



---

## **Issues and Challenges in the Acquisition of Knowledge Under the Hybrid Learning Modality**

*Lupadit, Lyda T.*

Graduate School, Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Tagudin, Ilocos Sur Philippines.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.4.923.52681>

---

### **ABSTRACT**

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant shift in the educational landscape, with the adoption of hybrid learning as a response to school closures. This research aims to explore the issues and challenges faced by students in the acquisition of knowledge under the hybrid learning modality. The study is anchored on Experiential Learning Theory, Lev Vygotsky's Theory of Learning, and Self-Determination Theory to provide a comprehensive understanding of how students adapt to this new learning environment. The research methodology involves focus group discussions with 12 students from various programs of the College of Arts and Sciences at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College who have experienced both face-to-face and hybrid learning. The conclusions were drawn out of the findings of the study: (1) The hybrid learning modality provided students new opportunities to embrace digital era, allowed them to learn technologies at the comfort of their homes even while working, and let them do assessments at their own pace and self-assessment and (2) The student-participants encountered concerns on their motivation and support system, their access to resources for online classes and their management of time at school, work and at home. Based on the conclusions, the recommendations were formulated: (1) foster collaborative online learning communities, (2) implement personalized learning pathways and (3) a further study must be conducted on other learning modalities to other participants.

**Keywords:** acquisition of knowledge, hybrid learning, issues and challenges

---

### **Introduction**

The global educational landscape has changed drastically by the temporary closure of schools owing to the coronavirus pandemic and the sudden shift of the educational set-up. The ripple effects have been felt on how teachers and students have adapted to the new online form of education's limits. Due to the global expansion of the COVID-19 epidemic, the conventional face-to-face lecture mode of teaching, in which learners absorb material from the instructor that trickles down from top to bottom to, has been abruptly abandoned in all educational systems. One of the most important aspects of great online education is ensuring learner engagement, which necessitates the need to accurately assess learner engagement in order to determine a learner's performance and success. Online learning has emerged as a viable option for altering the traditional educational system as a whole. Teachers and students have had to adapt their habits, teaching/learning styles, evaluation methodologies, and other aspects of their lives. This change has yielded some benefits, but it has unquestionably resulted in conflicts and frustrations among instructors and students. This pandemic has challenged the educational system across the world and forced many higher education institutions (HEIs) to shift from traditional pedagogical methods to more online teaching and learning. Hence, schools were forced to suspend face-to-face classes, close temporarily, and opt for a flexible learning approach. This shift in the education instructional delivery was caused by the fear that HEIs would lose the whole ongoing semester or even more in the coming future. Due to this sudden change, the educators and students adjusted a lot to adapt to this new normal education, affecting their performances, day-to-day life, and even their education perceptions, especially in science education. The study assessed how the hybrid learning modality affects the acquisition of knowledge of students. The study is anchored on Experiential Learning Theory by David Kolb (1984). Kolb views learning as an integrated process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Kolb believes that learning involves the acquisition of abstract concepts that can be applied flexibly in a range of situations (McLeod, 2023). Further, Kolb vies that the development of new concepts is provided by new experiences. Effective learning is achieved when a person progresses through a cycle of four stages including having a concrete experience; observation of and reflection on that experience; the formation of abstract concepts and generalizations; and testing a hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences. The study is also grounded on Lev Vygotsky's Theory of Learning which it considerably provides emphasis on social factors contributing to the cognitive development of children. Vygotsky emphasized the importance of cultural and social context in learning. According to him, cognitive development stems from social interactions from guided learning within the zone of proximal development as children and their partner's co-construct knowledge (McLeod, 2023). Furthermore, Vygotsky believed that the environment in which children grow up influences how and what they think about. He also emphasized the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development in which children and those they are learning from co-construct knowledge.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

How does hybrid learning modality affect the acquisition of knowledge among the respondents? What are the different issues and challenges encountered by the respondents in the conduct of hybrid learning modality?

### ***Scope and Limitations***

The main focus of the research is to determine how hybrid learning modality affects student performance. The researcher aimed to determine whether the hybrid learning setup contributes to better students' learning performances. The data were gathered through the use of Focus Group Discussions out of convenience and safety. The study is limited to 12 students who are currently attending School Year 2022-2023 at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College.

---

### **Review of Literature**

This section presents the review of related literature and studies which were gathered from journals and articles and which will provide further understanding of the variables involved in the study. Bashir *et al.* (2021) explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had caused disruption and created challenges in the Higher Education sector with university campuses being closed and with in-person teaching and assessment shifted to an online format. Furthermore, Khouri (2021) elaborated that hybrid learning requires instructors to effectively deliver material in two different ways at the same time. In order to effectively navigate a hybrid learning environment, instructors should employ deliberate communication and conduct polling in order to solicit feedback from students. Moreover, Barron *et al.* (2021) shared that the important features to categorize hybrid learning include the time, space and interaction. Time refers to when the class is done which can either be synchronous or asynchronous. Space refers to where the class is done which can be face-to-face or remote locations. Interaction refers to the direct of communication and type of engagement. In addition, Ignacio (2021) elaborated the digital challenges faced by both students and educators in online learning such as poor to no internet connectivity at current location; none or shared suitable technology including laptop or desktop or attending online classes or creating and submitting outputs; insufficient knowledge in using digital technologies; and insufficient knowledge on modes of conducting and/or attending online classes. Furthermore, Li *et al.* (2023) presented a study on the evaluation of hybrid learning and teaching practices by academics, findings revealed that the participating academics perceived themselves with an overall high degree of readiness to handle technical issues. The heavy workload for lesson preparation and face-to-face and online classroom management, unfamiliarity with interactive teaching design suitable for hybrid classes and difficulties in monitoring students' learning process were the reported challenges regarding hybrid learning and teaching by the respondents. The provision of technological support to professional development for enhancing students' online interaction and engagement was the suggestion the participants had provided for the improvement of hybrid classes. Moreover, Alhusban (2022) investigated the tertiary level learners' satisfaction with the novel synchronous hybrid learning method (SHLM) that combined face-to-face and virtual teaching simultaneously using real-time audio and video technology to facilitate interaction between two groups, results showed that the overall results revealed that learners were generally in favor of SHLM. However, some beginner and intermediate students reported that at times, their proficiency level hindered their understanding when alternating to online classes attributing this to the fact that the implemented learning approach is subject to changes and may remain in place for an extended period due to the pandemic or in case of a shortage of physical classrooms or faculty. Dorina *et al.* (2020) aimed to explore how students respond to digital transformation with respect to hybrid learning. When asked about the challenges and issues faced, students reported technical issues and distance as barriers to online learning and collaboration. Relational difficulties and lack of joint engagement among group members due to a sense of anonymity were also another barrier. Students did not know their group members beforehand and cannot build relationships. Though some students showed interests in elements associated with more complex levels of learning such as co-involvement in decision making, dialogic collaboration and critical, reflexive skills. Wong *et al.* (2022) reported a review study on hybrid learning which featured the provision of face-to-face and remote learning in a synchronous manner. Five major research issues were identified which emerged from the covered research articles including teacher and student experiences and behaviors in hybrid learning; teacher and student perceptions of hybrid learning; the impacts, benefits and challenges of hybrid learning; the features of hybrid learning; and the effectiveness of hybrid learning. Finally, Dayagbil *et al.* (2021) conducted a study which explored the challenges and issues in teaching and learning continuity of public higher education in the Philippines in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. Findings revealed that during school lockdowns, the teachers had to make adjustments in teaching and learning designs which were guided by the policies implemented by the institution. Most of the students had the hard time complying with the learning activities and requirements due to limited or no internet connectivity. Trajectory for flexible learning delivery, the role of technology, the teaching and learning environment, and the prioritization of safety and security were the emerging themes from the qualitative data. Scenario analysis provided the contextual basis for strategic actions amid and beyond the pandemic. The abovementioned literature and studies gave clear direction and emphasis on the issues and challenges in the education sector most especially on the learning modalities during the pandemic. The presented studies supported the focus and purpose of the study.

### ***Research Design***

The present study employed a qualitative research design that focused on eliciting the views of students on current issues and challenges of hybrid learning in college education. In this particular study, thematic analysis was applied. The thematic analysis involves a six-step process: familiarizing with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This method is deemed appropriate for the present study as the research aims to determine the issues and challenges of the respondents toward the hybrid learning set up and how each of them was influenced through questionnaires and interviews.

### **Research Instrument**

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted as the main data-gathering instrument. This is a good choice if interview questions are rooted in feelings and perceptions and ones that cannot be easily answered by mere yes or no, which is the main objective of the present study – and that is to explore the issues and challenges of the student-respondents toward the hybrid learning set up and how each of them adapts in the acquisition of knowledge under this learning modality.

### **Data Analysis**

The information gathered from the interviews were transcribed. From the transcription, emerging themes and patterns are identified which was used to provide insights on each of the research objectives. It is noteworthy that the transcription, themes and patterns were focused on the respondents' issues and challenges towards the hybrid learning setup and how each of them adapts in the hybrid learning modality. Transcriptions were presented with its corresponding codes and themes. Interpretations and discussions were then provided.

---

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Learning Management and Opportunities.** The students have managed and found many opportunities in online learning. These college science students perceived online learning as flexible and convenient, exploration of more learning resources and ways of learning physics, realizing more opportunities for improvement, and maximizing the utilization of technology for learning. A participant shared about the availability of resources in the web. The use of technology, characterized by gadgets and the internet had made it possible for students to adapt to the process of learning under the hybrid modality among the students. As respondent 1 elaborated: *“Hybrid learning modalities have been implemented as a mode of instruction during the last semester. We are able to adapt the acquisition of knowledge by providing basic technology like the internet, laptops, and mobile phones. Our parents are very supportive of all the needs we had at school. Our teachers were able to deliver the knowledge we needed despite the challenges we faced during the pandemic.”* Another participant said that, *we adapt by learning and mastering the use of different technologies in order to cope with different styles.* Face-to-face delivery of instruction for learning is the comfort zone of students as well as of teachers, however, the current pandemic situation forced them to take the road less traveled. Online learning as a road to travel opens lots of opportunities to teachers and students (Arrieta et al., 2020) to make online teaching and learning better. It may prepare them when the world returns to a better normal that we used to have. Many studies found out that online learning can offer lots of opportunities, which can be observed today as most of the institutions switched to this modality. *Respondent 5 shared her experience* The activities and quizzes were passed through Google Classroom or done in Google Forms. *Respondent 8 states that online learning, where it is accessible to look for answers just on Google in the internet. And respondent 9 also shared I prioritize staying organized by using tools such as calendars, task lists, and online folders to keep track of upcoming deadlines and course materials.* This implies that hybrid learning delivers positive opportunities for student's learning, allows more engagement and it increase students' participation. It can be inferred that the use of internet, laptops and mobile phones had helped the respondents adapt to the process of acquisition of knowledge under the hybrid learning modality. As this setup also involves online classes, students need accessibility to digital resources such as phones, laptops, personal computers and the internet in order to facilitate learning in this modality. The text implies that access to digital resources, such as internet, laptops, and mobile phones, is crucial for students to adapt to the process of acquiring knowledge under the hybrid learning modality. It suggests that these tools have helped the respondent successfully navigate the challenges of hybrid learning by facilitating their engagement in online classes and enabling them to access necessary learning materials. Relating this to the study conducted by Benson et al. (2011), it suggests effectiveness using a combination of face-to-face and online teaching approach. As such, it provides sense of flexibility for better classroom participation.

This experience will equip them with digital skills and experiences that will prove invaluable in future educational landscapes. Ultimately, the goal is to navigate the challenges of the pandemic and emerge with a more integrated and technology-enabled approach to education (Feenberg, 2019).

**Time Management.** With combined face-to-face classes and online learning setup, students had to resort to effectively managing their time in order to maximize their learning without compromising their well-being. The following statements were found out: Respondent explained: *“Of course, by managing my time properly, despite how skeptical the schedule is. also, by adjusting time for studies and responsibilities at home. In learning face-to-face, I always try to answer questions from the instructors and depend on my own understanding, unlike in online learning, where it is accessible to look for answers just on Google in the internet.”* With online classes in a hybrid learning modality, students had to balance school and their household responsibilities. Other students were also working while continuing their studies. Respondent 7, a working student, shared: *“I adapt to the hybrid learning modality by managing my time. I spend half my time adjusting or adapting the works in our schools and to my work.”* This implies that time management is one of the important skills contributing to anyone's success. For students who have household chores and at the same time, had to attend online classes; and for working students who had to attend face-to-face classes, time management plays a vital role in their adaptation to acquisition of knowledge under the hybrid learning modality (Rinkema & Williams, 2021).

**Issues and Challenges in a Hybrid Learning Modality.** Indeed, the hybrid learning modality has posed several challenges to students. Combining face-to-face and online classes had surely forced students to quickly adjust to this modality. In the interview conducted, students were asked about the issues and challenges they faced during the hybrid learning modality brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Students had already anticipated the real challenges in this new normal in teaching and learning process. Some of these challenges were internet connection and participation. However, it was different when one personally experienced and encountered them.

Limited Access of Internet Connection. The use of technology is quite a trend today, however, not everyone has access to internet and literate on the use. And since the country where the participants live in can barely afford things such as education regarding technologies and most especially stable internet connection, it is not surprising that students will experience challenges in blended learning. The identified issues above are aligned with the respondent 4's accounts: *"There are a lot of issues and challenges I have faced during the hybrid learning mode. First is the poor internet connection, wherein I don't have the chance to join the online class, be it a minor or major subject. Second is the lack of devices or gadgets; it's hard for me as a student to learn with just the use of a phone. It's not enough to accomplish and pass my requirements..."* For a student like Respondent 9, having no mobile phone to be used as a tool for virtual lectures poses a challenge in his acquisition of knowledge. *The respondent shared: "Limited access to technology: I have limited access to technology or reliable devices such as a laptop or webcam, which are necessary for online learning. This makes it difficult to participate in virtual lectures, especially since I don't own a cellphone to use in virtual lectures or complete online assignments."*

This implies that the Internet is one of the basic learning resources that students need in the online learning setup of hybrid modality. However, some students had difficulty securing a good internet connection, more so for availing one. Poor internet connection affects the quality of online classes with students suddenly being cut-off class because of slow internet. Gadgets, such as laptops, phones and personal computers are also considered vital for students in acquiring knowledge in the said modality. It was found out that students only have mobile phones, whereas some students don't even own one. Mobile phones can cater to online classes but with accomplishing requirements asked by instructors such as passing documents with certain formats, it can be hard for these students to comply with what is asked. Poor internet connection and the lack of access to gadgets and other digital devices were known to be common challenges among students in a hybrid learning modality.

Financial Constraints. With the need to invest on digital devices and provide for students' allowance to accommodate the hybrid learning modality amidst loss of jobs among households, the modality has posed financial challenges to parents and students. It was confirmed by the following responses by the respondents: *Respondent 4 elaborated: "Financial stability; growing up in a not-so-privileged family is hard. You don't know where to get the money you'll spend to go to school."* For students who are from families that are financially-challenged, there is but great uncertainty as to how they can provide for their schooling. This was supported by another statement of *respondent 5: "...Another is financially, since due to the pandemic, the source of income of our family is limited, and there are instructors who are asking us to pass activities in hardcopy, which is why there's an extra payment for the fare as well as the load to attend virtual discussions. In face-to-face, there is also a problem in terms of finances, which is why I am trying to budget the allowance given to me, especially since there are lots of activities that require contributions that require money."* This implies that students need technologies to facilitate online learning and need allowances when going to school for in-person classes. But parents are having a hard time providing for these learning resources. The lack of gadgets and internet accessibility as mentioned above were apparently attributed to the limited funds of households. Passing of hard copied requirements, fare and allowances and the need to top-up load in order to have mobile data or internet just so students can enter virtual classes can obviously be made possible through funding. With financial constraints among Filipino households, students are having the difficult time to focus on their studies and adapt to the acquisition of knowledge in hybrid learning modality.

Limited Digital Resources. Few of the requirements to experience smooth virtual communication, especially in blended learning, are technologies, gadgets, and stable internet connection. Another common theme that emerged is the lack of resources needed for blended learning. According to the respondents who identified themselves as less fortunate, blended learning is challenging but providing necessary materials to cope with it is much more challenging. *According to respondent 1 Lack of Gadgets especially if you don't have funds to buy one. And also, respondent 9 shared the Limited access to technology or reliable devices such as a laptop or webcam, which are necessary for online learning.*

Lack of Parental Support. Students look up to certain people when accomplishing tasks. In school, students rely on teachers while they rely on their parents at home. With no support from either of them, students cannot perform at their best. Respondent 3 said: *"The different issues and challenges I've faced during the hybrid learning modality are that some teachers neglect their work, especially in giving the students the information they need in the subject, lack of comfort in studying at home during online classes because of the environment."*

Especially during those tough times, when students have to adjust to the modality, teachers and parents are who they considered to be their help and guidance. Teachers are requested to have consideration for students who cannot pass the requirements on time due to resource constraints. Parents are asked to be supportive of their children who are currently at class by not asking them to run for errands. *Respondent 4 shared: "... The teachers are inconsiderate; even if we put in all the effort and exert our time to finish a certain task, they don't accept our papers."* *"There is no support of parents in academic."* *Respondent 2 said.* In the teacher's defense, it is the parents that should guide and help their children at this most difficult time. Teachers have a lot on their plates yet are trying to provide a conducive learning environment for teachers. Deadlines are provided in order for students to meet. Too much consideration will not push students to exhaust all possibilities in order to comply with what is asked. Students should rely more on their parents and reach out for their help at times like this. Teachers are just there to guide the students. Amesite (2021) explained that teachers are doing their best to educate their students and adapt to the continually fluctuating and unprecedented situation. This implies the need of collaboration between and among the students, parents/guardians and teachers which could lead to better learning outcomes. Yani (2017) affirmed that the 21<sup>st</sup> century education contributes to better understanding on the roles of family in the learning continuity.

Limited Time. Time management was found to be one of the ways which students use in order to adapt to the process of acquiring knowledge in the hybrid learning modality, as found in the discussions above. Ironically, poor time management has also been a challenge for some of the respondents of the study. *Respondent 9 elaborated: "The different issues and challenges I faced during the hybrid learning modality were time management because learning from online to face-to-face classes has been a big adjustment for me in managing my time. Her responsibilities, such as household chores or family obligations.* For students who have significant household responsibilities, the difficulty of effectively managing time in learning and fulfilling responsibilities was evident. For students who are taking jobs while attending classes and fulfilling family obligations, time management has been a

challenge for them. Respondent 9 further said: "...Difficulty in time management: hybrid learning requires strong time management skills, and it is really difficult to balance online and face-to-face learning, especially since I am a working student also managing other responsibilities, such as household chores or family obligations."

This implies that strong time management is very important in hybrid learning modality. Balancing time allotment further contributes to the effective learning and good management of life. According to Worthy (2023), hybrid learning requires good organization skills and requires good-time management skills. But with struggling Filipino households at difficult times, under-privileged students will find it difficult to effectively manage their time. The result of the study is in consonance to Abante et al (2021) where it was found that looking for better service of internet provider, proper guidance from parents, continuous communication between the parents and teachers, finances and support coming from the parents and/or the government to provide the resources needed are some of the necessary actions to do to beat the challenges of blended learning.

---

## Conclusions and Recommendations

From the findings, the following conclusions were drawn. 1.The hybrid learning modality provided students new opportunities to embrace digital era, allowed them to learn technologies at the comfort of their homes even while working, and let them do assessments at their own pace and self-assessment. 2.The student-participants encountered concerns on their motivation and support system, their access to resources for online classes and their management of time at school, work and at home. From the findings, the following recommendations were drawn:1.Foster Collaborative Online Learning Communities: Encourage the creation of online learning communities where students can collaborate and engage with peers beyond the traditional classroom setting. These communities can take the form of discussion forums, virtual study groups, or project-based collaborations. By facilitating interactions and knowledge-sharing among students, the hybrid learning experience becomes more dynamic, diverse, and intellectually stimulating.2.Implement Personalized Learning Pathways: Recognize the unique learning needs and preferences of each student and provide personalized learning pathways within the hybrid learning framework. Utilize adaptive learning technologies and data-driven insights to tailor educational content, assignments, and assessments based on individual strengths, weaknesses, and interests. By catering to students' specific learning requirements, the hybrid learning experience becomes more engaging, relevant, and effective. By implementing such support systems, educational institutions can help alleviate the difficulties encountered by students and create a more inclusive and supportive hybrid learning environment. 3. Further study must be conducted on other learning modalities to other group of participants.

---

## REFERENCES

- Alhusban, H. (2022). A Novel Synchronous Hybrid Learning Method: Voices from Saudi Arabia. *Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, 20(4), 400–418. <https://doi.org/10.34190/ejel.20.4.2340>
- Baranao, E. L., Mariano, A. A. C., Nanit, J. N. V., & Samson, K. C. F. (2022). Distractions and Coping Mechanisms in Blended Learning of Grade 10 Students in Philippine School Doha, SY 2021-2022.
- Bashir, A., Bashir, S., Rana, K. S., Lambert, P., & Vernallis, A. B. (2021). Post-COVID-19 Adaptations; the Shifts Towards Online Learning, Hybrid Course Delivery and the Implications for Biosciences Courses in the Higher Education Setting
- Dayagbil, F. T., Palompon, D. R., Garcia, L. L., & Olvido, M. M. J. (2021). Teaching and Learning Continuity Amid and Beyond the Pandemic. *Frontiers in Education*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2021.678692>
- Gnaur, D., Hindhede, A.L., & Andersen, V.H. (2020). Towards Hybrid Learning in Higher Education in the Wake of the COVID-19 Crisis.
- Ignacio, A. (2021). Online classes and learning in the Philippines during the Covid-19 Pandemic. *ResearchGate*. <https://doi.org/10.31149/ijje.v4i3>
- Johnson, E., Morwane, R., Dada, S., Pretorius, G. J., & Lotriet, M. (2018). Adult Learners' Perspectives on Their Engagement in a Hybrid Learning Postgraduate Programme.
- Li, K. C., Li, K. C., Kwan, R., Chan, H. T., Wu, M. M., & Cheung, S. K. S. (2023). Evaluation of Hybrid Learning and Teaching Practices: The Perspective of Academics. *Sustainability*, 15(8), 6780.