ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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Is the future of education in hybrid learning?

What is hybrid learning, what are hybrid learning models, and what role will it play in the future of education and training?

The year 2021 has made it clear that a mixture of classroom and online training, i.e. hybrid learning, is set to be the preferred way to deliver education and training. Schools, universities and workplaces, forced to adopt online training, are now choosing a hybrid approach that integrates study and work in-person or at a distance. What are the characteristics of hybrid learning or hybrid learning and why will it be the future of education and training?

What is hybrid learning?

Hybrid learning is an instructional approach that combines online and classroom instruction with different forms of learning:

- **Experiential learning**
- Informal learning
- Formal Learning

While in blended learning the online portion of the training is complementary to the activities you do in the classroom, with hybrid learning students have an alternative. This is the biggest **difference between blended and hybrid learning**.

In the case of blended learning, for example, all learners take a classroom course with the trainer and use the LMS (learning management system) platform to take quizzes or delve deeper into the subject matter with videos, simulations, etc.

In hybrid learning, some students may choose to participate in the lesson in question remotely, via the virtual classroom, while others are simultaneously in the classroom with the trainer.

But hybrid learning is not just **formal learning**, as in the example we just showed. It also includes forms of experiential learning, whereby employees and students learn by doing, and **informal learning**, with peer-to-peer exchange.

What are the tools of blended learning?

The fact that in hybrid learning, the same lesson can be attended remotely and in-person may not leave the trainer with many options other than to make all course material available to students.

The tools used by the trainer are:

- **Videoconferencing** to deliver the lesson simultaneously in the classroom and online. This is referred to as synchronous learning;
- An **LMS, learning management system** to manage and track students' learning progress. Digital training materials, such as video lecture recordings, quizzes, and general teaching resources, bring asynchronous learning to life.
- **Collaborative tools** such as a discussion forum to allow students to work in teams and collaborate, whether in the classroom or at a distance.

What are the hybrid learning models?

Depending on the number of students, their learning styles, and the type of training, different models for hybrid learning can be adopted:

- **Differentiated learning**: during the same lesson, the trainer plans different activities for the students who are in the classroom and those who are following at a distance to ensure maximum involvement by all. The two groups carry out the same program and interact with each other.
- **"Multitrack" model**: as in differentiated instruction, in-person and online students take the same lesson, but do not need to interact with the other group.
- **"Shift" model**: students take turns taking the classroom and distance learning classes.
- **Project-based or independent model**: when in-person classes require hands-on experience, it is not possible to achieve the same educational objectives remotely. In this case, distance learners can work independently on a project, using simulations and virtual environments to bring experiential learning to life.

Why is hybrid learning the future of training and education?

By giving students the ability to choose how they want and can learn, hybrid learning provides greater flexibility and student involvement in the choices that affect their education. The varied methodology, ranging from the differentiated model to total autonomy, makes each student more motivated to follow the educational path that best suits their **learning style**. Because of these characteristics, hybrid learning is suitable for both traditional training and eLearning. That's why it could be the future of training.