THIS WEEK — MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Creating a Premium Blend:
20 Questions and a Case Study

BY GINA A. OREFICE

Hot or Not? — you may have seen some of the many Web sites that offer virtual passers-by the opportunity to rate people, animals, and things according to highly subjective levels of desirability. While it's a silly way to waste time, we often seem to play at the same game in technology. The evaluations are sometimes just as subjective and superficial. Ideas, technologies and trends are thought to be hot (or not), sometimes for the right reasons and sometimes for the wrong reasons.

Depending on the reader's age, it really isn't difficult to recall dozens, maybe even hundreds, of innovations some people thought were hot at the time: the BetaMax videotape format, teaching machines, VideoDisc, LaserDisc, CD-I, the :CueCat, Microsoft's Bob and Apple's Lisa, the NetPC, "push" technology, eBook devices, the "paperless office" and the "cashless society," or cold fusion (the physics version, not the software).

On the other hand, there have also been a number of cases in which being tagged "hot" did not turn out to be the kiss of death. Among these is "blended learning," which seems to be a hot topic for the right reasons.

For example, in June 2004, the eLearn-ing Guild published a Guild Research Report titled, *The Trends in Blended Learning*. Among the findings that underscore the success of blended learning were such items as, "... a significant majority (85%) of our respondents' organizations uses blended learning for the creation and/or delivery of educational content," and, "... the majority of respondents reported that in their experience blended learning was more effective than non-blended methods (74%)." But to me, the most significant finding was the conclusion that, "... improving learning experiences is more often a rationale for blended learning than is the desire to reduce delivery and development costs."

Wouldn't it be great if we only had to think about how to put together the most

Blended learning may be the next focus of process re-engineering to affect all e-Learning professionals and require development of entirely new design and management skills. Without much research to support optimum blended learning creation, it is important to do what we can to minimize the risks and maximize success. In this pioneering article, read how Canon USA, Inc. is already leading the way to premium blends!

A publication of

THE eLEARNING GUILD

effective instruction blend?

It would be glorious to spend 100% of the time designing instruction. Unfortunately most of us must also manage the learning project, design the instruction, develop the delivery media, and sometimes, if there is an instructor-led component, we teach as well. To the client (whether internal or external), what usually matters most is how quickly you can launch your course, how many people can take the course, how long will it take them to complete it, and how much will it cost.

Since this is the case, designers need to be both efficient and effective with allotted resources and scheduled timeframes. That's why it's important to learn from the successes and the mistakes of others in the industry. It is also important to leverage the tools and strategies used to design and develop learning in successful projects.

However, at the same time it is important to remember that audiences, performance challenges, organizational cultures, and technological infrastructures are very different from one project to the next. Each effort may require a different approach to the design of instruction, blended or not. That's why it is critical to be cautious about "magic bullets" for learning or "one-size-fits-all" solutions for performance improvement challenges. No matter what your instructional design challenge is, it is so important for you to know when to say, "Just because a particular strategy or delivery modality was successful elsewhere, we've tested it within our corporate culture, with our audience, etc. and it didn't work, so let's move on and try something else."

I have written this article to shed some light on questions such as:
• What is blended learning?
• Is blended learning really as new and cutting edge as some articles and white papers would have us believe?
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of some of the delivery modalities?
• Does blended learning really work?
• What is a solid approach to designing a premium blend for any corporate culture, audience, content, and technological infrastructure?
• Does blended learning make our jobs as instructional designers easier or more difficult?
I will conclude by relating my answers to the way in which the Educational Services department within Canon U.S.A., Inc. approached its first blended learning solution.

What is blended learning?

This is a loaded question, and I'm not sure there will ever be a standard definition of blended learning, but in the context of this article I will approach it as a learning design that combines at least two *delivery modalities* that may also include multiple instructional strategies. There are also many different names and ideas about delivery modalities. Here are my working definitions for four of the most popular ones:

1. *Asynchronous Web-based training (WBT)* provides a tutorial type course consisting of several self-paced modules accessed through the Internet. WBT activities include simulations, games, animations, assessments and reading.

2. *Instructor-led training (ILT)* refers to an instructor-led event in a physical classroom. ILT activities could include reading, writing, lecture, assessments, role-plays, games, etc.

3. *Asynchronous online learning (AOL)* refers to discussion threads, which may be monitored by an instructor, or by a *subject matter expert (SME)*. AOL activities could include reading, writing, simulations, animations, assessments, etc.

4. *Synchronous online learning (SOL)* refers to classes that are conducted by an instructor through a *virtual classroom* (e.g., Elluminate, Centra, and other virtual classroom technologies). SOL activities include reading, writing, simulations, animations, assessments, etc.

You will notice that the activities under all four types are practically identical. The main differences in activities have to do with interfaces, and with the amount and type of interaction with other learners, instructors, and SMEs.

Is blended learning really a new concept?

Actually the concept of blended learning shouldn't be new to anyone. Since the days of the one-room schoolhouse, we have combined "instructional activities," including: reading, lecture, group work, and writing (even if it was on slate tablets). What makes blended learning different today is that now we can combine instructional activities with a wider variety of delivery modalities.

The inconsistent definitions and confusion around delivery modalities is exactly

why many professionals in education and training are unsure about what blended learning is, and whether it should be part of their curriculum. Selecting from the choices available today of instructional activities, delivery modalities, learning theories, and so on, can be overwhelming.

It seems that as we add more technology-driven options to our toolboxes, the concept of blended learning has begun to explode. In order to create a premium blend for a particular situation, it is important to determine the delivery modalities' strengths and weaknesses, and to pair them with instructional activities that match the audiences, performance challenges, corporate culture and technological challenges.

Getting to know the delivery modalities.

The idea behind blended learning is that it should be possible for instructional designers to create a combination that leverages the advantages of each delivery modality while neutralizing the disadvantages. (See Table 1, below, for the advantages.) The challenge is deciding on the delivery modalities needed for the optimum combination.

Each delivery modality has one or more advantages over the others, given a particular situation. Important factors in determining which delivery modality is the best fit include:
• Content
• Instructional strategies
• The skills of the designer team
• The budget
• Time to market
• Time frame

• Technological infrastructure
• The audience location, skill set, access to the Internet, access to computer equipment, etc.

Later in this article I present 20 questions that should be asked when selecting and combining delivery modalities, but first let's look at a critically important question.

Does blended learning really work?

Like any other new instructional strategy or theory, blended learning will not be deemed a success until there is enough research that cites specific statistics proving that with a particular audience, budget, content type, etc., a particular blend of delivery modalities will create the most effective instruction. Currently there are very few specific statistics available on blended learning, so for now the title of this section must remain a

TABLE 1 *Delivery modality advantages*			
WBT	**ILT**	**AOL**	**SOL**
Participants can access anytime and anywhere.	Instructor is available for questions. Face-to-face communication is the most effective way to communicate.	Participants can access anytime and anywhere.	Instructor is available for questions and participants get immediate answers.
Participants can make mistakes without fear of criticism, learn from simulations of software or soft-skill scenarios.	Learn from peers through observing, and participating in the practice of many different types of skills, or through discussions.	Anonymity allows for participants to feel more comfortable asking questions, or posting answers, and they have the ability to learn from peers through discussions.	Anonymity allows for participants to feel more comfortable asking questions, or participating, and they have the ability to learn from peers through discussions and some skill practice (i.e. software).
Consistency of content is guaranteed.	Classes can be adjusted on the fly based on each audience (with a good instructor).	Classes can be adjusted on the fly based on each audience (with a good instructor or SME).	Classes can be adjusted on the fly based on each audience (with a good instructor).
Maintenance of content is easy to manage.	Short development time, and low development and implementation costs.	Short development time and low development costs.	Short development time and low development costs.
Participants can learn at their own pace.	Allows for hands-on practice of all types of skills with peers and instructor.	Participants can learn at their own pace.	Allows for hands-on practice with software skills and some soft skills with peers and instructor.
Participants can revisit the learning at anytime.	Shorter time-to-market.	Shorter time-to-market.	Shorter time-to-market.
No travel costs.	No need for hardware or software, etc.	No travel costs.	No travel costs.

question. However, the research that does exist shows that through blended learning the potential for knowledge retention and improved job-performance increases.

What evidence do we have now? We would like to be able to cite results that meet the Gold Standard of research: peer reviewed empirical studies, involving large groups of learners that cite hard numbers to disprove well-crafted neutral hypotheses. So far, there aren't any. The few studies that cite hard numbers have typically collected Level 1 data (subjective learner reaction, not learning results) from small groups of learners.

Most of what is available cites anecdotal evidence, such as case studies, learner comments, and managerial reviews. Unfortunately these studies do not give us what we need for building a systematic understanding of blended learning and its design. On the other hand, they do address possibilities, indicate some promising directions, and provide some guidelines for reducing risk and increasing the possibility of success.

Until we have experimental research results that meet the Gold Standard, we will need to design our own observational studies and surveys as part of the

development effort. As instructional designers continue to leverage the advantages of the different delivery modalities with all types of content, audiences, etc. in order to determine their own premium blends, we will all benefit as we are able to read about their successes and leverage what makes sense for our performance challenges.

As with the traditional instructional design process, it seems design of blended learning is also more of an art than a science. Sometimes I really wonder about our understanding of instructional design — for example I recently saw a request for a software application that would enable a designer to select the right delivery modalities for a particular audience, corporate culture, etc. There are too many variables and intangibles in our business to create an application that can design learning, blended or not.

How do I begin designing a premium blend?

There are probably hundreds if not thousands of instructional design models, but the generic ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) summarizes most

of them. Of the five steps in this model, the most critical one is Analysis. After determining that training is needed to improve performance, or to meet another business need, analysis should continue in order to decide what training solution is the right choice for your particular performance challenge, organizations's culture, audience, design team and instructors.

I have seen many discussions in articles and journals that present simple decision tables, based on two to four variables, to support selection of delivery modalities. Although I believe that some of these tables are great tools, they don't seem to do justice to the complex process of determining what training solution is the right one. In my experience, it's important to continue to gather information about a number of factors in order to determine your premium blend.

I have developed a series of questions to ask during the analysis phase. Some of these questions relate to organizational issues, such as cost and staffing, and some relate to learning issues, such as transfer to the job, the learners' existing knowledge, and so on. The answers will guide the designer in selection of one or more delivery modalities. It is not a fore-

gone conclusion that these questions will lead to a blended solution in every case.

Questions relating to learning issues

The first ten questions will guide design choices that primarily affect learning and transfer to the job. Some of the choices may ultimately affect cost and project management as well.

1. Difficulty level

What is the difficulty level, and what skills are needed for this audience to become successful with this content? The more difficult or the more skills-based the content is, the more likely it is that hands-on, practice time, expert help, or social learning will be needed. Therefore solutions like ILT, SOL, or a combination of WBT, ILT, and SOL might be necessary. If it is software skills that need to be taught, simulations through a WBT course might work without any other modalities.

2. Learner experience

What is the experience level of your audience? Audience familiarity with the topic may determine the blend. For example if a course is an update to a computer system that the audience is already familiar with, a WBT with software simulation could be a total solution. However, if this is a new or complex skill, or a combination of hardware and software, the combination of WBT, ILT, and possibly AOL or SOL, will be necessary.

3. Content support

What types of delivery modalities are best for which portions of the content and audience, and what is the right blend? Typically WBT is best for the transfer of knowledge, concepts, theory, facts, etc; WBT is also effective for teaching software skills through simulation. WBT also guarantees a consistent message, which may be important in instruction designed to support policies and procedures. But SOLs and AOLs are better in some cases. For example, if a

SME is necessary for follow-up sessions and questions from geographically dispersed audiences, SOL or AOL would be the right choice. Depending on the skill of designers and instructors, content that needs to be quickly designed and deployed can also be handled well by SOL or AOL. ILTs are great for social learning, problem solving, and skill practice with real-world scenarios.

4. Practice

Does the content or audience require hands-on practice? If hands-on practice is required for improved performance, a blend with an ILT component or just an ILT could be the solution. If the skill required involves software, this can be emulated very well through a WBT course. If it were felt that a SME would be helpful, a combination of WBT with AOL or SOL would be worth considering.

5. Social learning questions

Would social learning increase the effectiveness of the training? An ILT, or an SOL if designed appropriately with the
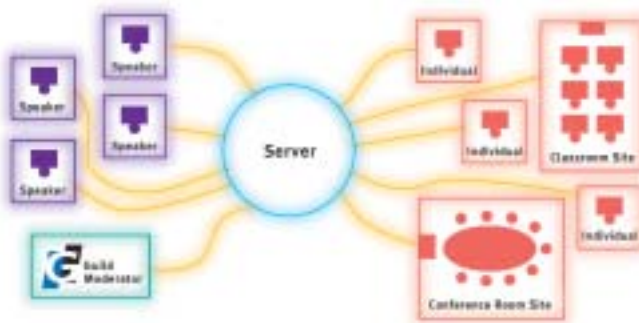
right technology (e.g. Centra, Elluminate, or other virtual classroom-based synchronous solutions), are really the only modalities in which social learning will occur.

6. Expert availability

Would it be necessary to have subject matter experts (SMEs) available for questions? If SMEs are necessary, an AOL, SOL or ILT, possibly combined with a WBT solution, could be the right blend.

7. Assessment

What levels of assessment will ensure performance improvement? If a course requires comprehension and knowledge a WBT solution will work. If assessment of learner analysis skills is needed, a SOL could be the solution. Finally, if skills must be demonstrated in order to make an assessment, a SOL or ILT or combination of WBT, SOL and ILT may be the right solution.

8. Learning activities

What types of learning activities would be most effective for this audience and content? Determining learning activities is central to the instructional design process. Once the designer determines the types of activities necessary to achieve specified learning objectives, a decision can be made concerning the most appropriate delivery modality for each of the activities.

9. Learner experience with delivery modalities

What experience does the audience have with the delivery modalities available? Even though a particular modality might be a great solution for the content and audience, the designer must consider whether it involves overcoming a learning curve for the audience in order to use it.

10. Learning aids

What types of learning aids would increase the probability of the learning objectives being achieved? Thinking about the learning aids will help to determine the modalities best suited to deliver the training.

Questions relating to organizational issues

Costs, staffing, and other organizational and managerial questions continue to be important, since a solution that costs more than the problem is no solution at all. The next ten questions address the

> It is important to remember that no matter what the research states, you are the expert when it comes to designing a learning solution that works for your organization's culture, performance challenge, audience, SMEs, designers, and instructors.

key matters to account for in selection of modalities.

11. Content stability

Will the content that is being covered continually change? If this is the case, spending a lot of time up front developing training is not a good idea. WBT might be the best solution as it is easier to maintain a consistent message and update the content on the fly. An SOL is also a possibility, since you can schedule updates as needed to present the information to a geographically dispersed audience.

12. Time constraints

How much time do you have to design and develop the course? It takes less time and sometimes less money to design and develop SOL training or ILTs than it does to create WBT, depending on the skills of your designers and trainers.

13. Infrastructure

Are there any technology limitations, including bandwidth, the skill set of your tech support group, etc.? If the technical limitations are severe enough, SOL, AOL, or WBT may not be a viable solution even if it makes sense instructionally.

14. Deployment

How geographically dispersed is the audience? SOL, AOL and WBT are all possible cost-efficient ways to quickly deliver training to a dispersed audience. However, a number of factors may rule these out: for example, audience, designer, and trainer experience with

these technologies; content difficulty; experience with the content; the need for face-to-face practice; or experience with scenario-based practice in real-world situations with the actual equipment. Sometimes the most effective solution may require an ILT, even for a geographically dispersed audience.

15. Group size and time frame

How many people need to be trained and what is the time frame to complete their training? Depending on the number of people that need to be trained and how quickly, a SOL solution might be needed. However, instructional designers have to be cautious when under pressure to deploy this type of solution. SOL, like any other training modality, may or may not be the single most effective way to train that particular audience and content. The design may need to combine SOL with WBT and AOL in order to create an effective solution. In some cases, it may be better to change the time frames and go with an ILT.

16. Design team skill set

What is the skill set of your designers for all modalities available? The depth of the instructional designers' skill sets must also be taken into consideration. Just because a designer does a great job with traditional classroom training doesn't necessarily mean they can design a blended solution.

17. Budget for consultants

Do you have the ability to hire consultants for any portion of this training? If the in-house skill set isn't what it needs to be in order to deploy a blended learning solution, hiring consultants to fill this gap might be the answer.

18. Total budget

What is the budget that has been allotted for this course? Although budgets should have nothing to do with instructional design considerations, the realty is that they do. Therefore, when designing a blended solution each component's cost as well as effectiveness must be considered. This is also a good time to think of evaluation, because if you feel you can prove cost savings due to particular training deployments, the budget could possibly be expanded upfront in order to deploy that solution.

19. Instructor skill set

What is the skill set of your trainers? Although SOL is a good solution for

some content and some audiences, you must also consider the skill set of the trainers. Not all great classroom trainers can make the transition to a virtual classroom.

20. Total availability

What is the availability of instructors, SMEs, and your audience? You will need instructor and SME resources for ILTs, SOLs, and AOLs. If your audience doesn't have time for travel or to spend several days in a classroom, SOLs, AOLs and WBT might be a combination that works for them. In some cases, combining alternate solutions with an ILT can cut down the time required in the classroom.

Using the answers

After answering the above 20 questions, a designer will have information on the performance challenge, content, instructional strategies, audience, instructors, SMEs and designers available for this project. These questions along with the table of advantages for delivery modalities, experience with the audience, and the great content available in The Journal and on the Web on blended learning should give a starting point and enable good decisions on how to begin coming up with premium blends.

In reality the design process is an iterative, not a linear one. Once some initial notes are made on delivery modalities, begin writing learning objectives and then match them to possible delivery modalities (and vice versa), while referring back to the 20 questions. In most cases, an initial set of learning objectives will form before finalizing delivery modality decisions. It is also possible that as the design team answers the 20 questions, new learning objectives may come up for consideration, delivery modalities may change, or certain learning objectives may disappear from the design. It is important to remember that no matter what the research states, you are the expert when it comes to designing a learning solution that works for your organization's culture, performance challenge, audience, SMEs, designers, and instructors.

As instructional designers, does blended learning make our jobs easier or more difficult?

The bottom line is that, although we now have many more tools that enable

us to design incredibly effective learning solutions, blended learning really has made our jobs more difficult. But the good news is that these tools can make our participants more successful in gaining the skills they need to improve their performance, or in gaining the knowledge they need to do their jobs in a way that will improve your organization's performance.

There will probably never be a totally scientific way of selecting instructional strategies, and therefore there will probably never be a scientific way of deciding what delivery modalities should be combined for best effect. Design will always involve art, or optimization. However, as instructional designers who are dedicated to creating the most effective instruction, it is worth building the skills to make these determinations.

How the Educational Services (EDS) department within Canon U.S.A., Inc. approached its first blended learning solution.

Our first premium blend contained a mix of WBT and ILT, which allowed EDS to use the classroom time more efficiently and effectively. Why did EDS decide on a blended learning solution? We felt, given the research available to us, that with the right blend of learner-centered solutions the potential for knowledge retention and improved job-performance increases.

What was the decision process of EDS in selecting this particular course as our first blended learning solution? First, I should provide some history on our current training and what it is that we do. EDS is responsible for training service technicians, who work for dealers that sell our products. Our training focuses on new and updated products that are part of the imaging systems group which includes copiers, printers, multifunctional devices, and software, just to name a few of the products.

Our current curriculum includes 23 WBT courses, 32 self-paced self-study courses (which are paper-based), and 25 instructor-led training courses. We reviewed the benefits of all delivery modalities. Based on feedback from our audience (including their desires for more hands-on time with the devices, less lecture time, and more accessory training), our designers' skills, our technological infrastructure, and our knowledge of our audience, we decided to start with a blend of WBT and ILT for one of our newest black-and-white multifunctional product launches.

The idea was to move most of the content that would normally be provided in a classroom lecture to a WBT course, which would then become a prerequisite to the classroom instruction. Figure 1, below, illustrates the content shifts involved.

With this strategy the WBT portion of the course covers the basic concepts, theory, configurations and specifications of our newest imageRUNNER series. At the same time, the ILT portion of the course would allow for more hands-on with the equipment, in the context of real-world scenarios. This blended approach was going to allow us to give
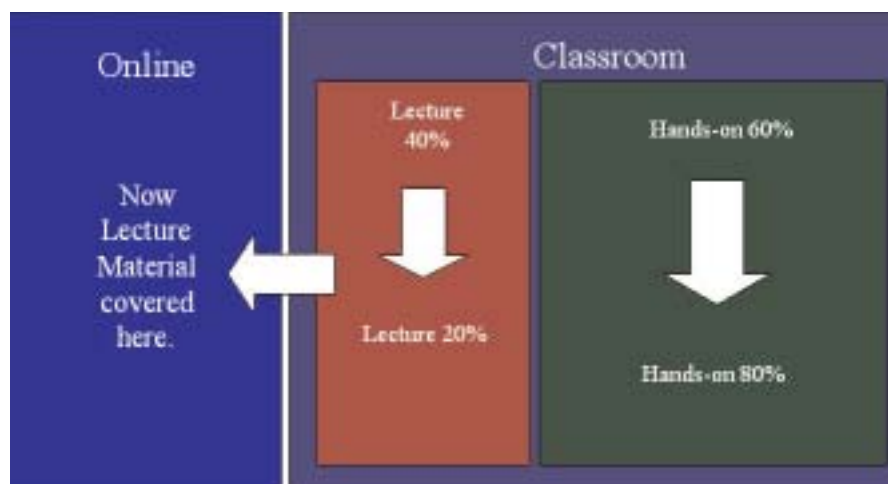

Figure 1 *Canon USA reorganized course content to increase hands-on time as a percentage of classroom instruction.*

the students what they had been asking for! The first step in the process of determining our premium blend learning solution was the formation of the "Right Blend" Task Force.

The "Right Blend" Task Force

The goal of creating the "Right Blend" Task Force was to bring the right people together to ensure the blended approach delivers the most effective learning experience for our participants, and in turn increases our customer satisfaction. This task force consisted of three of our instructors, two designer/developers and management representatives. The "Right Blend" Task Force's objectives were as follows:

- Determine what specific imageRUNNER series 2270/2870/3500/4500 content should be covered through which delivery methodology. We did however give the Task Force some guidelines for the e-Learning and classroom portions of the course. (See Figures 2 and 3 below.)
- Determine how the classroom portion of this course should be configured and what should be included, for example:
  – Pre-assessments — test for retention of online content, get participants on the same page, and reinforce key main concepts.
  – Lab Practical Exercises (allowing the technicians more time with hands-on practice in context of real-world scenarios).
  – Lab Practical Final Exam
  – Final Written Exam
- Finalize the content in both the online and classroom course.

In addition, the Task Force was assigned responsibility for several key support tasks. These included:
- Weekly meetings
- Take the online course and provide feedback on content and how information is being presented.
- Attend a train-the-trainer to actually go through the entire classroom course for one final look at the content and how it is presented.
- Champion the blended approach, that is, knowing and communicating the blend benefits, which were:
  – Increase hands-on instruction during the classroom portion of the course while maintaining a high-quality training program. This will give the Instructors the chance to have a greater impact on the students during the application phase of learning.
  – Increase the scope of information being covered in a course (i.e. Accessories). This method will allow us to cover more information and also focus classroom and Instructor resources.
  – Focus in on the skills and field knowledge the Instructors can provide in the classroom. Making the courses more efficient and more effective with the same or less time in the classroom.
  – Students can work at their own pace during the online portion, spending the time where they need additional time.
  – Flexibility of the delivery will give the student more information in a fashion that will fit their schedules.
  – More efficient use of field resources, equipment and Instructors. Not printing Technical Reference Manuals (typically 500+ pages) will save regional training center resources.
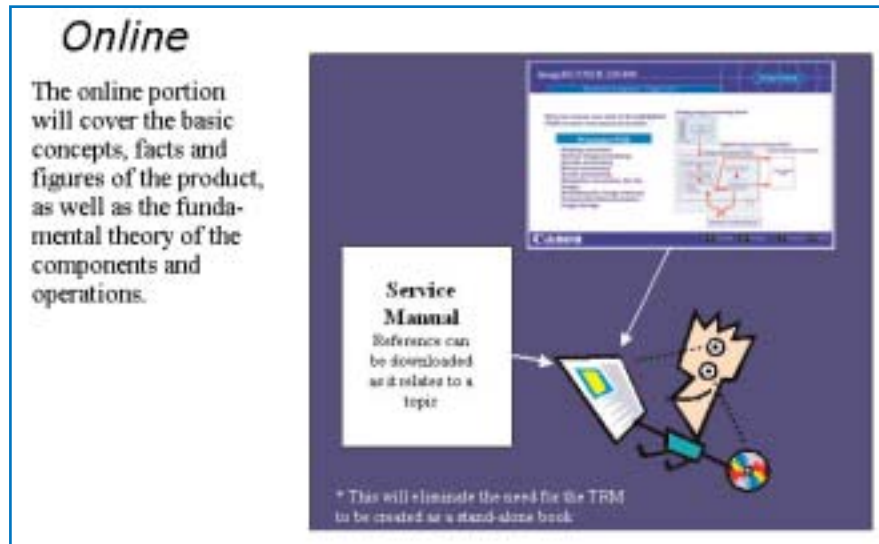
Results to date

This solution has been deployed now for a couple of months. Here is a sampling of actual feedback we have collected so far:
- "New course format (less lecture more hands on). Provides better training, more prepared to service equipment. Pre-study on e-learning provided a

Figure 2 *Example of guidelines given to the Task Force for the e-Learning part of the training.*
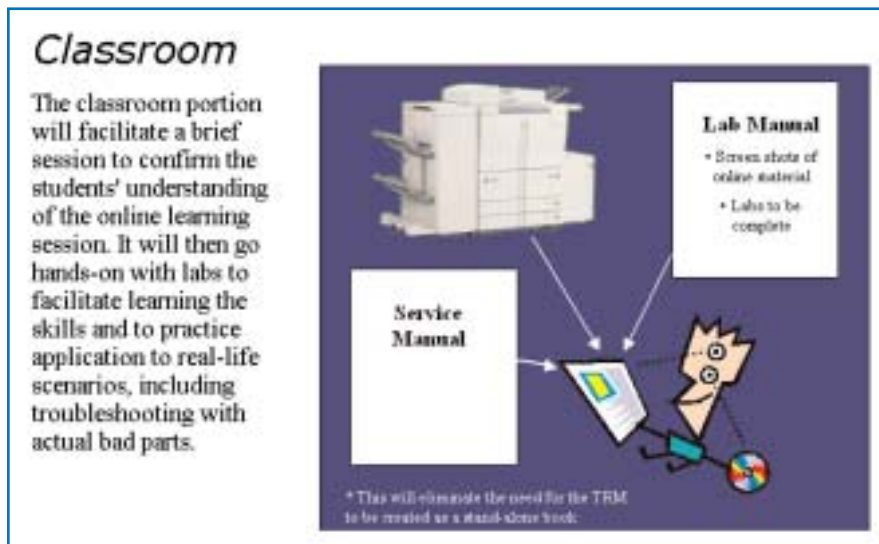
Figure 3 *Guidelines provided to the Task Force for the classroom portion of the course.*

good running start on training."

- "I like the new format of the classes. Less lecture and more hands on. The e-Learning study guide was a good way to eliminate the lecture time in the class. The practical trouble shooting was a great way to test what we learned and used in each module."
- "I feel that the new course format is more effective."
- "This new format is excellent. Most of our time was spent working on machines and this class had much more time spent on accessories."
- "I liked the way the course was designed with less lecture and more hands on."

Stay tuned for more details on the success of this program. In a follow-up article that I expect to provide later this year, you will learn how our audience continued to react to this blended course, how successful they were, and what they thought of the improved classroom training with its additional hands-on practice in the context of real-world troubleshooting scenarios and practical exams.

The blend wrap-up

As designers we should now realize that not only are our performance challenges getting more complex but the tools that we have available to build, develop and deliver our courses are also becoming more complex. We've also discovered that even though these tools might not necessarily make our jobs any easier, they do have the ability to enable us to create more effective learning solutions.

This is a very exciting time in our industry. As we continue to experiment with these different delivery modalities in order to create our own premium blends, we will be able to learn from our blended successes. Of course, other organizations' attempts that fell short of success are also lessons learned, or they may even be effective learning solutions for our audiences. Good luck to you in your quest to design and develop your own premium blends of learning!

Author Contact

Gina Ann Orefice, the Assistant Curriculum Development Manager at Canon USA, Inc., is a lifelong learner. She is action-oriented, has a zest for life, a good imagination, inquiring intellect, ingrained ethics, and a desire to excel.

That is why, she says, online learning was the perfect way for her to obtain an MS in Instructional Design / Online Learning and to move forward in her career. She is now pursuing her doctorate in Instructional Design / Online Learning.

In 1994, Gina began designing and developing blended learning solutions and realized her passion for instructional design and learning. She is currently managing seven e-Learning and instructor-led training designers and developers. With 10 years of experience in the analysis, design, development, delivery and implementation of learning, Gina continues to bring passion to the table in her pursuit for the right learning solution, at the right time, through the right delivery methodology. Gina's secret to success? "Keep looking for your passion — it's the key to lifelong learning and success."

Contact Gina at (516) 328-5571, or by email to gorefice@cusa.canon.com

---

Additional information on the topics covered in this article is also listed in the Guild *Resource Directory.*

The eLearning Guild™ is a global Community of Practice

Through this member-driven community of designers, developers, and managers of e-Learning, the Guild provides high-quality learning opportunities, networking services, resources, and publications.

Guild members represent a diverse group of instructional designers, content developers, web developers, project managers, contractors, consultants, managers and directors of training and learning services – all of whom share a common interest in e-Learning design, development, and management. Members work for organizations in the corporate, government, academic, and K-12 sectors. They also are employees of e-Learning product and service providers, consultants, students, and self-employed professionals.

The more than 14,600 members of this growing, worldwide community look to the Guild for timely, relevant, and objective information about e-Learning to increase their knowledge, improve their professional skills, and expand their personal networks.

Resource Directory

The Guild hosts the e-Learning industry's most comprehensive resource management system that includes more than 4,500 (and growing) e-Learning related resources in a searchable database. Guild Members can post resources and can update them at any time.

Surveys & Studies

The eLearning Guild conducts continuous polls and more than a dozen surveys and studies each year – including an annual salary survey. Guild Members have unlimited access to all data and analyses.

The eLearning Developers' Journal

The Journal provides in-depth articles about how e-Learning professionals can make e-Learning more successful in their organizations. It's a weekly online publication in PDF format and Guild Members have unlimited access to the searchable archive of every issue published.

Job Board

The Guild Job Board should be your first stop for solving employment related issues. Whether you are an employer looking to fill a key position or an e-Learning professional looking for a new job, you'll find success here.

Info Exchange

The Info Exchange enables members to ask questions of, and get feedback from, other members around the world in a discussion board format.

Member Discounts

Guild Members receive a 20% discount on all optional services offered by The eLearning Guild that are not included in your membership. These services include all face-to-face and online events produced by the Guild, special publications, and other services as they are developed.

The Online Forum Series

e-Learning for e-Learning professionals! *The Guild Online Forum Series* enables you, or your team, to explore the most pressing issues facing e-Learning professionals today with some of our industries smartest people – right from your desktop or conference room.

Engaging Symposia

The Guild's unique and focused symposia drill into the most critical issues for e-Learning designers, developers, and managers. These are intensive learning events with limited enrollment. Participate in person or online, as an individual or as part of a team.

Annual Conference

The eLearning Producer Conference, held in the fall each year, offers comprehensive and in-depth content for all e-Learning professionals in a collegial environment conducive to learning and sharing.

Event Proceedings

If you attend a Guild event, you have immediate access to all event proceedings. If you do not attend, as a Guild Member you still have access to the proceedings 90 days after an event ends.

Guild e-Clips

A Guild Members-only publication sent by email. It's short, easy to read, and includes "clips" designed to keep members connected to the latest information about Guild publications, surveys & studies, and learning events.

eLearning Insider

The *eLearning Insider* is sent by email every other week and includes current e-Learning industry news, excerpts from Journal articles, highlights from Guild surveys, e-Musings, and information on Guild matters.

Professional Development Through Active Engagement

In order to maintain a vital community and provide relevant information, The eLearning Guild seeks the active involvement of all Guild Members and Guild Associates. Consider these ways to engage:

Speak at Guild Events: Members and Associates are encouraged to submit presentation proposals for any and all Guild events.

Write for the Journal: *The eLearning Developers' Journal* articles are written by industry leaders and practitioners just like you who are working in this field every day.

Join the Program Advisory Committee: This committee works to craft the program content of all events produced by the Guild.

Join the Research Advisory Committee: This committee works to identify the topics for Guild surveys and studies, and also develops the survey instruments.

The eLearning Guild organizes a variety of industry events focused on participant learning: