

# How to Choose the Right Modality for Your L&D Strategy

Learning modalities were not always part of the corporate trainer's vocabulary. There once was a time when employee training seemed as straightforward as designing a good classroom experience, facilitating it with energy, and following up with printed resources like manuals and job aids.

For the past few decades, however, different modalities of learning have entered the L&D lexicon. In this blog post, we're going to talk about what a learning modality is, leveraging learning modalities in the new normal of hybrid corporate learner populations, and how to match modalities to your learning program.

## What is a learning modality?

Let's start at the very beginning and answer the question: what are learning modalities?

In corporate training, the term "learning modality" refers to the delivery channel or method. For example, classroom training is one type of learning modality. Other learning modalities include on-the-job training, video, virtual or augmented reality, elearning modules, and mobile learning, to name a few.

## **What are the four learning modalities?**

In K-12 education, there is a different learning modalities meaning. In this discipline, the four learning modalities focus on leveraging different types of content in your classroom, including audio, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic. Our focus is on corporate learning and development, so we won't discuss these four learning modalities in this blog post.

## What are some of the most common learning modalities?

There are many modalities in learning that you can employ for any given corporate training program. Let's dive into some of the different learning modalities:

### In-person learning modality options:

Let's start with some learning modalities so traditional that you might not even think to list them.

#### **In-person classrooms**

The first tried-and-true modality is classroom training. In this model, a facilitator leads a class of in-person learners through lectures or activities.

#### **On-the-job training**

Virtually every employee has experience on-the-job training at some point. In this learning modality, an experienced employee - sometimes a manager, sometimes a peer, sometimes a mentor - provides real-time guidance to show the learner how to execute a specific task.

#### **Mentorship and coaching**

Mentorship and coaching are alternative learning modalities to formal training. Rather than deploying a specific set of content that has been designed by learning experts, in this method, senior employees provide guidance and feedback to employees that help them build soft skills, forge relationships, or identify areas for improvement.

TRADITIONAL  
LEARNING  
MODALITIES:



**IN-PERSON  
CLASSROOMS**



**ON-THE-JOB  
TRAININGS**



**MENTORSHIP  
AND COACHING**

## Online learning modality options:

The term “learning modality” has grown as more content delivery options have emerged with new technology. That’s why online learning modality means a variety of things, depending on your learning objective. Let’s break down some of the most common online learning options:

### Virtual classrooms

This delivery method uses the techniques of classroom training and the technology of video conferences. A facilitator delivers training content to a group of learners, who join the video call from wherever they are in the world (as opposed to traveling to a single classroom to join in person).

### Self-paced elearning modules

In elearning modules, learners are in charge of the pace of their learning. Elearning modules usually include slideshows, voiceover, or prerecorded videos that learners progress through. They can also include quizzes, exercises, and tests to increase engagement with the content.

### Mobile, app-based learning

With the rise of L&D strategies like microlearning, app-based learning on mobile phones has become increasingly popular. In this learning modality, learners access content on their mobile devices so that they can watch videos, listen to podcasts, refer to documents, or take quizzes from anywhere with an internet connection.

### Augmented and virtual reality

This final learning modality is still nascent, but it is fast growing in popularity. In augmented reality, learners engage with the real world - such as a printed postcard or flyer - and then scan a QR code to access online content such as a video or audio track. In virtual reality, learners enter an online environment for a full experience. This online learning modality has become particularly popular for learning dangerous skills, such as flying a plane or performing surgery.

## ONLINE LEARNING MODALITIES:



**VIRTUAL  
CLASSROOMS**



**ELEARNING  
MODULES**



**MOBILE  
APP BASED**



**VIRTUAL  
REALITY**



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## Course materials as learning modalities

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One often neglected learning modality is the reference material with which learners receive knowledge. For example, some common course materials include:

### Videos

Even before it was easy to stream content, training videos have been used to deliver how-to or scenario based content.

### Workbooks

Course workbooks remain a great way to deliver important information that learners can reference on their own time, while also implementing activities that create engagement, such as fill-in-the-blank statements, diagrams, and tear-away quizzes.

### Manuals

Course manuals are important learning modalities for complex topics like safety operations, legal references, and other in-depth content. While manuals may not be as exciting as a microlearning burst, they remain an important resource for learners to return to as reference points.

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When designing your corporate training, keep in mind that multi modal learning - or multiple learning delivery methods for one learning objective - might be the best strategy for you.

In this blended learning approach, you map out your desired learning outcomes to several different learning modalities. That way, no matter whether your learner attends a classroom training, completes an elearning module, watches a video, or a combination, they achieve your desired learning outcomes. Meanwhile, your content is tailored to each modality of learning, so that each channel is optimized for your training objectives.

As a simple example, at Mimeo, we use cross-modal learning strategies for customer training. When you first sign up for an account, you are paired with a customer success manager, who acts as a platform mentor or coach to enable your team's admins and users with personal help. In our Superstar webinars, we provide overview tours of the entire platform for you to participate in at your own pace when not in the middle of creating a document. Finally, with our help videos and articles, we provide just-in-time training for you to learn how to do something specific on the Mimeo Print platform.

When thinking about your training program, consider using blended learning modalities to make sure that no matter how your learner chooses to access your content, they are able to achieve your desired learning outcomes.

Designing effective training is a more complex task than it was back when your only options were a classroom or video course. However, each new learning modality offers new opportunities to provide learning in a different, more effective way. That's why it is important to match your learning content and objectives to the right modalities so that your learners get the best content at the right time.

For help distributing your printed course materials to learners - whether they are remote or in the office - schedule a call with one of our experts.

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