

12 Tips for Effective Learning in Blended Education 【Full Version】

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12 Tips for Effective Learning in Blended Education

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Let's Understand Blended Education

1-1. Understand the Definition of Blended Education

Blended education is a general term for a curriculum and teaching format that effectively combines face-to-face and online learning activities.



Let's Understand Blended Education

1-2. Understand the Different Types of Blended Education Classes

- **Rotational classes:** A form of teaching in which different types of learning (e.g., face-to-face, online, collaborative learning, etc.) rotate at regular intervals in one course or class.
- **Flipped classroom:** A form of teaching in which students prepare for a lesson using video materials and then do individualized instruction and collaborative learning in the classroom. It is also regarded as a form of rotational teaching.
- **Distributed classes:** A form of teaching in which students are divided into groups, one face-to-face and the other online, and then take turns in the next class. This is urgently needed for experiments and practice in the COVID-19 crisis.
- **HyFlex classes:** HyFlex is an abbreviation for Hybrid-Flexible. It can offer face-to-face, synchronous and asynchronous forms, and then the student can choose one from them at will.




Let's Understand Blended Education

face-to-face



online



-  Live Video Distribution
-  Recorded Video Distribution
-  Document Distribution

Blended (Hybrid)

Rotational classes



Flipped classroom



Distributed classes

Group A



Group B



Group A



Group B



HyFlex classes



Let's Set Up Your Learning Environment

2-1. Set Up Your Learning Environment at Home

- Prepare your personal computer or a tablet with an OS of Windows 10 or higher (the latest OS for MacOS and iOS). In some cases, the screen of your smartphone alone may be too small to view materials. It is recommended that you take courses on your personal computer if possible.
- Online classes are recommended to be taken under an optical or Wi-Fi environment. Mobile communication can be restrictive and expensive to use. Be careful.
- If your personal computer is not equipped with a camera or microphone, prepare a separate one. If you have more than one device, such as a tablet, separate screens for viewing and working on materials and for checking on the instructor and other students. This will make it easier for you to take classes.

Let's Set Up Your Learning Environment

- Some personal computers have difficulty in hearing the voices through microphone. Make sure that your voice is easy for others to hear before you start a meeting. It's a good idea to have earphones or headphones (better if they have a microphone). They will be clear and there's no audio feedback.

2-2. Use Your Camera and Microphone

- Adjust your camera position so that your head-to-shoulder area (front) is in the picture. It is recommended that you buy a stand or stack books under your personal computer.
- Set your audio to mute. If you turn on the microphone, you will hear even small sounds (sounds such as turning a page, typing, or coughing become noise for other students). Unmute if you have a question or instructions.



Let's Make Your Proper Study Plan

3-1. Understand the Credit System and Make a Proper Study Plan

- A university requires 45 hours of "study" in order to earn 1 credit (Article 21 of Standards for Establishment of Universities). The term "study" here refers to both in-class study and preparation and review outside class time. In other words, students are not required to complete their studies just by attending classes, but are required to prepare well for classes and review the materials after classes.
- The number of hours of study outside class time depends on the type of class, but in the case of a lecture-style class, it is common for students to be assigned twice as many hours of study as they are in class. In other words, in a 90-minute lecture, students will be required to prepare and review for 180 minutes. You need to set aside this kind of time on your own timetable and make your proper study plan.

Let's Make Your Proper Study Plan

- Some students register for as many classes as possible in order to earn a large number of credits early, so that they have no free time at all. It can interfere with your daily life because you don't have enough time for sleep and extracurricular activities. Be careful not to take too many classes.
- To prevent this, some faculties have a CAP system (that sets a limit on the total number of credits you can take during a semester). Let's check your course guide for this system.
- If you don't want to continue taking a course, you must cancel it during the withdrawal period which is set up after you have started the course. If you don't do this, your GPA will be lower and you won't be able to monitor your progress and receive appropriate guidance from your teachers.

Let's Make Your Proper Study Plan

3-2. Read the Syllabus Carefully

- When taking elective courses, read the syllabus for each course carefully for its objectives, lesson plans, teaching methods, and assessment methods. You should also consider whether the courses are really necessary for you and whether the number of courses you can take is within your current lifestyle.
- Syllabuses will also describe how the classes will be conducted. If you have a series of face-to-face and concurrent interactive classes, envision where you will be taking classes, either in a classroom on campus or at home, and whether you have enough time to move to and from them. If you are unlikely to be able to make it to class on time, contact your teacher or your departmental office in advance.

Let's Manage Information in One Place

4-1. Manage Information in One Place

- Online ID and password information for each class
- Information about teaching materials (including URLs)
- Information on how to communicate with a teacher and classmates

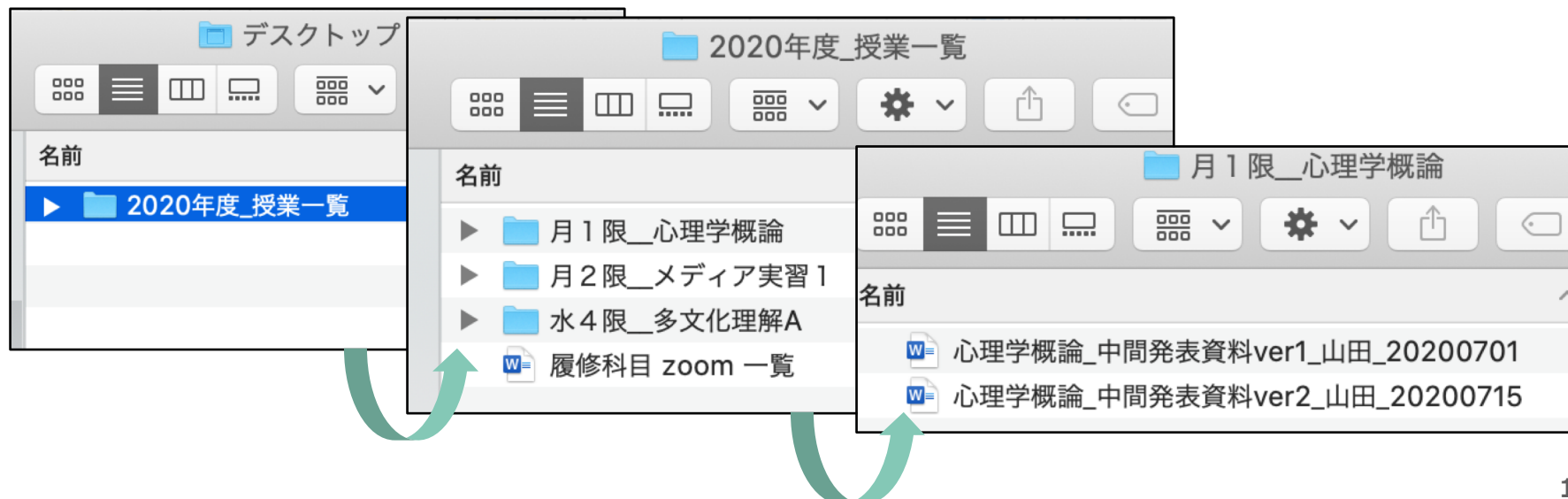


Let's update
your information
accordingly

Let's Manage Information in One Place

4-2. Keep the Information Structured

- Create folders for each year and each class subject and keep them structured so that you know where files are located.
- In an online class, you may share the files you create with others. It is recommended that you clearly indicate the name of the class, title, creator, and date of creation on the file.



Let's Get on a Data Diet

5-1. Reduce Your Traffic and Avoid Losing Your Connection

- Try not to display the video (footage). If that's not possible, try making the video (footage) as small as possible instead of full screen display. You can also set the screen to only show the people whose video is off.
- Quit all apps and softwares except the main one. In particular, close your browser. If you must have more than one screen up, print pre-distributed materials or use them with your smartphone to spread the communication load.

5-2. If You Lose the Connection, Reconnect & Reboot.

- Stay calm and reconnect. If you still can't connect successfully, try restarting the app or personal computer.

Be Careful When Submitting Your Assignments

6-1. When Submitting the Assignment, You Should Also Write Your Student Number and Name in the Body of the File

- Even if you are submitting through the CLE, your student number and name should be written in the body of the file as well as the name of the file. This will make it easier for teachers when grading.

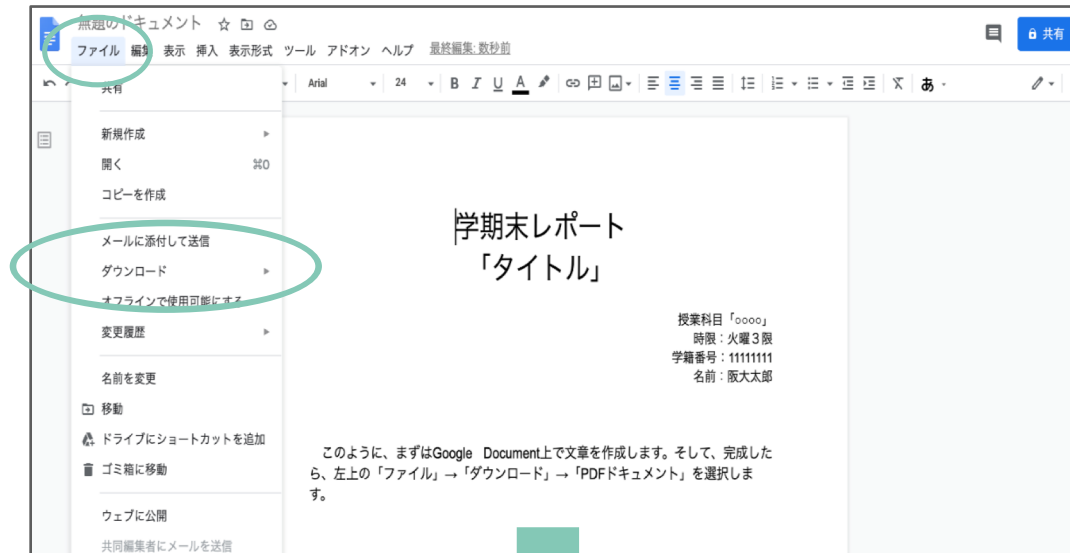


Be Careful When Submitting Your Assignments

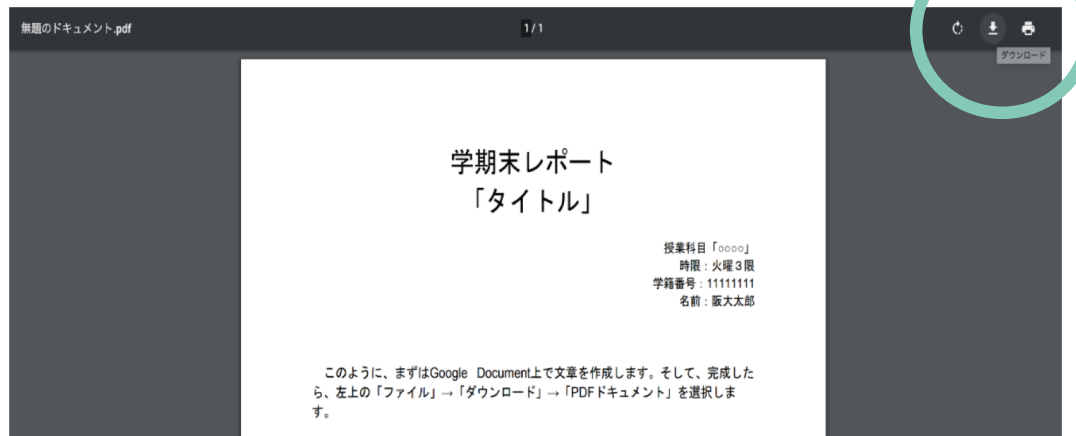
6-2. If You Don't Have the Software You need for Your Assignments, Use an Alternative Tool.

- Use Office365. Osaka University has an umbrella agreement with Microsoft Corporation. Students have access to Windows OS, Office, and other products.
- A scanner app for your smartphone allows you to convert images you take to PDFs, so you can turn your handwritten notes into PDFs.
- Google Docs is compatible with Microsoft Word and can also be converted to PDF.

How to Create and Convert a Google Document to PDF



File
(ファイル)
↓
Download
(ダウンロード)
↓
PDF Document



← Download
(ダウンロード)

Preserving Academic Integrity

7-1. Preserve Academic Integrity

- Academic integrity is the values and skills involved in academic. In other words, it means that we place a high value on being honest and have developed the skills to be honest.
- This is a basic rule that all academics must adhere to. If you don't follow this, the knowledge that has accumulated won't be properly passed on. If you violate any of the rules set by a university, you may face disciplinary action, so be careful.
- Online, without exam supervision, cheating is more likely to occur. This makes it all the more important to act with academic integrity.



Preserving Academic Integrity

7-2. Understand the Violation of Academic Integrity

① Plagiarism

Using someone else's ideas or work as your own without giving proper sources. (e.g. stating an article as one's own opinion without quoting from the literature.)

② Inappropriate Collaborative Work

Solving problems with others without following the established rules.(e.g., solving a problem on LINE with friends during an online test.

③ Reproduction

Reproducing the work of others, with or without permission.(e.g. Copying the content of a report written by another student.)

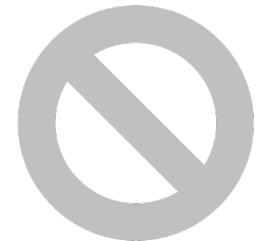
Preserving Academic Integrity

④ Cheating

Stealing the answers of others on a test or otherwise, looking at textbooks or reference books that you are not allowed to view, or consulting with others to answer.

⑤ Unauthorized Recording, Distribution or Publication of Class Materials

Sharing the URLs and passwords of class materials, class videos to a third party without permission, or publishing them on social networking sites. In addition, filming of videos without permission and publishing them on social networking sites.



Be an Autonomous Learner

8-1. Discipline Yourself in Your Own Learning

- Online classes, especially non-simultaneous classes, tend to disrupt the rhythm of your life and cause you to accumulate assignments. In this case, you'll be cramming and learning before the test.
- Blended education requires students to take responsibility for their own learning and to be disciplined in their own learning. Those who are able to do this are called autonomous learners.
- First, set your own schedule for learning outside of class time (e.g., prep, review, create assignments, etc.). Scheduling apps such as KOAN app or Google Calendar can be helpful.
- If you're having trouble in getting your life back into rhythm, for example, don't take it too far on your own and ask for help.

Be an Autonomous Learner

8-2. If You Are Late or Absent, Contact the Faculty Member Directly

- Don't call in absences without permission or through friends, even if it is an online class. Self-directed learning is not the same as irresponsible learning. Contact your teacher or teaching assistant directly.
- For some classes, absences or tardiness may interfere with tasks such as permission to enter the class, grouping, or recording. Advance notice allows the faculty members to be prepared for this.
- In situations where it is impossible to contact the faculty members in advance, please be sure to do so after the fact.
- Each department and faculty member has different procedures for reporting absences, so be sure to check the procedures for contacting them.

8-3. Take Advantage of Campus Resources

- Inquiry-based learning is learning to ask questions and seek answers to those questions on your own. Regardless of whether or not your class instructs you to do so, you are encouraged to make active use of the library and other resources on campus to explore your own questions. Osaka University has resources such as electronic journals that can be accessed from off-campus.
(Osaka University Library https://www.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/off_campus/).
- Ask questions of your faculty members or TAs before or after classes, or use office hours to talk to your faculty members individually. They should be able to help you online or in person. This is the best part of learning in a university.

8-4. Learn through Reflection

- Get in the habit of regularly reflecting on your learning (e.g. every Saturday). You may notice that your schedule was too hard, or that you weren't learning as efficiently as you should have been. Use this to readjust your schedule and create your own learning pace.



Let's Master ICT Tools

9-1. Use Communication Tools

- **Slack...** You can send messages and files like LINE and can be used on both personal computers and smartphones. Its immediacy makes it a great tool for group work.
- **Discord...** You can communicate within the server to which you are invited to chat and make voice calls. You can create text channels (topic-specific chats) to organize topics.
- **LINE Open Chat...** You can communicate without sharing your account information with each other. This is a great option for people who don't want to share their account information with others.
- **Miro...** You can post stickies just like a whiteboard. You can use it to exchange ideas with your group.

Let's Master ICT Tools

- **KOAN**...This is a system to support matters related to education at Osaka University. It is used not only for registering courses, managing calendars and schedules, filling out questionnaires, and checking grades, but also as a means of communication with the university and its faculty.
- **CLE**...A class support system that provides IT support for your classes. The system provides not only a means of reviewing class materials and videos, but also a bulletin board for communicating with faculty and other students.
- **BCU (Blackboard Collaborate Ultra)** ...A CLE-based system that allows you to attend remote lectures. You can use screen sharing, chat, raise your hand and use reaction buttons, whiteboards, and breakout groups to communicate with other students.
- **ZOOM**...A system that allows you to attend remote lectures. It is available without CLE, so you can communicate with other students outside class time.

Let's Master ICT Tools

9-2. Use Tools for Recording

- **GoodNote5**...a handwriting app recommended for students who have an iPad/iPhone/Mac and a computer pen. You can add highlights and annotations.
- **Google Document**...a web-based document authoring tool that is compatible with Microsoft Word and can be saved as a PDF.
- **Padlet**...You can store files in a variety of formats on the web and share them with others.



Examples of How to Use the Tools Effectively to Improve Learning

【Example of a Situation】

The class is in a concurrent online format using **BCU** and you are supposed to work on one project as a group. Nothing has been decided yet as to what kind of project to create. You have not met any of the group members and have not received any specific instructions from the faculty on how to proceed.



【Example of How to Handle This Situation】

You use **CLE** to contact members and create a **LINE group** first. Then, members communicate each other on **LINE** outside class time. During class, each student use **BCU** and **Google Documents** to work on their own work. You also use Miro when you want to vent your ideas.

Let's Take Care of Your Mind and Body

10-1. Let's Take Care of Your Mind and Body

- In online classes, you will be working more with computer displays. This can cause Visual Display Terminal (VDT) syndrome, which can affect your eyes, mind and body.
- To avoid this, keep the following points in mind
 - Maintain a distance of 50-80 cm from your computer screen.
 - Adjust the height of the screen so that the top edge of the screen is at or below eye level.
 - Adjust the light in your work area (not too dark or too bright).
 - Take regular breaks (set a timer every hour).
 - Eat three meals a day at the designated times, and make sure you have a balanced diet
 - Schedule your wake-up and bed time so you get enough sleep.
 - Get some light exercise at least once a day. Go outdoors and get some sunshine.
 - Use the university library or study spaces for a change of pace and exercise.

Let's Ask Others for Help

11-1. Talk to Your Teachers/Faculty Members

- Some people may think that they feel embarrassed talking to teachers, that teachers may not be responsive, or that they don't want to be perceived as incompetent. However, blended education is a new approach. Everyone encounters problems every day in this unfamiliar environment. It is also important to ask for help in these situations. Teachers are always available.
- Raising your hand or chatting with them during the class time has the advantage of sharing information with other students. On the other hand, if you have a question about something you don't want other students to know about, you can ask it later via email.

Let's Ask Others for Help

11-2. Contact the Health and Counseling Center for Help

- The Health and Counseling Center is available to help you with a variety of issues. Don't hesitate to use this center if you have a problem or concern about something or don't know where to go for help.

11-3. Stay Informed through the Website and Email

- Always check the official university website and email. The situation is ever-changing. Make it a habit to check the campus website and email as often as you can. Be sure to keep up to date with the latest information.



Let's Connect with Other Students

12-1. Greet, Call Out, and React during Classes

- If you see faces on the screen, smile and greet them first. It is difficult to know who you are talking to online, so they may not get a response to your question. Try to call them by name to avoid this (e.g., "What do you think, Mr. XXX?").
- Increase your non-verbal interactions by clapping on the reaction button or writing comments in the chat section.

12-2. Make Time for Free Talk before and after Classes

- Connect early or stay connected for a while after class to have free conversations with other students. You may ask faculty members to make such a time.

Let's Connect with Other Students

12-3. Organize a Social Event with Other Students

- Some say it's hard to make friends online, but it's entirely possible to make friends online as well. Get up the courage to suggest that you hold a social event. With online meeting systems, you can have a large group of people in any location. You can have a small social event on campus as well, as long as you follow the rules indicated by the university.

12-4. Join or Organize Events on and off Campus

- In university, you can make many friends outside the classroom. You are encouraged to participate in events on- and off- campus.
- If you are able to gather your friends together and plan an event, you will be able to expand your own world in addition to participating in it. In times like these, it's important to think about what you can do and take action!

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