

Blended Program Assessment Tool for OLTD 511

(**based on California State University Rubric for Online Instruction)

Leslie McCurrach
OLTD 511 Assignment #2
November 14, 2017

Background: In order to rank these schools, I had to do some soul searching to determine what matters most to me in an educational setting. Furthermore, the focus question of whether I would send my own children to a particular school actually changed the order of my rankings in some cases.

- I value community schools and the diversity contained within them. I firmly believe everyone needs to learn how to work and get along with others, and as result the private schools that would otherwise be quite lovely don't appeal to me.
- I have a lot of resources and ability to teach my own children (as does my husband, a senior math & computer science teacher), so my concerns for their education are social and related more to physical activity and the arts than to the core curriculum. If my kids show any difficulty with core subjects, I have the ability and knowledge to purchase learning apps and have them complete these at home. My kids are also quite privileged and enjoy dance lessons, swimming lessons, and a rich variety of outdoor and intellectual pursuits with their parents, especially in the summer when we are both off with the kids.
- I value play, creativity, and curiosity, and I want my children as well as my students to think critically and have fun while they're learning.
- Relationships are crucial!
- Not all learning happens within the walls of a school, so flexibility in scheduling is important for many learners.

Ranking:

1. San Francisco Flex Academy
2. Acton Academy
3. Rocketship
4. Carpe Diem
5. Avenues World School
6. KIPP Empower
7. Aspire ERES Academy
7. Phaedrus Mission Dolores Academy
7. Quakerton Community School District Cyber School
8. Woodland

Program: San Francisco Flex Academy

Video #: 11

Blended Model: Flex

Overall Impression: Located in San Francisco, this Flex Model school provides online courses on site, with teachers and paraprofessionals (academic coaches) who work to personalize programs and serve students who are working on their own schedule and own pace. It serves diverse students, helps both high achievers and student who have had difficulty, and seems to put emphasis on the relationships and community.

Rank: 1st

Rationale: I was deeply impressed by the student testimonials and how they were motivated by the individualized programs and caring teacher support. Community is crucial to me, and I was particularly won over by how the students noted that there were no cliques in their school and everyone knew and socialized with everyone else. Breaking away from age-grouping would remove so much of the stigma attached to taking longer to achieve mastery of some of the learning outcomes as no one would be visually “behind” their peers. I am also hugely drawn to diversity in the classroom (and the rich social and learning opportunities this affords students), and this school seems to celebrate diversity. I love that they are achieving this much in a FREE program.

Is this a school/program I would want to send my own children to? (Y/N) Y

	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Cat 1: Learner Support and Resources			- academic coaches & qualified teachers - breakout sessions - on site computers (Not BYOD)
Cat 2: Online Organization and Design		- courses are provided online - design is unclear	

Cat 3: Instructional Design and Delivery		- Personalized online with support F2F - Breakout sessions for additional instruction	
Cat 4: Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning		- Not overly described BUT students feel successful - Academic coaches & teachers keep kids on track	
Cat 5: Innovative Teaching with Technology	N/A - seems like the focus is on learning and not on the tech - more the flexibility the tech provides		
Cat 6: Faculty use of Student Feedback			- Although not overtly described, relationships seem HUGE, and that lets me know the staff value student input

Program: Acton Academy

Video #: 13

Blended Model: **Rotational Model** (Not clear if they rotate in stations or if they are actually learning in small groups on projects - could also be Flex, because they state that the student learning is not driven by teacher timelines)

Summary: This tiny, 29 student private elementary school has an efficient, open concept design where students work on core skills using online programs and other subjects in small or whole groups. They are student-centric, and explicitly opposed to having learning driven by teacher assessments or expectations. Teachers are referred

to as guides, and students have freedom from grade groupings, allowing them to work on skills until they have achieved mastery.

Rank: 2nd

Rationale/Justification: This looks like the ideal elementary school classroom to me. The students are engaged, their teachers strive to encourage inquiry and curiosity, and they have freedom to work at their own pace and on things that engage them. It is colourful, seems nurturing, and I identify with their values (such as emphasizing sportsmanship in PE). I like that they aren't driven by assessments (as I have a hate-on for report cards), and their elective programs look outstanding. I would send my kids here in a heartbeat if it were a public school, but it isn't, and that's the only reason why this isn't my #1 ranked school.

Is this a school/program I would want to send my own children to? (Y/N) Y

	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Cat 1: Learner Support and Resources			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specialist teachers for electives at elem level - lots of teachers in class of 29 - LOTS - off the charts resource rich (but not as rich as Avenues)
Cat 2: Online Organization and Design	N/A only says they use online programs for core learning		
Cat 3: Instructional Design and Delivery			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - student-centred - project based - varied and personalized
Cat 4: Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - excellent scores on standardized tests - teaching students how failure is helpful - NOT assessment driven (swoon) - mastery achievement

			- avg. student gained 2.5-3 grade levels in one school year
Cat 5: Innovative Teaching with Technology	N/A looks good but not described. Basing "good" on solar car project		
Cat 6: Faculty use of Student Feedback			- student-centred & not teacher-driven; therefore, the instructional design needs to come from the kids

Program: Rocketship

Video #: 7

Blended Model: Rotational - Station Rotation

Summary: This innovative elementary school uses a 6-part rotational model to offer diverse instruction and intervention tailored to individuals. The parts consist of whole group, online learning (starting at grade 3), targeted intervention, team learning, small group instruction, and the enrichment station (PE & the Arts).

Rank: 3rd

Rationale/Justification: This model looks like it could be used in every elementary school across the province with very little investment and teacher professional development. It appears to have taken the best of what we all have to offer as educators and structured it into their rotations. I love it! Students work with grade-level peers, have targeted lessons with instructional-level groups, have time dedicated to PE and the Arts, social skills and collaboration, digital literacy, and targeted intervention based on data-based decision making. I can see my kids loving this.

Is this a school/program I would want to send my own children to? (Y/N) Y

	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Cat 1: Learner Support and Resources			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - student-centred with lots of teacher support - computers & classrooms look great
Cat 2: Online Organization and Design		- looks like fun apps and programs for the kids to learn with	
Cat 3: Instructional Design and Delivery			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - outstanding - varied and targeted - delivery in many groups and with specialist teachers
Cat 4: Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - progress monitoring & data from classroom & computers - serves as basis for targeted intervention & small group instruction at instructional level rather than grade level
Cat 5: Innovative Teaching with Technology		- the instructional design looks much more important than the technology, though I appreciate that they are teaching children digital literacy skills	
Cat 6: Faculty use of Student Feedback	N/A		

Program: Carpe Diem

Video #: 10

Blended Model: Flex Model

Summary: This tuition-free charter middle and high school in Yuma, Arizona focuses on using technology for content and concept delivery with teacher time being spent on exploring those concepts in context and with critical thinking and hands on projects. Students work at a customized pace, and computer assessment data is analyzed to determine what interventions might be needed and where student learning should go next.

Rank: 4th

Rationale/Justification: If it weren't for the image of 300 cubicles in the centre of this school for students to be separated from their peers and working away in semi-isolation, this would actually be my top choice secondary school program. The staff seem to focus on relationships and providing the learners with supports they need, and the self-paced environment seems to be resulting in strong learner outcomes being met. I love the idea of using the computers for concept development and then having the teacher interactions focused on the "fun stuff" like critical thinking and solving real world problems.

Is this a school/program I would want to send my own children to? (Y/N) Maybe - need more info about the arts and electives and if my kids would have to sit in cubicles for hours a day.

	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Cat 1: Learner Support and Resources		- unclear staff/student ratios - computers on site - hands on teacher time	
Cat 2: Online			- concepts developed

Organization and Design			online with algorithms determining what comes next - designed for early and swift intervention - no idea how fun they are though
Cat 3: Instructional Design and Delivery		- seems effective but dry - hands on projects and critical thinking	
Cat 4: Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning			- daily determination of student achievement to drive next learning opportunities - computer data aggregated daily and analyzed by teachers
Cat 5: Innovative Teaching with Technology			- this does seem to really resemble something different than a traditional school, so I would argue it is innovative
Cat 6: Faculty use of Student Feedback	N/A		

Program: Avenues World School

Video #: 6

Blended Model: Unclear from video - Rotation of some sort most likely

Summary: This school looks like a million bucks -- probably because it would cost a million bucks (per kid) to send them here. Avenues is a K-12 private school with a tech-rich environment and a focus on student achievement. It is located in New York, New York. Students appear engaged, surrounded by an Ikea-showroom-type environment with grey and bright white being the overwhelming colour (tonal?) choices. The video doesn't have narration, so much is left to interpretation, but it is clearly a well-produced film that highlights the immaculate grounds and incredible resources available to students. (Tuition cost \$45,000 USD per year according to the several year old info I found).

Rank: 5th

Rationale/Justification: This school looks so amazing, I couldn't rank it lower, even though I got a creepy, elitist vibe from the shininess of the floors and the giant televisions decorating the hallways. I love the comfy couches for small group learning, the inclusion of electives in their promotional video, and how engaged in learning and discussion the students appear to be. The campus looks top of the line. Teachers appear to care for their students, and classes appear to be small. I am turned off by the uniforms and lack of colour, as well as lack of visible diversity in the student body.

Is this a school/program I would want to send my own children to? (Y/N)

Y but only if it they somehow recreated this in a public school

	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Cat 1: Learner Support and Resources			- expensive looking everything - small classes - specialist teachers who appear happy
Cat 2: Online Organization and Design	N/A Only know the kids use computers because they are sitting on couches in video using identical Macs.		
Cat 3: Instructional Design and Delivery	N/A		
Cat 4: Assessment	N/A		

and Evaluation of Student Learning			
Cat 5: Innovative Teaching with Technology	N/A - though the tvs in all the hallways and smartboard game in one clip look really cool		
Cat 6: Faculty use of Student Feedback	N/A		

Program: KIPP Empower

Video #: 2

Blended Model: Station Rotation

Summary: This elementary school in South Los Angeles uses the station rotation method for teaching the four core subjects. Their foray into blended learning came about largely as a strategy to decrease student-teacher ratios under the pressure of budget restrictions, and it seems to be working really well to keep students engaged. Software programs are adaptive, and student access a number of different websites using a “launchpad”. Teacher “dashboards” aggregate data from the different computer programs as well as face to face assessments. The school day is longer for these students than at a typical school.

Rank: 6th

Rationale/Justification: I love this school’s goal (to empower students to live lives of significance), and the classrooms and staff look nurturing and supportive. I love that they refer to the children as “scholars”. The use of computers is explicitly designed to provide instruction that students can complete independently in order to facilitate small group and target instruction with the teacher or teachers in the classroom. The only downside I see to this school is the longer day. I think this is wonderful for students who would not receive enrichment at home (or who would otherwise be on their own

unsupervised), but for my own kids, I would prefer they aren't in school longer than they already are.

Is this a school/program I would want to send my own children to? (Y/N) Y
 but only if the school day wasn't longer than average

	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Cat 1: Learner Support and Resources			- 14:1 teacher to student ratios - computers in classroom
Cat 2: Online Organization and Design			- launchpad and dashboard look like great solutions
Cat 3: Instructional Design and Delivery		- fun games for the littles - targeted small group lessons based on data	
Cat 4: Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning		- looks like they are responding well to the collected assessments to inform instruction	
Cat 5: Innovative Teaching with Technology		- love the launchpad - these looks like apps and games that a more affluent parent (i.e. me) would buy for their kids at home	
Cat 6: Faculty use of Student Feedback			- "whole child" approach targets instruction - seems indirectly excellent ("scholars", super nurturing)

Program: Aspire ERES Academy

Video #: 4

Blended Model: Station Rotation

Summary: Aspire Eres Academy is a public school run by a non-profit organization whose goal is to get low-income students prepared for college. They use classroom rotation through teacher led small group instruction, independent study (individually or in groups), and time on the computer with adaptive software programs.

Rank: Tied for 7th

Rationale/Justification: This school is doing great things to empower students who might be traditionally disadvantaged. The software they use is adaptive, and really seems to be engaging learners with visual representations of success (passing levels). I appreciate that the teachers use data to program standards into the computers for student learning the next day. I also like the feel of this school and the nurturing impression I get from staff interviewed here. It is difficult to differentiate this from the next few programs that I put tied at 6th.

Is this a school/program I would want to send my own children to? (Y/N) Y
but I would prefer there be more emphasis on enrichment as my kids come from a home where they already have access to targeted interventions (both parents are teachers)

	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Cat 1: Learner Support and Resources		- these are good but don't strike me as amazing - teachers & assistants	
Cat 2: Online Organization and Design			- adaptive software programs supplement in class concepts & remedial needs with teacher input

Cat 3: Instructional Design and Delivery	N/A but looks varied and successful		
Cat 4: Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning			- data collection is ongoing and constant - informs next lessons for students
Cat 5: Innovative Teaching with Technology		- online portion seems supplemental but effective	
Cat 6: Faculty use of Student Feedback			- check ins with students for feedback are followed up by staff

Program: Phaedrus Mission Dolores Academy

Video #: 5

Blended Model: Station Rotation

Summary: This Catholic Private program serves a diverse group of students in San Francisco, 75% of whom receive some form of tuition support. Their aim in using blended learning was to improve the academic results for their students while also lowering operational costs. Students rotate through computer learning with software supporting core concepts to teacher or teacher assistant led instruction and finally to small group learning.

Rank: Tied for 7th

Rationale/Justification: I admire what this school has achieved, but I feel like their station rotation is just another version of a traditional classroom without anything to really make it stand out from many of the other station rotation examples we viewed. I like the teacher emphasis on how the computer data allows them to target small group intervention and how having the groups rotate allows for some students to receive

remedial support and others in the same classroom to be challenged. Again, this is not massively different than what elementary school teachers do everyday, but here we are seeing a massive portion (about half) of instructional time being spent on computers.

Is this a school/program I would want to send my own children to? (Y/N) N I would never send my child to a Catholic school. However, I respect what they are doing.

	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Cat 1: Learner Support and Resources		- traditional classroom with addition of computers	
Cat 2: Online Organization and Design		- software looks fun	
Cat 3: Instructional Design and Delivery		- challenge and remediation mentioned - small group, teacher led	
Cat 4: Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning		- computer data used for determining small group instruction	
Cat 5: Innovative Teaching with Technology	- seems pretty traditional to me		
Cat 6: Faculty use of Student Feedback	N/A		

**Program: Quakerton Community School District
“Cyber School”**

Video #: 14

Blended Model: A La Carte

Summary: This online (cyber) program provides students in high school with the flexibility to select certain courses for study online, which gives them the ability to choose courses that might not otherwise fit into their timetables. The school runs online courses, blended courses, and face to face programs, all taught by the same teachers. Their motto is “anywhere, anytime learning.”

Rank: Tied for 7th

Rationale/Justification: This program looks like a great solution to scheduling and low enrollment issues that community school often encounter. Giving children the opportunity to select “cyber” courses may expose them to Advanced Placement courses or classes that otherwise would not fit into their timetables. I like that they emphasize the importance to provide support and training for the teachers, otherwise all the money spent on tech is wasted. The technology also allows for differentiation, which I’m presuming means different levels of instruction as well as pacing, but the video is unclear. I like the look of this school, but it isn’t standing out as amazing or “disruptive.”

Is this a school/program I would want to send my own children to? (Y/N) Y if there wasn’t a more dynamic option. Seems basic and effective.

	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Cat 1: Learner Support and Resources		- Teachers provide f2f classes and “cyber” classes - f2f support is available though not always required	
Cat 2: Online Organization and Design		- online platform looks pretty standard	
Cat 3: Instructional Design and Delivery			- love the use of tech in the f2f classroom to connect with experts in the field - it’s great to have online courses supported with skype

			or similar visual teacher contact
Cat 4: Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning	N/A - though they do have great stats to support the success of their students on standardized tests and school retention		
Cat 5: Innovative Teaching with Technology		- this seems like it is an innovation in their district, but pretty basic (though not ineffective) in terms of what I have seen	
Cat 6: Faculty use of Student Feedback	N/A		

Program: Woodland

Video #: 8

Blended Model: Flipped Classroom

Summary: This video shows a flipped science classroom where content is created on Camtasia and posted online for students to view at home before class time. Instructional time is now spent on support and hands on activities. This does not appear to be school-wide.

Rank: 10

Rationale/Justification: This looks like a engaging classroom and a masterful educator, and I like what he is achieving with his students, which appears to be engagement and deep learning. However, this is not necessarily self-paced, as we are unsure if the class needs to stay on pace with their peers. The video content looks really good, and I appreciate that there are two people having a conversation in the video

rather than just a recording of a single teacher giving a lecture. I would be happy to have my kids take this class, but I worry that for many of my students the ability to actually view and learn the lessons before class might be low due to overly expensive rural internet costs or highly disruptive home lives.

Is this a school/program I would want to send my own children to? (Y/N) Y

	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Cat 1: Learner Support and Resources		- Online lessons made with Camtasia	
Cat 2: Online Organization and Design	- Lessons look good but don't allow for differentiation		
Cat 3: Instructional Design and Delivery			- This guy seems like a master teacher
Cat 4: Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning		- He states that now he is not telling the students how they show their learning (or when), but it isn't clear what this looks like	
Cat 5: Innovative Teaching with Technology	- Pretty standard in many of today's classrooms		
Cat 6: Faculty use of Student Feedback	N/A		