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Tips for a hybrid learning environment

With the COVID provisions, businesses and schools may have part classroom and part online course beneficiaries. Here's how to engage students in this form of hybrid learning.

Hybrid learning is an instructional approach that offers simultaneously, classroom and distance learning classes by offering formal, informal and experiential learning experiences. While in blended learning, distance activities are complementary to classroom activities and occur at different times, in hybrid learning or hybrid learning, students have the choice of attending classes in-person with peers or colleagues and the trainer, or attending remotely.

Sometimes, and in this increasingly pandemic period, there is actually no choice and some students for personal, health, or corporate policy reasons must train and learn online. As the nature of choice is lost, it becomes critical to **keep student motivation high** while trying to maximize student engagement. Here are some tips for getting all students to participate in training with hybrid learning models.

How to organize differentiated instruction

If the trainer chooses to use the differentiated teaching model, it means that all students in a training course take the same lesson, some in the classroom and some remotely, and interact with each other. In this model, it is critical to use great video conferencing tools and microphones that allow the trainer to engage those connected online and those at home.

Also, prior to class, it is important to remember the rules for taking the floor, keeping in mind that remote learners may have more difficulty being heard.

Dividing students into small mixed groups of online and in-person students could facilitate interactions and teamwork. In this case, it is important that each group in the classroom have a device to access video conferencing. Some **teambuilding exercises** can serve to introduce gamification elements into the lesson: remote students can guide students in the classroom, giving directions on how to design an object and challenge the other mixed groups.

The role of the flipped classroom in the multi-track model

In the multi-track model, two or more tracks are followed in the learning journey. Classroom and remote groups participate in the same lesson, but do not meet. The reason for choosing this type of blended learning may be the different levels of learners.

It is critical for the trainer to provide for this plurality in the course and to design activities that students can do in the classroom, even in small groups, and activities intended specifically for online learners, breaking them down by starting knowledge. Activities can be synchronous or asynchronous, depending on the student's choice based on their **learning style**.

To allow everyone to actively participate, the principles of the flipped-classroom or inverted classroom can be applied. All students have access to the training material before the lesson begins. This may be a video with specific instructions and information that prepares for discussion. Peer-to-peer and thus informal learning will occur in the classroom or online.

Learning by doing: a classroom and virtual project model

Learning by doing is one of the foundations of **experiential learning**. To ensure that everyone can practice remotely as well, it is good to take into account the specific situation of each student. When designing a simulation for example, it is important to test its operation on smartphones, because not all students have the ability to access from PCs. In addition, it is good practice to use collaborative tools where students, whether in presence or at a distance, can work on the same project developing communication skills and critical thinking.

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