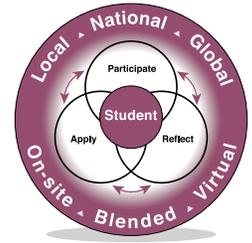


What is Virtual and Blended Cooperative Education for Learners, Educators, and Employers



WHAT IS VIRTUAL COOPERATIVE EDUCATION?

In a virtual cooperative education, learners complete all of the placement component of their co-op program remotely. The placement supervisor may be located in their local community, in another community, city, province or country.

WHAT IS BLENDED COOPERATIVE EDUCATION?

In a blended Cooperative Education environment learners complete all or part of the community component of their co-op program in person and online. The delivery model may change throughout the semester in response to the community, the learner, and the employer needs.

Experiential learning in a blended environment may have varying involvement in the time spent virtually and/or in person. This will depend on the needs of the learner and the employer and should be decided in collaboration with the cooperative education teacher. "Experiential learning therefore has the power and potential to provide increasingly authentic, dynamic, and engaging learning experiences as it opens the door to building teaching and learning relationships at the local, national, and global level."¹

Supporting Learners in a Virtual and Blended Environment

An introduction and information page for students (and their parents) about virtual and blended co-op, includes information and tips for success

[Virtual and Blended Co-op: Learners Checklist](#)

Supporting Educators in a Virtual and Blended Environment

A checklist for educators who are offering blended or virtual co-op opportunities

[Blended/Virtual Co-op: Educator Checklist](#)

Supporting Employers in a Virtual and Blended Environment

A checklist for employers offering blended or virtual co-op opportunities.

[Blended/Virtual Co-op: Employer Checklist](#)

¹ The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12, Cooperative Education, 2018

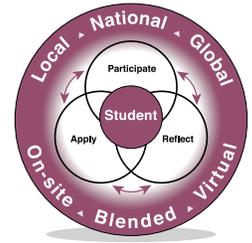


RESOURCES

- OCEA Resources** – You must be logged in to access resources
- CEWIL** tips for students working at home [English](#), [French](#)
- CEWIL** tips for employers supervising students remotely [English](#), [French](#)
- Choose your own Adventure!** – (How to find the right job for you/Cold-calling cheat sheet)
- Presented at OCEA 2018/19 Conference by Kevin Kokerus, HDSB
- Virtual Co-op and Design Thinking SPCE** – Resources found on OCTE.ca
- Working from home during COVID-19** on YouTube

[WSIB Fillable Form](#)

What is Virtual and Blended Cooperative Education for Learners, Educators, and Employers



BLENDING/VIRTUAL CO-OP: LEARNERS CHECKLIST

WHAT IS COOPERATIVE EDUCATION?

Cooperative Education provides secondary school learners with learning experiences connected to communities outside of school. Cooperative Education placements can be on-site, virtual or blended.

- **On-Site:** learners are physically present at their placement.
- **Virtual:** learners complete all of the placement component of their co-op program remotely. The placement supervisor may be located in their local community, in another community, city, province or country.
- **Blended:** learners complete all or part of the community component of their co-op program in person and online. The delivery model may change throughout the semester in response to the community, the learner, and the employer needs.

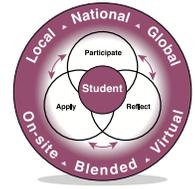
SECURING A PLACEMENT:

Taking an active role in securing your co-op placement and collaborating with your educator is important because it builds a relationship with you, your employer, and your educator. It also provides you with the ability to find a placement that suits your interests, skills, and goals.

AS YOU BEGIN YOUR PLACEMENT SEARCH:

- Know Yourself: Consider your strengths, interests, skills, and what you hope to learn from the placement
- Research Your Options: Consider your location, travel requirements (if blended), research the company website, learn what skills and knowledge will be an asset

TIPS FOR DISCUSSING A VIRTUAL OR BLENDED PLACEMENT:



Be prepared to discuss virtual or blended placements with your educator or a potential employer. If you are reaching out to a potential employer, have a script prepared that includes:

1. Introduce yourself

- Include your full name and school
- “Hi, my name is (insert your full name). I am a student at (name of school).”
- Share your interests and why you are calling the employer.

2. Explain that you are calling about a high school co-op placement

Some employers may not be familiar with cooperative education, be prepared with:

- What is co-op?
 - Does your school or school board have an employer guide that you can share
- Placement Timing
 - Be as specific as possible (eg., September to January, Monday to Friday 12-3pm) or if your placement is flexible let the employer know the possibilities (e.g., my co-op work term is not set yet, I could be available mornings or afternoons based on what works best for your place of employment)
- Virtual or Blended Placements: while many workplaces may have employees working from home, having a co-op student work remotely may be new for them.
 - Ask the employer if working remotely is a possibility and have some ideas about the types of tasks that you can do while working remotely.

3. Your experience

- Explain why and how you would be a good co-op student at their place of employment
- Refer back to your interests from #1.

4. Thank the employer and clearly identify the next step

- “Thank you for your time this morning, I will send you a copy of my resume and cover letter at (employer@emailaddress.com).”
- “Thank you for your time, I am excited to connect you with my co-op educator (insert name) who will call you.”

WORKING REMOTELY



Working remotely means navigating several different virtual environments at once and learning to communicate with different people, in different roles, on different platforms. Consider these questions and discuss with your co-op educator and employer as you prepare for your placement.

1. Where will you work?

- At home or at school?
- Where in your home or school will your work that provides you with few distractions and a work- appropriate space?

2. How will you communicate with your supervisor and colleagues?

- Who can you ask for help?
- What is the best way to connect remotely with your supervisor and colleagues?
- How often will you check in with your supervisor? Who will initiate the check-in?

3. How will you connect with your co-op educators?

- How do you reach your co-op educator to discuss questions or concerns?
- How will you report your hours and submit your assignments? How often?
- How will monitoring meetings be set up with your supervisor and co-op educator?

4. What technology do you require?

- How will you access technology that is required?
- Do you require training on this technology? How will you receive this training?
- Who do you ask if you require help or technical support?
- Is there a code of conduct for technology use with your employer? School?

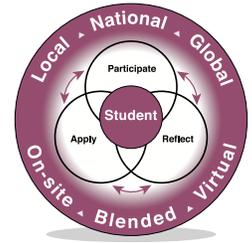
5. How to act professionally and meet workplace expectations?

- Determine your work hours and work space. Be consistent with your availability.
- Create a workspace that provides you with the ability to have privacy and few distractions.
- Dress appropriately for your workplace (do not wear pyjamas)



- For video or conference calls:
 - Be on time (or a few minutes early)
 - Turn on your video (where appropriate)
 - Mute your microphone (where appropriate)
 - Prepare an introduction to use during calls and emails
 - Stay focused (e.g., taking notes during a call helps to stay focused, do not check your phone or text)
- Meet regularly with your supervisor. Ask for feedback and how to improve your performance.

What is Virtual and Blended Cooperative Education for Learners, Educators, and Employers



BLENDED/VIRTUAL CO-OP: EDUCATOR CHECKLIST

BEFORE THE PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

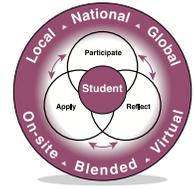
Access to Technology:

- Does the learner have the necessary access to technology to participate in the program? Can your school/board provide the technology for learners who don't have access?

Choosing Digital Tools:

- Does your board have an approved list of digital tools you and your learners can use during the virtual/blended co-op experience?
- Which digital platform will you use to provide instruction for the Strand A component of the course? Will you provide a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction? Will you use chat rooms or video conferencing for synchronous instruction?
- Will your learners need instruction/support around working with digital tools that will be used in the program?
- Will learners meet one on one with their supervisors on Zoom or a similar video conferencing platform? Consider the following:
 - What is your board's policy for learners being alone in an online environment with a supervisor? You may need to arrange for all video meetings between the supervisor and learners to happen with you, the co-op educator present.
 - You may need to provide instruction to learners about how to use the video conferencing platform(s) that will be used.
 - Some supervisors may require learners to have their video on during meetings while some learners may not be comfortable with this. How will you address this situation?

Strand A Considerations:



- Have you planned to cover the following information in-depth as part of your Strand A content instruction?:
 - Professional and appropriate online communication
 - Online professional dress code and work environment
 - Privacy and confidentiality
 - Online code of conduct for learners
 - Health and Safety considerations (ergonomic hazards, repetitive strain injuries, online safety, stress, and wellness)

Mandatory Forms:

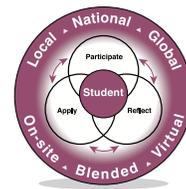
- Does your board/school have digital fillable versions of the mandatory co-op forms? Not all learners will have access to printers.
- Will your learners need instruction around completing/submitting forms digitally?
- Will you require digital signatures from your supervisors? Will they need support when completing forms digitally or can they print, sign, and send the necessary forms to you?
- Will photos/screenshots of the learners be taken? A Media Release Form signed by learners and parents/guardians may be necessary.
- Consider how learners will be communicating with their supervisors. Will it be via phone, email, chat or video conferencing platforms? Some supervisors may use video conferencing platforms not supported by your board. Will your school/board require signed consent for the use of non-board supported digital platforms?

ARRANGING PLACEMENTS

For teacher-found placements:

- See if any of your existing in-person contacts would be able to offer virtual tasks and learning opportunities that can be completed remotely by learners.
- Consider contacting partners that your school/ board already works with to provide training and learning experiences to learners to see if they can offer virtual co-op opportunities for learners. For example, some of the SHSM certification providers or guest speakers that come to schools may be able to provide virtual placements.
- Consider placing more than one learner at a single placement. This is not usually recommended for in- person placements but can work quite well in some virtual settings. Learners can work in

a group to collaborate on research and problem-solving tasks guided by their supervisor, helping them to develop necessary [21st Century Competencies](#). Multiple learners can also have different, individual inquiry-based projects, research assignments, and tasks related to their interests while working for the same co-op supervisor.



Types of tasks performed at virtual placements:

- Types of tasks you can suggest to a potential employer:

Consider confidentiality issues and whether necessary training and equipment can be provided when determining if the tasks are appropriate for learners.

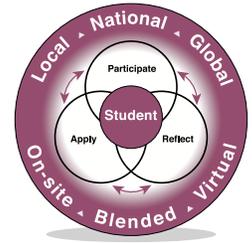
- Administrative tasks (data entry, creating posters, brochures and manuals, creating, auditing or updating websites, maintaining social media accounts...)
- Working on research projects/inquiry-based projects related to the workplace with the supervisor's instruction and mentorship
- Assisting online with live virtual events, classes, conferences, camps, activities (virtual camp counsellor, virtual teacher's assistant...)
- Other tasks that help learners develop [21st Century Competencies](#)
- See if any online training/certifications can be provided by the employer as part of the learner's co-op experience

DURING THE PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

Monitoring meetings and integration sessions:

- Will these be conducted via a combination of video conferencing platforms, phone and email interactions?
- Are all parties familiar and comfortable with the schedule of meetings and the technology that will be used?

What is Virtual and Blended Cooperative Education for Learners, Educators, and Employers



BLENDED/VIRTUAL CO-OP: EMPLOYER CHECKLIST

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Set Up for Success

- Have you virtually introduced yourself?
- Have you introduced the learner to other members of the team?
- Have you provided the learner with a virtual tour?
- Will the learner be expected to use a range of communication and productivity tools?
- Can you provide learner training for virtual platforms and applications?
- Do you know if the learner's home computer is compatible with your programs?
- If learner reporting to work in person: [COVID-19 checklist for employers](#)

Rules of Engagement



- What are your workplace culture expectations regarding language/ dress/ attendance/ set working times? Have you articulated your expectations to the learner?
- Virtual ethics- what are your expectations regarding communications/ recording of meetings via phone or platform? Have you articulated your expectations to the learner?
- How will the learner receive their assigned duties? Who will provide feedback?
- Do you require the learner to sign any forms? Would you consider the learner drafting the 'virtual co- op agreement', or at least being a collaborator?
- What health and safety training is required for your employees? Would there be additional or different training required for a learner working remotely?
- If the learner is reporting to work in person: Have you provided the learner with COVID-19 testing, guidelines, and social distancing measures for your particular worksite?

From 'Survive' to 'Thrive'

- Does the learner have at least one contact s/he would feel comfortable asking for help?
- As part of the learning plan for co-operative education, have you and the learner identified short/ medium/ long term goals for the virtual placement?
- What opportunity is there for learner reflection and modification of the goal setting?
- Who will check in on the learner to make sure they are engaged? How is the learner's well being?
- How will you bolster engagement and monitor productivity?
- Would you consider the learner being part of the mental health and wellness committee, or proposing opportunities for your employees?
- Are you able to provide the learner with [21st Century learner opportunities](#)?



<https://www.thinglink.com/scene/766110847230541825>