Hybrid Learning – Tips and techniques on getting the most from multi-location learning

What is Hybrid Learning?

Hybrid Learning is an approach where some students attend physically in the classroom, while others join virtually. Lecturers teach off-campus and on-campus students at the same time using video conferencing, virtual classroom or webinar tools.

At the University of Derby, on-campus sessions should be adopting the student learning labs approach as outlined in the educational model, but if you are confident with hybrid learning approaches, these can be used to enable students to participate in these sessions remotely.

Here are some tips and techniques to get the best out of a hybrid classroom environment :

What might I need to consider in a hybrid classroom?

- Usually microphones and webcams in classrooms are primarily setup for lecture recording. To achieve the best results for online students, make sure you are aware of where you are standing or moving in relation to the microphone and webcam as this will give the students who are joining

remotely a better classroom experience.

- Be aware that students could be remotely joining your session at any time during the lesson. Consider how you can bring them into the conversation or join group work activities
- Any conversations and discussions that happen in the classroom need to also be available on the online webinar tool, to allow all students to take part. You might ask someone in the room to type the questions, or repeat them yourself so those at home can hear.
- Ask students in advance how they would prefer to participate, e.g. via webcam, raising hands or text chat.

- Build in regular breaks to enable you to check the chat to see if there are any questions
- Students who are joining remotely may be on a range of devices e.g. personal computer, smartphone or tablet. Consider this when creating content as students may find some content difficult to read, due to the size of the screen they are viewing it on.
- Beware that students will have differing quality of internet bandwidth at their own home – make sure when using video and audio, you provide a link so the student can watch it in their own time, after (or before) the session.

How do I set up a hybrid classroom?

Many classrooms are equipped with webcams, microphones and visualisers. Using these with a virtual classroom solution or webinar tool e.g. Collaborate, will enable you to share the resources you are using in class to those students joining remotely.

When using a virtual classroom or webinar tool:

- You can share your slides/screen etc with the class and remote students
- It can be accessed on the class PC and your personal device

- Remote students can ask questions by raising their hands virtually or through a chat window
- In-class students can also connect to the room, to ask questions, view the slides
- Remote and in-class students can collaborate with each other in break out rooms
- The session can be recorded and accessed by students later.

What do I do on the day?

Pre class:

- Load your slides, and other resources you will be sharing into virtual classroom solution, prior to the session
- Check your settings – do you want notifications popping on the screen wile presenting in class?
- Let your students know which room you will be using, and how to access

- Let your students know what the expectation for face to face and remote access/engagement is (this may be different to how you run your synchronous online sessions)

On arrival in class:

- In the classroom, log in to your virtual classroom solution and go into the room you have shared with your remote students

- Decide if you will keep your mic on or off – (if it's on, remote students can hear everything, if off, they may be confused that the sound is not working on their device)

Once your class is ready to start:

- Turn your mic and video on, check your remote students can see and hear
- Ask your face to face students to log in to the virtual classroom solution, if you require them to
- Remember to record the session
- Share your slides, or other resources you're using in online session, and check these are also displaying on the main screen in the classroom

During the class

Enjoy it!

Ensure you build in opportunities to engage and interact with all your students.

Hybrid Learning FAQs

How do you ensure inclusion for all students and that they get a comparable learning experience?

It is important that the learning experience is inclusive for both off-campus and on-campus learners. Things to consider include:

- Ensure all learning content is regularly updated and an area where all students can access it.
- Record sessions, for students to view again or if they have difficulties accessing the classroom.
- Enable classroom discussions to continue after the synchronous session, so students who could not access the live session can still contribute to the conversation. This may be through a discussion board that has prompts to encourage students to explore a topic further, or from a different angle.
- Provide a summary recording to highlight key discussion points and outcomes of the session, and the next steps for the students.
- Consider arranging a dedicated catch up with students who are studying remotely, so you can go through the session with them without the distraction of the classroom.

How would you need to adapt your teaching to deliver in this way?

There has to some adaption to teaching if an effect hybrid model is to be successfully achieved.

- Team teaching may be something to think about – having someone managing the online cohort, relaying back information and answering questions. This will make the student feel a more active part of the classroom, not just spectator.
- If team teaching is not possible, make sure you have scheduled in time in the session where the students not in the classroom have a chance to contribute

- Having all on-campus and online students connecting into the online virtual classroom session will make the online students feel more part of the cohort.

- Make sure all learning materials are present on the VLE and are accessible for everyone.
- Have a discussion area for answering questions – this does not have to be the lecturer answering all the questions, leave that up to your students. This will hopefully create a good community of practice with the cohort.

How would a hybrid classroom be achieved if the lecturer must remote in from home?

If the lecturer must remote from home for whatever reasons running a class may be very difficult. Here are a few things to consider.

- Firstly, does the classroom session have to be live? Consider flipping the classroom and creating learning content for students to work through in their own time, then bringing them into a discussion either on a virtual discussion board e.g. Padlet or by running a small group seminar online to discuss the work.
- Consider moving the whole session online but if an on-campus session must be run, nominate a student (or students) in the room to join an act as a co-facilitator for the online session.
- Alternatively, if possible bring in a second teacher to facilitate the on-campus session, relaying questions back to the students and helping with classroom activities.
- Make sure all learning content is up to date and well organised in the VLE for all students to access.
- Create a discussion area for students to ask questions

Case studies and useful links

FACILITATING "HYBRID" WORKSHOPS VIA WEBINAR – University of York

The HyFlex Course Model