Graphical user interface, application, Word

Description automatically generated

Figure 1 Blended Learning Universe Screenshot

*Link:* <https://www.blendedlearning.org/>

I selected the Blended Learning Universe website <https://www.blendedlearning.org/> to critique using the Ten Usability Principles and the Spatial Contiguity Principle. The reason why I selected this website is because of my professional interest in blended learning classrooms. As an online educational technology teacher, I am constantly seeking information on how to effectively blend online and offline learning. While not losing the traditional research-based instructional practices that have worked for years in the classroom. This website has served as an instrumental tool when researching methods for blended learning classrooms regardless of the subject being taught. Based on the ten usability principles my critique of the Blended Learning Universe website is as follows:

* Affordance is the first area of the ten usability principles and this website did a great job incorporating it. This website has the same navigation on each webpage. The navigation bar appearance and location are the same on each webpage. Icons are appropriately used to display social media contact information. There is no wasted space on the website. Each element is useful and purposeful.
* Chunking on the website is evident. Under the Basic tab, there is a lot of information for the reader to obtain. Instead of having nothing but scrolling text on this webpage, it's broken down into digestible pieces. This website uses infographics and colorful icons to display information and direct readers to different parts of the webpage. The icons are hyperlinked to detailed graphics that explain robust concepts. While the infographics are simple with brief understandable definitions.
* The color on this website is amazing. The web designer used a color template throughout the entire website. Colors are used to highlight important concepts and draw the readers’ attention to hyperlinks. The color palette is easy on the readers’ eyes and is consistent on each page of the website. All the colors added to the overall appeal of the website.
* Consistency is shown on each page of this website when using the desktop version. The desktop version when using a desktop computer or laptop consistency on each webpage is prevalent. When using a mobile device like a cell phone the consistency is not there. On the cell phone device text is misplaced or shifted from graphics. This website is better viewed on the desktop than any mobile device.
* Proximity is one of the elements this website accomplished with stellar marks. As mentioned before this website has a lot of information on blended learning. The information is divided into various categories based on seven models. Each model has an icon that takes readers to another page that explains the model. From there additional resources on the model selected are provided. The website directs the readers to helpful information and tools based on the model selected on the home page. This helps eliminate searching through unnecessary information when researching blended learning models.
* Readability is the text on each page of this website is excellent. This website primarily uses black text on white background, which is ideal for readers. There are places throughout the website where white text is used on blue backgrounds. In those sections, the text is still readable because the shade of blue used is dark enough for the text to be seen. Good font types and sizes were selected that help the reader highlight important information.
* Recognition of this website is applicable on every page using familiar icons and a navigation bar. The icons on the contact page are recognizable social media icons. This allows all users to instantly know which social media platforms the Blended Learning Universe can be followed on. The navigation bar uses names that are familiar to users. Readers know what is on each page based on the name. In doing so it makes it easier to quickly find resource materials.
* Alignment on the website is on every page. Everything is perfectly aligned based on related learning materials. There is nothing out of place on the desktop version of this website. When using the mobile device to view this website some text isn’t aligned. Sections are aligned the same on mobile devices and desktop versions. Each row and column are placed based on the information in them. They are all grouped accordingly to the different blended learning models. The research tab shows alignment with images in one column and the corresponding text next to it. All in a perfectly straight line down the webpage.
* Similarity is used on the website through the colors, fonts, and navigation bar used on each page of this website. On each page, the same colors are used in the same places. The fonts do not change on each webpage. Again, the navigation bar is the same on each webpage to help readers explore the website. On the blended learning models page, the infographics highlight the similarity principle. Each infographic uses the same images and colors to explain the different models. Also, each blended learning model has the same buttons to display videos and further explain the model.
* Visibility based on the ten usability principles is not present on this website. There is no progress bar or status bar anywhere on this website. Since this is a website primarily to provide information to readers there is no need for a status or progress bar. The only visible option is under the blended learning models. This area has icons for each of the seven blended learning models to select from. After any hyperlink is clicked on this website there is no indication that it was clicked.

The Blended Learning Universe website shows the Spatial Contiguity Principle under the design tab. On this page, there is a graphic showing the eight steps in blended learning. Each step is identified by color with the blended learning journey step typed on it. After the step is clicked the headers on the following pages are color-coded to match. In addition, the blended learning model infographics have text placed on them. These examples follow the protocol for the Spatial Contiguity Principle. This website is exactly the type of learning design website I would like to create. The use of color is what mainly caught my attention. Next, was the use of effective and simple infographics to explain difficult concepts. Lastly, was the way the information was chunked in bits size without feeling overwhelming as a reader. Overall, this is an excellent website that followed most of the key learning design principles.