



**Blended learning models (classroom-workshop-online): Four levels of integration and impact on work practice** © NewMindsets 2003

This document presents four methods of blending “face to face” and online learning where a classroom or workshop model has been selected as a key method of delivering the “face to face” dimension. The four methods highlight the important strategic choices that have to be made and how different blending philosophies lead to different levels of impact on work practice. Methods 3 and 4 are particularly effective in delivering high level impacts on work performance and return on learning (ROL).

	Blended learning model / Use of online learning	Impact on work practice
Method 1	<i>Primary mode of instruction: face to face classroom/workshop sessions Online learning resources made available as background material</i>	Impact of online materials with this model is usually very limited – similar to background readings or library resources in traditional classroom.  Online materials go largely unused – adopted by small percentage of active learners out of interest – typically about 10% of the total number of learners.  Impact on more passive learners minimal. Transfer to workplace completely discretionary and ad hoc according to learner interest.
Method 2	<i>Balanced (blended) mode of instruction. Online materials integrated with classroom instruction: used as required “before and after” resources and are referenced/featured in classroom discussions e.g. using screen shots to make concrete links and motivate and guide learner use.</i>	Impact moderate.  Effective pre-class/workshop assignments can prepare learners, fill learning gaps and stimulate thinking ahead of class; post class assignments can extend shelf life of learning and facilitate systematic follow through.  If the follow through and work application is discretionary it will usually only be adopted by active learners and a relatively small percentage of interested learners who see the relevance of the assigned learning for addressing specific work problems.
Method 3	<i>Classroom and online learning tightly coupled with personal learning objectives and competency development plans. Supplemented by on the job coaching, advisory or other on the job support.</i>	Impact high when there is clear and direct accountability for learners to close the learning loop by integrating theory and practice (e.g. by fulfilling practical job related assignments or presenting learning impacts to peers, direct reports or instructors as part of the learning contract and competence development plan.)  Works best when specific online resources e.g. worksheets, job related exercises, are assigned as required follow up to classroom based instruction. For example, following a workshop on teamwork learners may be required to complete online learning and worksheets on “How to be an effective team member or “How to be an effective team leader” or “How to set team ground rules in their own team situations.”  Extremely effective if (a) the work assignment is submitted in written form as part of course completion or for accreditation purposes, or (b) if learners undertake to report results in writing or orally to a third party (e.g. a coach, mentor or peer learning partner) or engage in a results-oriented tele-conference call with fellow learners. Impact even greater if supported by formal or informal coaching or mentoring or team discussion back in the workplace – produces a cascading effect on team learning / development of a learning culture.

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Method 4	<p><i>Action learning model designed to deliver demonstrable ROL (Return on Learning) through individual or team project application provides the key focus for learning.</i></p> <p><i>Classroom and online learning is directly geared to creating a positive ROL outcome - through demonstrable project results and improved personal/team development and work performance as the <b>primary objective</b>, rather than as an ancillary or supplementary spin off.</i></p>	<p>Impact very high and capable of producing extraordinary returns on specific projects, as well as providing solid returns on overall competence improvement.</p> <p>With this approach a certain percentage of learners (typically between 20-30% - research still in progress) are often able to make major breakthroughs on projects and learning performance, especially if the results are made visible e.g. through learner presentations to senior management or through specific accreditation requirements.</p> <p>Everyone that makes a genuine commitment to the program is likely to report high personal learning and competence improvement, even if they don't achieve major breakthroughs on work projects within the specified time frames.</p> <p>Clear ROL expectations are needed to create the accountability and commitment required for delivering demonstrable ROL.</p> <p>This action-based approach can be effective for both individual and team- based learning.</p> <p>Workshops, coaching and mentoring need to be designed as foundations and supports for this kind of performance based learning.</p>

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