



Hybrid Courses @ LPC

Questions and Answers for Faculty

What exactly is a hybrid course?

As defined at Las Positas College, a hybrid course is a course that has any combination of on-campus meetings (excluding orientations) and online meetings. For example, a class meeting once online and the rest of the time face-to-face would be considered a hybrid. So would a class that meets once face-to-face (excluding orientations) and the rest of the time online.

To make a hybrid successful, you will need to rethink and redesign your course, in addition to learning new online teaching skills. Don't think that you can just put your PowerPoint presentations on the web and call the course a hybrid; that's not good enough. Your online learning activities should engage and challenge students, all the while complementing your face-to-face meetings. The ultimate goal is to have the necessary blend of online and face-to-face activities that will help students achieve the learning outcomes of the course.

Why would anyone want to teach a hybrid?

When designed properly, hybrids have proven to have a positive impact on student learning. According to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which has an extensive hybrid program, hybrids:

- Are more student- and learning-centered than typical face-to-face courses
- Have less listening and more activities
- Have more interaction and discussion
- Have greater engagement with students
- Offer a more flexible course format, and
- Open more possibilities

So what should I be thinking about while considering a hybrid?

Obviously, you will need to determine which activities students will complete in class and which ones they will complete online in order to achieve the outcomes. You will also need to determine how the activities in both modalities combine to create a tightly integrated, cohesive course.

Your first step might be to think about what is working and what might not be working too well in your face-to-face class. For example, let's say your lectures are effective, but your class discussions don't get the desired results. You can move the discussions online. Conversely, if discussions in your face-to-face class are lively and engaging, you can create a series of mini-lectures and move them online with interactivity, graphics, audio, and/or video.

You will also need to think about your students and how prepared they are (or aren't) to learn online. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee identified several areas of student preparedness that you will need to address:

- **The myth that fewer class meetings means less work**
- **Inadequate time management skills for online learning**
- Difficulty accepting responsibility for learning

- Difficulty with more sophisticated technologies
- Difficulty grasping the hybrid course concept

I'm assuming that some thought will also have to go into how I'm going to organize my online component, correct?

Correct. Needless to say, you should organize your online component so that it works seamlessly with your face-to-face component. For instance, if you structure your face-to-face component into weeks, modules, chapters, units, etc., you should structure your online component the same. However you structure the class, just make sure that you cover all of the content that is detailed in the course outline of record.

You mentioned discussions and mini-lectures as activities that can be done online. What are some others?

There are a variety of activities you can do with students online. You can have students complete group work, written papers, research on the Internet, quizzes, exams, practice quizzes, journal writing, simulations, virtual field trips, games, peer-editing/critiquing, web logs (blogs), polls and surveys, debates, case studies, and presentations. These are just some of the popular activities; the web opens up possibilities that are limited only by your creativity level.

Aside from activities, what should I post online to support my students?

Here are some possibilities:

- Course information, such as your syllabus and class policies
- Links to web sites related to your course
- Frequently asked questions
- Model assignment submissions
- Grading rubrics
- Student grades

So considering all of the above, how long will it take to design a hybrid?

That depends on several factors, such as your knowledge of Blackboard, your experience teaching with Blackboard, your knowledge of online learning, your overall computer skills, your time availability, and your motivation to teach a hybrid. To be on the safe side, it is recommended that you spend a semester designing your hybrid before you begin teaching it.

Will teaching a hybrid force me to do anything differently in the face-to-face class?

Most likely, at your first face-to-face class meeting, you will want to explain and demonstrate how the online component of the class will work, including a demonstration of how students log into Blackboard. You will also need to tell your students how to get technical support.

It is very important that you teach your students about time management because they will be responsible for finding the time to complete class work online. Throughout the course, you should constantly ask for feedback from your students about what is working and what might not be working well online. With this feedback, you can make the necessary changes to improve the online component for the future.

OK, I think I want to design and teach a hybrid. How do I get started?

1. Discuss your desire to teach a hybrid with colleagues in your discipline. Make sure to tell them how the online component will integrate with the face-to-face component. Discuss how the course fits with your discipline's Enrollment Management plan. If the request is approved by your discipline, proceed to Step 2.
2. Talk to your dean to get your dean's approval. At that meeting, decide with your dean when your class will meet face-to-face and when it will meet online.
3. Complete a curriculum proposal—including the Distance Education section, regardless of how much your class will meet online vs. on campus—and get the appropriate signatures. The curriculum proposal will have to be submitted to your division to get division approval. It will then be taken to the Curriculum Committee for discussion, and hopefully, approval.
4. If approved by division and Curriculum, you should receive an email asking for information about your hybrid that needs to be inputted into the upcoming Schedule of Classes. This email will probably come from your dean around the time that divisions begin planning for the next schedule. The email will contain a link to an online form that needs to be completed with info such as your preferred meeting days and times, along with preferred rooms. You'll need to submit this form so students have accurate info.
5. Prior to the schedule being released, Scott Vigallon will send you a link to an online form that asks you to input detailed information about your course. Scott will use this information to build your "hybrid course information page" and will upload it to the Online Learning web site. This page will describe your course to potential students so they will have a full understanding of activities and expectations prior to registering for the course.
6. Talk to Scott about the various options for training. Training is required of all instructors who want to use Blackboard, regardless of whether you teach a hybrid, a fully online course, or you just supplement your face-to-face course with Blackboard. To teach a hybrid, you will want to be trained in the technical aspects of Blackboard, including web accessibility, as well as in online teaching and learning (for example, facilitating class discussions online).