

Blended Learning Lab

Workshop design:

The Blended Learning Lab (BLL) is an immersive professional development program and designed process for creating digital-age learning experiences. The BLL will consist of 4 weeks of online coursework followed by a 2 day in-person workshop at the ECIS Annual Conference. This professional development program was developed and has been successfully delivered at the United Nations International School since 2014.

Conferences and workshops are great, but we know that the best professional learning experiences are ongoing and immersive. Four weeks prior to the ECIS Annual Conference, teachers will be enrolled in a 10-15 hour online course that introduces the most effective teaching methods and activities in blended and online learning while modeling these approaches through its design and delivery. The course specifically targets key approaches to teaching and learning in international schools including a focus on inquiry, effective strategies for differentiation to meet the needs of various learners, and the development of conceptual understanding. The course will provide exposure to case studies of excellence from peer schools and curated discipline-specific technology tools to drive deeper learning. Carefully designed self-reflection will provide space for teachers to access prior knowledge (valuing their years of experience as classroom instructors) and build upon their expertise with new modes of technology-based delivery.

The pre-conference Blended Learning Lab will provide an intense hands-on experience where teachers will be given time, support and inspiration to create blended learning units/modules. Teachers will be challenged to rethink the traditional lesson planning process as designers of learning experiences. Teachers will be supported in this work by Content Strategists, leading practitioners at the United Nations International School who have successfully transformed their classroom practice and who are skilled at supporting other colleagues in the design of blended learning projects. The role of the strategist is not to build individual elements of a lesson, but to help the teacher determine how they should be combined to create a blended lesson that is more effective and compelling for students than the current lesson being offered.

The practical outcomes for the online course will include (1) an understanding of how to translate current pedagogical practice into a blended learning mode, providing students with greater control over their learning and (2) an individualized blended learning action plan with self and peer review. After the pre-conference workshop, participants will have blended one full unit/learning module ready for implementation.

We hope you will come and share your knowledge and experience with us as well as network with other experts and novices who are venturing into the world of blended learning.