



What is Blended Learning?

Definition, Benefits, and Uses

The transition from in-person instruction to eLearning isn't slowing down anytime soon, and it has provided great opportunities and flexibility for learners worldwide. However, many skills are still best taught in-person, and it is all too easy to create a disjointed learning environment in which online and live classes fail to complement each other.

Blended learning can help integrate these two learning approaches so they reinforce one another. Let's dive into how blended learning works and how it can be used to provide a more comprehensive and cohesive learning environment.

Blended Learning Defined



Blended learning is a physical-digital hybrid approach to education, in which some portion of the learning is done through in-person instruction and the rest with eLearning tools.

Blended learning is not simply two parallel training methods. Rather, it is intended to tightly integrate in-person and online instruction within the broader **learning ecosystem** so that learners can seamlessly transition their course material between online and in-person instruction while maintaining a cohesive learning experience. Blended learning is the best way to bridge the gap between traditional instruction and eLearning while addressing the reality that adult learning is not one size fits all.

For instance, an employee may review online media remotely and then come to an in-person training session to discuss the same material with colleagues or shadow someone to see the practical application of the material in the workplace. You might **implement a leadership development program** that combines eLearning self-study, instructor led training (ILT), social learning, and executive mentoring together with ongoing digital assessments to measure progress. You can even **offer product training to your sales team** using a combination of ILT, scenario-based training, and eLearning to boost their performance and your bottom line.

Why Use Blended Learning?

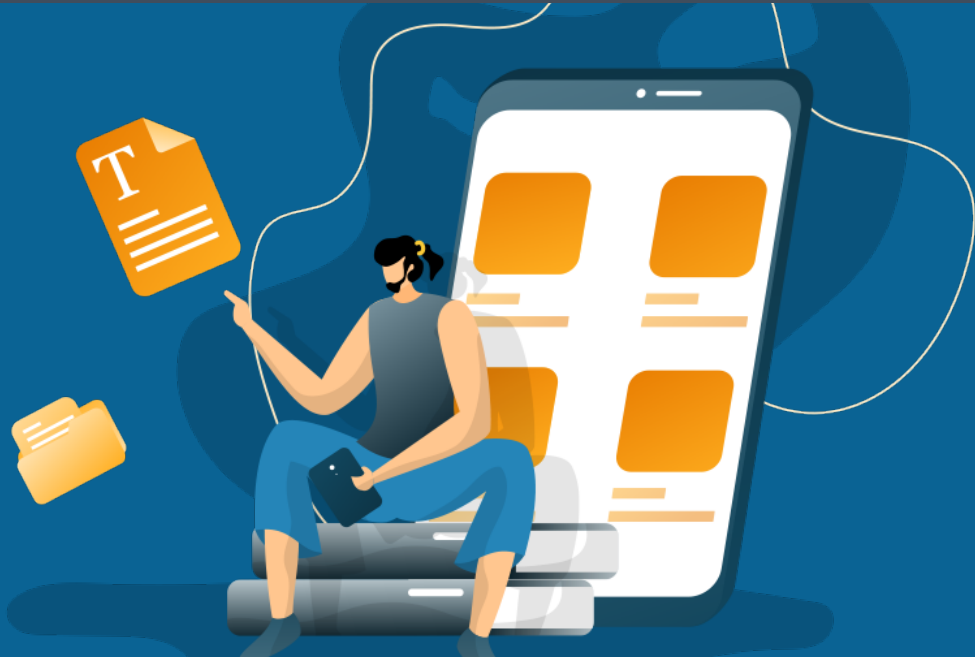


Studies have shown that blended learning can **improve learner performance** relative to both in-person and online only learning environments, indicating that using a hybrid approach improves the overall learning experience.

Here are just a few of the benefits to adopting a blended learning approach:

- **Flexibility to support various learning styles.** In-class discussions and collaborative environments are great for reinforcing course material and allow employees to grasp it in a more tangible way. However, as people have different learning styles, online media course material can allow learners to move through the material at their own pace before coming in to work with their colleagues.
- **Cost reductions.** In-person instruction requires space for all the employees and a certain number of trainers at a specific student-to-teacher ratio. A blended learning environment reduces some of these requirements by pushing a portion of the course online. The in-person courses can then better utilize the time and space to allow for fewer required resources, thus reducing overall cost.
- **Better learner engagement and understanding.** Blended learning lets you deliver your content in whatever way makes the most sense for the subject and your audience. Learners can get the basics of something like automotive repair through online instruction, come in for in-person demonstrations as needed to reinforce their knowledge, and confirm their understanding through a combination of digital exams and live skill tests. By matching the method to the material, your learners will be more engaged and retain more information.
- **Learn from anywhere, anytime.** With the material hosted online, learners can access it when and where they choose, free from the restrictions of a physical class setting.

Tools for Blended Learning



There are many online tools that can be used in a blended learning environment. For example, webinars, videos, slide presentations, and quizzes can all be easily hosted online for employees to access and work on remotely.

However, these tools are insufficient for completely integrating the online and physical learning environments and reaping the benefits of blended learning. To avoid the otherwise inevitable disjunction between online and in-person learning, you need to manage them in a single platform.

That's where a **learning management system (LMS)** comes in. An LMS can help to bridge the online and offline worlds by providing dynamic and collaborative learning and administrative tools that allow both employees and trainers to manage the whole lifecycle of a course.

For example, an LMS can be utilized to facilitate on-the-job training (OJT). The employee may conclude an **online course** with an in-person task that is monitored and evaluated by a mentor or instructor. After the task is completed, the observer can input their feedback and assessment results into an online questionnaire that automatically becomes part of the employee's record and can be utilized for further progress in the course. Administrators can even use LMS reporting tools to monitor the overall efficacy of such programs.

An LMS can also host collaborative online environments such as user communities, walls, and feeds. By doing so, employees can mimic the social environment of a physical class when they're working remotely. While the in-person classes are still very valuable and allow for hands-on application, these online collaborative tools are great for extending the conversations past the bounds of the physical classroom.

Make Blended Learning Easy with an LMS



Blended learning allows employees and instructors to enjoy the benefits of both online and physical education. They can combine the efficiencies of eLearning while still getting the personal and collaborative aspects of in-person learning. An LMS can help to tightly integrate these two environments so that they foster a seamless learning process regardless of where the learners are located.

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