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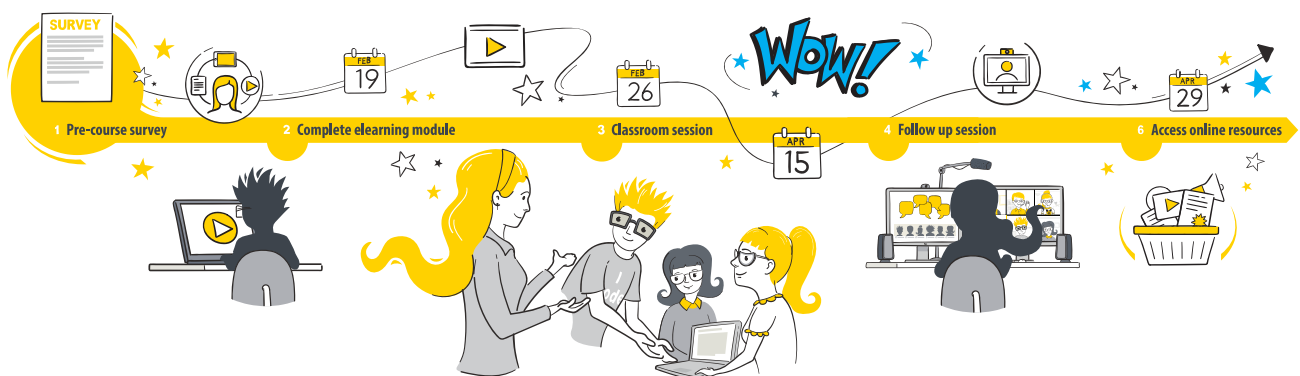
What is Blended Learning?

What is blended learning? Why move to blended learning? What software do you need? Everything you need to launch blended courses in your training organization.

Let's not beat around the bush...

You're here to increase profits for your training business and improve learning outcomes for your customers. Blended learning is the most effective way to **scale your business**, **increase course capacity**, and **charge more money**, all while **increasing accessibility** and **knowledge retention** for learners.

But, what is blended learning? How do you implement blended courses in your training organization? How do you deliver great blended training? Read on to find all the answers...

Chapter 1

What is blended learning?

Let's start with the basics

Overview of blended learning

Blended learning means providing course content in a variety of delivery formats; including face-to-face, live online webinar, quizzes, video, podcasts and surveys. Not only does it provide a richer learning experience than any one format on its own, it's scalable and effective. Let's break down the four main delivery methods....

## Face-to-face

A traditional face-to-face course is held in a classroom, or as a private or group tutorial. This delivery has the most limitations, as class numbers are dependent on venue size, geographical location and time and date availability.

Live online webinar

Similar to a traditional face-to-face course, but held in a virtual classroom. A presenter, or presenters, deliver a presentation in real-time to learners around the world who attend via video conference, from the comfort of their own office, home or wherever they may be.
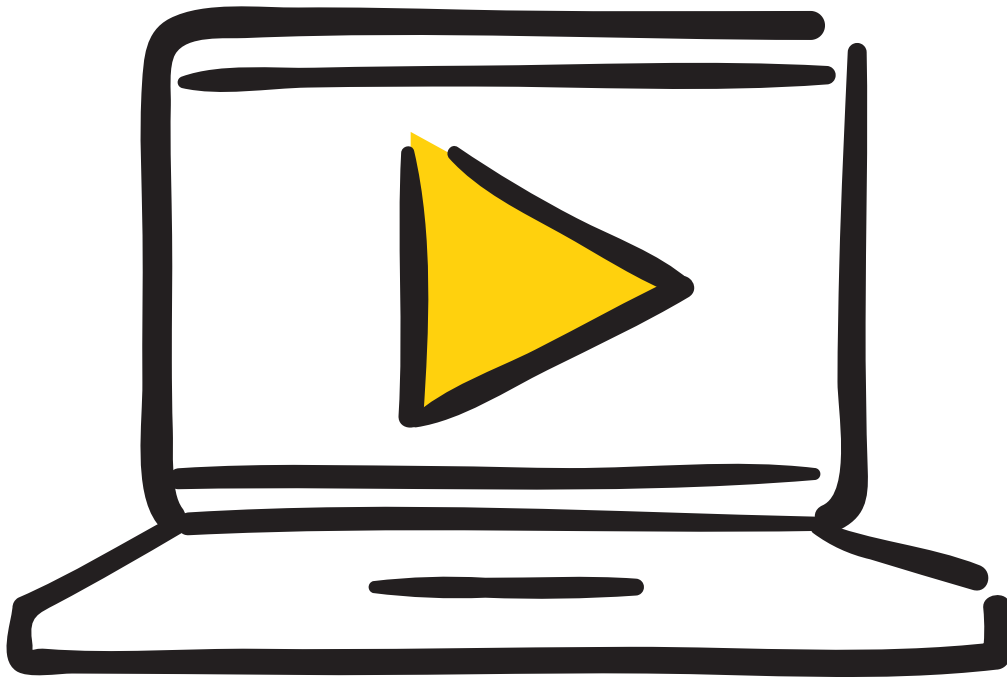
On-demand video

Living in the times of YouTube and Netflix, most of us are familiar with on-demand (or pre-recorded) video. Arlo allows you to easily promote and sell pre-recorded webinars to people who visit your website – a great opportunity to drive profits and efficiencies in your training business, by reusing and recirculating existing content.
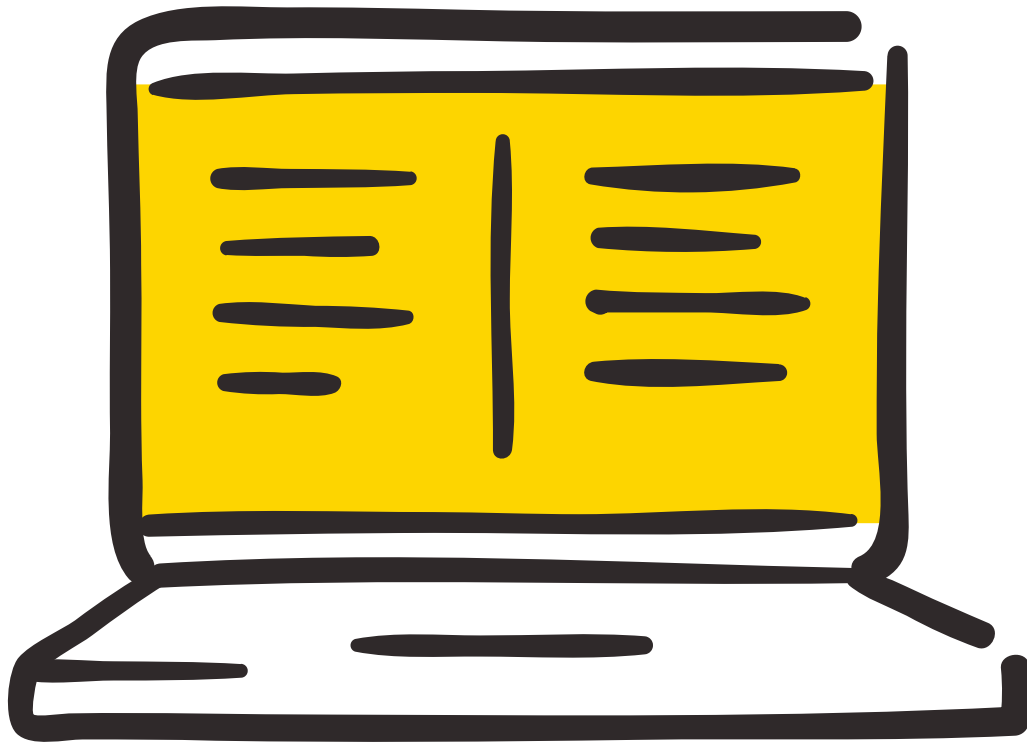
eLearning

eLearning is self-paced learning, such as online courses and modules that people can complete in their own time, online, from anywhere (in fact, this guide is an example of self-paced eLearning)! Registrants can undertake the course at any time and do not have to attend on a specific date, or attend a live class. These modules can include SCORM packages, quizzes, surveys, wikis, videos, and assignments, all while allowing the training provider to track completion.

Why move to blended learning?

Factors like Covid-19 and a rise in remote working have accelerated our desire for flexible learning. Now more than ever it is important that training providers offer blended learning to stay relevant.

Whether Covid-19 has been a catalyst for transitioning traditional face-to-face courses to online, a sprint forward in your existing journey to online and blended, or you're still in preparation phase, you can rest assured that you're on the right track. Whatever changes you made, or are making, at the crux of it you simply moved with the market and have continued to meet the evolving needs of your customers. After all, that's what a business needs to do in order to survive.

More than half of the global population are active internet users, and with more than 80% of households in the developed world having a computer, gone are the days of encyclopedias and searching for answers in libraries. We live in a world where information is at our fingertips and it should be no surprise that our expectations are the same when it comes to taking a course. When we've got Google, we don't need a crystal ball to see that the future of training is in blended learning.

And with an impending recession as a result of Covid-19, forecast redundancies and a changing job market, history tells us that we'll see people turning to study in order to up-skill. Only this time round, they'll want to do it from the comfort of their own homes. A watershed moment for blended learning.

Business benefits	Learner benefits
Scalable For webinar and eLearning blended courses, you can take your courses worldwide with no geographic constraints, and increase your registration numbers.	**Accessible** Blended learning courses that offer a webinar option or reduced face-to-face component means attendees have reduced or removed travel and accommodation costs, and it's less time away from their day-to-day.
Cost effective Reduced or removed costs for travel and accommodation for presenters, and reduced or removed venue and catering costs for attendees.	**Personalized Learning** Access to content that best suits individual learning styles – be it podcast, video, SCORM modules or quizzes.
Increase profits Charge more for a more comprehensive/longer course, and/or save on associated travel, venue and presenter costs.	**Flexibility** Students can learn at time, place and pace that best suits them.
Save time eLearning tools can automatically mark student assessments. Reduced travel and classroom time for presenters.	**Knowledge Retention** Ability to revisit content and re-do assessments online. Access to resource libraries and forums post-course.

The bottom line: increased profits

Charge more for a more comprehensive course offering. Here's an example:

	$900	$1,200	$1,350
2-day face-to-face course	✓	✓	✓

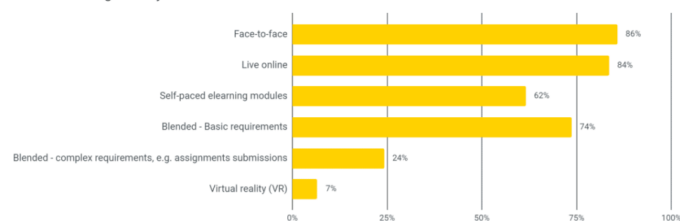|	$900	$1,200	$1,350
6x 1 hour elearning activity		✓	✓
6x 30 min quizzes		✓	✓
Online assessment and certificate			✓
Access to online library of resources			✓
Ongoing forum engagement			✓

The future of the training industry

In our recent industry research, we asked our training providers how they believe training will be delivered in the next 12-months, as we start to emerge from the restrictions of COVID.

86% believe face-to-face training will re-emerge, and 74% believe training will be delivered with some form of blended learning.

Modes of training delivery in the next 12 months?

Face-to-face	86%
Live online	84%
Self-paced elearning modules	62%
Blended - Basic requirements	74%
Blended - complex requirements, e.g. assignments submissions	24%
Virtual reality (VR)	7%

Tips for creating content

- **Use existing material.** Look at your existing course material and see what can be adapted for an online delivery. For example, can a printed study guide be adapted into eLearning SCORM modules? Can a classroom-based activity be moved online?

- **Don't do it all at once.** Start by adapting 1 or 2 courses that are best suited to blended learning, and look to add more in the future.

- **Continuous improvement.** Pilot your eLearning course and take feedback. Re-calibrate. Plan for continuous re-calibration and improvement – book it in your diary for every 6-9 months. This is how you'll keep your course material relevant and stay one step ahead of your competitors.

- **Outsource.** Engage a graphic design agency or a freelance copywriter to fill any skills gaps and save time.

There are a variety of tools that exist to help you create content for your blended learning courses. Go1 is a content library that provides unlimited access to thousands of learning resources, from top training providers around the world, covering topics for all training needs, including business basics, communication skills, management & leadership, project management and personal development.

For those training providers who are completely new to eLearning, Arlo CEO John Mitchell recommends taking existing webinar PowerPoint presentations and packaging them up as an eLearning course, as a good first step. He recommends using Articulate Storyline or Rise360 to easily adapt content into an eLearning format, as do many of our training providers.

"Articulate Storyline is very easy to work with – our staff can easily update content and make changes to the workflow."

– Craig Smith, Positive Partnerships

"Rise 360 very rapidly transitioned our content in an attractive package. I can't speak highly enough about it."

– Owen Hayes, Edval Education

Chapter 2

Case studies from training providers

Parallel Project Training

Using elearning modules, quizzes, podcasts, on-demand, webinars and face-to-face, Parallel Project Training delivers market-leading blended learning courses for project management professionals.

Established in 2009, Parallel Project Training is one of the UK's leading project management training providers, delivering courses for the Association for Project Management (APM) qualifications. They were the first company to introduce a blended learning approach for APM.

Co-founder Paul Naybour's background is in the management of rail and infrastructure projects, leading training programmes for many of the key players in the rail and transportation industry.

He also acts as the company's Business Development Director, delivers training courses to project organisations such as the Ministry of Defense and Network Rail, and has been actively involved in developing their range of podcasts and webinars. At the very beginning of the company's journey he recognized the need for a flexible approach to learning and a range of study options that would enable project managers to study in a way that suited them.

"This approach has enabled corporations and individuals to develop a professional project management capability at a time and place that suits them, and using the methods best suited to their learning style."

The APM Project Fundamentals Qualification is one of Parallel's blended learning courses – a practical course for new project managers or members of project teams who want a better understanding of the processes, tools and language of project management. The course can be taken either as a live online course or a 2 day face-to-face course and both options include access to downloadable content (course syllabus, guidance notes and sample exam paper), printed learning material (APM study guide) and full access to elearning modules in Moodle.

Within Moodle, attendees can watch pre-recorded video content, complete quizzes at the end of each section, and listen to podcasts to supplement and reinforce learning. For a sneak peak of how Parallel is using Moodle to deliver elearning, check out this teaser video.

Finally, attendees have the option of taking the practice exam online via remote proctor, or in a traditional classroom setting.

In terms of their software choices, Parallel uses Adobe Connect to deliver their online training because it's "reliable and very flexible", and they've had excellent feedback from customers on the use of Moodle for hosting their elearning – "people find it easy to use and intuitive".

And when they recently ran a survey with their course attendees to gauge their experience with live online learning, they asked if the session was engaging and the result was 100%.

Paul
Co-Founder

"We always strive to make our training interesting and engaging, with trainers who know their stuff. It's great to see this has translated to online training. Many people fear an online class will be dull and boring, but it's great to see that's not the experience of our delegates."

So, what's the recipe for successful blended learning?

- **Parallel supports their attendees from the moment they register.** From the moment attendees register, they can access downloadable content including self-assessments and practice exams, as well as printed study guides. For live online webinars, to cultivate a successful online learning environment, Parallel provides information to attendees on how to get set-up, including this YouTube video on how to setup Adobe Connect. If all else fails, they'll talk people through the set-up process over the phone to ensure that no one is left behind. 1:1 tutoring is also available for those who need additional learning support before taking the exam.

- **They've invested time in their live online setup.** They use good quality headsets, put their webcams at eye level, use a pop-up screen for the background, set-up lighting from the side of the screen and ensure trainers are well presented. Their webinars are also highly interactive and engaging – they make use of PowerPoint slides, quizzes and discussion boards, animation, video clips, live screen capture and "whatever else can make the subject come alive". They schedule a lot of breaks in which attendees will be asked to go away and complete activities – just like you would in a classroom.

- **They've invested time in developing content for blended learning.** Live online webinars, face-to-face courses (classroom or private), downloadable content, printed study guides, elearning modules, quizzes and podcasts, are all used to support different learning styles, reiterate course content and improve knowledge retention. In terms of the type of content they offer, their advice to other training providers is "look at what your competitors are doing, and think about how you can compete. Focus on niche content. Choose a subject-matter expert as the presenter who is comfortable speaking live on camera and knows their subject well enough to answer any questions that come up".

- **Their training management system is fit for purpose.** Parallel discovered Arlo when they were looking for an event management system that was specifically designed for training companies. Since implementing Arlo they've been able to deliver remote training and live online, have been able to save £50k per year in course administration costs, move entirely away from paper bookings, manual joining instructions and paper records and have seen a 19% increase in their registrations. They also liked the way Arlo integrated with WordPress, Xero, and Moodle to support their blended learning vision.

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pp positive partnerships
Working together to support school-aged students on the autism spectrum

Positive Partnerships

Craig Smith from Positive Partnerships shares how they successfully adapted a 5-day face-to-face course to a blended learning course in order to improve course accessibility for their learners. Watch the video to learn more.

Case Study: Positive Partnerships

Chapter 3

Creating a compelling business case

Let's get down to business

To get buy-in from stakeholders and drive organizational change you need to create a compelling business case for blended learning; identify business challenges, identify business ROI, and determine the technology and support required to transition.

Identify business challenges

- **No stakeholder buy-in.** Involve key stakeholders early on in the process, and educate them on the benefits of blended learning for the business.

- **No desire to change.** Prove the ROI, show examples, provide market and competitor analysis. Take a fragmented approach – start with a pilot, so you're not changing the business model too drastically. Have a plan to revert if it doesn't work, and share it with stakeholders up front.

- **Lack of skills or resources.** Don't be afraid to use freelancers or agencies who specialize in the skills that are missing in-house. For example, a graphic designer or a copywriter. There's an upfront cost here, but it's not an ongoing cost and it will ultimately save you time. There are plenty of online resources to help training providers make the transition (like this!), and a lot of TMS and LMS tools do most of the work for you. Check out our software section for more info on this.

- **Not sure where to start.** Start small – take one existing course and brainstorm it internally to see how it could be adapted to for eLearning. Take one piece of content, such as a study guide, and transform it to an eLearning module (written content could become a podcast or an on-demand video followed by a knowledge-testing quiz). Pilot it, collect feedback both internally and from your customers, and re-calibrate.

Identify business ROI

- **Cost vs Benefit.** Increasing business profitability is the most important objective for your company and it's how you'll get your stakeholders across the line. Collect detailed financial information about your company's costs to run a training program and set some hard, but realistic, targets up front to increase existing ROI. If you don't already have a way of measuring cost vs benefit that you can extend to blended learning we recommend using the standard formula of: ROI (percentage) = ((Monetary benefits – Training costs)/Training Costs) x 100.

- **Decreased cost and time.** The assumption is that the introduction of blended learning will, over time, decrease the cost and time spent delivering a course. This is because traditional classroom-based training is both cost-heavy (venue, travel, food, instructor accommodation) , and time-heavy (time spent by an instructor to deliver a classroom course, including travel and set-up). A key thing to note here is that it will decrease *over time* – initially there will be some costs for new software and resource to transition courses to an eLearning model, and this needs to be factored in.

- **Scale trajectory.** Scalability is one of the biggest benefits of eLearning – removing the restrictions of class sizes, and introducing the possibility for global expansion. There needs to be some work done upfront to determine the trajectory of enrollments that you will measure success against. Look at your existing class enrollment numbers per location, and calculate how much that is expected to grow with expansion into new markets.

- **Measure training effectiveness.** The [Kirkpatrick Model](#) has been used by training providers since 1959 to evaluate the success of training programs, based on learner outcomes. Here are the 4 levels of the Kirkpatrick model, and how to apply them.
  – **Reaction.** This is focused on measuring engagement, to understand how well your training was received and what can be improved in future. Conduct a simple post-course survey to understand how engaged your learners were.
  – **Learning.** Measure what your learners have and haven't learned, and how they'll apply their learnings in future. With blended learning you can easily set pre-course surveys to determine learning objectives and knowledge, and then post-course quizzes and surveys to determine what they have learned.
  – **Behavior.** This measure helps you to understand if people are applying their training after completing a course. Follow-up self-assessment surveys could be sent to attendees weeks or months after course completion, to evaluate if and

how they are implementing what they have learned.

– **Results.** This looks at the impact the training has had on the learner's company, if it is a corporate training program. Some positive outcomes include increased productivity, higher employee morale, and increased sales. Workplace observations, interviews or surveys can be used for evaluating these objectives.

Determine your requirements

- **Staff training.** Train existing staff on technical aspects, such as webinar delivery, online assessments and chat forums. CIPD offers training delivery courses, including a short course on How to Create and Run Successful Webinars.

- **Creating content.** Whether you're transitioning existing content to a new format or creating new eLearning content, consider whether you'll up skill existing in-house staff to create and manage eLearning content, or whether you'll need a graphic design agency or freelance copywriter to fill skills gaps. It's also worth checking with your LMS account manager to see if they can help build out the courses for you.

- **Technical equipment.** What technical equipment is needed – do you need to invest in good quality laptops, headsets/microphones for instructors? Do they need additional lighting? Is broadband speed sufficient for webinar delivery?

- **Software.** What new software is needed? Such as a training management system like Arlo to handle an increase in registration numbers and an LMS to host eLearning content.

"True brought instructional development in-house by investing in training for subject matter experts and subscribing to Articulate 360 to utilize Rise and Storyline. With new skills in eLearning development, our educators have been adapting face-to-face courses to blended learning courses."

– Audrie Jurgens, True

Chapter 4

Templates for blended learning

We asked three of our training providers to share their recipes for successful blended learning journeys. These are real-world examples of their most popular courses that

have been completed by hundreds and thousands of attendees.

We've provided examples at three different levels of blended learning: Basic, Moderate and Immersive. Use them as templates to encourage discussion and collaboration with internal stakeholders to launch blended learning courses for your own training organization.

Basic blended journey

Significant face-to-face or webinar component with minimal elearning.

Example: Parallel Project Training's APM PFQ Course

About: Parallel Project Training is a UK-based corporate training company, delivering blended learning courses to project management professionals.

The why: Parallel was set-up with a primary focus on delivering blended learning in 2009, to offer a **more cost-effective, flexible and modern approach to training**. However, the blended approach was ahead of its time, and the market still wanted traditional classroom training. Their blended learning has really taken off again since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The solution: Learners have the option of an entirely online/self-paced course, which comes with a significant reduction in price.

The result: Blended learning has given Parallel the resilience to adapt to the changing environment. Several customers have come to prefer the on-line environment and the **simpler logistics and cost efficiencies** it offers.

The software: Their eLearning is built on Moodle, using podcasts, on-demand video and quizzes.

Content development: Their eLearning content was developed in-house by re-purposing content from their existing study guide.

Template: basic blended learning journey

Parallel Project Training's APM PFQ Course is focused around a 2-day face-to-face/live online workshop that is complemented by podcasts, on-demand videos and quizzes.

1. **Pre-course survey.** Once attendees have registered for the course online, they automatically get access to the eLearning portal to complete a pre-course survey.

2. **Printed Study Guide.** A printed study guide is sent to attendees in the post, which is a printed replica of all course material including that in the eLearning modules.
3. **eLearning Modules.** Complete section 1-8 in the eLearning portal. Attendees have a choice of listening to a podcast, watching an on-demand video, or studying the content in their printed study guide, depending on what best suits their learning style.
4. **Quizzes.** Each of the 8 eLearning modules are followed by a quiz at the end, to test knowledge retention and prepare attendees for the formal exam.
5. **2-day course.** Attendees participate in a 2-day course, with the option of a live online webinar or face-to-face delivery.
6. **Mock exam.** Attendees complete a mock exam in the eLearning portal, which is automatically marked by the system to give them instant results. Attendees can take this practice exam as many times as they like.
7. **Exam.** Attendees sit a real exam in a classroom. During Covid-19, this was converted to an online exam using remote proctor software.
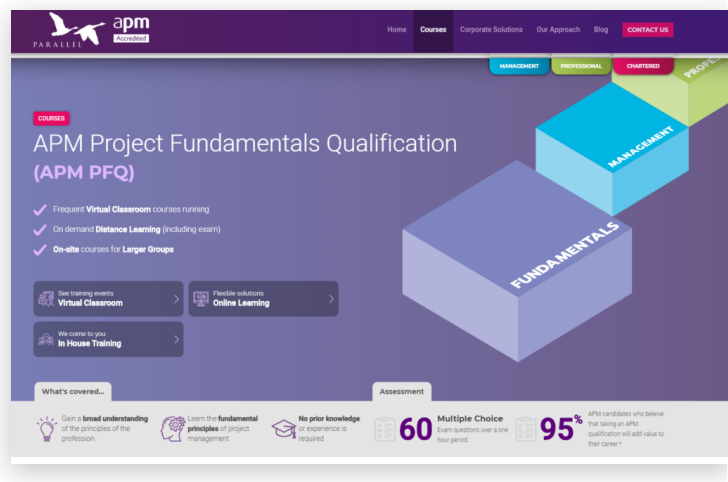
Moderate blended journey

An even mix of face-to-face or webinar with elearning.

Example: Positive Partnership's 2-Day Parent/Teacher Workshop

About: Positive Partnerships is funded by the Australian Government to provide courses for families and educators to support children on the autism spectrum.

The why: Their **five-day face-to-face program was impractical** for participants who couldn't commit to that amount of time away from their usual day-to-day.

The solution: Adapted to a two-day face-to-face course, with three days of self-paced eLearning.

The result: Reducing the face-to-face element to two days and introducing self-paced eLearning for the remaining course content **greatly increased the accessibility** of the course.

The software: Their eLearning is built on Learnbook, utilizing SCORM modules. The modules were authored in Articulate Storyline – a third-party tool that helps authors build slide-based lessons that blend instruction, audio, video, and interactions.

Content development: The content was developed by in-house subject knowledge experts, including research and insights from the Autistic Advisory Group. They contracted freelance digital artists to build out the content in Storyline and utilize Learnbook staff to help create the modules.

Template: Moderate blended learning journey

Positive Partnership's 2-Day Parent/Teacher Workshop is a blended learning combination of face-to-face/live online, SCORM modules and quizzes.

1. **SCORM modules.** Attendees complete 4x 1hr eLearning SCORM modules in Learnbook.
2. **2-day workshop.** Attendees participate in a 2-day face-to-face workshop.
3. **eLearning modules.** Complete 6x 45 minute eLearning post-workshops tasks in Learnbook.
4. **Quizzes.** Each of the 6 eLearning modules are followed by a quiz at the end, to test knowledge retention and prepare attendees for the formal exam.
5. **Resource library.** At the end of the course, attendees can continue to access the resource library for more information and tools.
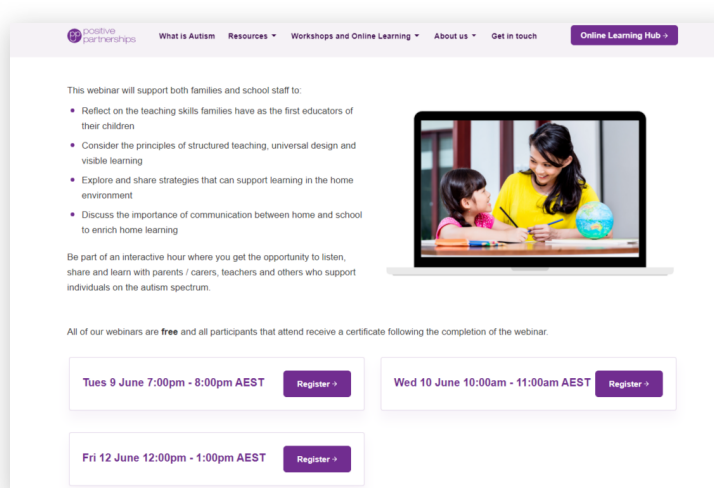
Immersive blended journey

Significant elearning components complemented by short face-to-face or webinar.

Example: True's Cancer Screening Education For General Practitioners

About: True is funded by the Australian government to provide professional development for doctors and nurses, and workplace development for other sectors including social workers and allied health professionals.

The why: True's IT systems and software hadn't been invested in effectively, and they were lagging behind when it came to digital delivery and capability. They **needed a new way to deliver high-quality health education that is accessible and inclusive,** to support health workers in their ongoing professional development.

The solution: Developed a range of flexible self-paced blended learning courses to add to their course catalog.

The result: True is able to deliver engaging relationships, sexuality, and sexual health education to all areas of Queensland – especially to rural and remote regions – making this crucial education **accessible to everyone regardless of location or availability**.

The software: They moved from a content management system with basic SCORM delivery to the Moodle-based Learnbook, and Arlo to equip their staff to deliver and manage quality digital education founded on best practice. In addition to producing interactive, engaging SCORM packages with Rise, True utilizes many of Learnbook's offering of activities – quizzes, surveys, forums, assignments, podcasts, and on-demand video.

How it was developed: True brought instructional development in-house by investing in training for subject matter experts and subscribing to Articulate 360 to utilize Rise and Storyline. With new skills in eLearning development, True's educators have been adapting face-to-face courses to blended learning courses featuring Learnbook online, anytime content, sometimes exclusively and sometimes in combination with face-to-face workshops or live webinars via Zoom.

Template: Immersive blended learning journey

True's Cancer Screening Education For General Practitioners is an eLearning-based course composed of podcasts, surveys, quizzes and online evaluations. This is complemented by a short 30min face-to-face/webinar session.

1. **Introductory session.** A predisposing activity and quiz in Learnbook on Australia's National Cancer Screening Programs.
2. **Webinar.** 1x 30min in-depth face-to-face or webinar session focused on cervical cancer and symptoms.
3. **eLearning modules.** Complete 10x 30min eLearning modules in Learnbook on various topics, including 'Symptoms and Signs of Cervical Cancer'. Each are followed by an evaluation.
4. **Podcast.** Listen to 1x 1hr podcast in Learnbook on breast screening.

5. **Online hub.** Attendees then get access to an online hub full of tools and resources to further extend their learning journey.
6. **Online forum.** Attendees then get access to an online, anonymous forum where they can ask questions directly to True's expert clinicians and chat to their peers.
7. **Activity and evaluation.** Attendees complete a knowledge-reinforcing online activity, followed by an evaluation. Upon completion they are awarded their accreditation certificate.
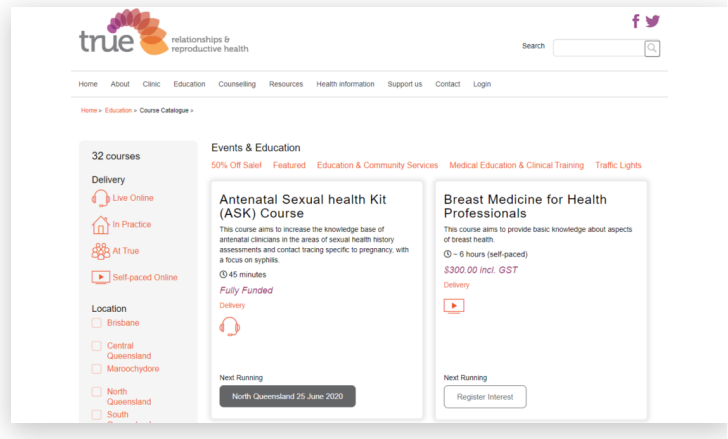
Chapter 5

Software for blended learning

Tools you can use to deliver blended learning
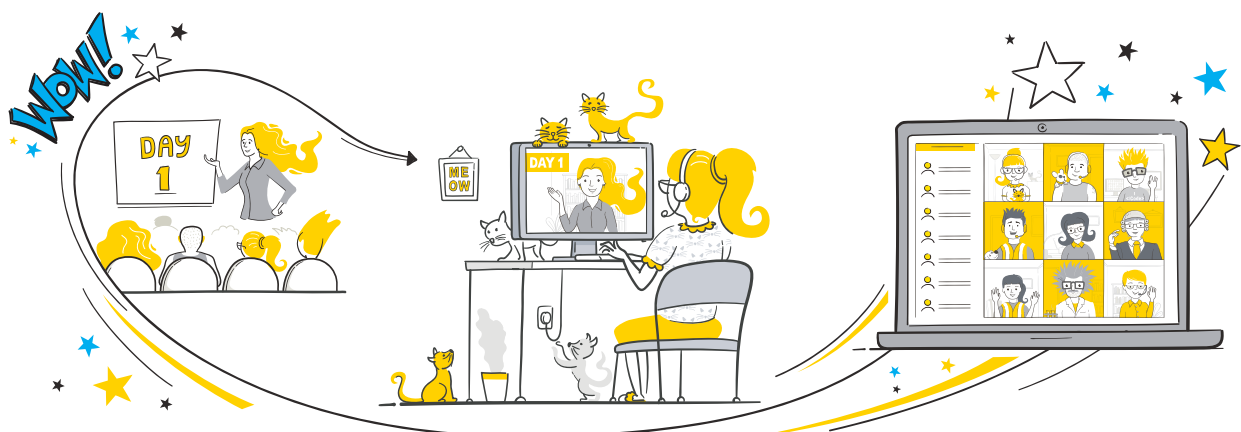
Software solutions for blended learning

We've done the research so you don't have to. Here's our round-up of the best software solutions to help you launch blended learning for your training organisation.

1. **Arlo Training Management System.** With customers in over 70 countries, Arlo is a global leader in flexible, powerful, purpose-built training management software. Ditch that maze of spreadsheets. Forget generic event management systems. Designed so you can streamline processes and grow your training business. Use Arlo's built-in website to start selling your courses today or seamlessly integrate Arlo into your existing website.
2. **Learnbook LMS.** Learnbook brings your face-to-face and live online learning to life with elearning activities, shared resources and collaboration tools. It is the perfect Learning Management System (LMS) for training providers to use alongside Arlo. There are 14 different types of "activities" available, allowing training providers to build assignments, forums, quizzes, surveys, videos, workshops and more into a blended learning journey.
3. **Zoom.** Arlo's integration with Zoom combines the world's leading webinar software with the Training Management System designed to help you sell more. Zoom easily allows you to create connected environments from anywhere. Share resources, instant message, use a virtual whiteboard or use separate break out rooms.
4. **Go1 and Rise 360.** As a first step in creating elearning content, we recommend experimenting with existing webinar powerpoint presentations and packaging them up as an elearning course. For this, we recommend using Rise 360, which is what we've used to create this interactive step-by-step guide. In addition to this, content libraries like Go1 give you access to thousands of learning resources so you can include pre-built elearning in your courses, rather than having to create your own from scratch.

Why Arlo?

Arlo manages your training business from end-to-end so you can sleep easy.
It's a complete training management solution to promote, sell, and deliver courses and events.

Overview of Arlo - Software for Training Providers

Why Arlo + Learnbook?

Total solution for training providers

Promote, sell and deliver self-paced elearning, live online, face-to-face and blended courses.

"Arlo is excited to be a Learnbook partner to help training providers transition to blended learning. We're combining the elearning power of Learnbook with the commercial savviness of Arlo. A number of customers are already using the two systems in tandem and reaping the rewards."

– John Mitchell, CEO, Arlo

learnbook
★ Elearning course creation
★ Elearning content hosting
★ Course resource libraries
★ Collaboration tools
★ Assessment management

go
★ Pre-built elearning content

arlo
Website
Shopping cart
Finance
Marketing
CRM
Classroom scheduling
Live online scheduling
Reporting

Ready to give blended learning a try?

Try Arlo for free for 14 days to see how it could streamline processes and grow your training business. Alternatively, schedule a personalized online demonstration and we'll show you around.

Start a free trial of Arlo   Get a demo

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