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iNACOL's New Learning Models Vision



The vision of iNACOL is to transform K-12 education toward a student-centered learning system.

New learning models personalize learning using competency-based approaches, supported by blended and online learning modalities and environments.

Teachers use technology daily to analyze and utilize real-time data to differentiate instruction, customize learning and to engage students in deeper learning. All students are responsible for their own learning and work at their own pace by demonstrating mastery of required concepts, resulting in higher achievement and ensuring all students are prepared for both college and career.

The ultimate power of blended and online learning lies in their potential to transform the education system and enable higher levels of learning through competency-based approaches. Technology-based models can allow for rapid capture of student performance data and differentiated instruction tailored to the specific needs of individual students. By adapting instruction to reflect the skills and knowledge students have mastered, blended and online models have the potential to keep students engaged and supported as they learn and to help them progress at their own pace, leading to dramatically higher levels of learning and attainment.

The mission of the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) is to ensure all students have access to a world-class education and quality blended and online learning opportunities that prepare them for a lifetime of success.

iNACOL is a non-profit organization focused on research; developing policy for student-centered education to ensure equity and access; developing quality standards for emerging learning models using online, blended, and competency-based education; and supporting the ongoing professional development of classroom, school, district and state leaders for new learning models.

iNACOL hosts the iNACOL Blended and Online Learning Symposium — the premier K-12 blended and online learning conference. The 2014 conference will take place in Palm Springs, CA, November 4-7, 2014. For more information: inacol.org.

Keep up with latest news stories, reports, research and information on blended and online learning, competency-based pathways, education technology and policy. Subscribe to **Plugged In:** inacol.org/news/plugged-in/.

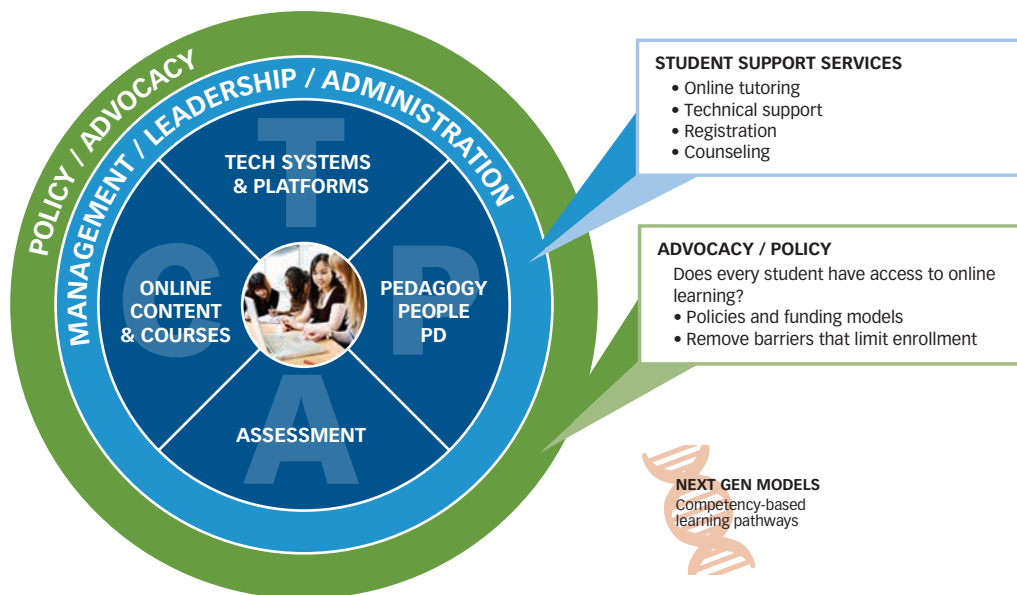
What New Learning Models Look Like

The goal of the iNACOL New Learning Models vision is to assist educators in transforming each child’s educational journey into a more personalized, engaging learning experience in order to improve student outcomes.

When planning and implementing New Learning Models using blended and online learning, there are several elements to consider to ensure quality. iNACOL has developed the New Models Using Online & Blended Learning TPAC framework (Patrick, 2011) below that describes each of these elements. The student is at the center with each element supporting their individual learning. While technology (“T”) is listed at the top of the list, and is essential to the development of these new models, the “P” embraces the importance of people, new pedagogical models, and professional development to transform the old system into more student-centered models. These models require a shift in mindset around leadership, pedagogy and staffing roles for all educators.

Each of the elements in the graphic are essential to planning and implementing New Models of Learning as described in the vision statement. However, to truly transform learning to a personalized experience for each student, iNACOL has identified eight design principles that will shift the instructional model at the classroom level in order to meet our vision.

Figure 1. New Models Using Blended & Online Learning TPAC Framework



T

TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS

- Enterprise architecture
- Learning management system/virtual learning environment
- 1:1 computing
- Broadband internet infrastructure
- New SIS models for standards-based and competency-based approaches

P

PEOPLE / PEDAGOGY / PD

- Teachers need new skills to teach online
- Administrators need new skills to manage online programs
- New Response to Intervention (RTI) models through blended
- Personalizing instruction allowing students to accelerate at their own pace

A

ASSESSMENT

- Online / adaptive
- Personalization engines
- Performance-based

C

ONLINE CONTENT

- Online courses
- Dual enrollment
- Credit recovery
- Common core curriculum

Continuums: Design Principles of New Learning Models



Personalized – A 2013 iNACOL survey of the K-12 blended and online education field identified the top ten essential components of personalization as:

- Student agency (student has voice and choice on level of standards/lesson and some control over how they learn);
- Differentiated instruction;
- Immediate instructional interventions and supports for each student is on-demand, when needed;
- Flexible pacing;
- Individual student profiles (personalized learning plan);
- Deeper learning and problem solving to develop meaning;
- Frequent feedback from instructors and peers;
- Standards-based, world-class knowledge and skills;
- Anywhere, anytime learning can occur; and
- Performance-based assessments, such as project-based learning and portfolios of student work.



Student-Centered

- Learning environments respond to each student's needs and interests, making use of new tools for doing so. Critical and distinct elements of student-centered approaches to learning challenge the current schooling and education paradigm. From Students at the Center.
- Embracing the adolescent's experience and learning theory as the starting point of education;
- Harnessing the full range of learning experiences at all times of the day, week, and year;
- Expanding and reshaping the role of the educator; and
- Determining progression based upon mastery.¹



Equitable and Accessible for All Students

- Provides access to courses, experiences, and teachers they would otherwise not have;
- Meets the individual learning needs of each student, including students with disabilities;
- Results in equally or more rigorous learning opportunities for students;
- Provides multiple methods of instruction (context, content, and instructional methodology) to ensure that students from different cultures and life experiences have the opportunity to succeed; and
- Digital content is designed using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) so that the content is accessible to all students.

¹ Anytime, Anywhere Student-Centered Learning for Schools and Teachers <http://www.studentsatthecenter.org> (Jobs for the Future, 2013)



Result in Higher Student Achievement

- Use competency-based models to ensure student mastery;
- Use data to drive instruction through the analysis of frequent and varying forms of assessment;
- Use valid and reliable assessments in ways that are meaningful to students; and
- Assess students on their performance in multiple ways and multiple times to ensure they have reached proficiency (may include adaptive assessments, formative assessments, imbedded assessments, performance-based assessments and summative assessments).



Technology-Enhanced

- Provide opportunities for students to collaborate with teachers and peers, unlimited by proximity;
- Students engage with digital content, which can occur anytime, anyplace, and have multiple pathways that are competency-based and not tied to a fixed school calendar; and
- Integrate student information and learning management systems designed around competency-based approaches, providing data to support students, teachers, and schools for improving performance.



Affordable and Sustainable

- Approaches add productivity and value to ensure cost-effectiveness. It is important to monitor the relationship between results and services and spending in order to be effective;
- Integrate blended and online learning into essential K-12 education funding process;
- Allow funding to follow students down to the course level;
- Performance-based funding may tie (at least part of) K-12 funding to student growth, rather than “seat time”;
- Use public and private partnerships to achieve efficiencies and avoid “re-inventing the wheel”; and
- New learning models are sustainable on recurring public revenue after four years of launching and implementation.



Flexible Staffing Models

- Teachers “coordinate student learning” through the expanded use of technology-based tools and content, as well as the effective use of outside experts, out-of-school and/or community resources;
- Environments provide flexibility to mix schedules of online and physical instruction. With a highly flexible schedule, instruction and learning are possible 24x7;
- Support structures (e.g. online tutoring, home mentors, and technical support services) are in place 24x7 in addition to teacher support;
- Revise human resources policies to include a team approach to educating students, shifting educator roles, with reconsidered expectations for teaching staff to have greater expertise in instruction and assessment, and greater flexibility in hiring; and
- Provide adequate support for educators including integrated student information and learning management systems, coaching in instruction and assessment, and opportunities for educators to build a common understanding of proficiency.



Ensure Robust Competencies and High Standards for All Students

- Include academic and efficacy standards;
- Structure learning objectives so that they are explicit and measurable;
- Align with standards benchmarked for college readiness and success after high school, such as Common Core State Standards, college entrance requirements, or globally-benchmarked standards;
- Outcomes Include Understanding and Application of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions Through Demonstration of Deeper Learning and Evidence Toward College and Career-Ready, World-Class Standards; and
- Content is rigorous, developmentally appropriate, and based on the science of learning.²

Next Steps

There is much to be done to achieve this promise. While enrollment in blended and online and models is growing rapidly, the field is still nascent and there is great diversity in the effectiveness of courses and content available today. Increasing access alone will not lead to better outcomes for students. In order for blended and online learning to transform the education system, it is essential that the models available are of high quality and successfully increase achievement. Fulfilling the potential of a student-centric, competency-based system will require that the field of blended and online learning — and the policy environment in which it operates — evolve to demand models that are not only different, but more effective than traditional schooling.

iNACOL wants to accelerate the development of effective new learning models necessary in order for the field to achieve its potential, enabling all students to achieve success. Blended and online learning models that are competency-based provide enormous potential for transforming the education system toward student-centered, personalized learning.

iNACOL's ambitious vision of blended and online learning models requires research, development and identification of promising practices to better understand where the field is today relative to that potential. iNACOL will continue to work with its networks across the field of K-12 education to lead innovation through collaboration on research, development, rapid prototyping, sharing information, building tools and capacity in the field to implement and sustain a variety of new learning models.

² Adapted from *Clearing the Path* (Stugis, Rath, Weisstein, Patrick, January 2011)