



HYBRID VS. ONLINE

The differences and advantages of both learning models offer a number of positives, but also a few negatives.

By Luigi Valdivieso, Florida National University



Advances in communication and Internet technologies have improved the way educational institutions deliver instructions to learners, particularly in hard-to-reach locations. As a result of web-enhanced systems of communication coupled with newer configuration of media, there have been several attempts to provide learning solutions that meet the diverse needs of both learners and instructors.

Learning environments between the traditional method of teaching and learning and the technology-based online learning mode vary greatly, but the end result is the same: To award students with a diploma or degree that will prepare them for employment in their field of study.

Both hybrid and online learning formats have the potential for reducing costs while delivering high-quality learning instructions at the same time. The increased quest for online education is often cited as evidence that technology can offer a solution to how learners learn without affecting the quality of education.

Hybrid learning blends the traditional method of instruction with technology-mediated methods of teaching and learning to improve the traditional learning environments. Hybrid learning is also referred to as “blended learning” or “flipped classrooms.” Both online and hybrid methods of learning originated from the practice of distance education.

Understanding online learning

Online learning is an efficient way of using technology in education to open up classes to the masses as well as controlling costs in light of increasing fiscal constraints. Online learning comes through a variety of methods that can range from videotaping lectures and posting them on the Internet for students to access



at any time to posting all educational materials, which includes syllabi, class assignments, tests and examinations, online via sophisticated, interactive, Web-based learning platforms where cognitive tutors are used and users have the benefits of feedback via multiple loops. Web-based learning can be used to teach many subjects to a diverse group of students in a variety of educational settings.

The concept of hybrid learning

In the hybrid method of teaching and learning, instructors use classroom time to interact with students while the Internet is used to deliver lectures, which in most cases are Web-based videos. The Insights Institute defines hybrid or blended learning as follows:

A formal educational program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace, and at least in part at a supervised brick and mortar location away from home.

The major aim of hybrid learning is to overcome the identifiable shortcomings of Web-based learning while also utilizing several instructional sequencing and strategies of delivery to improve the satisfaction of the learner, the instructor and the institution while simultaneously striving to achieve improved learning outcomes. It incorporates a mix of instructor-led teaching methods via both traditional and Web-based channels. Hybrid learning incorporates blended learning typologies such as:

- Online and offline learning
- Live, collaborative and self-paced learning with synchronous online and physical formats
- Unstructured and structured learning
- Work and learning mode
- A combination of custom content and off-the-shelf content

Many scholars have identified the reasons for the increased usage of hybrid learning among academic institutions. Their list includes:

- Enhanced pedagogy
- Easy access to instruction and knowledge
- More interaction among students
- Cost efficiency and effectiveness
- Enhanced personal presence
- Easy revision of learning content

Hybrid learning vs. online learning

There are identifiable differences in the conditions and factors affecting learning under hybrid and online learning formats. The hybrid learning mode relies heavily on using a physical meeting place to engage with learners, and it is complemented with online learning. So, a student under the hybrid learning mode will take lectures in a traditional classroom setting as well as some remotely via the Internet.

Some researchers claimed learners experienced less learning support and a heavier workload under online learning compared with learners under the hybrid learning format. This could have resulted from the feeling of a lack of the sense of presence or belonging the online learning platforms often depict. Although this feeling is primarily psychological, it is important to note so that in designing an online learning program, incorporating instructional activities and collaborative opportunities becomes very important because such activities will enhance each learner's emotional engagement with fellow learners and instructors. To correct this perception, incorporating several instructional strategies could make a great difference. Such strategies include providing immediate technical support

and timely feedback on learners' questions, sending progress reports to learners regularly to enhance motivation for learning achievement, asking short questions on a regular basis to check the understanding of learners on learning outcomes, and using humor to make learners feel emotionally engaged and refreshed.

The hybrid learning mode seems to provide clearer instructions to learners than the online learning delivery channel. Some researchers noted that online learners reported experiencing more challenges and obstacles in attaining similar learning outcomes compared with learners using the hybrid learning mode, hence, resulting in low learning. The appropriate suggestions for online instructional designers to resolve this issue include adjusting the level of learning content with instructional variations to satisfy varying levels of learning of the individual online learners.

Advantages of hybrid and online learning

Several reports have shown that both hybrid and online learning formats have the potential for reducing costs while delivering high-quality learning instructions at the same time. The increased quest for online education is often cited as evidence that technology can offer a solution to how learners learn without affecting the quality of education. For some time now, students have been able to earn their degrees or diplomas by way of the Internet. Florida National University, among others, is a good example of how beneficial online education is to our generation. Hundreds of learners have gained quality education from the institution's online learning platform.



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Luigi Valdivieso is an Admissions Supervisor for the Distance Learning Department at Florida National University. He has a Master's degree in Psychology and a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. He has more than 10 years combined experience in education and social work, a dual expertise that led to his appreciation of the many situations and obstacles students encounter during their path to a higher education.