

Introduction

In blended programs, students interact with digital curriculum for assessment and instruction in addition to direct instruction with a teacher. This changes the structure of lesson plans. In this model, teachers have time to utilize data to identify student needs, to individualize instruction, and to develop instructional interventions that keep students learning.

Program Factors

The flexibility of Apex Learning® digital curriculum allows for great variation in implementation design. Consider the following factors when planning your program.

Program Type

Select the digital curriculum best suited to program goals.

Tutorials

- ✓ Enhance instruction through guided practice
- ✓ Provide remediation and extension
- ✓ Prepare for high-stakes assessment

Tutorials focus on standards-based objectives with an innovative structure — Learn It, Try It, Review It, Test It — to offer choice, build knowledge, develop critical thinking, and deepen understanding.

Prescriptive pretests identify readiness for grade level instruction as well as mastery of grade-level standards. Personalized learning plans provide students with differentiated support in areas requiring remediation. Data dashboards provide teachers with actionable **formative data** to understand individual and classroom readiness that can be used to drive instruction.

Comprehensive Courses

- ✓ Original credit
- ✓ Credit recovery
- ✓ Alternative environments

Apex Learning courses contain a **complete course of study** with breadth of standards coverage, depth of instruction, and integrated formative and summative assessment. Each course contains an extensive **learning management system** making it easy for teachers to monitor progress, communicate with students, and track submission of work from a distance.

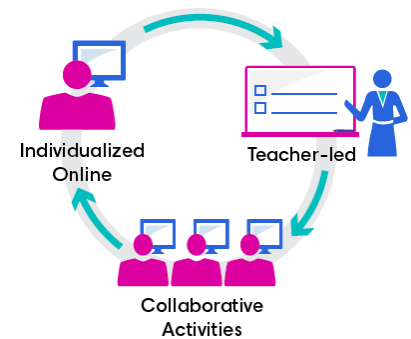
Location

Digital curriculum may be completed on-site, or through a combination of on- and off-site instruction.

Staffing

Consider the following options when planning staff allocations. Students are best served by qualified teachers in the subject area.

- **Teachers:** Staff courses with a teacher in each core content area and world language.
- **Teacher's Aide & Teachers:** Staff courses with a paraprofessional or lab manager for supervision, motivational support, and proctoring. During specified time periods, provide access to a subject area teacher for instruction, formative feedback, grading, and tutoring.



Blended Learning Implementation Models

Model 1: Rotation Students rotate between online and teacher-led instruction. Digital curriculum is used to assess, differentiate, and enrich. Online portions may be completed outside of school.

Model 2: Flex Instruction is primarily delivered through a digital curriculum. Teachers provide individual or small group instruction based on progress and performance.

Model 3: A La Carte Students attend traditional school and take individual courses online.

Model 4: Enriched Virtual Students enroll full-time and work remotely with qualified teachers. There may be required check-ins, onsite projects and labs, tutoring, and proctored summative assessments.

Learn more: <http://www.christenseninstitute.org/blended-learning/>

Best Practices for Blended Teachers

1. Embrace the Role of the Blended Learning Teacher

Just as with traditional instruction, blended teachers should hold appropriate credentials and subject-area certifications. Effective blended teachers:

- Provide direct instruction, including individual and small-group remediation.
- Encourage and help students set goals to plan and pace learning.
- Understand the structure of digital curriculum content and assessment.
- Differentiate instruction based on assessment data.
- Provide timely formative feedback to students.
- Regularly communicate progress, performance, and attendance with students, parents, and staff.

2. Lead a Student Orientation

Establish clear expectations including, policies and procedures, attendance requirements, due dates, communication, and motivational support systems.

3. Provide Teacher-Directed Instruction

Incorporate the following instructional strategies to realize the greatest student outcomes:

- **Whole-group Instruction:** Review pacing, standards, and objectives to prepare mini-lessons.

Incorporate the following strategies:

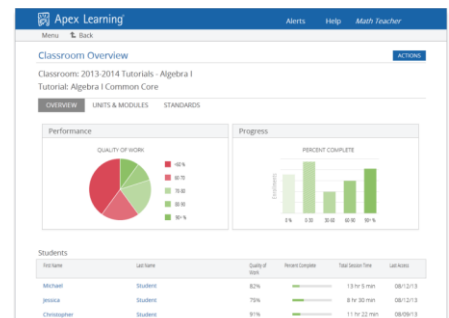
- Activate prior knowledge
- Make relevant connections between the content and real-world application
- Introduce new vocabulary

- **Small-group Instruction:** Use assessment and progress data to identify and group struggling students. Provide appropriate intervention or extension to each group. Consider enlisting additional support from peer mentors and tutors.

4. Use Data to Inform Instruction

Monitor progress and performance using the Classroom Overview.

- Monitor access and progress
- Track individual and class performance



5. Participate in Professional Learning

Participate in formal and informal professional learning to develop best practices and strategies for teaching in a blended environment.

Best Practices with Apex Learning Comprehensive Courses

6. Motivate Students to Stay on Track

Support students to complete assignments within the given timeframe.

- **Cascade due dates** to pace work toward timely completion and provide meaningful reports.
- **Require portfolios** include feedback, written work, notes, study sheets, lab reports, logs, journals, essays, and study guides.
- **Conduct progress meetings** to review work samples and progress toward completion.

7. Communicate Progress and Performance

Communicate frequently throughout the course with students and parents.

- **Office hours:** Set and communicate times when students and parents can communicate directly with you. Consider web conferencing in addition to face-to-face and phone support.
- **Enable the Coach email:** Parents receive a weekly progress report. Contact parents directly and outline steps students can take to get back on track if:
 - The student is behind schedule (less than 80 percent on-schedule).
 - The student has not signed in for more than five days.
 - The Grade-to-Date is less than 70 percent.
- **Conduct Learning Conferences:** If a student continues to make unsatisfactory progress after progress meetings and parent contact, conduct a learning conference. Invite a parent and a school counselor to meet with the student to discuss goals and how to get back on track.

8. Proctor and Protect Summative Assessments

To [ensure academic integrity](#)¹, summative assessments — including teacher- and computer-scored tests and exams — should be completed in a proctored environment after students complete all corresponding lessons and activities. Collect and store completed teacher-scored tests in a locked file cabinet.

¹ http://cdn.apexlearning.com/documents/Best-Practices_Academic_Integrity.pdf