

The Different Types of Online Courses

Distance learning has become, with the help of technological innovations, a viable option for both students and faculty in higher education. In fact, research has found that students reported studying more for online courses than for traditional courses, and that they put more thought into online discussions and interactions than in their face-to-face (F2F) classes. In addition, faculty reported that online teaching improved their understanding of teaching with technology, and helps them design a better learning experience for students.

Essentially, online classes can easily meet the same (and surpass) the standards, expectations, and learning goals of any F2F class. Classes are simply delivered in alternative medium using the online environment. There are different types on online classes that are offered at The University of Texas at El Paso. These include:

1. Tech-Enhanced Courses (TEC): These are classes that utilize technology, such as a learning management system, to support teaching and learning. In many cases, a syllabus, and some content material may be provided online as a repository for students to have 24-hour access.

2. Hybrid or Blended Courses (HYBR): These are classes where online course activity replaces at least 50% percent (though this may vary) of required F2F meetings. When the technologies used for education and communication outside the classroom are used to supplant some of the classroom work, reducing the time actually spent in the classroom, the result is a blended or hybrid course. For example, if a course traditionally meets in a classroom three times per week, a hybrid or blended version may only meet one day F2F of the traditional weekly classroom sessions.

3. Minimal Face-to-Face Courses (MNF2F): These are classes that are almost fully-online, where most F2F meetings are eliminated except for a few key F2F sessions for introductions, review sessions laboratory work, and/or examinations.



4. Fully Online Courses (ONLIN): These are classes that are 100% online, delivered through a course management system, and utilize synchronous/asynchronous tools for communication with students.