ELA: Online Integration & Management

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🌿 6.1 Online Integration and Management in the Language Arts

> ### Teachers Talk: the Great Filter (3:36)
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> Reflection Questions: How did Mr. Jepperson's role as a teacher change when he began blending his classroom? How do you see your role as a teacher? How could you change your role to benefit your students?

Online integration is at the very heart of blended teaching. It has to do with how you combine your in-person ELA classroom with online activities. (Remember the baker mixing dry and wet ingredients from [Chapter 1](#).) Because the main component of blended learning is integrating online and in-person activities, online integration is a good place to begin thinking about blending your classroom.

This is where you as an ELA teacher can consider what specific online practices can help you address the problems of practice you identified in Chapter 1. The more examples of blended teaching you have personally seen and the more experience you have with online teaching, the easier this process will be for you. But even if you are just starting out, you will probably have a few ideas of your own. This chapter will help you explore more ideas.

Although blended teaching can seem overwhelming, experienced blended teachers say that the best way to go about this process of starting to blend is to think big but start small. Small beginnings allow you to wet your toes in the process, focus on specific pedagogies and activities, see the benefits and drawbacks, and make improvements on a small scale without becoming overwhelmed by the process.

Teachers Talk: Small Beginnings

Jenifer Pickens

Just try it. Do just a little bit at a time, but do something. If you like it, then you can do more. And you will like it!

6.2 Planning for Integration

You can take that first small step by doing the following:

1. Identify the problem of practice and the learning objective that you are interested in blending.
2. Think about activities, both in-person and online, that could support the student learning. (A framework for this process is to think about activities that involve students interacting independently with content, activities that involve students interacting primarily with each other, and activities that might involve interaction with an instructor.)
3. Consider how the online activities and the in-person activities can connect.
4. Choose one of the activities you have considered and create a blended lesson.

See the example below in Table 1 for how this process might work. The teacher in this example explores several activities that could be blended. You have a similar chart in your Blended Teaching Notebook.

The teacher has identified her problem of practice: I want my students to be more precise and careful in their analysis of character. The [learning objective](#) states: "Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text

says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text."

Here are some ways she could combine online and in-person activities.

Table 1

Planning for Online Integration: Student–Content

Student–Content Interactions

Online Activities:
1. After reading a text, students use [Jamboard](#) (an online sticky note tool) to explore character. Use one color of sticky note for character traits and another color for evidences from the text.
2. Each student will write one paragraph of a group character sketch in a Google doc.

In-person Activities:
1. Students read a text, identifying character traits of a character of their choice.

Connection: The students will use what they found in the text to create their Jamboards, which will later be used to make paragraph assignments and to create a collaborative online character sketch.

Blended teaching can also enhance student–content interactions because content can be easily modified. Trent found that even between classes he could change instructions to help his students understand.

Teachers Talk: Easily Changing Content

Trent Mikesell

Having content online makes it easy to change. If I find the directions aren't clear or if I haven't addressed a question that a lot of students have, I can change it, even between classes. I don't have to redo an assignment; I can change problems or mistakes as soon as I find them (or as soon as a student points them out to me). If I see a common problem crop up in an assignment or writing, I can easily grab content from students' work (with their permission, of course) and in seconds have it on a slide in front of the class, where we can discuss it together and target the specific problem the students are having.

Table 2

Planning for Online Integration: Student–Student

Student–Student Interactions

Online Activities:

Student−Student Interactions

1. Students in the above activity who chose the same character will copy their Jamboards to a discussion board and will make comments on two other students' jamboards, noting traits they agree or disagree with as well as analyzing the strengths of the evidence they used to support their conclusions.
2. Students will give appropriate feedback on the Google Doc for the paragraphs of the people in their group. They will also proof each other's paragraphs. They will make suggestions for transitions that will make the paper feel more unified.

In-person Activities:
1. Students will meet in person in their groups, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their character traits, and decide which character traits to write about in a collaborative character sketch. They will determine who will write the intro and conclusion as well as each paragraph describing a different character trait.
2. The students will meet one more time in person to read their completed paper aloud and make any final changes.

Connection: The work the students do on jamboard and the discussion board will prepare them for a productive in-person group discussion about the character and for being able to plan an outline for their character sketch. Once the character sketch is completed the students will leave feedback online, make improvements to their draft, and meet in person for a final review and revision of their sketch.

Table 3

Planning for Online Integration: Student−Instructor

Student−Instructor Interactions

Online Activities:
1. The teacher will leave feedback on the discussion board, asking one question about each person's jamboard.
2. The teacher will give feedback on the complete character sketch on the google document.

In-person Activities:
1. The teacher will meet briefly in person with each group to answer questions and to assess progress.

Connection: The teacher will respond online to the Jamboards, asking a question that can cause the student to think more deeply about the character or consider another piece of evidence. She will use what she learned from their Jamboards and discussion board to guide her in-person meeting and to later give online feedback on Google docs.

✎ **Blended Teaching Workbook**

In your workbook, using one of your problems of practice, fill out the Planning for Online Integration table. If you haven't already opened and saved your workbook, you can access it here.

🍃 6.3 Selecting a Blended Teaching Model

Once you have chosen an activity or activities to blend, consider which blended teaching model best fits the activity. (For a review of blended teaching models, see Chapter 2: Online Integration in *K-12 Blended Teaching: A Guide to Personalized Learning and Online Integration*.)

Teachers Talk: Flipped Classroom (4:54)

Watch on YouTube

Reflection Questions: What content could you deliver online in your classroom? How can you more effectively use your classroom time when you deliver some content online?

Teachers Talk: Station Rotation (5:25)

[Watch on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

Reflection Question: How can you create a lesson plan that goes horizontal?

Teachers Talk: Lab Rotation (6:54)

Watch on YouTube

Reflection Question: How can you foster peer review using technology?

[Watch on YouTube](#)

Reflection Question: Think about your students. What are some targeted lessons that could benefit groups of your students?

6.4 Deciding What to Do In-Person in an English Language Arts Classroom

Blended learning is the *strategic* combination of online and in-person modalities. But how do teachers decide which activities to do online and which to do in person?

One way to begin answering the question of what can be done most effectively in person is to look at your strengths as a teacher, the needs of your students, and the types of activities that lend themselves to the best use of the in-person space.

For example, students may be working (collaboratively or alone) on a project or paper. You want to do this in person because you know they will have many specific, unique questions. Answering those questions in the moment that they come up can keep students from getting stalled in the process and keep energy high. It also helps assure that students don't have to back up and redo work.

Similarly, you may want to begin a discussion in person. You want students to get excited about the topic and begin thinking about the possibilities of the discussion. Once they've had this beginning, they may be more ready to participate in an online discussion.

Perhaps you are good at reading aloud, and your students enjoy hearing you read. You might want to introduce a new text in person, reading and discussing it.

Role-playing, whole class simulations, reading circles, discussions of goals and progress may all be activities that work best in the in-person space.

Know yourself, your students, and your subject matter well enough to determine what you want to preserve for the in-person space.

Once you know how you can best use the in-person space, you can begin to explore ways to use the online space to allow the kinds of activities you want in the in-person space, to best use the affordances of the online space, and to make meaningful connections between the two modalities. Answers to the following questions may help you decide.

- Can I put some instruction online so I have more class time to work with students individually or in small groups?
- Can putting an activity online increase student participation?
- Can I use the online space to allow my students to personalize the pace, path, time, place, or goals of their learning?
- How can I use the online space to target individual learning needs?
- Can I use the online space to help students increase ownership of their learning?
- Can I use the online space to give my students access to materials they wouldn't otherwise be able to have?
- Can I use the online space to teach the same concept in different ways, so learners will have more than one option in their learning?
- Can I use the online space to allow for greater learner-learner interaction and collaboration?
- Can I use the online space to adapt or differentiate materials to meet different students' needs?
- Are there new ways I can use the in-person space when I put some of the instruction and activities online?

Answering questions such as these can help you decide which activities to do in person and which ones to do online, as well as how to combine the two so that each enhances the other.

6.5 Evaluating Blended Activities

Blended learning is not just about using technology in the classroom. It is about strategically combining technology with in-person activities to improve pedagogy and student outcomes.

Review Chapter 3: Evaluating Blended Teaching for guidance in how to evaluate the blend you have created.

In addition, the PIC-RAT framework provides a means of evaluating your use of technology to see if it is adding value to your classroom. It helps you evaluate students' relationship to technology as well as its impact on traditional practices.

For a complete explanation of the PIC-RAT framework, See 2.3.1 "The RAT Framework," 2.3.2 "Blended Activities that Engage (The PIC Framework)," and 2.3.3 "An Evaluative Framework for Blended Teaching" in Chapter 2 "Online Integration" of *K-12 Blended Teaching: A Guide to Personalized Learning and Online Integration*.

🔖 6.6 Planning Blended Routines and Behaviors

Teachers Talk: Routines in the Classroom

Brianne Anderson

My first week I made sure that all the Chromebooks were plugged in, but I didn't check the power strip. It had been flipped off. Everything was plugged in, but that little light button on the power bar was off. I came the next morning and had this awesome lesson planned, but all the computers were dead.

The simple use of technology in the classroom is something that has to be implemented on day one. If your students haven't used technology in the classroom before, you'll have to teach them even simple things like how to turn on the computer and open the internet. The first thing I like to teach my students is how to communicate with me digitally, giving them clear instructions on the best way to contact me. I also like to teach them where to find answers, trying to help them be more self-sufficient. These are things we practice.

Teachers Talk: Getting Started

Trent Mikesell

With classroom management, I would think through very carefully what you want to have happen with the hardware and movement in the classroom. What will you have students do when they have a computer on their desk and you want to talk? Make your expectations really clear right from the very beginning and practice the procedures. What I've noticed is that the teachers are clear, but they don't follow through.

As Brianne and Trent remind us, establishing routines in a blended classroom is crucial. Helping students understand when and how to move around the classroom, how to access an LMS or other online programs, how to log in and out, where and how to store hardware, how to communicate civilly and respectfully, and how to turn in assignments is essential to creating a usable blend. In addition, making plans for how to manage off task behavior can prepare you for situations that are sure to arise.

Process for Implementing Routines in a Blended Classroom:

1. Decide specifically the kinds of behavior and routines you want to put in place.
2. Spend the first two or three weeks really drilling and practicing those routines.
3. Set clear expectations.
4. Decide what you will do to help students who have a difficult time meeting the expectations. How will you respond to them?
5. Evaluate your plan and make adjustments as needed.

In Table 4 below your mentor teachers share tips they have learned and implemented that have helped them establish routines to manage their classrooms. As you read through them, think of your classroom. Are any of these tips appropriate for your setting? What ideas come to mind of ways you can effectively manage your own classroom?

Table 4

Blended Teaching Routines

Blended Teaching Routines—Teacher Tips

Student Movement	- Will you have activities that require the movement of students (such as in a station or lab rotation). - Will students be moving all at the same time? - At different times? - Plan an efficient way to facilitate those movements. - I have my students do three things when they come into class: - Open their grading portal and check their grades. - Open their email. - Open the class website to see if there are any new posts. - Be very clear. Make few rules but enforce them well.
Hardware Management	- Don't waste time plugging in computers between periods. Make sure they're plugged in at the end of the day. - Use of cell phones (some teachers collect them so they don't have them in class; others let them use them for assignments) - Keeping Chromebooks or other hardware charged (if devices are kept in the classroom; students don't take them home). - Establish a routine for making sure computers are plugged into the right charging station. - Create checklists. - Make assignments. - Make sure computers are plugged in and charging. - Sanitizing computers. - Keeping a log of damages or problems. - Assign specific computers to specific desks or specific students; this increases accountability. - Teach how to hold and carry devices; practice.

Blended Teaching Routines—Teacher Tips

Software Management	- Teach how to turn on the computer, log in, and access the internet. - Practice using the LMS, opening it, finding assignments, checking grades, submitting assignments, etc. - If you have specific formats you want students to use when submitting assignments, teach them what they are. - Create checklists. - Teach how to download, upload, and organize files. - Have the students practice everything you teach.
Student Questions	- Teach them where to find answers before they ask you. - Establish specific ways to contact you outside of class and how to address you politely. - Teach how to use email. - Establish "expert" students that other students can turn to for help. - Create instructional videos or review pages students can access when they have common questions.
Classroom Configuration	- Decide what kinds of activities you do in your classroom. Are there classroom configurations that will support those activities? For example: - Create a comfortable reading space. - Create a space for collaboration, where students can talk together. - Create a quiet space for writing or other thoughtful activities. - Do you have fewer than 1-to-1 devices? If so, create a space for working on computers.
Off-task Behavior	- Use software that allows you to monitor what is on the screen of each student. - Teach students to monitor themselves. - Sometimes if I have problems with students straying away from what we're doing on their computers, we shut down the computers and use paper again for a day. - Even good students can get off task. I try to always walk around the classroom, both to be available for help and to give quiet reminders to stay on task. - Utilize your LMS or other software to keep track of online behavior. - I have a table by my desk. If there is a student who is really having a difficult time staying on task, I place him or her on that table away from the other students and monitor that student more closely.
Other	Help students develop time management skills, so that they use their time as efficiently as possible.

Here Dave Lee explains his "cool-off zone," a place where students can get away from distractions and refocus.

Teachers Talk: Addressing Off-Task Behavior—The Cool-Off Zone (1:46)

Watch on YouTube

Reflection Questions: How did Mr. Lee help students avoid distractions and regulate their learning? What can you do to help your students make decisions about how they will regulate themselves?

English language arts teachers say they typically spend four to six weeks at the beginning of the year establishing routines and expectations and teaching students how to use the technology. But, they say, it pays off in the long run with a smooth running class and increased opportunities for interaction and personalization—all of which they see as positives in their blended classroom.

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