

Dreaming Bigger

Personalizing Pace, Place & Time





Flexible Learning

Flexible learning is a principle of practice aimed at increasing the flexibility in the requirements of time and location of study for students. This project explored the experiences of teachers in implementing practices of flexible learning into one high school in Saskatchewan.

Each teacher developed course content in their subject area in the Moodle Learning Management System that enables educators to create online courses with a focus on interactive and collaborative construction of content. The courses were offered in a blended format customized to meet the needs of students.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS . . .

- ▶ Credit recovery/attainment
- ▶ Remediation
- ▶ Enrichment
- ▶ Differentiation
- ▶ Intervention strategies
- ▶ Increased graduation rates

STUDENTS WHO MAY BENEFIT . . .

- ▶ Caring for children and other family members during the day.
- ▶ Experiencing anxiety or other mental health challenges.
- ▶ Paid employment.
- ▶ High performance athletes.
- ▶ Newcomers.
- ▶ Transient students.

Moral imperative – reaching out to students who may not be succeeding in the current system and providing additional opportunities is social justice work.

Teachers' Experiences . . .

SUPPORTS

Time . . .

- Teachers need time to learn, plan, explore, reflect, and think in order to change practice.
- Teacher time and relationships with students remains important to student success through blended learning.
- Flexibility was valued over continual availability – students wanted ongoing interaction with teachers but did not expect 24-hour access.

Technology

- Access to technology for both teachers and students is essential.
- Technology can provide opportunities to overcome other barriers experienced by students.
- Support for teachers in accessing and using technology is critical.
- A Learning Management System can help keep everything organized and accessible.

Risk-Taking Environment

- Financial risk – technology and teacher time.
- Professional risk – shift in practice is always a risk.
- Personal risk – fear of increased demands on time and availability.

OUTCOMES

Collaboration – time and technology alone will not shift practice without a supportive, collaborative environment through . . .

- Administrative support and leadership.
- Capacity building among staff through shared learning.
- Ongoing professional development.
- Confidence in practice.
- Emergence of influencers and leaders.

Focus on a common goal

- Needed the full staff to focus on the shift in practice – other projects were put “on hold.”
- Focus was supported by the moral imperative – this is the right thing to do.

MOVING FORWARD

- Incorporating flexible learning must be a balancing act between meeting students' needs and supporting teacher workloads.
- A shift to flexible learning can increase opportunities for collaboration, professional development, and the development of leadership skills.

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