

What ITIL Training & Exam Delivery Method is Right for You?

By [Rick Lemieux](#)



The world of ITIL training & testing has changed quite a bit over the past two years. Today, one can be trained from Foundation thru Expert in an instructor led classroom, virtual classroom, online self-paced video or e-learning classroom or in a blended learning classroom that combines self-paced training with instructor-led review sessions. Exams can be taken onsite with a proctor, online with a web cam proctor or at an accredited testing center. These new multi-venue delivery and testing capabilities provide training coordinators with the ability to maximize the use of their ITSM training dollar while minimizing their travel cost and a student's time out of the office. This multi-venue approach also provides the ability to accelerate ITSM adoption within an enterprise by enabling training coordinators to offer solutions that can be delivered anytime, anywhere. This newsletter is designed to help training coordinators understand each delivery method in detail so they in turn can use this new found knowledge to assist in the development of multi-venue training plan for individuals or an entire IT organization.

There has been lots of discussion lately about what ITIL training method is best to learn from. There are those who say classroom is best because it's where you have direct access to an experienced instructor as well as other IT professionals willing to share their thoughts and experiences. There are others who say e-learning is the way to go as it provides the student with scheduling and learning flexibility plus online mentoring services at a low price. There are others who say blended learning is best as it provides the best of both instructor led classroom and e-learning. The bottom line is they're all good as each delivery method is a nail to someone's training hammer. Listed below is a detail description of each delivery method along with a summary of how each method impacts training, travel and time out of the office budgets along with the student's ability to pass the exam on the first try (i.e., return on investment).

The Three T's and one R of ITIL Training

There are four basic things training coordinators need to think about when connecting a student with an ITIL training delivery method. The first has to do with **Training Budget**. It makes no sense to go shopping at Tiffany's if you only have a dollar to spend. The second is **Travel Budget**. Most companies have put a hold on travel until the economy gets better. My gut tells me that even when it gets better there will still be a hold on it especially when management discovers that things still get done without people jumping on airplanes. The third is **Time out of the Office**. The downturn in the economy has forced companies into a position of doing more with less. With that being the case it's almost impossible for anyone to leave for a couple of days let alone a week. The fourth is **Return on Investment**. That is if we are paying for this employee to be trained in the ITIL we want to ensure that he passes the exam on the first try and that he/she returns with knowledge they can use on the job. Listed below is a summary of all ITIL training methods along with information on how each method impacts training, travel and day out of the office budgets along with the student's ability to retain the content and pass the exam on the first try.

ITIL Classroom or Virtual Classroom Training

ITIL classroom certification programs are delivered by an accredited instructor to groups of students assembled in a physical or virtual (webinar) classroom with the exam being administered on the last day of the program. Training options include:

- Public, open enrollment classes delivered in a training center to a group of students
- Public, open enrollment virtual (webinar) classes delivered online to a group of students
- Corporate classes delivered onsite to a group of six or more students

- Corporate virtual classes delivered online to a group of six or more students
- Courseware licensing programs for IT organizations looking to deliver their own program

Budget & Productivity Impact

Training Budget - This is the most expensive solution in the market today due to its significant expense structure (venue, instructor, operational overhead etc.)

Travel Budget - Unless you can find a virtual or locally hosted class some travel dollars will be spent.

Time out of the Office - Plan three days for Foundation and the Service Lifecycle classes and five days for the Capability and Managing Across the Lifecycle classes

Content Retention / Exam Pass - This is one of those depends situations. That is if the instructor is good and the student follows all the rules (i.e., reads the corresponding ITIL books, studies in the evening etc.) the likelihood of passing the exam is in alignment with the average international pass rates of 77.5%

ITIL Blended Learning Training Programs

ITIL blended learning certification programs are delivered using a unique combination of online self-paced training programs, instructor led review sessions and student management services to deliver students a hybrid training solution. With this approach exams are normally scheduled on the last day of the instructor led review session. Training options include:

- Public, open enrollment classes delivered in a training center to a group of students
- Public, open enrollment virtual (webinar) classes delivered online to a group of students
- Corporate classes delivered onsite to a group of six or more students
- Corporate virtual classes delivered online to a group of six or more students
- Courseware licensing programs for IT organizations looking to deliver their own programs

Budget & Productivity Impact

- **Training Budget** - With minimal instructor and venue expense, this delivery method tends to price out somewhere between classroom and online self-paced training.
- **Travel Budget** - If the instructor led review session is delivered online the impact to the budget is zero. If delivered in a classroom, the impact will be minimal based on the reduced number of days required for the instructor led delivery of the program.
- **Time out of the Office** - Plan one day for Foundation and two days for all other programs.
- **Content Retention / Exam Pass** - This program provides a lot of one-on-one support to help students retain the content and pass the exam on the first try. In a pilot program with a Fortune 100 company this approach is producing pass rates at the 95% level with average student scores coming in at 85+%

ITIL Online Self-Paced Certification Programs

ITIL self-paced certification programs are delivered online using a self-paced, streaming video or traditional e-learning format with support from ITIL Experts and other students operating within a social network or proprietary support group. With this approach students are in charge of setting up their exam schedule. Training options include:

- Online self-study training videos or e-learning programs delivered direct to a student's PC
- Corporate self-study e-learning training programs delivered over the corporate intranet

Budget & Productivity Impact

- **Training Budget** - This delivery method tends to be the least expensive as everything (lectures, courseware, mentoring & exams) is delivered online.
- **Travel Budget** - This delivery method has zero impact on the travel budget
- **Time out of the Office** - Dependent on how the students structures their self-study schedule this delivery method may or may not require any time out of the office.

- **Content Retention / Exam Pass** - This program provides a lot of one-on-one online support to help students retain the content and pass the exam on the first try. Our experience to date with this approach is showing pass rates at the 85% level with average student scores coming in the 80% range

Summary

The chart below provides a summary of the training methods listed above along with their impact in terms of training costs, travel costs, time out of the office costs and the exam pass rates.

ITIL V3 Training & Exam Delivery Methods Summary

Training Type	Training Cost	Travel Cost	Time Away from the Office (per class)	Exam Pass Rates (average across all certs)	Source
Classroom - Onsite Delivery	Highest	Yes	18,21 or 30 hours*	78%	www.itil-officialsite.com/News/ExamStats
Classroom - Webinar Delivery	High to Highest	No	18,21 or 30 hours	78%	www.itil-officialsite.com/News/ExamStats
Blended Classroom - Onsite Delivery	Up to 55% less than classroom	Yes	12 Hours per class**	95%	itSM Solutions - Based on Pilot currently running with a Fortune 100 company
Blended Classroom - Webinar Delivery	Up to 55% less than classroom	No	12 Hours per class	TBD	itSM Solutions - Pilot to Launch in August 2011
Online Self-Paced Video Classroom	Up to 65% less than classroom	No	5 to 9 hours per class***	85%	itSM Solutions - Based on number on online self-paced students trained in 2011

* Time allocated for Instructor Led classroom session. Does not include travel days

** Time allocated for instructor led review sessions

*** Time allocated for online video instructor led review sessions

Hopefully the above information has provided some insight into the value each training and exam venue brings to the market today. Feel free to reach out to me @ rick.lemieux@itsmsolutions.com if you need more information on the training and exam delivery methods covered in this newsletter.