E69 Teaching Today's Students: Hybrid Learning

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the value of hybrid learning and receive tips on how to successfully implement it into their educational programs, including primary, secondary, and continuing education.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing information about an educational delivery method that embraces technology, personalizes education for today's students, maximizes the use of instructional time, and further develops "soft skills" such as time management, critical thinking, and problem solving. This presentation expounds on previous information about "flipped classrooms" by reviewing the advantages (and disadvantages) to hybrid learning, sharing first-hand experiences of implementation, and providing tips for successfully applying hybrid techniques into any type of educational program.[1]

Under the pedagogy of blended learning, the hybrid classroom takes advantage of technology to provide students with a personal educational experience that allows them to access a variety of learning activities at their own pace and convenience while maintaining Face-To-Face (F2F) interaction with an instructor through brick-and-mortar classroom activities designed to reinforce weekly learning objectives. Numerous researchers claim hybrid learning is the future of education because it combines the best of online and traditional classrooms to provide a delivery modality with numerous advantages to students, educational institutions, and employers.[2-12]

As early as 1999, education professionals recognized that access to technology shifted the nucleus of learning away from the traditional classroom; however, educational institutions have been slow to embrace the change, partly due to a "disconnect" between today's educators and learners.[13] Research indicates there are currently three generations of adult learners: Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Generation NeXters.[14-17] Generation NeXters have grown up in a technological world and expect it in every aspect of their lives. Generation Xers have been steadily exposed to technology and embrace it. Baby Boomers were born before computers and cell phones were accessible to everyone and a few still tend to avoid them. The majority of educators are Baby Boomers and some are still uncomfortable with technology. In the traditional classroom, the instructor is the "star" because the focus is on lecture. Online, the student is solely in charge of learning and often feels alone or unmotivated.[18-21] In a hybrid learning environment, the instructor's role is that of a facilitator or guide. Learning is now student-focused and requires the use of many different skills to express competency in a field of study. This can be a challenge to technology-impaired instructors and an obstacle to implementation; however, a clear plan with phased implementation can make the move to hybrid learning much smoother and rewarding for everyone involved.[22]

This is a technological world that strives to constantly keep up with the ever-changing world around us. This being said, there is a duty to embrace technology and prepare students for the world in which they will live and work.

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