

Blended learning: Adopting a multi-faceted approach Benefits and Challenges

Utilising a mix of face-to-face and online approaches can significantly increase outreach as you are no longer limited to engaging young people in your geographic area. Some young people who do not feel comfortable with face-to-face engagement will engage in online activity. This blended approach increases the mechanisms through which young people can engage and should encompass a variety of learning approaches.

Benefits

Increasing outreach



Online engagement can make it easier for young people to participate because there is no travel involved. Projects have reported increased outreach as online engagement means they are not limited to their geographic area. It can also enable projects to broaden the breadth of subjects and activities.

Group discussions

Actively encourage small group discussions online and face-to-face. This can greatly increase the confidence and reflection/thinking skills of young people and make the sessions more 'real' for them.



Linked learning



Face to face activity can be supplemented by online activity leading to a broader learning experience and increasing a young person's participation.

Online optimisation

Ensure online engagement is fully optimised for, and accessible by mobile phones to streamline engagement where possible and make it fully accessible, particularly for those without a computer.



Digital innovation



Online engagement using mediums such as Minecraft can be a successful method for digital outreach because it is a less pressurised environment than a Zoom call.

Challenges

Data usage

Not all young people have access to Wi-Fi and video technologies, like Zoom, use high amounts of data. Where possible, offer to cover any costs incurred.



Be inclusive



Face-to-face and online activity should be linked, but have the ability to be hosted as standalone events so that participants taking part in one type of activity do not feel excluded.

Mitigating anxiety

Young people with extreme social anxiety can sometimes engage well in a digital environment although some young people can find breakout rooms with everyone on camera a daunting experience.



Getting the right balance



Ensuring the right balance that provides equal opportunities to young people whether face to face or online is crucial.

Share Learn Improve is a key ethos of Our Bright Future and facilitates connections, knowledge sharing and lesson learning across the programme.

Other good practice guides that link to blended learning approaches and may be useful include [Operating under Covid-19 conditions](#) and [Minecraft and Discord top tips](#)

For further resources and good practice guides please visit www.ourbrightfuture.co.uk/resources

If you would like to learn more about the Share Learn Improve function please contact ourbrightfuture@wildlifetrusts.org