# Five Key Digital Features for Deeper Blended Learning

*Posted by Andrew Coulson on Tue, Sep 24, 2013 @ 06:01 PM*

Classifications of blended learning, where digital content is blended with classroom instruction, often include explanatory diagrams showing the physical location and times when teachers and students use computers. These demonstrate the potential for making the use of learning resources more efficient.

Yet as a digital content publisher, my organization is focused on the other, exciting potential for blended learning: dramatically improving the learning itself. We want to use blended learning to increase comprehension and sense-making, improve the transfer of knowledge and the retention of new information, far beyond what has previously been possible.

So, let me briefly introduce five key features of blended learning, from the learning-centric perspective on instructional interaction between teacher, student, and digital content.

Feature 1: Of course by its 1:1 nature, student interaction with digital content is self-paced. Solving puzzles on a tablet or viewing a lecture on YouTube can be more valuable, because the student determines the progression and review.

Feature 2: Digital content isn't limited to conventional-practice-on-a-computer of procedures. It can be a way to introduce and explain concepts, whether in advance of, in parallel with, or even after they are introduced by a teacher.

Feature 3: Digital content can be highly interactive, meaning that the student needs to respond to some problem-solving scenario, and then see the results of her response. This is a "minds-on" interaction about the academic subject matter, not just gameplay.

Feature 4: Digital content can provide immediate feedback. Not just right or wrong; the best digital content can provide an immediate explanation of why an answer was correct or incorrect.

Feature 5: Digital content can provide an adaptive or custom sequence of learning objects for each individual, by assessing student skills, adjusting difficulty levels as needed, or recognizing long-term patterns in student misconceptions.

Finally, a vital component of digital blended learning that promotes deeper learning is … the teacher. The same unique digital content that students use in their 1:1 environment can inform, and be used by, the teacher at his point of instructional interaction with the students.

To fulfill the potential of blended learning beyond just efficiency; to achieve deeper learning, consider these instructional features in your blended learning plan.

*This post first appeared on District Administration, October 2012*