

## Option 1

Khan Academy's Introduction to Blended Learning (n.d.), describes blended learning as allowing for traditional methods of education to be blended with online learning to personalize the learning experience for each individual learner. The goal is not to simply a tech-rich classroom (layering technology on top of technology), but instead recreate the learning structure using technology. This will provide an effective and engaging learning experience, which encourages ownership of the learning process. Students should have some control over place, path, and pace, in which learning online and within the classroom becomes an integrated whole. Blended learning is personalized, is mastery-based on core concepts, based on high expectations and rigorous standards, and drives student ownership. Selwyn (2011) supports this concept when quoting Facer and Green (2007) as stating that, "more often than not, digital technology is seen to provide a powerful means of supporting education that is driven by individual learner needs and based on learners taking control of managing and accessing knowledge for themselves" (p. 148).

- **How do digital technologies complement or challenge the established processes and structures of school organization?**

Digital technologies complement the established school system by providing support for higher-order thinking to occur when implemented successfully. However, the Khan Academy videos suggest that the implementation of digital technology into the education system may disrupt, uproot, and challenge our current system.

In Redesigning A School Toward Blended Learning (Khan Academy, n.d.) six traditional assumptions about education were listed:

1) *A school calendar year based on farming schedules.* This challenges our annual school calendar.

2) *The scheduled times and length of the school day.* This challenges the school staff's schedules and how the school schedule will run.

3) *Whether subjects should be taught for the same amount of time.* This creates a challenge for organizing a master schedule for students.

4) *Class size.*

5) *Classroom configuration.*

6) *Grouping by age and grade.*

These last three (4-6) could mean that both students, teachers, and administrators are moving about the school in untraditional ways, for untraditional sets of time, in untraditional classroom settings.

While these six assumptions may create complications and challenges in implementing a new system, it does not mean that it isn't for the most beneficial outcome.

- **In what ways do digital technologies appear to support the restructuring of schools and schooling?**

Digital technology appears to support the restructuring of school systems by potentially providing teachers with more time to intervene with students at the right time. Technology frees up teacher time by providing instant learning results, enabling the teacher to respond to learning needs immediately. Digital technology also provides students with a path to independently learn with the teacher facilitating learning (Khan Academy, *Teaching in a Blended Learning Environment*, n.d.). The goal of learning in a blended classroom is for students to have ownership in the personalization of the mastery of concepts, while meeting rigorous standards. Therefore, class size, classroom configuration, and grouping by age and grade are traditional structures that need reconsideration with the implementation of digital technology in our school systems. Learning with self-directed learning goals, using digital technology, students are empowered to learn at their own individualized pace, taking ownership of their learning.

- **What traditional assumptions about education do you believe are worth challenging?**

2) *The scheduled times and length of the school day.*

This is worth considering partially because it aligns with leading business models of today. Top economist Daniel Pink states in his book *Drive* (2009), that when productive time is scheduled individually, employees work how and when they are most productive and this results in a better output and a happier, more fulfilled employee. This work model provides employees ownership in their tasks. If our school system can emulate what is successful in the business world and will later be expected in the business world (self-management), then I think it is worth considering.

4) *Class size.*

Digital technology will allow for larger class sizes. However, this larger classes can be split and managed by one facilitator of learning when half the class is actively engaged with digital technology. Khan Academy's *Teaching in a Blended Learning Environment* (n.d.) suggests a 34 to one ratio with a 50/50 split. This option can help with school budgeting while allowing a small class size mentality by splitting the students into two groups (*Redesigning A School Toward Blended Learning*, Khan Academy, n.d.).

5) *Classroom configuration.*

When students create their own schedule based on their learning goals, they manage their work level and will be more productive in the working world. Also, when teachers are enabled to use their skills and interests, they are able to specialize, develop expert skills, and are enabled to use their talents to benefit the whole system. This promotes ownership and is again in alignment with Daniel Pink's (2009) theories in the workplace (Khan Academy, *Teaching in a Blended Learning Environment*, n.d.).

When we consider modified classroom configuration, we are able to move away from the individual teacher to team-teaching involving the administration, special educators, para-educators... It becomes a more holistic approach with more people involved and invested. More experienced teachers mentor new teachers in partnerships (*Redesigning A School Toward Blended Learning*, Khan Academy, n.d.).

6) *Grouping by age and grade.*

Dynamic grouping is suggested and is based on a student's proficiency level, which can change on daily. Students should not be forced into the same learning pace based on age. Students should be allowed to control the pace of their learning, but a minimum pace must also be established and enforced (Khan Academy, Teaching in a Blended Learning Environment, n.d.). Mixed-aged grouping is also beneficial for student mentoring to occur (Redesigning A School Toward Blended Learning, Khan Academy, n.d.).

References

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