

The Ultimate Guide to Adapting Your Training for Hybrid Learning

Hybrid learning (or using both in-person and virtual learning to train on learning objectives) has been around since the advent of elearning in the 1990s. Pre-2020, hybrid learning was often referred to as “blended learning” and included face-to-face instructor-led training complemented by elearning modules, microlearning bursts, video content, or other virtual experiences.

However, many training teams were only experimenting with hybrid learning when the COVID-19 pandemic forced the majority of the corporate workforce to work remotely. Suddenly, in-person training was no longer an option, and your organizations expected hybrid learning.

Now that we are a few years into the pandemic, you may be tasked with converting even more of your learning content into modalities that can be delivered in hybrid course formats. We decided to round up an ultimate guide (with links to even more resources) so you can kick off each conversion project on the right foot.

The first step in adapting your training for hybrid learning is to meet with your stakeholders to make sure you are all on the same page about what hybrid learning is and why you need it. For example, do your business partners understand that hybrid learning is more than just having employees sign into a video conference for 2 hours? Are they requesting a hybrid learning approach because they need to support a hybrid work environment, or because they are looking for a new way to meet a business outcome?

Start the conversation by making sure everyone agrees on definitions. Here are some lexicon questions you might want to review:

What is hybrid learning?

Hybrid learning is one of those terms that means something different to every learning and development practitioner. Here's the simple definition of hybrid learning: a method of delivering information that employs both traditional classroom-style training and virtual modalities.

Put another way: if you are training learners who are in-person and learners who are not in the same room as your facilitator, you're delivering hybrid learning.

Some instructional strategies for hybrid learning includes having remote learners video-conference into in-person classrooms (also known as hybrid classrooms), pairing virtual classroom environments with self-paced elearning, and following up from face-to-face training with microlearning checkpoints.

Let's dig in to clarify what hybrid learning means by considering some other terms:

What is the difference between virtual and hybrid learning?

Virtual and hybrid learning are similar, but they are not the same. In fact, virtual learning is one modality that you probably use as part of your hybrid learning program. Virtual learning refers to training that is delivered to learners who are not in the same place as the facilitator. It can include video classrooms, elearning modalities, microlearning bursts, and more.

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What is the difference between blended learning and hybrid learning?

Blended learning is a term that has been around for decades, while hybrid learning has become popular with the business changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. They are actually synonymous! They both mean that you use a mix of in-person and virtual training, and you probably use a mix of synchronous and asynchronous training, too.



So, when your business stakeholders ask “what does hybrid learning mean?” you can explain that it supports learners in different environments by leveraging multiple instructional modalities.

Once you’re on the same page about definitions, you’ll want to have a frank conversation about why or why not hybrid learning is a good fit to meet their desired business outcomes. After they have explained their objectives, start discussing the pros and cons of hybrid learning.

Here are some points you might want to bring up.

Benefits of Hybrid Learning

Ability to join the class from anywhere

- **Learner advantage:** They can fit the training session into their schedule without having to commute to a specific office
- **L&D department advantage:** you can offer more training more cost effectively, since you don’t need to cover anyone’s travel

Opportunity to offer more flexible training

- **Learner advantage:** They no longer have to take a whole day or two in order to participate in the training. They can interact with the content in various formats in the moments when they are ready to learn, making it more likely it will be effective for them.
- **L&D department advantage:** You can offer more effective training that reaches more of your learner population

Hybrid learning in any form comes with great advantages to both your L&D team and the learners.

More accessible training

- **Learner advantage:** When participating in hybrid environments, it is more likely the content will be made accessible for different learning or physical abilities (such as captioned videos for hard of hearing) or different languages .
- **L&D department advantage:** You can offer more effective training to more niches of the learning population.

That said, converting your in-person training to include virtual components comes with a few pitfalls, too.

BENEFITS OF HYBRID LEARNING



JOIN THE CLASS FROM ANYWHERE



MORE FLEXIBLE TRAINING



MORE ACCESIBLE TRAINING

Hybrid Learning Takes Time to Do Well

Most organizations do not have the resources to produce virtual learning according to best practices, so it is not effective. Virtual learning takes time, money, and expertise to execute well. Ken Blanchard's [L&D in a Hybrid World](#) report shows that 53% of L&D professionals are dissatisfied with their virtual training offerings and feel they are less effective than in-person offerings. Virtual training requires a significant investment in time to develop well. Cindy Hugget's [State of Virtual Training](#) report shows it takes 12.5 hours of development to create 1 hour of interactive virtual training.

Zoom-Fatigue Extends to Training

Synchronous virtual training contributes to video call fatigue and sees a decrease in learner engagement. In Ken Blanchard's [L&D in a Hybrid World 2022](#) report, one anecdote included, "Active participation during class and attendance overall is down. People say they will just watch them later."

Hybrid Learning is Not as Social

Learners have trouble engaging with each other and the facilitator in virtual environments, making it a more isolated experience. In the Ken Blanchard report, L&D professionals identified features that make virtual learning more like face-to-face training as the top three features they want to improve: more learner engagement, more social interaction, and more learning touchpoints over time.

As part of this conversation, you might want to share some real-world examples to answer the question of "how does hybrid learning work?" Take a look at Cindy Huggett's [State of Virtual Training](#) report for hard stats about what others in the industry consider virtual learning - and stay tuned for our podcast, [The Secret Society of Success](#), which will dive into what hybrid learning looks like at various organizations!

Once you and your stakeholders have agreed on the definition and goals of your new hybrid learning program, it is time to roll up your sleeves and get to work. There are tons of instructional design resources available discussing the theory of hybrid learning available ([including this complimentary on-demand webinar](#)), so we'll limit this list to a few key principles.

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you adapt your face-to-face training content for a hybrid learning population:

Keep Synchronous Sessions Short

When learners are not isolated in a conference room with you, it is harder to keep their attention. Even learners in an office might have trouble dedicating time to the training, as this anecdote from Cindy Huggett's report shows: “[quote]” Think about ways to shorten your synchronous learning sessions so that they only have to commit to thirty or sixty minutes of distraction-free time.

Offer Offline Options

Remote learners do not always have access to reliable internet connections. Consider supplementing online materials with hard copy training collateral like manuals, worksheets, or notebooks. (We know this sounds like a huge administrative task, but with online document printing services like Mimeo, your manual printing becomes a simple “order and deliver” item on your to-do list.”

Match Modality to Learning Objectives

One great benefit of hybrid learning is that learners have more control to choose the type of content that helps them learn best. Make sure you match the learning objective to the learning modality so that you are not doing franchise training on how to set up brand-approved signs with a complicated elearning module when an instruction video would work, and that you're not attempting soft skills learning like empathy training with short how-to videos. For more on the theory behind matching content to modality, watch our [complimentary on-demand webinar](#) with Jonathan Halls.

The data shows that hybrid learning is here to stay. It supports learners who are in various environments and who need options for interacting with your learning content. That said, we know that adapting your training for a hybrid classroom or hybrid environment is a daunting task.

If you need help with the print and delivery of documents to your learners (either residences or office locations), we're here to make it a simple click-and-order experience. Reach out to set up your free account!