COURSE EXPERIENCE

The extent to which a course enhances students' learning and eliminates any obstacles that stand in the way of learning.

Student learning

The use of blended course features which facilitate students' self-regulated learning (orienting and planning, monitoring, adjusting and evaluating).

Level 1 Standard	Level 2 Advanced	Level 3 Comprehensive
No deliberate consideration for student learning.	Blended course features are used in order to facilitate student learning, informed by evidence or experience.	Blended course features are used in order to facilitate student learning, informed by evidence or experience, and continuous quality improvement is deliberately embedded in order to enhance student learning.

Implementation Guidelines

To reach maturity level 2 of this dimension (Advanced) it is important that (features of) the blended course facilitate self-regulated learning (SRL). This can be done in various ways, for example by integrating the seven recommendations of Quigley, Muijs and Stinger (2018). Also, particular technology-supported tools contribute to the facilitation of self-regulated learning in a blended learning environment, such as pedagogical agents, learning analytics and data visualization (Triquet, Peeters, & Lombaerts, 2017).

The third level (Comprehensive) refers to embedded CQI approaches which enhance self-regulated student learning. In general terms, SRL student data are collected and, subsequently, targeted interventions in a blended course are planned in order to improve the facilitation of SRL. This involves adapting or changing specific course features. Triquet et al. (2017) describe 7 methods to measure SRL among students and link these to two instruments for practice (a survey and a semi-structured interview).

References

Quigley, A., Muijs, D., & Stringer, E. (2018). *Metacognition and self-regulated learning*. Education Endowment Foundation. Retrieved from https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/metacognition-and-self-regulated-learning/

Triquet, K., Peeters, J., & Lombaerts, K. (2017). Self-Regulated Learning Online: Benefits, Empirical Foundations, Multi-level, and Multi-modal Promotion & Evaluation thereof for Teacher Professional Development. Contributing SRL Part to Teach-UP. A policy experimentation co-funded by Erasmus+. Deliverable D1.1: Gaps in ITE and CPD provision report. Department of Educational Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Retrieved from http://teachup.eun.org/documents/556205/1092039/TeachUP_D1.1b_Self-Regulated-Learning-Online.pdf/3d155d94-8a05-4cde-b18c-d6a33f4fc2b9

Study load

The match between the intended and achieved study load of a course (distribution and correctness).

Level 1 **Standard**	Level 2 **Advanced**	Level 3 **Comprehensive**
The calculation of course study load is based on guesses.	Course study load is calculated based on experience. Different course elements (e.g., online learning activities, face-to-face learning activities, exam preparations) are taken into consideration for the calculation of the study load.	Course study load is calculated based on data and experience. All course elements (e.g., online learning activities, face-to-face learning activities, exam preparations) are taken into consideration for the calculation of the study load. The study load is monitored, evaluated and changed based on quantitative and qualitative data.

Implementation Guidelines

This dimension refers to the (mis)match between the intended and achieved study load of a blended course. Particular to blended learning environments is the fact that study load should consider both face-to-face learning activities (e.g., in-class lectures, tutor sessions, tutorials, excursions, lab sessions) and online learning activities (e.g., video watching, readings, exercises, discussions, simulations). At the second maturity level (Advanced), study load is estimated based on experience. The Erasmus University (2009) and Radboud University (2018) in the Netherlands, for example, have common guidelines about how to calculate study load. Students are informed on how much time they should spend on a specific topic or an assignment, which aids them to plan and manage their study time. This can be done in a paper-based manner as part of the course syllabus or by incorporating a specific instrument in the LMS (see Figure 1).

Figure 2 A Learning Management System, including study load indications for students

On level 3 of this dimension (Comprehensive), the study load is based on data as well as experience. This means that various data sources, both quantitative and qualitative, are included to monitor, evaluate, and adjust the study load of a course. Examples of quantitative data are statistics from the LMS (how often a page is accessed and for how long), data from learning tools and from course evaluation surveys. Qualitative data can be gathered by means of focus groups and interviews with students to gain additional insights related to the study load. Based on these various data sources, the study load is evaluated and, if needed, adjusted.

References

Erasmus University. (2009). *Calculating study load*. Retrieved from
    https://www.eur.nl/sites/corporate/files/15_Studielastberekening_juli_2007_ENd.pdf
Radboud University. (2018). *Credits and study load*. Course Guides FFTR 2018. Retrieved
    from https://www.ru.nl/prospectus/2018/fftr/rules-regulations/courses-exams/credits-study-load/

Inclusiveness

The consideration for the diverse needs (including accessibility aspects) and backgrounds of all students to create an online and face-to-face course experience where all students feel valued, safe, have a sense of belonging, and where all students have equal access to learn.

Level 1 **Standard**	Level 2 **Advanced**	Level 3 **Comprehensive**
No deliberate consideration for inclusiveness.	Initial attempts to facilitate and include the different needs and backgrounds of all learners. Special attention is paid to social belonging and identity in the online course environment. This process is informed by evidence or experience.	The different needs and backgrounds of all learners are included and facilitated. Students feel valued, safe, and have a sense of belonging. The realization of inclusiveness is based on evidence or experience. Continuous quality improvement is deliberately embedded in order to improve inclusiveness in the course.

Implementation Guidelines

Inclusiveness is an important, yet complex dimension of a blended course. A series of blended course features have to be taken into consideration in order to design or assess its inclusiveness. Maturity level 2 (Advanced) is related to the fact that students feel valued, safe, and have a sense of belonging. Salmon (2020) has developed a five-stage framework to support incorporation of these aspects into the course design. It covers both the technical and social aspects of learning. Although it aims online learning with so-called 'e-tivities' and 'e-moderation', all features may be implemented for blended teaching and learning purposes. Another facet of inclusiveness is that all materials are accessible to diverse learners. This requires that images are accompanied by explanatory texts, that alternative font styles are available (e.g., headings, paragraphs), that videos include closed captions or transcripts, and that fonts are preferably sans serif. The University of Edinburgh (2020) offers a useful checklist for assuring the accessibility of both materials and collaborative learning activities. Informed by the experiences of instructors, inclusiveness may be(come) part of the course enhancement processes. The accessibility toolkit (Coolidge, Doner, Robertson & Gray, 2018) and the paper by Gronseth (2018) also offer concrete guidelines for implementing accessibility principles. Finally, Leiden University and Romein (2017) collected 11 teacher stories of inclusive teaching. This booklet can stimulate and inspire others to improve the inclusiveness of their course.

Level 3 of inclusiveness (Comprehensive) states that the different needs of all students must be supported. This means that all the efforts of level 2 should be implemented at the maximum. Additionally, CQI is embedded with targeted actions to enhance the inclusiveness of a blended course. Course evaluations, complemented with inclusiveness data obtained by means of surveys, focus groups and interviews are common ways of assessment.

References

Coolidge, A., Doner, S., Robertson, T., & Gray, J. (2018). *Accessibility Toolkit* (2nd edition) [E-book]. BCcampus. Retrieved from https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/

Gronseth, S. (2018). Inclusive Design for Online and Blended Courses. *Educational Renaissance*, 7(1), 14–22. https://doi.org/10.33499/edren.v7i1.114

Salmon, G. (2020). *Five Stage Model*. Gilly Salmon. Retrieved from https://www.gillysalmon.com/five-stage-model.html

The University of Edinburgh. (2020). *Accessibility Checklist*. Retrieved from https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/learning-technology/accessibility/checklist

Universiteit Leiden, & Romein, D. (2017). *Teacher's tales: On the road to inclusive teaching*. ICLON - Leiden University. Retrieved from https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/algemeen/diversiteit/boekje-teachers-tales-webversie.pdf