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Hybrid learning in higher education system: A new frontier in pedagogical innovation

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Abstract

Hybrid Learning is also known as a mixed approach. It is a combination of face-to-face traditional teaching and online teaching at the same time. Also known as synchronous and asynchronous learning. Hybrid learning is a new and innovative approach for students in the present world.

Although current generations are digital natives, as they can explore, learn, and manage the technology that is necessary to them. In addition to making certain that students have dependable access to technology, for this, educational institutions also provide technical support services. By offering a variety of learning modalities, reducing limitations on time and space, and strengthening digital abilities, hybrid learning also benefits students in their pursuit of education.

Higher education may consider hybrid learning as a solution when there is a paucity of instructional space and the resources to use technology in the classroom. When attempting to build students' strengths and affirm their weaknesses, the hybrid learning model also takes into account for communication and teamwork between educators and learners. Through an online learning platform, students can complete their instructional tasks and receive feedback from their mentors.

Additionally, students can use the same platform to connect with teachers and classmates, as well as collaborate on online projects. Moreover, it is suggested that this model encourages and promotes students' technological skills growth so they can learn how to use tools and programs of certain software that could be helpful for their professional lives afterwards.

Keywords: Hybrid learning, new educational model, higher education, and educational technology

Introduction

The relevance of hybrid learning for current and future university education must be understood in the context of its evolution, which has been significantly marked by the pandemic, bringing numerous changes and adaptations worldwide. One of the main actions for post-pandemic educational contexts is linked to strengthening education as a common good, as well as valuing the teaching profession and fostering collaboration among university professors.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated the adoption of hybrid learning models in higher education institutions worldwide (Kanetaki, 2022) ^[12]. This study adds to the current discussion about the direction of higher education by providing useful suggestions for the development and application of synchronous hybrid models. Understanding the outlook of students will be key as educational institutions develop further, since it guarantees that creative solutions meet the various needs of students in the twenty-first century (Racheva & Forsyth, 2024) ^[19].

Hybrid learning, also known as blended learning, refers to combining e-learning (EL) based learning approaches with face-to-face or conventional learning approaches. In the world of education, this technique has only recently been used. The following is a summary of hybrid learning and how it can be used in the world of education (Krisna, 2024) ^[11].

Intending to improve and increase the flexibility of teaching and learning processes in university settings, this article offers theoretical and practical inputs as an approach guide for designing hybrid learning environments. In similar ways, it seeks to enable every educator to utilize the capabilities of digital technology in organizing, facilitating, and assessing learning activities to meet the educational goals using a student-centered learning strategy.

As Álvarez and Saborío (2025) found in their study by incorporating synchronous and asynchronous sessions along with online collaboration tools, a dynamic and continuous interaction between students and teachers is facilitated. This holistic planning not only supports the development of critical pedagogical competencies but also fosters a reflective and collaborative learning environment, essential for addressing the challenges of pedagogical mediation in the university context.

The ascent of hybrid learning in higher education

According to Elhassan *et al.* (2025), “the shift toward hybrid learning also reflects a broader trend of incorporating digital education methodologies to promote fairness, accessibility, and pedagogical integrity. Technology can be an efficient complement, not a replacement, resource to support the educational process.” Students' perceptions are also valuable in maximizing the educational benefits of curricula.

Krisna (2024) ^[11] concluded in his research that, the context of the high technology readiness that the group has demonstrated, providing additional training or resources that focus on the integration of technology in learning would be beneficial.

Additionally, supporting learners who need additional help in developing their technology skills will strengthen a successful hybrid learning experience. Although most of the informants have understood the benefits of hybrid learning in increasing learning flexibility and accessibility, further efforts may be needed to increase in-depth understanding of this concept. By strengthening this understanding, students can better utilize the potential of hybrid learning to enjoy optimal learning benefits (Krisna, 2024) ^[11].

Müller (2022), given the results and facts in his study, the research implicitly indicates which type of hybrid learning model proved to be the most effective in mastering the course outcome and successfully implementing and realizing teaching during COVID-19.

This research can serve as an example for other faculties, where it proves that with the introduction of an adequate hybrid learning model, verbal and nonverbal communication during the pandemic but also provides the opportunity to independently perform certain tasks and self-improvement. The possibility for the student to organize his/her workspace, but also to cooperate with other students and teachers in acquiring knowledge, and this can be achieved with a precisely designed hybrid model of learning.

Factors Encouraging Hybrid Learning Evolution

After COVID-19, digital technology has grown rapidly and has seen significant use in the field of Education. However, the growing acceptance of hybrid learning in higher education can also be responsible for a number of factors, which can be described as shown below:

- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Hybrid learning offers students the flexibility to balance their studies with other commitments, making education more accessible (Álvarez and Saborío, 2025). The adaptability of this model allows institutions to use this model as according to the diverse needs and learning styles of learners.
- **Technological Advancements:** The research suggests that there should be a synergy between students, parents, lecturers, and the campus to make the learning process by Hybrid Learning work successfully. Students must be high-spirited in following learning

both online and face-to-face. Lecturers must strictly prepare learning material and bring all learning devices into the classrooms, and the campus must prepare maximum facilities and equipment to ensure that such a process works as expected. (Nuruddin, 2024).

- **Pandemic-Induced Shift:** According to Kanetaki (2022) ^[12], Hybrid learning spaces were initially created in response to increased pandemic cases among students. The majority of participants have welcomed them, as they offer a high level of freedom in terms of physical presence. The first-year students have faced some hurdles during learning with this model due to the suddenly shifted educational paradigm.
- **Establishing a supportive learning environment:** Hybrid learning promotes active involvement, allowing peer interaction, and providing timely feedback that can improve the overall learning outcome. This would also be beneficial for students. This can be achieved through virtual social events and collaborative learning.

Hybrid Learning: What makes it an innovative educational approach?

This educational model has gained prominence due to its ability to adapt to diverse learner needs, leverage technology, and enhance student engagement. Online methods of teaching support and facilitate learning-teaching activities, but there is a direct need to weigh the pros and cons of technology and harness its potential.

Disasters and pandemics such as COVID-19 can create a lot of chaos and tensions; therefore, there is an important need to study the technology deeply and with due diligence to balance these fears and tensions amidst such a crisis (Dhawan, 2020).

However, it seems to have become a mainstream term that describes “modern education” that aims to take advantage of online technologies. Blended learning is, for example, used to describe the use of learning management systems as a complement to campus education and the use of digital technology in K-12 classrooms (Hrastinski, 2019).

Thus, we can say, the success of hybrid learning depends on several critical factors: digital infrastructure, teacher preparedness, and institutional support. Without equitable access to technology and proper training for educators, the benefits of hybrid learning can be unevenly distributed, potentially widening educational disparities (OECD, 2021). Aligned with all the experts' reviews towards hybrid learning, the following are the key characteristics of hybrid learning that Conclude by the researchers conclude to define it as an innovative approach to education:

- **Integration of Online and In-Person Instruction:** Hybrid learning integrates traditional classroom sessions with online learning activities at the same time and place. It can be said that it is the updated version of blended learning. This combination allows for a more diverse and engaging learning experience to occur during the learning process.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Hybrid learning offers students greater control over their learning experience, allowing them to choose when and where they learn. This flexibility can be particularly beneficial for students with diverse needs and commitments.
- **Technology's Utilization:** In the Hybrid Learning Model, educators utilize advanced technology to enhance learner interactions. This allows students to

collaborate with this technological framework, thereby ensuring that all participants derive substantial benefits from this model.

- **Encourage students' engagement:** Hybrid learning aims to foster student engagement by overcoming the limitations faced by students in the traditional classroom and promoting collaborative learning or group learning, and autonomy

What are the Positive Aspects of Hybrid Learning in Higher Education?

Hybrid learning provides a multitude of advantages for students, faculty, and institutions, thereby enabling its extensive application across all educational platforms and every stage of the educational level.

- **Improved Flexibility and Accessibility:** Hybrid learning provides students with enhanced flexibility and accessibility, allowing them to balance their studies with other commitments. This flexibility can be particularly beneficial for students who are working, have families, or live in remote areas. The use of online learning platforms also makes education more accessible to students with disabilities or other special needs (Elhassan *et al.*, 2025) ^[7].
- **Improved Student Participation and Interaction:** Hybrid learning can improve student engagement and interaction by providing a more diverse and stimulating learning environment. Online activities, such as discussion forums and collaborative projects, can foster a sense of community and encourage students to participate actively in their learning. Face-to-face sessions provide opportunities for direct interaction with instructors and peers, enhancing the learning experience.
- **Cultivation of Digital Skills:** Although hybrid learning promotes the development of digital skills, which are essential for both teachers' and learners' success in today's digital world (Elhassan *et al.*, 2025) ^[7]. In other words, we can say that students learn to use various digital tools and platforms, enhancing their digital literacy during the process of learning and also preparing them for the demands of the modern workforce.
- **Increased Learning Outcomes:** The Study has shown that hybrid learning can lead to increased learning outcomes compared to traditional face-to-face instruction (Salcedo, 2022) ^[21]. Furthermore, the combination of online and face-to-face learning can cater to diverse learning styles and provide students with more opportunities to engage with the material for their assistance.
- **Efficient Use of Resources:** The present time is technology-based so there is a need to use online and electronic resources effectively. Although we have many substitutes for technology resources, it is more important to learn about these resources. As time is modernized, the teachers and learners also modernize. Due to this, every teacher should know the effective use of resources in their classrooms for the maximum benefit of students.

What are the Challenges of Hybrid Learning in Higher Education?

Every aspect has two sides; one is positive, while the other presents negative consequences. Despite its numerous advantages, hybrid learning or Blended learning also has certain challenges within the field of education, which we can understand through the following points discussed below:

- **Technological Limitations:** Technological limitations, such as unreliable internet access and lack of access to

devices, can pose a significant challenge to the implementation of hybrid learning. These limitations can create disparities in access to education and hinder student engagement.

- **Increased Workload:** In the modern era, it can be said that Hybrid learning may help in increasing the workload for lecturers, who are required to design and deliver both online and face-to-face instruction (Alharthy, 2025) ^[3]. Lecturers may also need to provide additional support to students who are struggling with the technology or the online learning environment.
- **Skill Gaps in Navigating Digital Platforms:** Skill gaps in navigating digital platforms can be a barrier to effective hybrid learning for both students and lecturers (Alharthy, 2025) ^[3]. Students may need training on how to use the LMS and other digital tools, and lecturers may need professional development to enhance their online teaching skills.
- **Maintaining Student Engagement:** The mostly faced issue for the instructor during the teaching-learning process is that he or she can face some hurdles during maintaining student engagement in asynchronous components of hybrid learning, because of poor network connection or lack of computer knowledge can be challenging. (Alharthy, 2025) ^[3]. Due to this, students may feel isolated or disconnected from the course, and it can be difficult to create a sense of community in an online environment.
- **Assessment Complexities:** Assessment complexities can arise in hybrid learning environments, particularly when it comes to ensuring academic integrity (Alharthy, 2025) ^[3]. Lecturers may need to develop new assessment strategies that are appropriate for both online and face-to-face learning.
- **Technostress:** The continuous change in modalities and the adaptation of new digital tools can lead to technostress among students (Abbas *et al.*, 2023). This technostress can negatively affect academic performance and lead to a lack of participation in course activities.

Hybrid Learning: Embracing an Exciting Future

Hybrid learning is likely to remain a significant educational model in higher education, even after the COVID-19 pandemic subsides (Said & Refaat, 2021) ^[20]. The flexibility, accessibility, and potential for increased learning outcomes make it an attractive option for students, faculty, and institutions.

As technology continues to evolve, hybrid learning models will likely become even more sophisticated and personalized, offering students a truly customized learning experience. The focus should be on continuous improvement and modification of hybrid and remote learning approaches to improve the quality of higher education by offering opportunities for professional development and lifetime learning (Elhassan *et al.*, 2025) ^[7]. As Behzad *et al.* (2022) ^[4] described about Hybrid learning (HL) is a novel educational model that incorporates both the physical as well as the distance-based online learning system. Specifically, much wider application platforms for the HL model are the degree programs that are offered at different universities.

An important aspect of this model is that it is independent of the type of degree or institute, and can be equally applied at any institute by having the appropriate resources, and by following mandatory as well as the recommended set of rules.

Why is this approach considered a new frontier in pedagogical innovation?

Numerous educational institutions have adopted hybrid learning as a strategic initiative to bridge the gap between traditional classroom teaching and digital learning.

These initiatives not only promote student-centered learning but also align with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, UGC Draft, and Ministry of Education Recommendations, which emphasize digital integration and academic flexibility.

- The Ministry of Education (MoE) has recognized hybrid learning as a transformative approach to modernizing the Indian education system. Although MoE has provided several key recommendations to encourage the integration of technology with traditional classroom teaching, such as DIKSHA, SWAYAM, e-Pathshala, and NROER platform, should be adopted to facilitate Hybrid Learning.
- University Grant Commission (UGC) also cleared about the blended mode of learning, in which 40% of a course can be delivered through online mode and the remaining in traditional or offline mode. It also emphasized to use of digital platforms like SWAYAM Prabha and the National Digital Library of India.
- National Education Policy (2020) promotes "technology-enabled learning" as a tool to ensure continuity, accessibility, and personalization of education across all levels. It supports the development of digital infrastructure, such as SWAYAM, DIKSHA, and e-Pathshala, for encouraging online and blended modes of curriculum delivery to meet the diverse needs of learners.

Conclusion

Hybrid learning represents a significant evolution in higher education, offering a flexible and adaptable model that combines the best aspects of face-to-face and online instruction. While challenges remain, the benefits of hybrid learning are numerous, including enhanced flexibility, improved student engagement, development of digital skills, and increased learning outcomes.

By addressing the challenges and implementing effective strategies, higher education institutions can create hybrid learning environments that meet the needs of diverse learners and prepare them for success in the 21st century (Elhassan *et al.*, 2025) ^[7]. The key is to continuously improve and modify hybrid and remote learning approaches by offering opportunities for professional development and lifetime learning (Elhassan *et al.*, 2025) ^[7]. As technology continues to evolve, hybrid learning will play an increasingly important role in shaping the future of higher education (Kutkina & Grinevich, 2022) ^[13].

Brika *et al.* (2022) ^[5] have also shown in a bibliometric analysis that the findings of their study will assist in the field of e-learning in understanding the current state of e-learning and identifying the different research trends in light of COVID-19. Additionally, it will serve as the beginning

point for new research during the COVID-19 crisis, which will examine various problems and trends.

The research results obtained are according with the initial assumption that the application of digital technology in hybrid learning is categorized as effective for applying to higher education (Fransisca & Saputri, 2023) ^[8]. The development of effective assessment and feedback mechanisms for both in-person and online students could enhance the learning experience while providing valuable insights into student progress.

The establishment of mentoring programs wherein experienced educators guide their peers in implementing Hybrid teaching may also build confidence and share effective strategies (Sedek & Mohd, 2025) ^[22].

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