

The Impact of Hybrid Learning Models on the Development of Digital Competencies and Managerial Skills in IT Students

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Abstract- This article examines the impact of hybrid learning models on the development of digital competencies and managerial skills in IT students. Hybrid learning combines face-to-face and online instruction, adapting to the diverse needs of students. A 2023 survey showed that 69% of students prefer hybrid or online learning, while more than half of instructors prefer face-to-face instruction. Hybrid learning helps students develop digital skills using various tools and platforms, some of which are affordable and useful. Educators must choose the appropriate hybrid model based on class size and student needs. Smaller groups may benefit from different models than larger ones. A former IT student shared that a quiet, distraction-free environment at home helps her concentrate better, but group interactions in physical classes are also valuable for sharing ideas. Overall, hybrid learning brings comfort, flexibility, and offers endless possibilities that will greatly help students improve the skills needed for their daily lives and prepare them for the more challenging realities of the real world. This would require them to fully adapt to their surroundings and handle any problem they encounter. In this rapidly changing community and technology, being familiar with different online and technical tools is a great advantage. Most jobs today, if not all, require at least basic knowledge or basic computer literacy. A financial manager once said, "I can't even imagine working without my phone and computer. I remember one time I forgot to bring the envelope with the documents needed for our meeting that afternoon. My agents were already waiting in the meeting room when I realized I didn't have it in my bag! Thankfully, I made an electronic copy the night before, scanned them, and saved the files on my drive. In addition, I also sent them to my secretary's email. I actually had too many copies, so I just

printed them right away. No hassle going back and forth from the office to the house. I saved time, gas, and the meeting went smoothly." We may have experienced this situation ourselves, forgetting something important. There are several things we can learn from the manager's experience. First, it wouldn't have been possible if she hadn't scanned the documents the night before. Through her years of experience, she developed the initiative to make copies of all documents, especially the important ones. But she also couldn't have done it if she had no knowledge of what applications or tools she should use for scanning documents. You can't just take a picture of a document and expect it to be in document form just using your phone's camera. These scenarios are just one of many examples and cases that show the benefits of cultivating work-related skills while still studying. In the future, as newcomers to the IT industry, these students will be able to keep up with their seniors and do their jobs smoothly. Ilyn and another former IT student, both of whom experienced hybrid learning, are just a few of the many individuals who have benefited from this method of instruction. May this article be of any help to students who are considering their options. In the end, it purely depends on us when, where, and how we want to learn. The important thing is to know and carefully choose what is best for us. After all, we know what is best for ourselves. Taking the time to meditate and think through all our choices is the best thing we can do to avoid regrets and confusion in the future.

RESEARCH METHODS

To examine the impact of hybrid learning models on the development of digital competencies and

managerial skills in IT students, the following methods will be used:

1. Literature Review: Examine relevant literature (scientific articles, books, reports) on hybrid learning, digital competencies, and managerial skills. Analyze existing studies and research on this topic.

2. Survey: Create and distribute a survey for IT students participating in hybrid learning. Focus on their experiences with hybrid learning, their perception of the development of digital competencies and managerial skills, preferred forms of instruction, satisfaction with technical equipment, and support from the school.

3. Interviews: Conduct in-depth interviews with selected IT students, educators, and possibly representatives of companies that employ graduates of IT fields. Obtain more detailed information about their views on hybrid learning, benefits and challenges, impacts on skills development, and preparation for practice.

4. Case Studies: Detailed analysis of specific cases of hybrid learning implementation in selected IT fields. Examine the models, tools, and pedagogical approaches used and their impact on the development of students' digital competencies and managerial skills.

5. Data Analysis: Quantitative and qualitative analysis of data obtained from surveys, interviews, and case studies.

Look for connections, trends, and patterns in the data. Draw conclusions and recommendations for practice.

Supplementary Methods: Observation: Observe teaching in hybrid mode and interactions between students and educators. Analysis of study materials: Evaluate the content and form of study materials used in hybrid learning.

Selection of Respondents:

Students of IT fields with different preferences for forms of instruction (face-to-face, online, hybrid). Educators teaching in hybrid mode.

Representatives of companies that employ graduates of IT fields. The research will be conducted in accordance with ethical principles, and the anonymity of respondents will be ensured. The obtained data will be processed and interpreted in order to contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of hybrid learning on the development of digital competencies and managerial skills in IT students and to formulate recommendations for improving the quality of the educational process in this field.

I. INTRODUCTION TO HYBRID LEARNING MODELS

Definition and Types of Hybrid Learning

A lot of learning methods nowadays are being used to cater each student's needs. Their circumstances vary and so is their learning styles, pacing and preferences. One of the widely used methods ever since was the in-person classes or the traditional method where students and educators meet in a classroom face to face. However, as the technology evolves, lots of online learning methods surfaced which made the lives of both teachers and students more convenient and hassle-free. As mentioned, there are different circumstances to be taken into consideration. This is where the Hybrid Learning Method takes place. It gives students the option whether they'll be learning remotely from home or attend the classes in-person. According to EDSCOOP [1], a 2023 survey found that 31 percent of students prefer face-to-face instruction over the other modes, but the remaining 69% prefer fully online, hybrid, or blended learning options. However, on the instructors survey, there were 55% (which was more than half) of them who prefer in-person classes.

Hybrid Learning is an educational model wherein some students attend the class virtually while some attend in a classroom setting. This is like a combination of in-person and online classes. However, this model needs to be structured carefully so that each class format can both benefit from it. Technical issues and accessibility issues are still inevitable for some students which is probably the reason why some students prefer to attend the classes in-person and learn together with the students who attend virtually. Hybrid learning is often confused with blended

learning as both sometimes share the same instructional resources or elements. However, in blended learning, students are only required to work on online exercises sometimes and probably watch instructional videos on their own.

II. IMPACT ON DIGITAL COMPETENCIES

Tools

First of all, IT students can hone their digital skills as they apply these on their actual learning process. The use of many devices and any software applications is a fresh start for them to actually explore the world of IT. In the previous paragraphs, the importance of knowing the different tools and resources was being highlighted. An article by Shera Bariuad (a workplace learning expert with a background in planning performance-driven solutions for various business industries), has a list of some Hybrid Learning Tools for 2024 that might still be useful in 2025. She also even shared each of their key features and how much they cost. [2]

1. SC Training (formerly EdApp)

Ranked one of the top free hybrid learning tools on the market today, SC Training (formerly EdApp) takes pride in its powerful features designed for managing instructor-led and self-paced online courses. Among the best ones are the intuitive authoring tool and interactive templates, which can help you make interactive courses.

Even better, you can combine microlearning with gamification with these tools, and offer your courses in the form of smartphone games.

For a self-paced learning experience, SC Training (formerly EdApp) applies a mobile learning strategy, making your courses adaptable to any device, like smartphones. This allows your learners to take their training at the most convenient time and place, especially when their schedules are already hectic enough for long training sessions.

In a hybrid learning environment, SC Training (formerly EdApp) acknowledges that there are training sessions that are better done in a face-to-face setup. So, they developed the Practical Assessments tool, which is a checklist-style assessment feature designed for in-person training. You can use this tool

to observe and assess your learners' practical knowledge before or after completing their online lessons. This feature can be created as a lesson within a course, giving you the opportunity to develop a full hybrid learning experience for your learners.

Key features:

- Microlearning
- Gamification
- Mobile learning
- Practical assessments

Cost: Free (up to 10 users)

2. ProProfs

ProProfs LMS is a gamified hybrid learning tool that enables you to foster an interactive and collaborative learning environment. This LMS software allows you to create new educational content made from scratch or customize existing courses from its online training course library. To increase engagement, you can also add gamification elements including brain games, learning paths, and quizzes. While giving your employees the opportunity to learn at their own pace, you can still foster collaborative learning through virtual classrooms and discussion forums.

Key features:

- Gamification elements
- Easy online course authoring
- Virtual classroom
- Discussion forum

Cost: Free (within a 15-day trial), paid subscription starts at 4.96 (per feature monthly)

3. Code of Talent

Code of Talent is an excellent hybrid learning tool that can help you set up agile courses and training programs for employees in fast and dynamic business environments. Here, you can flexibly design your instructional courses in bite-size for greater retention, add gamified elements for higher engagement, and set microlearning missions for organized self-paced learning. It also supports collaborative and social learning features to broaden your employees' viewpoints and further accelerate their learning progress. Code of Talent is easily accessible through

mobile devices, which means training can be delivered anytime and anywhere needed.

Key features:

- Bite-sized courses
- Gamified content
- Microlearning missions
- Social learning features
- Mobile accessibility

Cost: Available upon request

4. Accessplanit

Accessplanit is a one-stop business training platform that allows you to streamline and automate training processes while creating high-quality training materials and exceptional learning experiences for customers. With its course management feature, you can efficiently manage course and training events, whether online or in-person, making it compatible with a blended learning strategy. It also offers flexible training solutions, which include face-to-face training sessions, webinars, virtual learning, as well as short courses for in-house training, public sessions, and employee sessions.

Key features:

- Course management for the course and training events, such as face-to-face, web, eLearning, and blended learning
- Automation tools
- Short courses

Cost: Price available upon quote request

5. HireRoad

HireRoad is an LMS that bridges offline learning and online learning to create a dynamic and collaborative learning platform managed by both the training managers and employees themselves. To support a hybrid learning environment, it provides different tools and features such as lessons with task assignments, on-the-job training events, and learning paths consisting of multiple courses. It also facilitates social learning through user communities and walls and feeds.

Key features:

- Lessons with task assignments

- On-the-job training events and performance evaluations
- Learning paths
- Community walls and feeds

Cost: Paid subscription starts at ,128 USD (up to 100 users monthly)

6. Violet LMS

Violet LMS is a full-service digital training provider that helps you organize different training programs, like employee training, onboarding, sales training, compliance training, distribution training, and even customer training. This LMS enables blended learning through features like an external trainer management system and a venue management system. To strengthen employee knowledge, you can take advantage of interactive courses and virtual classroom sessions. With the adaptable training plan this platform provides, you'll also have access to a visual calendar of priorities and tasks. You can also track and measure results for each individual through a powerful reporting tool.

Key features:

- Trainer management system
- Venue management system
- Virtual classrooms
- Visual calendar
- Powerful reporting tool

Cost: Price upon request

7. Zoho Showtime

Zoho Showtime is a comprehensive training solution that can help you run and manage your employee training programs more efficiently. Using this platform, you can provide your employees with self-paced courses and facilitate collaborative learning through peer interaction. If you're planning to include synchronous online training sessions, one awesome feature of this platform that you can use is its virtual classroom. Within this feature, your employees can access additional tools like whiteboards, polls, and in-app messaging that allow them to discuss learning and share knowledge among colleagues.

Key features:

- Whiteboards
- Virtual classroom

- In-app messaging
- Polls

Cost: 15-day free trial, Single user basic plan starts at .83 USD/month

8. Tovuti LMS

Tovuti LMS is an employee training software that incorporates features dedicated to providing an efficient training process for managers and an effective learning experience for your learners. It integrates a course authoring tool that enables you to build and deploy interactive courses, as well as track interactions with your course content. To support your hybrid learning strategy, you can use its virtual classroom feature so you can set up synchronous training sessions. It also gives learners the opportunity to discuss with groups or have one-on-one interactions with an instructor. Your learners will also have access to a personalized portal that shows their badges, certificates, leaderboard rank, checklists, assigned courses, and upcoming training sessions.

Key features:

- Course authoring tool
- Virtual classroom
- Personalized learner experience
- Analytics tool

Cost: Price available through a quote request

9. Gyrus

Gyrus is a cloud-based LMS designed with AI-driven intuitive features, helping you bring world-class training and development to your employees. As a hybrid learning solution, you can develop training materials delivered through various digital formats, including e-learning videos, webinars and documents, and virtual classrooms. Additionally, they provide support in traditional onboarding and training activities, as well as accessibility anytime and anywhere across any device. Its smart learning features are also optimized for building customized learning programs for various groups of employees and streamlining organizational compliance training.

Key features:

- Various digital e-learning formats
- Webinars

- Virtual classrooms

Cost: Paid subscription starts at 00 USD (monthly) and 000 USD (annually)

10. Blackboard

Blackboard is a digital learning platform that is equipped with a powerful range of teaching tools and solutions that revolutionize online teaching and learning. Here, you can create online courses, organize tasks, and even monitor your learners' progress. You can also host live training and connect with your learners in real-time using its virtual classroom solution. But unlike your usual video conferencing software, it also offers interactive whiteboards, hand-raise notifications, breakout groups, and chat features. These tools make the collaboration among your teams more fun and exciting.

Key features:

- Course authoring
- Virtual classroom
- Interactive whiteboards

Cost: Available upon request

11. Sana

Sana is an AI-powered hybrid learning software that can build training courses fit for all of your employees. The platform will empower your teams to leverage their expertise and learning to meet goals with the help of AI tools. What this means is that Sana will help your teams create immersive and impactful training relevant to each member of your company.

It's perfect for a hybrid setup because it already integrates into systems you probably already use: Google Workspace, Notion, Github, Slack, and more.

Cost: Starts at 7200 EUR/year

Key features:

- AI-assisted content generation
- Automated training ideas
- Collaborative workspaces
- Google, Notion, Github, Slack integration

12. Degreed

Another great AI-supported hybrid learning tool is Degreed. It uses algorithms to create personalized learning experiences by analyzing learner profiles, progress, and performance. Watch as the tool recommends courses, books, podcasts, and other learning materials to help your teams achieve their learning goals.

Key features:

- AI-powered skill analytics
- Personalized learning experiences
- Human capital management

The price difference is noticeable for some tools according to their available features. This is why tool exploration is essential. There are tools that are free but only for a specific period of time or for only a specific number of people. There are also some that can be used for an unlimited amount of time by a greater number of people but are costly. However, there are also underrated tools that have an affordable price and yet are already very functional. Tools that can carry-out basic tasks and already have the necessary features for a hybrid learning environment, are useful most especially for students who are on a budget and don't want to spend too much for a monthly payment subscription.

Online Learning Platforms and Resources

There are many hybrid learning models that can create an opportunity for them to develop and utilize their skills according to what is needed.

In fact, a strategic UX leader, Aniket, wrote on his LinkedIn page that there are five hybrid learning models that educators should know about. [3]

1. The Differentiated Model

In this model, both in-class and at-home students attend the same lessons and often interact. But, the activities and assignments for both groups are adapted slightly. The differentiated model is possibly the most basic one, but it works pretty well. It keeps all students on the same page and makes the teaching process simpler for educators. Here, learning is synchronous.

2. The Multi-track Model

At the other end of the spectrum, we have the multi-track hybrid learning model. As the name suggests, students move in parallel tracks. Although the classes are the same, there is no interaction between the in-person and online students. There are three tracks that students can opt for:

- Virtual Synchronous Track
- Online Asynchronous Track
- Face-to-Face Track

The virtual synchronous group will often attend the same lessons as the face-to-face group with video-conferencing software. But, they will not interact with them at any point. The online asynchronous group, on the other hand, will work independently. Most of their lessons will be recordings they can view at their convenience

3. The Split A/B Model

When schools started reopening after the COVID-19 restrictions, they mostly used the split A/B model. Learners alternate between online and in-person classes. While at home, students can function independently or asynchronously. When they're in class, they can meet with educators and enjoy meaningful discussions.

4. The Virtual Accommodation Model

Essentially, this model works in cases where only a few students need to learn from home. As the name suggests, this model accommodates a few learners who are unable to attend in-person classes. The small online group joins the classroom via a video-conferencing application. With this model, educators can keep their lessons moving along as planned, even if some students have to attend virtually.

5. The Independent Project Model

An independent project model only works when educators are dealing with a small number of students. Here, the lessons are personalized. Each learner has to work on a project independently based on their learning styles and preferences. Both online and in-person students will work on their assignments alone.

There's hardly any need for learners to interact with each other.

Educators must pick the ideal hybrid model based on their needs and requirements. Factors they should consider are the size of the class and the limitations of each student. The virtual accommodation and independent project models will not work with larger groups. On the other hand, the split A/B model might not be ideal for smaller groups. With these five hybrid models in their arsenal, educators can create exciting lessons for their students.

How hybrid learning allows individualized learning experiences, catering to different learning styles and paces

As we all know, the majority of the sectors today are influenced by technology. Including the educational sector. According to ResearchGate [4], One of the advantages of hybrid learning is that educators and students can develop their own digital skills, so that they can adapt more precisely to digital technologies that are increasingly developing. They also state that there are five things that must be applied to the learning process.

1. Live-Event
2. Self-paced learning
3. Collaboration
4. Assessment
5. Performance support material

This model is particularly relevant in the context of IT education, and STEM generally, where the integration of digital technologies is essential (Aliyu et al., 2023; Fransisca & Saputri, 2023).

Assessment and Feedback in Hybrid Learning

In a video by IESE Business School, one instructor said that in Hybrid Learning, there are more people involved. It's not just the teachers and the students but there were also technicians on standby and a cameraman. Although for some instructors, they just set up their own hybrid classroom. With this set up, students didn't have any problem watching what was written on the board. One online student also said that they always feel like they were really noticed and

included. They didn't feel left behind and they felt like they were also there physically. That is actually one of the main goals of Hybrid Learning. One thing that is crucial for them though is to make sure they have good and stable internet connection. During classes, they must not also forget to unmute their microphone whenever they say something in consideration for their peers who are physically in the classroom to hear.

According to an interview with Ilyn, a former IT student in the Philippines, she states that when she is coding, the environment she's currently in is a big factor to the success of her output. For her, it is very important to have a quiet and peaceful environment where there are no distractions from outside noises or from some of her peers. At the comfort of her own home, specifically in her room, she's able to maximize her time and concentration into learning and knowledge application. Ilyn also acknowledged that it's also very important to be able to have conversation with peers, sharing of ideas, group study which the students who attend the class physically can benefit from.

III. REAL-WORLD APPLICATION

Workplace Readiness

It really is a great advantage when an applicant already knows the work they are applying for. There may be some companies who are willing to give enough time to train applicants and don't even require work experience but most companies nowadays spend too little time on training. Most of the time, they prefer applicants with years of experience or applicants who are fast-learners. If students are well-trained and are already capable of solving problems on their own, especially in the fields of technology, it will help them gain enough credentials. Of course, there would still be a stressful phase wherein applicants always wait for a call to know whether they passed or failed the job interview. However this is not always the case for some, specially in the IT world. There are lots of well-known programmers today who didn't wait for their opportunities to open up. They initiate on grabbing opportunities by immediately implementing what they've learned. They used their learnings to build something through their passion and of course, hard work. The first tries were not successful but they

always knew that there's still a huge room for improvement and they take it as a challenge to create something much better. There were also lots of rejections and obstacles as they tried to achieve their career goals. Reaching these goals took a lot of time and effort but their application of knowledge and constantly trying to learn is what helped them get better. Not everyone takes this path, though. There are still some people who prefer to work under a company or management. They aim for a stable income and financial security. So, they might need to work with a bunch of other employees or even work with the higher-ups. Whichever field may an office be, technology is always present. In this day and age, can you imagine an office without a computer? a laptop? a tablet or even a phone? I don't think so. Documents are now being sent by email. Pictures, records, financial statements and even employee's log-ins and log-outs are now being saved on a computer. Others may still use hard-copy but they are always keeping a back-up soft copy. Even in the government sector, the residents' profiles and records are being recorded and kept on a computer data-base. The technologies being used by these different companies or sectors can sometimes encounter problems that will often need urgent solutions. Now, in Hybrid Learning, students are exposed to different technology, different tools and resources in order for the classes to take place. When they encounter technical problems during classes, they will have no other options but to solve the problem as soon as possible so they do not get behind the lesson. They would be able to explore different tools in a trial and error scenario to see what works best for them. They also might get some recommendations from their instructors and sometimes it's vice versa. Other instructors might also ask their students for some suggestions of the best tools that they can use for their classes. These tools exploration will be a great help to students once they start working. They would be able to identify the problem and can solve the problems through their experiences when they were still studying.

Development of Managerial Skills

Another former IT student, who prefers not to mention her name, was interviewed. This time, it was not her initial plan to enroll in Hybrid Learning. She wanted the traditional way, at first. But she had no choice

because she has an online part-time job and going to school is a hassle for her. She also didn't wanna enroll in a fully-online class because like she said, she doesn't want it to feel like 'just' online. In order to have the 'traditional way' feels, it felt nice to see the teachers through her laptop screen, teaching inside the classroom with a white board background. She at least still feels like she's inside a classroom.

For her, the environment she'll be seeing is important because it helps her focus more. It helps her avoid distractions and she really feels like she's physically in the classroom. "Before hybrid learning, I have tried online classes during the pandemic. It was only for a short period of time because it's not effective for me. Because of the thought that it was only 'online', I didn't really take it seriously. Whenever I have problems with the discussions, or have a hard time answering the teachers' questions, I just casually open my phone and look for answers online. I'd copy the answers I found, then confidently answer it in class, feeling like it's my own answer. I honestly felt like 'Okay, what's the use of listening to the teacher or focusing on the discussion when I can just learn it myself?'"

Unfortunately, it also affected her part-time jobs. During the meetings, she unconsciously doesn't pay attention anymore. She sometimes misses some important details that were instructed to her by her client.

"After being in a hybrid class for quite some time, my listening skills were enhanced. I've learned to focus more and hearing my colleagues' as they answer or share their ideas to the class, it felt like I was learning the traditional way while still being able to do my part-time job on-time. I've also learned how to manage my time and priorities. Your mood during the class is also a big factor actually. When you're happy and comfortable, you'll be able to comprehend the lesson clearly. Your thoughts won't get distracted by some other things. That is how hybrid learning helped me become what I am today."

She is currently working with different high-paying clients and has managed all her jobs well. She also states and encourages everyone who still has doubts on hybrid learning to try and see the improvements

themselves. “I hope it’ll help a lot of students as much as it helped me. The results may vary from everyone, but as I’ve realized, we’ll never know unless we try.”

Challenges of Hybrid Learning

A teaching assistant professor at Kansas State University, Sarina Maneotis and Chi-Leigh Warren [5], an industrial and organizational psychology graduate student in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Kansas State University wrote some of the few Challenges in Hybrid Learning. According to them, *“Hybrid learning can be challenging for both students and educators concerning planning, travel, adjusting course formats to in-person and online, and potentially navigating an overwhelming volume of information to teach and learn in a short time.”*

Travel costs and time commitment for in-person classes. Hybrid programs allow learners from a variety of locations to enroll. Although this is generally a benefit, it may come at the potential expense of logistic and financial challenges for students. To attend in-person classes, students must negotiate work and family obligations, and incur the additional time and financial costs of travel. Careful planning and program support can help, such as offering shorter or infrequent in-person courses where students can reasonably take time off work and travel to campus.

Increased planning for program and instructors. Programs may be involved in coordinating student travel, campus transportation, preparing in-person events, etc., in addition to preparing for course content. This may require additional staffing to coordinate, which the program, department, or college, may or may not have funding for.

Exhaustion during short courses. If the in-person components are offered over a brief period of time (to accommodate non-local students), learners may feel exhausted and overwhelmed by the amount of content covered. Additionally, it can be difficult for instructors to strike a balance between teaching effectiveness and covering enough material for the course. Preparation on the part of both students and faculty can help make the most of in-person time and interaction (a benefit of being in-person) can help energize the group during a long day.

May appeal to a limited audience. Some learners are very happy completing degrees entirely in-person or entirely online, and they may not be swayed toward hybrid programs. We suggest, though, that many learners thrive under a larger variety of modalities (hybrid) and may, in fact, prefer it. A hybrid program may offer a much-desired opportunity to experience in-person classes to a student who would not otherwise be able to attend an in-person program (e.g., cannot permanently relocate to the university, works full-time, cannot afford to take a career gap, or has family or other obligations that prevent relocation).

Some people may wonder: There are also lots of distractions at home. Since online students have the freedom to decide whether they’ll pay attention to discussion or not. They could just easily turn off their camera and microphone and will do whatever they want while the discussion is still on-going. There was a video online that has gone viral on social media. It was a video recording of an online class discussion. While the teacher was talking, there was a male student who was unaware that his mic was not turned off. The whole class, including the teacher, heard him trying to communicate with his teammates in-game. The teacher felt extremely insulted and eventually called-out the student’s behavior. These incidents might get a lot of people to doubt the effectiveness of hybrid learning. They’re worried that the students who attend the class physically get distracted and affected by these malfunctions. One more thing that some may worry about is when technical issues arise. It is inevitable since working with technology can be quite complicated sometimes. Imagine encountering technical problems while a lecture is going on. The whole class, including those who attend the class in-person, will have no choice but to wait until the issue is resolved. These are just a few of the many worries in the Hybrid Learning method. These challenges may seem hard and can be quite a headache but this also helps students and also the teachers to develop their technical skills a little bit more. Once they encounter a specific problem, they would be able to think and find ways on how to solve the problem. This would definitely be a lot of help for them, especially when they’re already in the actual field work of their careers. When they encounter the same type of problem, they already know how to fix it because they’ve already experienced it when they were still a student. Next is

all about the focus. If the student really wants to learn and benefit from the lesson, he/she will find a way on how to avoid distractions. This way, the student will be able to enhance their skills in managing their time and environment.

Ilyn (from the previous paragraphs), who experienced hybrid learning shared her experience about distractions at home. Her classes start at 7:00 AM and it's quite a challenge for her because she is not a morning person. She chose to attend online due to that reason. She usually wakes up at 6:40 AM or 6:50 AM just to have enough time to set up her gadget. She finds it ineffective because she can't really concentrate on the discussion. She feels very sleepy, especially because she does not take a shower. She just gets off the bed and goes straight to her computer, half-awake. It took her a couple of weeks until she realized that she would fail if that same routine continued. How did Ilyn overcome these challenges?

What she did was very life-changing for her. She tracked down what's causing her problem. She then noticed that she usually falls asleep at past midnight, 12:30 AM is the earliest. Usually she sleeps at 1:00 AM or 2:00 AM. It was because she spends most of her time on online games and social media. Sometimes, she spends her free time watching movies and starts cramming at night doing her homework. She then started to manage her time. She sets an alarm to limit her screen time and to follow a sleep schedule. She also makes sure to create a to-do list everyday to prioritize the most important tasks. The time left after everything's been checked out, is her free time. She tried so hard to follow that routine for a few weeks and eventually, she got used to her timeline and was happy with what she achieved. She became attentive to the class discussion, can understand better and most importantly apply all her learning to her actual projects. "It's always up to the student on how they manage their time, discipline themselves and make adjustments/changes necessary for them to fully benefit from the lessons." - This is what the former IT student's reminder to everyone who is currently or is planning to attend online in a hybrid learning setting.

Engagement and Motivation in Hybrid Learning

I remember as a student, I always wondered how I could easily learn from a particular teacher no matter how hard the lesson was. As I grew older, I realized that some teachers really made an effort to help their students engage in the lesson. They made sure that we participated in the class discussion. This is an important matter or technique to consider specially on Hybrid Learning as not all students can be physically seen. Teachers had to go extra miles to make sure that even her online students could play a part. Participation somehow makes the mind active and effortlessly receives and comprehends information. According to Catherine Atkinson & Beth Holland [6] from Learning Accelerator, the term "engagement" typically evokes an active image (e.g., talking, writing, drawing), but it also occurs on an internal level that is not easily observable (e.g., thinking, processing, reflecting). Researchers have commonly defined engagement along three different dimensions:

- Cognitive (thinking) engagement: An internal process through which students make sense of or process what they are learning.
- Emotional (feeling) engagement: An internal process through which students interact or react emotionally to what they are learning.
- Behavioral (acting) engagement: An external process through which students physically demonstrate or interact with what they are learning.

Instructor Training and Adaptability

How educators or teachers conduct their hybrid learning classes is also a great factor on how this method could impact or improve the students' technological and managerial skills. Teachers play a vital role in regards to this method's effectiveness. It is important for them to take note of this. An article from OWL LABS has a list of six steps on how to create a successful hybrid learning environment. [8]

1. Set your semester goals.

What do you plan to accomplish with your hybrid class? By setting long and short term goals for yourself

and your class, you can explain the key expectations to your students.

Determine these goals and their corresponding assessment, and work backward to structure the rest of your course. This backtracking from the end of the semester to your very first session will ensure that all of your assignments and materials serve your course directly.

2. Map it out.

Now that you've determined the goals of your course, and how your students will be assessed, you'll need to map out how they'll navigate your class. Create a chart, table, timeline, or another visual tool to outline your course modules, and their respective activities and resources, in chronological order. By mapping your course visually, it will be easier for you to spot any course holes or underdeveloped activities.

3. Determine which course objectives are best served as in-person activities.

Now that you've determined what your course will look like, it's time to factor in the hybrid element. Your face-to-face class time should be reserved for activities that require activities such as:

- Synchronous group brainstorming sessions
- Communicating class expectations and outlining individual responsibilities
- Establishing a collaborative, trust-based learning environment
- Call and response presentations
- Providing immediate feedback to students

Pro tip: Remember that synchronous, face-to-face time can happen in-person, or virtually. If some students are in the classroom, while others are learning from home, you can use video conferencing tools to connect with one another.

4. Determine the online portion of your course.

You'll notice that one main element of your hybrid course not mentioned in the face-to-face section is the deliverance of information. While in-person time is reserved for synchronous and group discussions, the majority of personal assignments will be done virtually. Additionally, the other activities that make up the online portion of your hybrid class can include:

- Self-paced learning and activity completion

- Automatic grading programs such as multiple choice of True/False quizzes
- Asynchronous group discussions
- Written critical analysis and thoughtful discourse
- Video or aural content consumption

5. Create and source content.

Once you've mapped out the modules in your course, you'll need to create and source the content that will be used by your students. This is the time for you to create assignments, find all reading materials, source your video content, and finalize your syllabus.

If your school has experience with hybrid classes, adapting archived resources and tailoring them to fit your class structure is a great place to start. Additionally, resources can be found on flagship education websites and managing discussion forums.

6. Give your hybrid learning plan a trial run.

Congratulations, you've created a successful hybrid learning environment! The only thing left to do, before your course begins, is to do a trial run of the online portion of your course. You want your course to be fluid and accessible, without encountering any surprise technology speed bumps along the way. If possible, have a fellow faculty member or trusted former student test the course for you. Having an extra set of eyes on your course is always a good idea, and those unfamiliar with the creation of your course will be more likely to spot gray areas.

All of these steps may seem easy but there are worries that teachers may face as they go along their classes. A Spanish and STEAM: Emerging Technology teacher at Riverview High School in Oakmont named Rachelle Dené Poth states her experience being a teacher in a Hybrid Learning method. She posted on a website called 'GettingSmart' her worries and it goes: [7]

“There are so many questions and concerns I have, beyond teaching the lesson itself. If I want to give students a paper so we can break from the screen time, I worry about passing out papers or collecting them from students. I worry about them having to sharpen their pencil. I worry that a student did not clean their desk or the desk shield enough. I worry about it all.

When I'm looking in my classroom with my students, I worry that I'm losing the engagement of the students who are at home. That I'm doing them a disservice because I'm somehow not providing enough and that there's something that I could do better. I asked myself: Should I create a video of myself teaching every single lesson and then have all of the students watch it? Should I have the students at home watch the video while I teach the students in my classroom? When I give a test, do I provide students in the classroom with a paper copy and create a digital assessment for the online students? Should I wait to give all students the test when they're physically in the classroom so I can answer their questions and make sure they're not looking up the answer somewhere? But what about the students who are fully virtual? There are so many things to consider each day.

I believe that if schools were doing the four days synchronously and one day asynchronously, then all students would be getting the same instruction, the same activities, and they could hear and see the teacher at the same time. In the hybrid world, as it is in this definition of hybrid, I feel like because of the split, we are going to lose more of the students. If we would have them together four out of five days in virtual, I do truly believe that the hybrid cuts that in half. That might be an unpopular opinion but that is what I notice based on my own experience, my thought process, the conversations that I've had, and everything that I've seen shared from teachers over the last couple of months. It is how I am feeling during my own experience and I'm working on finding ways to improve."

She even shared some tips to the readers on what helped her overcome those initial challenges. She said "First, by using my HUE HD Pro Document camera, students could see me in the classroom and I didn't have to stay in front of my netbook computer webcam. It also helps with being able to write on paper and share it on the screen for all students to see. Connecting a microphone to my desktop so that the sound could be heard in the classroom, students can speak to each other and I was not attached to my computer, and could move around the room. Making sure that I set everything up ahead of time, keeping a list nearby that reminded me of the time for each class,

and a checklist for each period of what we need to do to maintain our safety.

Choose some different digital tools to provide interactive lessons. The tools that I've been using the most have been Buncee, Edpuzzle, Formative, Nearpod, Gimkit, and Synth. These are tools we have used for several years, however they provide more possibilities for collaboration and are great for having students engage more in the lesson."

Shifting to fully virtual or fully traditional classes to Hybrid is truly a big transition to both students and teachers. It will make them feel like they haven't managed their time and resources very well but these challenges helped Rachelle and hopefully everybody too to turn these into something valuable. They now have more experience and versatile tools available to them and the students that can help and are currently building their skill set in the process.

IV. SUMMARY

The article discusses hybrid learning models, which combine online and in-person classes to cater to students' different needs. Some students prefer learning from home, while others prefer face-to-face interaction. A 2023 survey found 69% of students like hybrid or online learning, while over half of instructors prefer in-person teaching.

Hybrid learning helps students develop digital skills by using different tools and platforms, some of which are affordable and useful. Educators need to choose the right hybrid model based on class size and student needs. For example, smaller groups may benefit from different models than larger ones. A former IT student shared that a quiet, distraction-free environment at home helps her focus better, but group interactions in physical classes are also valuable for sharing ideas. Overall, hybrid learning brings comfort, flexibility and offers endless possibilities that will greatly help students to improve the skills needed for their day to day life and also helps in preparing them for the harder challenges in life which is the real-world environment. This would require them to fully adapt to their surroundings and face whatever problem they'll have to encounter. In this fast-changing community and

technology, being exposed to different online and technical tools is a really good advantage. Most of the jobs today, if not all, require at least basic knowledge or basic computer literacy.

A financial manager once said, “I can’t even imagine working without using my phone and computer. I remember, there was one time where I forgot to bring the envelope where I’ve put the documents necessary for our meeting that afternoon. My agents were already waiting in the meeting room when I realized that it’s not in my bag! Thankfully, I’ve made a soft copy, scanned them the night before and saved the files on my drive. Aside from that, I also sent it to my secretary’s email. I had in fact, too many copies so I just printed them out right away. No hassle at all going back and forth from the office to the house. I’ve saved time, gas and the meeting went smoothly.”

We might’ve experienced this ourselves, forgetting something really important. There are several things that we can learn from the manager’s experience. First, it wouldn’t have been possible if she didn’t scan the documents the night before. Through her years of experience, she developed the initiative to make a copy of every document, especially the important ones. But, she also couldn’t have done it if she had zero knowledge on what applications or tools she should use for document scanning. You can’t just take a picture of a document and expect it to be in a document form using just your phone’s camera. These scenarios are just one of the many examples and instances that show the benefits of cultivating work-related skills while still learning as a student. In the future, as newbies in the IT industry, these students would be able to keep up to their seniors and can do their jobs smoothly.

Ilyn and the other former IT student who both experienced hybrid learning are just few of the many individuals who benefited from this learning method. May this article be of any help for students who are contemplating their choices. In the end, it purely depends on us when, where or how we want to learn. The important part is, knowing and carefully choosing what’s best for us. After all, it’s us who knows what’s best for ourselves. Taking the time to meditate and think all of our choices through is the best thing that we can do to avoid regrets and confusion in the future.

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