

WL: Why Blend?

Brianne Leia Jackson & Patricia Yu



5.1 Blending in World Language Courses

The first question you should ask yourself before embarking on the journey of blended teaching is “Why blend?” Teachers who are still searching for their answer to this question may end up spending a lot of time and energy implementing changes that do not serve any larger goal or purpose.

Guiding Question: Why Blend?

Teachers must answer the question “Why blend?” It is not sufficient to blend just because it is popular or because others are doing it.

In the two videos below, Stephen Van Orden and Cheri Bradby-Viquez explain how blended teaching has improved their classrooms. What reasons might you have for blending? Do any of their reasons resonate with your own beliefs or practice?

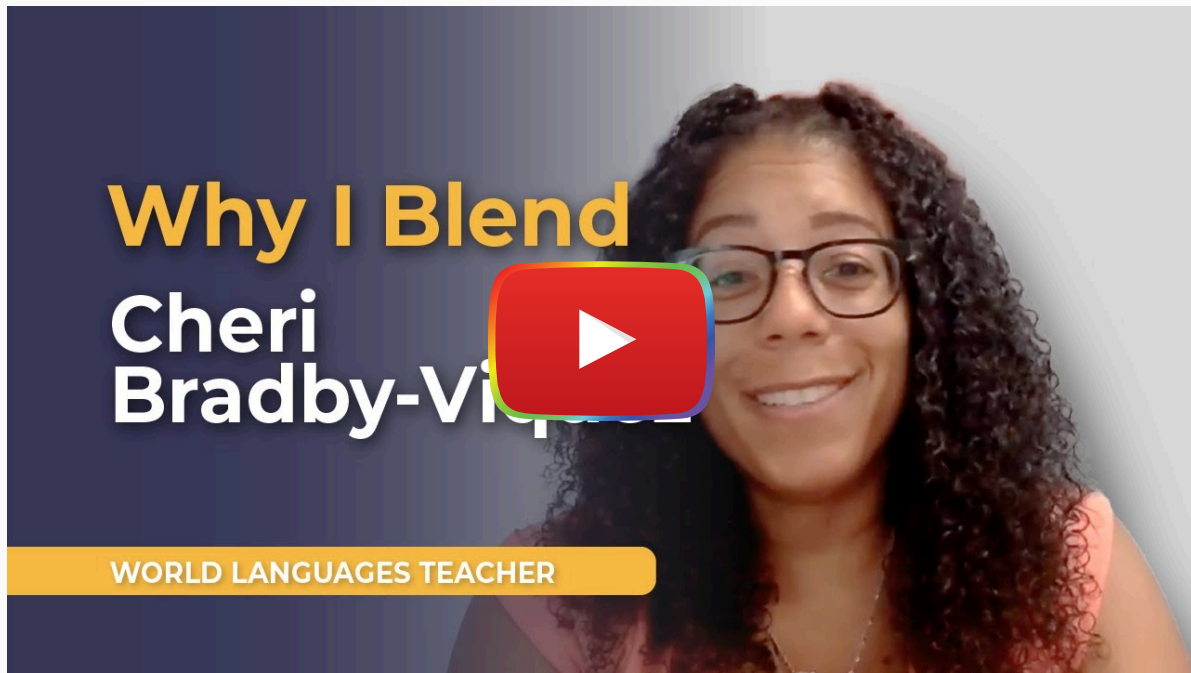
Why I Blend—Stephen Van Orden (3:26)



[Watch on YouTube](#)

"I realized that is what is happening with my students every single day all day long"

Why I Blend—Cheri Bradby-Viquez (1:43)



[Watch on YouTube](#)

"Blended learning can meet students where they are."

5.2 Reasons for Blending

There are four primary reasons why teachers choose blended teaching:

- **Improved learning outcomes**—Blended classrooms can increase personalization, allow for more individual and small group differentiated instruction, and make better use of classroom time.
- **Increased access and flexibility**—In blended classrooms students have access to materials anywhere and anytime. In addition, they have access to resources and activities that are online available online.
- **Increased efficiency/cost**—Blended classrooms can help students complete learning activities in less time and with less energy, reduce printing costs, and help students stay more organized (less likely to lose assignments).
- **Improved interaction**—Blended classrooms put the student at the center of the learning, rather than the teacher, making lessons more engaging and relevant to students' lives. Blended learning can also better prepare them to engage in the types of authentic interactions that are common in the real world.

Daniel McGraw and Stephanie Pryce explain how blended teaching allows them to be both more efficient as a teacher and to make learning a world language more student centered.

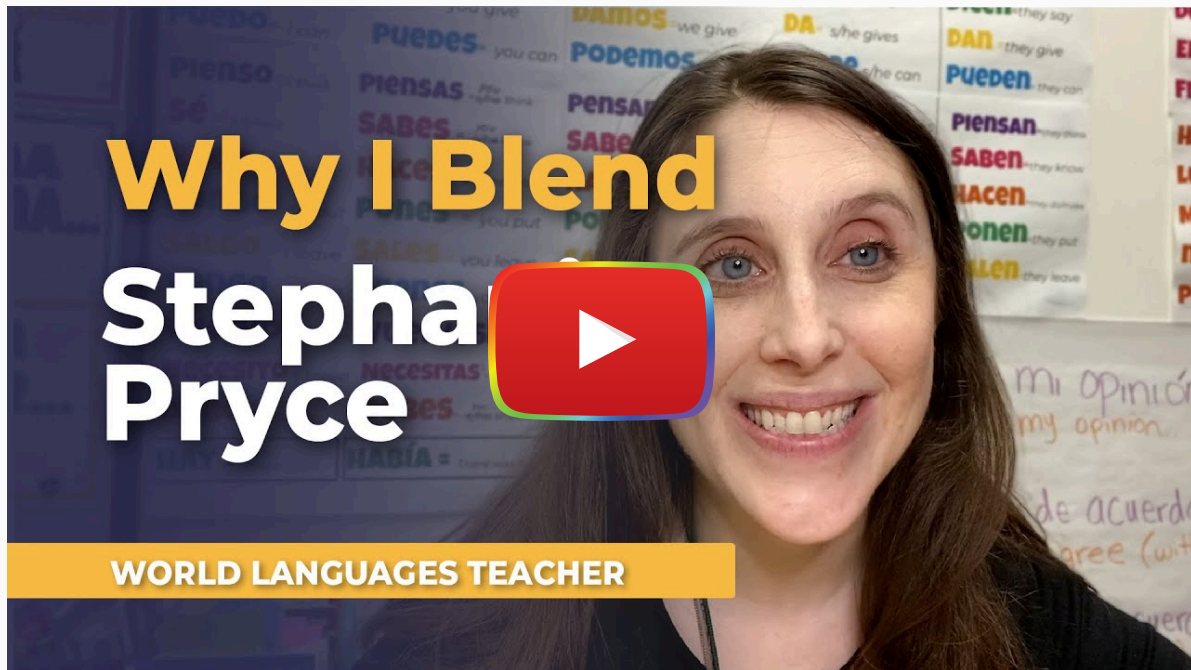
Why I Blend—Daniel McGraw (5:32)



[Watch on YouTube](#)

"How do we use this digital technology in a way that brings to life what we are doing in the classroom?"

Why I Blend—Stephanie Pryce (2:32)



[Watch on YouTube](#)

"The best part of blending is that you can use it for differentiation."

Oftentime teachers have multiple reasons for blending, but almost always one of these four reasons is primary in their minds. Table 1 below shows some simple world language examples and how they might help a teacher to achieve multiple purposes simultaneously.

Table 1

Examples of Multiple Purposes for a Blended SpEd Activity

Blended Example	Blended Purpose
Facilitates student collaboration and feedback during the writing process.	Learning Effectiveness: Sharing online writing eliminates the need for students or teachers to create hard copies of student writing to receive feedback. Because feedback can be easier to provide online using audio or video recordings, students can receive more detailed feedback. Students learn collaboration skills as well as the ability to rethink, rewrite, and revise their writing.
	Access and Flexibility: It is also easier for students to respond to recommendations and revise their papers online.
	Increased Efficiency/Cost: It saves the effort and cost to make physical copies of student papers. Using collaborative online documents can also make the collaborative process and providing feedback more efficient.
Creates a space for discussions that	Learning Effectiveness: Many students struggle to fully participate in class discussions for a variety of reasons, especially in world language classrooms, where students can be extra self-conscious about their pronunciation and grammar. Or, some students may dominate

Blended Example	Blended Purpose
involve all class members.	<p>conversations, allowing their classmates little opportunity to practice conversation in the target language. Online discussions give everyone the opportunity to participate, creating more robust, reflective, and divergent discussions. For online discussions that use voice tools, they also allow the world language teacher to give individualized and targeted feedback on student pronunciation and grammar.</p> <p>Access & Flexibility: Online discussions allow all students to voice their ideas and have equal opportunity to practice their pronunciation and to rehearse specific scenarios.</p> <p>Increased Efficiency/Cost: Online discussions efficiently give every student a voice. They also free up classroom time for other activities.</p>
Promotes differentiated instruction	<p>Learning Effectiveness: Based on student data, students can be assigned learning activities specific to their weaknesses in the different areas of World Language acquisition. For example, students who don't need to work on conjugations don't have to. Students who don't understand how to form questions in the target language can receive instruction and activities designed to help them learn this concept.</p> <p>Access & Flexibility: Students have access to instruction specifically targeted to their needs. They have the flexibility to access the content they need and which they have not already mastered.</p> <p>Increased Efficiency/Cost: Students don't waste time where they are already proficient. They don't have to wait for other students to catch up or worry about being behind.</p>

As you go through the world language chapters, you will be able to reflect on what you have learned and design your own activities and classroom in a Blended Teaching Workbook. Click on the "Blended Teaching Workbook" button to access your workbook.



Blended Teaching Workbook

Write a brief statement about why you want to blend your classroom. Which purposes and outcomes are you most interested in for your blend? Access your Workbook [here](#). Make sure you save your copy where you can access it as you go through the social studies chapters.



5.3 Common Challenges to Teaching/Learning World Languages: Problems of Practice

All teachers face challenges. It's part of the nature of sharing a learning journey with a large number of young people. For many world language teachers, blended teaching helps them address and overcome some of those challenges. Students need the confidence to communicate with people in the target language, be exposed to authentic texts or media written in the target language, and actively use the language they have learned in a real-world setting. However, how much does integration of these authentic texts and real-world scenarios take place in foreign language classes? If students rarely have the opportunity to communicate in a real setting, how do teachers design lessons and create more opportunities to engage themselves in a real world setting?

Why I Blend—Patricia Yu (2:38)



[Watch on YouTube](#)

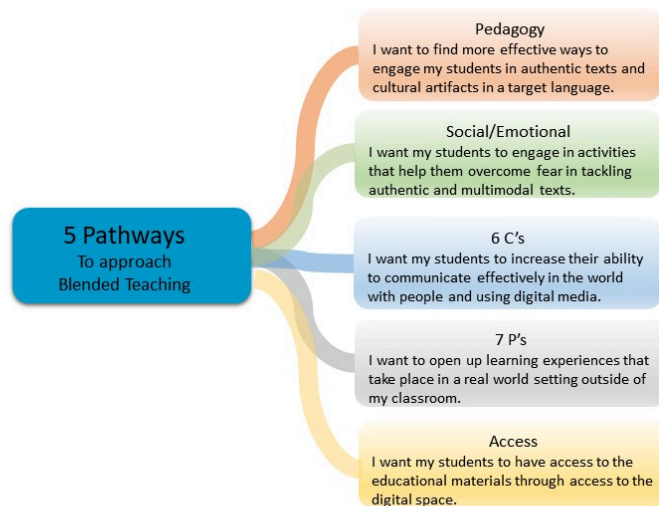
Definition: Problem of Practice

A problem of practice is a current problem or challenge that you believe could be improved through blended teaching.

Problems of practice can fall under any of the three purposes outlined in section 1.1. However, the most meaningful and powerful problems of practice for teachers deal directly with improving learning outcomes for their students.

Figure 1

Problems of Practice in World Languages



These five pathways are a powerful tool to help you think deeply about problems of practice that are relevant to you. Once you identify specific challenges in your current approach to teaching, you will be able to begin to explore what online approaches may be combined with your in-person approaches to make a better experience for your students and you alike. This process energizes you and your teaching. Teachers who choose to blend often find that they enjoy teaching in new and fulfilling ways.

Finding Your Problems of Practice

Now that you have reviewed the five pathways to identifying problems of practice, it is your turn to look at your own practice and try to identify a couple of challenges that you can consider as you continue throughout these ELA chapters. What student outcomes and teaching practices would you like to improve? What stands in the way of your teaching having the impact you would like it to have?



Blended Teaching Workbook

Identify 2-3 problems of practice (PoP) that you can use as you consider blended options for your classroom.

Note: You should identify several problems of practice (PoP) because not every PoP has a good blended learning solution.

If you haven't already opened and saved your workbook, you can access it [here](#).

Previous Citation(s)

Graham, C. R., Borup, J., Jensen, M. A., Arnesen, K. T., & Short, C. R. (2021). *K-12 Blended Teaching (Vol 2): A*



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/k12blended_world_languages/ela_whykUEhpAFc.

