Hybrid classes- the modern paradigm in teaching english

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Rezumat

Invățarea mixtă reprezintă procesul asimilării a diverse stiluri de învățare, care se pot realiza prin intermediul resurselor fizice și virtuale mixte. Stilurile de predare/ învățare se referă la numeroasele modalități în care învață oamenii. Prin intermediul învățării mixte, acest lucru poate fi realizat prin crearea unei varietăți de sarcini de învățare și activități, utilizând tehnologia, instructorul și interacțiunea de tip "de la egal la egal". Instructorul se găsește apoi în poziția de a asista mai degrabă elevii în utilizarea competențelor informatice și a aplicațiilor, accesarea internetului, și de a-i încuraja să fie cursanți independenți. Învățarea mixtă cere timp pentru ca atât instructorul cât și cel care învață să se poată adapta la acest concept relativ nou în furnizarea de instruire.

Hybrid class is a term that concludes lessons as courses "in which a big part of the learning activities have been moved online," a mixture of traditional classroom and Internet instruction (Garnham and Kaleta). Instructional time traditionally spent in the classroom is reduced and replaced with online learning activities. A hybrid class is a special course for its novelty and value and it is also synonymous to blended learning. "Hybrid" or "Blended" are names commonly used to describe the integration of teacher- student relationship and computer – student "relationship". **Blended learnin**g is a formal education 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 or pace. While still attending a "brick-and-mortar" school structure, face-to-face classroom methods are combined with online activities. Proponents of blending learning cite the opportunity for data collection and customization of instruction and assessment as two major benefits of this approach. Schools with blended learning models may also choose to reallocate resources to boost student achievement outcomes.

The ultimate goal of hybrid instruction is to combine the most effective instructional aspects of the traditional classroom with the most effective instructional aspects of the virtual classroom "to promote active independent learning and reduce class seat time".

Using available computer-centered technologies, instructors use the hybrid model to redesign some course content into new online learning activities, such as discussion forums, case studies, tutorials, self-testing exercises, simulations, and online group collaborations.

Typically, a hybrid course will meet 50 percent of the time in the classroom and 50 percent online.

Likewise, 50 percent of the "contact hours" of a hybrid will meet online through a variety of learning activities. For example, face- to- face interaction between student and teacher can be alternated with requirement to complete online learning activities that will be equal to the class meeting. The online half will be different types of online assignments and will require the student to be an active learner.

To perform best in hybrid course, students should be able to do the following:

• have access to a modern computer that meets the minimum requirements and;

• be able to consistently access and navigate the internet, send and receive e-mails with attachments, communicate in a digital discussion/chat, use required document management software.

The Advantages

Instructors and professors are able to teach their courses differently in a hybrid format,

using technology to their advantage to reach more students with the material. Technology and the Internet are here to stay, and becoming more knowledgeable about both should be required of all students.

What the instructor loses by not being able to communicate with a student immediately and in person may be accounted for through the use of unique new methods of communication, such as online discussion boards and instant messaging in class-wide chat rooms. The instructor is also able to diversify their lectures with video and web clips, or point students to online aids that may supplement the reading and instruction.

A good hybrid course is able to address a variety of learning styles. Both those students who learn well independently and those who learn well in the classroom are able to excel in this type of class, as hybrid courses borrow from both of those learning environments. Proponents of hybrid courses say that students enrolled in such classes have higher success rates than those in both traditional and online classrooms.

The Disadvantages

A hybrid course could mean more work, for both the students enrolled and the instructors handling the planning of the classes. It takes much more time for both: student and teacher. Students used to spending a few hours in a lecture hall per week may need to get used to the idea that they'll need to keep up with an online component of a course as well, and the instructors are responsible for not only making their classroom instruction informative and dynamic, but coming up with virtual components of the same quality. Students should consider their motivations for enrolling in such a course, as it's rarely the easy option on the course log that some may believe it is.

Students must be prepared for a good deal of independent work and less reliance on the instructor when they have questions on a particular lesson or assignment. For some students online activities can be extremely challenging and they cannot cope with the online activities. To get the material done will take more time and effort and stress. Plus they can encounter problems managing their time or slowing down the assimilation process their work.

What are the most important things in a hybrid course? A teacher who is teaching a hybrid class should:
1. create a well -defined syllabus that sets student expectations;
2. define exactly what the outcomes are;
3. how students will be assessed;
4. when students need to be on line and how are they going to be assessed.

Learning Outcomes and Methods of Delivery

 As indicated above, the first step in designing a hybrid course involves developing/reviewing the course and module learning outcomes (opening with action verbs and indicating skills to be demonstrated upon course/module completion) and determining which outcomes are better suited to face to face instruction and which outcomes align with online instruction. Faculty should focus on the integration of face to face and online components as this connection is essential to avoid teaching two parallel but unconnected courses. Learning strategies well suited to the online environment include:
- Asynchronous discussions.
- Application of theory to personal and professional experiences.

- Case studies.
- Sharing news items.
- Peer review of work.
- Group work.
- Private group discussion board.
- Group synchronous chat tool.
- Application/file sharing area or tool.
- Guest Speakers on the discussion board.
- Wikis to collectively compile knowledge.
- Online self.
- Assessment quizzes.

These activities are included regularly in fully online courses. To be most effective, hybrid instructors should be trained in these and related online instructional methods including online discussion facilitation and evaluation techniques

Instructional methods:

- Create weekly checklists (assignment roadmaps) for students to ensure a smooth delivery and manageable workload.

- Clearly state what is due for each day/week. More structure is needed in hybrid and online course delivery.

- Develop an organized and consistent course site so that students can find face- to- face and online materials required for each session/module.

- Use a variety of assignment techniques such as individual submission, group work, discussion.

- Integrate a small number of synchronous sessions to elaborate on a complex topic or to serve as virtual office hours.

- Create materials to help students with technology and management changes.

Structures

The instructor lectures and facilitates class discussion in the face- to- face classes. Students complete online assignments based on these classroom activities. The online assignments are posted to asynchronous discussion forums for online discussion. Students prepare small group projects online, and they post them to discussion forums for debate and revision. Students then present the projects in the face- to- face class for final discussion and assessment. The instructor places online course content (text based lectures, articles, recordings) for students to review. Students use these preliminary online materials to engage in face to face small group activities. Subsequent asynchronous discussions take place in small group and class wide settings.

Students can benefit from hybrid classes in a variety of ways.

- Hybrid classes offer greater flexibility and convenience by allowing students to complete part of the course work from home.

- Students can interact more with their peers and instructor since there are multiple opportunities to do so in both a classroom and online environment.

- Hybrid classes provide opportunities for students to engage in active, participatory learning.

- Students have more time to engage and reflect on class work when it is presented online and reinforced in the classroom.

- Students can feel freer to participate in more class discussions since they can choose which environment – classroom or online – they are more comfortable in.

- Students can develop and enhance skills in time management, organization, and collaboration.

- Students have access to online class materials, discussions, and assignments.

- Students can gain computer literacy skills that will be valuable in future classes and the workplace.

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