Blended and/or online learning often involves the use of technology. Many teachers want to use technologies in their teaching but don’t know where to start. As a teacher you already have a sound knowledge of educational principles and an appreciation of the context in which teaching will take place. Therefore, you are well placed to recognise which particular technology will best achieve learning and teaching goals. If you make an informed choice, learn how to use the technology and manage its use in class, you will find it much easier.

What is online or blended learning?

**Online learning** allows students access to your courses from a remote location. They can complete learning activities and assessments online that are equivalent to an on-campus course.

**Blended learning** is most suited to UNSW's strengths and needs, in terms of approaches to technology use in education. Blended learning is a flexible approach to the design, development and delivery of learning and teaching. It is a hybrid of online learning and traditional face-to-face learning, the one enhancing the other.

In a blended course, Instruction may occur in the classroom, online, or in both settings. The online component (a range of learning activities using online learning environments) becomes a natural extension of traditional classroom learning.

Blended or online learning does not prescribe a particular pedagogical approach or framework, but has the potential to support student-centred approaches to learning.

Examples of blended learning at UNSW including sample courses can be found [here](#).

Benefits of online or blended learning

Wholly online learning frees both teachers and students from face-to-face meeting requirements. It does, however, require considerable learning design and facilitation skills to be effective.

Blended learning:

- permits flexibility in course design and delivery
- permits flexibility of access to learning materials, activities and assessments
- supports the fusion of different times and places for learning
• can help students develop independent learning skills.
• may offer opportunities for systematic course evaluation, and
• offers the efficiencies and conveniences of fully online courses along with all the advantages of face-to-face contact.

Above all, a blended learning approach is student-focused, with the potential to offer a more robust educational experience than either traditional or fully online learning can achieve.

Challenges with online or blended learning

Too often online courses deliver the course content (e.g. lecture slides or course readings) online without exploring the opportunities for students to actively engage with this content online.

Your online or courses or course components do not have to resemble dull document repositories. Using online tools and Student-Centred teaching you can create a vibrant student community that enriches your face-to-face teaching. For example, after a class or lecture, students may continue tutorial discussions or reflect on the lesson content online.

Assistance with planning and designing an online or blended course can be found here.

Other challenges include:

• managing teacher and student workload
• gaining proficiency in using technologies
• the need to substantially revise course design if technology use is to be effective.

Resources

• How to Teach Online effectively
• Selecting technologies for blended or online teaching
• Planning and Designing a blended or online course
• How to Evaluate Courses

Resources for UNSW staff

The Connections Seminar series and the annual Learning and Teaching Forum provide platforms for UNSW staff to explore different aspects of learning and teaching, share ideas and get feedback on practice and research.

Recordings and presentations can be found on the respective Moodle course sites (self-enrolment key provided)

• 2018 Learning and Teaching Forum on October 26, 2018: Blending power electronics presented by Professor John Fletcher, School of Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications, Faculty of Engineering (self-enrolment key: Intforum)
2018 Learning and Teaching Forum on October 26, 2018: **Risk, Research, Support: Exploring New Approaches To Online Engagement In A Postgraduate Cyber Security Course** presented by Dr Elena Sitnikova, School of Engineering and Information Technology, UNSW Canberra (self-enrolment key: Intforum)

Connections Seminar on September 12, 2018: **What works and what doesn’t: Online Student Engagement in a Postgraduate Information Assurance Principles (IAP) course** presented by Dr Elena Sitnikova, School of Engineering and Information Technology, UNSW Canberra (self-enrolment key: unswconnections)