare mini-lessons for whole-group instruction. Students benefit from the following whole-group instructional strategies:
  - Activating prior knowledge
  - Making connections between real-world application and the content
  - Introducing new concepts and vocabulary

- **Small-Group Targeted Instruction:** Use assessment and progress data to identify and group struggling students to provide appropriate interventions. Consider enlisting additional student support from peer mentors and tutors.

*Answer [Steps to Start](http://sgiz.mobi/s3/Steps-to-Start) for customized lesson plan ideas designed to help you quickly integrate Tutorials into your instruction to accomplish a specific goal.*

3. Use Data to Inform Instructional Interventions

Monitor progress and performance using the Classroom Overview dashboard to quickly identify students in need of intervention.

- Monitor access and progress.
- Track student and class overall performance on individual assessments.

4. Discover Ongoing Opportunities for Professional Learning

Look for opportunities for staff to contribute in formal and informal professional learning to develop best practices and strategies for teaching in a blended environment.

Focus professional learning to develop skills and competencies in the National Standards for Quality Online Teaching developed by International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL).


More Information

For more information about implementing a blended learning program in your district, contact your Apex Learning representative, visit [http://www.apexlearning.com](http://www.apexlearning.com), or email [info@apexlearning.com](mailto:info@apexlearning.com).

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13 [http://www.inacol.org/research/nationalstandards/iNACOL_TeachingStandardsv2.pdf](http://www.inacol.org/research/nationalstandards/iNACOL_TeachingStandardsv2.pdf)