

# **Blended learning in Flemish secondary education: From emergency to structural implementation**

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## **Abstract**

Due to the Corona pandemic, it is impossible to imagine education without blended learning. This is also the case in Flemish secondary schools (Belgium) who had to switch to blended learning. While blended learning was initially implemented out of necessity, some schools want to implement blended learning on a structural basis. This research project investigates how blended learning can be implemented on such a structural basis via a systematic narrative literature study and a case study research in six Flemish secondary schools. Data was collected by document analysis, semi-structured interviews with school leaders and ICT coordinators, and focus group interviews with teachers, students and parents to answer two research questions. The first aim of this research focuses on describing implementation practices of blended learning as implemented during the first and second lockdown. Based on these results, the second research goal investigates which conditions are supportive in the Flemish context to give blended learning a structural place. Results shows how these conditions are located at the teacher and school level (e.g. role of the school leader, professional development, digital learning material, etc.). Special attention is given in the results to the home situation of students, and students of disadvantaged groups or students that are difficult to reach. All research results can be presented in an overall and new model for implementation on blended learning in secondary schools. This model contains specific design principles for schools and teachers who want to continue with blended learning to support students' learning processes.

**Keywords:** blended learning, case study, distance education, ICT, secondary education