



Implementing Blended Learning in Classrooms

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Strategy

Implementing blended learning in classrooms

Description

Providing tailored coaching support to teachers, paraprofessionals, central office support staff on virtual instruction

Recommendations

- When considering curriculum choices for blended learning, a standardized and comprehensive curriculum has been shown to be most effective for both students and teachers.
- Reconfiguring staff support will require onboarding adjunct positions such as learning coaches to assist with online learning needs.
- For optimal gains in student achievement, students should have opportunities for self-paced work.

Overview

In 2016, Evergreen Education Group conducted a case study of nine schools who had integrated the Fuel Education (FuelEd) online curriculum and platform into their existing blended learning or virtual programs. Of the nine programs, five of the schools were whole school programs and the other four were credit recovery and remediation programs. Whole school programs applied a variety of blended learning techniques in order to support the FuelEd curriculum while the credit recovery and remediation programs were situated within traditional public and charter schools in which students participated in only the FuelEd courses to recover credits or improve their academic performance. Though each of the programs were at differing stages of the implementation phase, each of the schools reported improved student outcomes as a result of the FuelEd curriculum.

Blended learning allows students to access a variety of course offerings at various paces.

- All of the schools featured in the case study used the FuelEd curriculum as their primary curriculum.
 - The FuelEd course catalog includes core courses, electives, advanced courses, credit recovery and remediation for students in K-12 grades.
 - Crater Lake Charter Academy (CCLA) noted that teachers can customize a student's course through FuelEd to provide a personalized learning plan for students.



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- CCLA follows a block schedule in which students attend 1.5-hour blocks in which students participate in blended learning activities.
- For schools with limited course offerings, FuelEd provided courses that otherwise were unavailable to students at that school.
 - Carver Military Academy school leaders noted that the variety of course offerings encouraged students to stay enrolled as Carver is a choice school.
- Schools offered a wide range of schedule options that were flexible for students.
 - Of the five whole school programs, all five schools required their students to come on campus for a certain amount of time. The schedule options for the schools were as follows:
 - Elementary and middle school students spend 6 hours per day Monday through Thursday and high school students come as needed; K-8 students appeared on campus Monday-Thursday for 5.5 hour days while grades 9-12 appeared Thursday and Friday for 5.5 hour days; All students attend Monday-Friday in cohorts with staggered start times (8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:30 a.m.) for 5 hours each day; All students appear on campus on Tuesday and one additional day for 7 hours - grades 9-12 appear on Wednesday and grades K-8 appear on Thursday.
 - The fifth and largest whole school program required K-5 students to attend in-person on Friday and sometimes Wednesday as needed for intervention purposes. Students in grades 6-8 attended on Monday and Wednesday. Unlike the K-8 students, students in grades 9-12 were held to a trimester schedule where they had the option to attend in-person on Tuesday and Thursday.
 - Of the credit-recovery programs, all programs required students to take virtual classes in their campus' respective learning or media labs.
 - Of the four programs, only one program allowed students to complete their courses on the weekend rather than the school day. Other programs offered evening course options.
- Offering customized self-paced work empowers students to become independent workers and manage themselves.
 - Several schools showed student improvement reading and math gains and noted that the gains were due in part to students working independently.
 - The two longest-running FuelEd whole school programs reported an averaged 242% growth in middle school math MAP scores and an averaged 140% of growth for elementary school students comparable to students in traditional schools in their district and state.

By reconfiguring staffing needs to support blended learning, teachers are able to customize online learning and build better rapport with their students.



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- Teachers responsible for delivering FuelEd courses typically are held to a standard school day. However, schools employ support staff who are responsible for tasks such as coordinating FuelEd enrollment, assisting with technical needs, and providing remedial support as needed.
 - Because Carver Military Academy opted to use FuelEd as a means of course recovery, they employed a coordinator who managed all related needs for the program.
- Poudre School District Global Academy (PGA) allows its teachers to supplement the FuelEd curriculum with offline materials in order to meet student needs.
 - PGA emphasizes utilizing student data in order to build supplemental materials.
 - PGA teachers both teach on-campus and online courses as well as tutor and coach students online. An integral part of PGA's model is parent involvement in the academic coaching process.
- The Springs Studio for Academic Excellence (SSAE) utilizes both the online teachers provided by FuelEd as well as five full-time Student Support Coaches (SSC) to provide remediation and instruction for students who need individualized support.



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References

FuelEducation. (2016). *Outcomes of Blended and Online Learning Programs Using Fuel Education Curriculum*. Evergreen Education Group.