

# Blended Learning Design Plan

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## DESIGN PARAMETERS

**Course description:** The purpose of this course is to facilitate participants to learn the basic process of independent, ethical, and original research. It covers research methodology in Humanities and Social Sciences at both theoretical and practical levels. Specific issues addressed include: definition and steps in research, characteristics of research, study designs; types and methods of research, quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, special types of research in study of religion, analysis and presentations, and thesis writing. Participants will also learn principles of ethical research and skills for practical application of these principles.

Participants will be expected to be actively involved in directing their own learning - the role of the facilitator is to guide and mentor the participants. Therefore the course expects a lot of self-directed learning.

Please note that any form of research misconduct including plagiarism, fabrication and falsification will not be tolerated and could lead to discontinuation of this course

**Course/programme context:** REL 801: Research Methodology Course. This is a core course in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Master of Arts in Religion.

**Student demographics and description:** These are 7 male and 5 female postgraduates with age ranging between 25 and 56 year olds. Four students are coming straight from undergraduate while eight have been working or continue to work. Five of those who have been working were/are secondary school teachers, One as primary school headmaster who is still working and double sup as a parish priest in a rural setting, and one is a CEO of faith based NGO. The 3 of the 5 younger students have a Bachelor of Arts in Religion while the other 2 have a Bachelor of Theology. Five of the older ones have a Bachelor of Arts in Religion, two have a Bachelor of Education in Religious Instruction and one has a Bachelor of Theology. The older male student working as CEO of a faith based NGO is physically challenged. Though independently mobile climbing stairs or active physical activity is challenging for him.

**Available and required resources:** Smart phone or Laptop (with the following apps installed WhatsApp, Google, Gmail email address, Zoom; Adobe Reader 10.1; Word; PPT); MUSOMI (LMS)

### **Learning objectives:**

1. To explain the process of ethical, scientific and original research
2. Discuss the key sections of a research proposal
3. Demonstrate skills for practical application in developing a research proposal
4. Guide learners through the selection of a suitable and viable research topic
5. Guide individual students in the development of a draft research proposal.

## DESIGN PLAN

This design covers the first 2 hour Blended Learning Practice (BLP) plan for the first unit of the course which has two objectives. It combines a Face to Face (F2F) session and an online session with synchronous and nonsynchronous activities.<sup>1</sup>

<b>Learning objective</b>	<b>Activity description</b>	<b>Technology requirements/OER</b>	<b>Teaching/facilitation requirements</b>
1.Introductions of the course, the teacher and of learners (F2F) & assignment for next class	<p>The following are the sub-sessions on:</p> <p>1.1) Teacher draws attention of class to the two objective of the first unit and then Self-introduction of learners, teacher and &amp; course sharing their expectations follow. Then together the class sets some ground rules (30mins)</p> <p>1.2) Teacher discusses expectations to indicate which will be met and which may not be met and why &amp; responds to any questions (10 minutes)</p> <p>1.3) Teacher explains how the entire course will run, that is, mixing online and face to face; synchronous and non-synchronous &amp; responds to any questions (10mins)</p> <p>1.4) Assignment: Divide class into 3 groups of 4 students in each group (mixing age and sex and other variables). Then each groups researches, discusses (online or offline as will be convenient for each group) and prepare to present for 15 minutes at the next class which will use MUSOMI platform. All will work on what is research then each group will work on tow steps i research</p>	<p>Smartphone with relevant applications: Gmail Account And/or WhatsApp</p> <p>Computer with relevant software like Word document, PPT, gmail, Google (In group discussions, learners will use google search engine this do search for information as they discuss) besides OER</p> <p><a href="http://www.etu.org.za/toolbox/docs/development/research.html#how2">http://www.etu.org.za/toolbox/docs/development/research.html#how2</a></p> <p>MUSOMI (LMS)</p>	<p>Timetable</p> <p>Class list with basic demographic information and education background</p> <p>Classroom that allows for roundtable setting for face to face class</p> <p>Expert in process of Research to be guest lecturer</p>

<sup>1</sup> Before this BLP session, it is expected that the teacher would have sent via email and whatsapp the course outline at least 3 days to the BLP session requesting individual students will have gone through the outline and reflected on it. It is assumed that students are familiar with MUSOMI, the university LMS.

<p>2.To explain the process of ethical, scientific and original research (Online session involving synchronous and nonsynchronous)</p>	<p>process (Group 1: Steps 1&amp; 2 of research Group 2: Steps 3 &amp; 4 of research Group 3: Steps 5 &amp; 6 of research) Each group should prepare 3 PPT slides of their presentation and upload these on MUSOMI at least a day ahead of the next class. (5 minutes)</p> <p>1.5) Teacher emphasizes that the next hour will be an online session on MUSOMI and will start with group presentations. Any group may be called upon to start. Teacher reminds class of the date and time of next class and notes that she will send the relevant link and a reminder by email and WhatsApp a day before the class. Teacher responds to any question and closes the class. (5 Minutes)</p> <p>2.1) Teacher welcomes learners to class on a live session on MUSOMI and refers to what was done in the previous F2F class. She explains what will happen throughout the current session then invites one of the groups to start presentations (5 minutes)</p> <p>2.2) Each group presents live (5 minutes each), and after each presentation, all including teacher comment to add value and/or ask questions on the presentation correcting any misconceptions if any (5mins) (Total 30 minutes)</p> <p>2.3) Mini guest lecture presented live on process of research: planning, implementation, &amp; dissemination of research (PPT slides &amp; video of lecture available) (10mins)</p>		<p>Knowledge, skills and values on OER access</p> <p>Online institutional technology support services in case of challenges</p>
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	<p>2.4) Learners reflect on guest lecture, a Questions &amp; comments, if any, session follows. (5 mins)</p> <p>2.5) Teacher refers to OER expounding on the process of research, explains what next session will be on and how it will run and ends by drawing attention to the week's assignment (to search, upload and read an OER resource relevant to key sections of a research proposal) in preparation for the next unit (10 mins).</p>		
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DESIGN RATIONALE

I would expect that this design would work well for a postgraduate course where I expect learners to be self-driven. It is learner centred and a lot of activities are by the learners. It is flexible in that it allows for F2F sessions as well as online sessions with synchronous and nonsynchronous activities. There are group activities and individual activities so it stimulates interaction but at the same time it allows for individual work. There is reflection to promote critical thinking. Using different learning activities promotes learning for different learners. The F2F introductory sessions help all of us to know each other and this is helpful in promoting interactions and will facilitate taking care of each other. For example knowing who we are in the class by gender and intersectionality supports interaction, sensitivity and emotional. Having ground rules like respect for each other's opinion creates a favourable environment for learning.