Far too often, course redesign occurs only in a single course or even single section, leaving the institution substantially unchanged. We believe that blended learning can be a vehicle for broader and sustainable institutional transformation by using a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches to course redesign.

**Thomas Cavanagh, Associate Vice President of Distributed Learning, University of Central Florida**

The University of Central Florida (UCF), a blended learning pioneer, and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), an association of nearly 420 public institutions and systems, created the Blended Learning Toolkit to foster blended learning course development. Blended learning combines face-to-face sessions with online learning, creating a course where students experience structured class time and flexible completion of online course material. Research points to blended learning’s benefits: improved student learning outcomes and lower attrition rates when compared to both face-to-face and fully online learning, as well as direct instructional cost reduction by as much as 50%. The most successful blended courses are wholly redesigned, rather than simply moving some components of a course online while leaving the remaining activities unchanged.1 The Blended Learning Toolkit supports the course redesign approach, and interest in its openly available online tools, strategies, curricula, and other materials continues to grow. When the resource originally launched in July 2011, 20 AASCU institutions used it, but now universities, colleges, and K–12 schools from around the world access the Blended Learning Toolkit.

**DESIGN DETAILS**
The Blended Learning Toolkit, an online, Creative Commons–licensed clearing house of blended learning open educational resources (OER) contains:
- Blended learning strategies, models, and course design principles.
- Two prototype blended course templates in composition and algebra, available via an IMS-zipped archive that can be uploaded into any standards-compliant LMS and a simple MS Word file that can be used to re-create the content in the format and platform of choice.
- Directions and suggestions for applying the toolkit resources to create original blended learning courses in disciplines other than composition and algebra.
- Assessment and data-collection protocols for all participating in-

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stitutions, including survey instruments and standards.

- **Morning Blend**, a blog dedicated to blended learning research and practice.
- **BlendKit**, a set of courseware designed for self-study, cohort work, and adaptation by faculty developers. Resources include modules, readings, recordings, and hands-on task guides. UCF personnel have conducted national workshops on adapting these resources for individualized institutional contexts. Over time, the BlendKit course materials have developed their own following.

**PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

UCF and AASCU used NGLC funding to produce scalable, online resources to support the adoption of blended learning worldwide.

- **Building partnerships**: The project team selected 20 AASCU institutions whose student demographics best matched the NGLC target population of students who are low income and under age 26 to serve as scaling partners for the soon-to-be developed resources. They facilitated partners’ participation by communicating project requirements, fulfilling IRB requirements for data collection and project evaluation, and developing a centralized project communication hub (now inactive). In addition, the project team leveraged AASCU Academic Affairs meetings to strengthen partner connections.

- **Developing the toolkit resource**: A team of instructional designers, graphic artists, and programmers developed the Blended Learning Toolkit during the first three months of the NGLC grant period.

- **Conducting train-the-trainer sessions**: In the summer of 2011, the project team provided three five-week training programs—one in composition via Blackboard’s CourseSites platform, one in math via webinars, and one on generic design and delivery of blended instruction via a MOOC, BlendKit2011. Interestingly, of the 200-plus participants who enrolled in BlendKit2011, over half were from non-partner schools from around the world.

**RESULTS TO DATE**

The UCF/AASCU team and SRI International, an external evaluator of projects in the NGLC grant program, reported these project results:

- UCF/AASCU scaled the Blended Learning Toolkit across 20 institutions in 11 states during the project.
- Well over one hundred faculty (131) developed 79 unique blended courses, resulting in 217 new blended learning course sections offered.
- Nearly three-quarters of faculty (74%) who used the Blended Learning Toolkit during the project indicated they would definitely or probably teach another blended learning course in the future, if they had the choice.
- As of June 2014, the Blended Learning Toolkit has logged 119,462 site visits, with 309,813 page views, and approximately 2.59 page views per visit. These site visits translate into 74,520 unique visitors from 11. South Africa

The Blended Learning Toolkit’s online access and Creative Commons licensing provide a freely available, globally respected resource for blended learning course development and deployment, used by institutions in these representative countries. Source: Cavanagh.
188 countries; approximately 70% of which originated from within the United States. The remainder comes from all over the world, including, in descending order, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, India, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Brazil, and South Africa.

• Since July 2011, the BlendKit Course materials have seen over 55,000 downloads.
• The BlendKit 2012 MOOC enrollment of approximately 1,200 faculty was six times higher than BlendKit2011’s 200 participants. As of June 2014, UCF offered the BlendKit MOOC three times to a combined registration of more than 4,200 participants from around the world.
• The majority of respondents (79%) to a BlendKit2011 postsurvey said the MOOC aided in the development of their next blended learning course; 74% said BlendKit2011 helped them become more comfortable with blended learning.
• Anecdotal feedback indicates the BlendKit course materials enabled faculty development initiatives to achieve outcomes that would have been otherwise impossible within their existing calendars and budgets.

PARTICIPANT IMPRESSIONS
Faculty appreciate the quality, comprehensiveness, and open accessibility of the toolkit and the BlendKit MOOC. “I found the toolkit to be a comprehensive resource for any institution interested in exploring blended learning,” noted Tom Erney, dean of distance learning at Columbus State Community College. “I just completed watching the final [BlendKit] webinar,” said Ann M. Giralico Pearlman, instructional design specialist, College at Brockport. “Thank you for all your great work. The instruction, readings, content, activities, and presentation have been extremely beneficial.” An anonymous commenter appreciated the materials’ accessibility. “I am very grateful that the content remains available online for repeat viewing. Now that I have the bare bones course up and running, I have more time to learn how to make the course better.”

NEXT STEPS
The project team continues to expand the Blended Learning Toolkit, adding more resources and model courses both from within UCF and from other institutions. All the materials remain open and freely available for others to use and repurpose under a Creative Commons license. In addition, UCF introduced changes for BlendKit2014, offering the MOOC in partnership with EDUCAUSE, with the option of earning a Blended Learning Designer certification.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
• Blended Learning Toolkit
• BlendKit2014 MOOC course materials

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