Blended Learning, Dr John Hannon, LTLT, La Trobe University

Teaching and learning in higher education is changing.

Universities have traditions of learning that are over 1000 years old. Moreover, some of these still persist.

While there is still a place for lectures, we need to ask how these traditions can be adapted for a complex and uncertain future.

Digital networks are transforming higher education.

Today's super-connected students study online and face to face, in multi-campus and distributed cohorts.

They view presentations and demonstrations via video and podcasts, and access their study resources at times and places that suit them.

From home, on transport, or in the workplace.

Opportunities for learning are no longer limited by teaching rooms.

Students connect to expert knowledge, they meet with professionals, and even conduct a live session with a book author.

So what is blended learning? Well, to start with, it's not replacing lectures for recordings or textbooks for digital content, or posting assignments for online submission.

Blended learning is not substitution.

It creates new connections beyond the walled garden of traditional university learning.

Students find open resources, courses and textbooks, they generate knowledge from field projects, and collaborate in professional learning communities.

Blended learning integrates these relevant and authentic learning experiences into university courses.

How does this happen? Instead of designing study around scheduled classes, blended learning designs structured interaction between learners, teachers and resources.

For example, in the subject International Public Policy, the lecture was transformed from a platform for presentation to a forum for making connections to key concepts.

A focus on activities involved pre-reading, recorded mini-lectures and guided discussion.

Blended learning is active learning through structured engagement.

It extends opportunities and opens up new possibilities in education.

If you'd like to find out more about how to integrate online learning experiences with face to face teaching in your subject visit www.latrobe.edu.au/blended

Find out more about designing active learning into your courses.