

**SPECIAL REPORT**

of the

**AD HOC COMMITTEE ON  
ONLINE LEARNING**

concerning

**THE RECOMMENDED REVISION  
OF TEACHING MODE CLASSIFICATION  
IN  
SPIRE**

Presented at the  
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## ***Recommended Revision of Teaching Mode Classification in SPIRE***

Proposed by the Instructional Design Subcommittee of the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Online Learning, University of Massachusetts Amherst

April 18, 2006

Committee:

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### ***Background:***

Discussions in this committee and its focus groups always began with “but what do we mean by online learning?” When we looked at SPIRE, the “Instruction Mode” classification was split between “In Person,” “World Wide Web” and many subtle variations on video-based teaching. Because “online learning” can take many different forms, we feel that a new classification is needed: for faculty who wish to accurately describe their courses, for students who want to select courses based on accurate information about online components, and for administrators and faculty groups who want to more accurately track the ways that online learning is being presented on campus.

### ***Proposed Classification***

This draft proposal contains descriptions of five modes with possible names. After discussions with the Registrar and SIS staff, the only limitation appears to be a 30-character limit for the “Instruction Mode” field in SPIRE. These proposed names are the result of much discussion, if they need to be changed, the resulting names should be clearly recognizable to students and faculty (i.e., internal jargon or cryptic acronyms should be avoided if possible.)

1. In-Person  
**Definition:** May include *optional* online components.
2. In-Person Plus Some Online (nickname: “In-Person Plus”)  
**Definition:** Some *required* online activities but most contact hours are in-person.
3. Blended In-Person and Online (nickname: “Blended”)  
**Definition:** A combination of *required* online and in-person sessions with approximately equal contact hours in each mode
4. Online Plus In-Person (nickname: “Online Plus”)  
**Definition:** Some *required* in-person activities but most contact hours are online.
5. Online  
**Definition:** May include *optional* in-person gatherings.

Note the significant use of “*required*” and “*optional*” when describing online and in-person elements of a course. This is important to set expectations for a student who select courses based on their personal access to technology, or the campus.

**Proposed Instruction Modes Illustration:**

1	2	3	4	5
In-Person	In-Person Plus	Blended	Online Plus	Online
<i>Face-to-face Activities and Instruction</i>			<i>Online Activities and Instruction</i>	
All activities and instruction delivered in-person. May include <i>optional</i> online activities.	Some <i>required</i> online activities but most contact hours are in-person.	A combination of <i>required</i> online and in-person sessions with approximately equal contact hours in each mode.	Some <i>required</i> in-person activities but most contact hours are online.	All activities and instruction delivered online. May include <i>optional</i> in-person activities.

**Examples of Courses in Each Category**

**In-Person**

Class meets twice a week for traditional lecture and discussion. Lecture notes and a syllabus are posted on a public course Web site, but these materials are also provided in class, so access to the site is optional.

**In-Person Plus Some Online**

Class meets twice a week for demonstrations and lab time. An online tool (such as OWL) is used to deliver all graded homework assignments.

**Blended In-Person and Online**

A large Gen-Ed class replaces its once-a-week large lecture with access to recorded lectures via an online tool. In-person discussion sections are held once a week for smaller groups. Online quizzes must be taken before the discussion section to demonstrate knowledge of recorded materials. Assignments are collected and graded via online tool.

**Online Plus Some In-Person**

A class for adult learners provides most instruction and graded activities via an online tool. However, at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester, students are required to come to campus for hands-on projects and group discussions.

**Online**

A class for professionals provides all content and activities through an online tool. Once a semester, students in the online program are invited to an optional meet-and-greet with the faculty in New York, Minneapolis, or Los Angeles (the location rotates).

**MOVED:** That the Faculty Senate approve the Recommended Revision of Teaching Mode 05-07 Classification in SPIRE, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 07-007A.