itslearning

Hybrid Learning Handbook

Tips on implementing your hybrid learning strategy

Reflect, Restructure, Reimagine Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly disrupted the traditional mode of face-to-face education. But it has also hastened teaching innovation, collaboration and discussions on the future of education. There has never been greater demand for educational technology and VLE-driven online learning. At the same time, the fundamental role of the educator as a guide, and source of inspiration and support has become much stronger as organisations embark on a transformative digital strategy for teaching and learning.

1.6 BIL

Students affected by learning disruption due to the global pandemic in 2020

1 BIL

Students still affected by full or partial closure of schools and universities in 2021

UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report

87%

of educators surveyed by Microsoft in 2020 said they will use more technology after the Covid-19 pandemic.

50,000

increase in active users on itslearning in March 2021 compared with March 2020

itslearning has experienced record usage since educators adopted remote learning in March 2020.

Education has now become modular, flexible and accessible. Educators are adapting the way they deliver teaching to today's changing environment and needs.

Multimedia, especially video conferencing, in teaching is at an all-time high. Additionally, education is becoming more data driven and personalised.

Hybrid learning is not a new phenomenon but for a long time, face-to-face instruction was preferred because of the ability to give immediate feedback and engage in real-time with students. The pandemic has changed this dynamic. With educational technology (EdTech) such as itslearning, giving instant feedback, communication and collaboration has now become much easier.

Still, whether you are new to digital learning or not, it can be challenging to develop a hybrid learning protocol in this ever evolving learning landscape.

In this Hybrid Learning Handbook, you will find best practices and step-by-step guidance from education experts and the itslearning community for planning and implementing a hybrid learning protocol within your organisation.

Plus a handy **survey sample** and **checklist**.

What is hybrid learning?

Isn't it the same as blended learning?

The answer to the second question is 'No'.

The terms 'hybrid learning' and 'blended learning' are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same. Hybrid learning happens when online components replace some of the face-to-face class teaching time. The online engagement can be both synchronous and asynchronous.

Meanwhile, in blended learning online materials do not replace face-to-face class time, but rather complement and build on the content discussed in the class.

Think of hybrid learning as the next step from blended learning. The approach greatly reduces 'seat time' in a traditional classroom and shifts more of the teaching and course delivery online. When in the classroom, students can often spend more time engaged in collaborative learning activities (flipped learning).

Learning takes place in the classroom/lecture hall, online at home via a learning platform or on the go via a mobile device at any time.

If we focus on the future rather than the past, we can design a hybrid system, partly physical, partly virtual, with assessments that are focused towards the ability to create things and solve problems. Whatever option we choose, there is a rather rare opportunity to design an education system that is suitable for our times.

Prof. Sugata Mitra

Children and the Internet
Learning in the Times to Come

Learning spectrum

Face-to-face	Blended	Hybrid	Remote/Online	Flexible
Instruction happens in a classroom setting. Technology may or may not be used to complement in-person teaching.	Instruction mainly happens face-to-face in a classroom setting, while technology is used to deliver learning materials, goals, assignments and assessments. EdTech is used to augment the face-to-face framework.	Instruction happens both online and face-to-face in the classroom. This can include staggered learning, or cohort learning where one group of students is on campus while the other is online. Online learning can be both synchronous or asynchronous.	When the classroom shifts online with more than 90% of teaching and learning activities taking place on a digital medium. Face-to-face interaction (if any) is limited.	Nearly all teaching and learning happens online. Additionally, students have the flexibility of determining how, what, where and when they learn. There is a higher degree of engagement because students learn at their own pace and in their own time.

Use of EdTech increases →

Hybrid learning teaching plan example

Educational organisations have been permanently changed by the Covid-19 pandemic. They have adopted remote learning but schools, colleges and universities also say they miss the face-to-face component. A hybrid learning protocol will accommodate both face-to-face and online learning, and will allow institutions to quickly switch to remote learning when needed.

Face-to-face

Introduction to the course, elaboration of what will be learned, learning objectives.

Done Online

Reading or viewing video teaching materials at own pace, assignments (individual/cooperative/collaboration), practice and application of what has been learned.

Face-to-face

Interactive discussions, asking questions, one-to-one instruction for students who need it, lab or other work that needs supervision.

Done Online

Consolidation, deeper learning through independent work. Use of the itslearning Learning Paths for elective, remediation and advanced work.

Face-to-face

Presentation, feedback, refection and well-being check-ins.

5 steps to Hybrid Learning Success

To avoid the common hurdles when implementing hybrid learning, consider these steps for designing a well-defined and well-communicated protocol.

1 Plan a clear, actionable process by engaging all stakeholders

It is important that you begin by informing all stakeholders within organisation. Get their feedback and address concerns. This includes your curriculum, technology and instructional staff, as well as students and parents. Flexibility should also apply to the broader community's needs.

You can start by sending a survey (*see sample on page 14*) to everyone involved. Use this as an opportunity to introduce your hybrid learning protocol.

Leverage the unique strengths of your staff and focus on what you do best – facilitate learning.

Engage experienced hybrid learning instructors to help onboard your team of teachers with what will be required of them in ensuri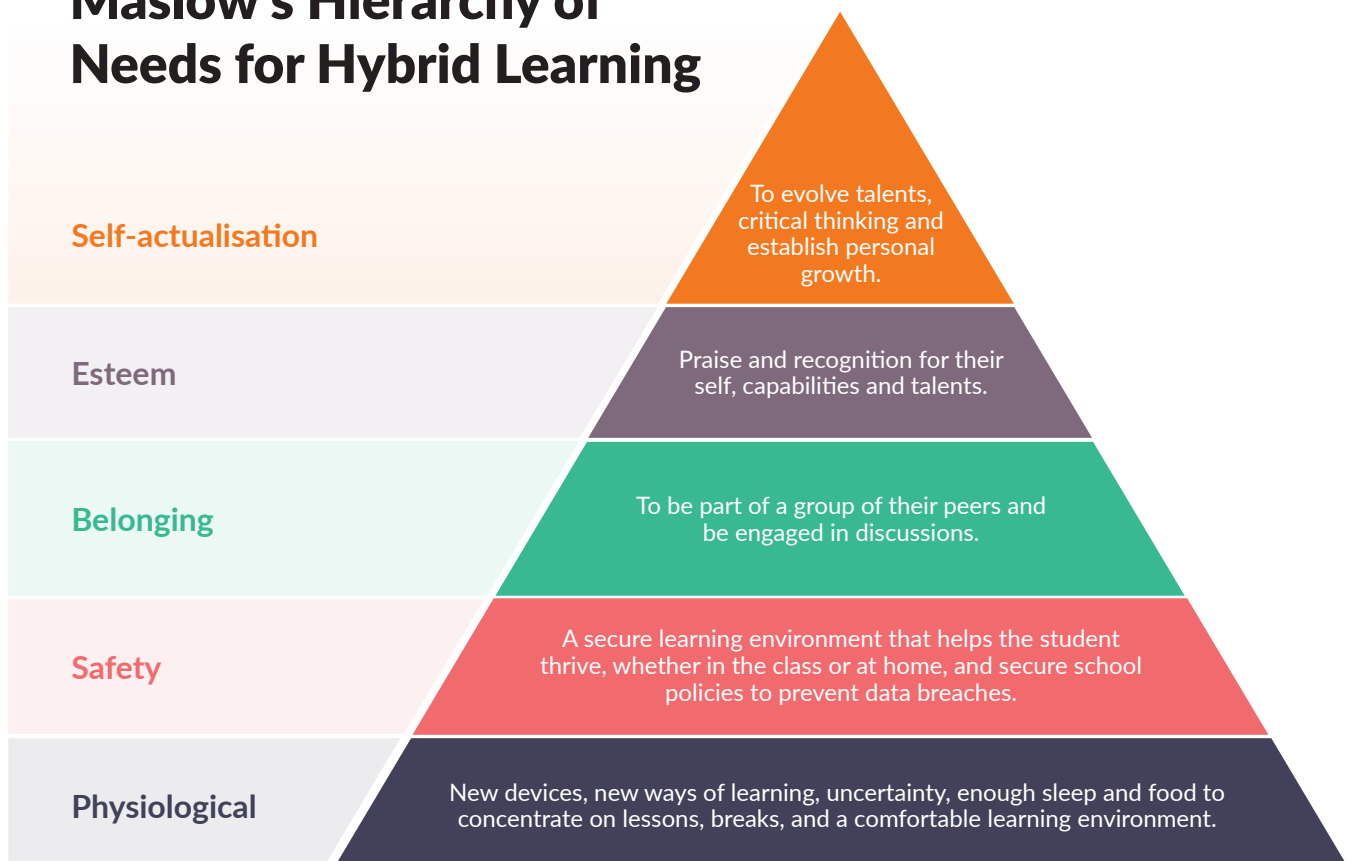ng that your program is a success. In Higher Education this could include staff/faculties engaged in delivering distance learning courses. itslearning pedagogical consultants can also help you design and implement a dedicated hybrid learning protocol for your institution.

Enable and empower educators by giving them the necessary resources and training to successfully deliver hybrid learning.

Consider the Universal Design for Learning and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs adapted for education when designing your protocol to help you focus on the right EdTech for your needs.

Health and safety measures – such as those implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic – should be mandatory and non-negotiable to minimise risks to everyone, including the wider community.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs for Hybrid Learning

Self-actualisation	To evolve talents, critical thinking and establish personal growth.
Esteem	Praise and recognition for their self, capabilities and talents.
Belonging	To be part of a group of their peers and be engaged in discussions.
Safety	A secure learning environment that helps the student thrive, whether in the class or at home, and secure school policies to prevent data breaches.
Physiological	New devices, new ways of learning, uncertainty, enough sleep and food to concentrate on lessons, breaks, and a comfortable learning environment.

2 | Prepare and address challenges

One obstacle that many educational institutions encounter when implementing a hybrid, online or flexible learning protocol is ensuring digital equity. Some students might not have laptop access or a high-speed internet connection at home. You also need to consider a plan that takes into account other possible technical issues that could interrupt hybrid learning. Here are a few ways to make sure all students can take part in hybrid learning:

- When adopting any new educational technology (EdTech), make sure that the applications offer full functionality on all devices. While some students might not have a computer at home, they might have access to a mobile phone or tablet.

- Stimulate and support learners. Look for EdTech with intuitive design and high-quality user experience. At itslearning we put usability first because learning is optimised when teachers and students do not have to struggle to use the technology.

- Create, collaborate and share content across your network.

- Have a hub for all your learning materials and activities, such as using Plans in itslearning. Attach learning objectives to the lesson plan and activities, so students have scope, structure and sequence. A uniform, structured way of delivering teaching makes it easier for students to focus on their most immediate tasks.

- Include a make-up clause in your protocol. If you assign tasks or homework, give students extra days to complete the work when they are working from home.

- Address digital equity early in the year. If possible, provide students who lack access with hotspot devices for internet or loan out laptops/tablets if a prolonged period of online learning is expected.

- Use recorded videos to provide instruction and give encouragement. Students will then have the opportunity to pause the video, rewind and listen again to sections that they are struggling to understand.

- Do a practice run to identify and iron out any complications in your hybrid learning protocol. This will ensure smooth execution and compliance. This is also a great time to check for any gaps in knowledge and ensure that all stakeholders have received training on your digital applications and platforms.

Remote learning was highly rated by teachers who had more access to resources and whose students had access to devices and the internet.

McKinsey study 2020

3 Organisation-wide protocol ensures accountability

An organisation-wide protocol with clearly defined steps will minimise confusion. It will help already busy teachers save time, streamline their work and give them a clear path to achieving the strategy and goals of your hybrid learning protocol.

Include a transparent and easy-to-execute procedure for requesting exceptions to the overall protocol. Exceptions should only be made for reasonable, non-disruptive requests. Determine what these requests are, or have a clear line of command for any inquiries.

To keep students focused, follow these simple rules:

Make it easy for students

Provide students with a central hub for all classroom materials, assignments and anything else required to complete tasks. This way they will always know where to find materials, assignments and instructions. Create course templates that all teachers at your institution can follow.

Assign real-time tasks

Include a task that requires visible online activity, like group discussion, video conference, or require that assignments be submitted by a specific time.

Check-in

Reach out to inactive students via instant messaging or video conferences. Schedule one-to-one time for students who need more guidance. Use Breakout Rooms or group activities to create smaller groups and engage quieter students.

Give voice and choice

Ensure student engagement by giving them choice in how they show what they know. Rather than requiring all students to submit written assignments, give them the option to submit a video, drawing, song or other evidence of learning.

4 | Social learning at scale augmented by technology

With the right digital tools, you can make online learning just as engaging and personalised as traditional face-to-face instruction. Gather and use data to inform teaching.

Consider these powerful digital tools to make eLearning more engaging:

Polls and Surveys

Use a poll or survey to motivate students at the start of the day. You can also use these features to give instructions, test students on course materials, or get student feedback on recent lessons.

Discussion Boards

An excellent tool for fueling student engagement, discussion boards allow educators to facilitate resource sharing, peer-to-peer assessments, or debates on current events.

Collaboration

Create assignments that require group work and collaboration. Set up peer and self-assessment to empower students to take charge of their learning.

360° Reports

These easy to read, graphical reports show you at a glance which students are engaged and how long they have spent on their tasks and reading materials.

Assessment

Tools such as quizzes, multi-choice questions, short essays or video presentations can ensure engagement and gauge mastery and information uptake.

Video Recordings

Connect with your students in the form of a welcome video on virtual learning days. Even older students appreciate this gesture. Pre-record lessons to better convey difficult concepts and provide clear details on assignments.

Learning Paths

Create a dedicated learning path suited for each student's level. The sequential steps guide and let them learn at their own pace. Students can jump ahead, repeat an activity or get additional learning material. Read how one school network used learning paths to ensure student success.

Educational games

Expand on lessons by providing students with digital word games, puzzles, simulation exercises, and other games that can improve the understanding of concepts and help develop critical thinking skills. You can connect to hundreds of learning apps via the Learning Tools Integration (LTI) in itslearning.

Video Conferencing

Another engaging way to use video is video conferences with students. Schedule a few minutes with each student as a virtual check-in or use it to clarify instruction for students who have questions. Here are more tips on how to optimise video conferences.

5 | Align your hybrid learning policy with your VLE

A carefully planned and communicated procedure paired with local directives (in times of emergency such as a pandemic) will make your hybrid learning protocol much smoother to execute.

Build space for continuous fine-tuning depending on the situation at your organisation or wider community to keep your hybrid learning protocol on point.

With course materials that can easily be aligned to learning objectives/standards, robust tools for communication and collaboration, and the freedom of mobility, itslearning simplifies the hybrid learning process from initial planning to implementation.

Hybrid learning is a teaching method that combines traditional classroom experiences and online course delivery with a strong emphasis on utilizing the best option to achieve the learning objectives. However, not all hybrid learning models are the same, so it is recommended that you have your own protocol that fits your specific needs.

How we can help you

As your educational partner, itslearning can help you plan and implement a dedicated hybrid learning protocol to suit your requirements.

Contact us for a consultation on hybrid learning or get in touch directly with:

Matthew Jordan
Head of Sales
matthew.jordan@itslearning.com

itslearning is Europe's largest provider of learning management systems for schools and universities. Built for today's way of teaching, the itslearning VLE is used by millions of people around the world.

We are headquartered in Bergen, Norway, with offices in 8 countries. Since 2019, itslearning has been part of the Sanoma Group.

To learn more about itslearning visit
itslearning.com

Hybrid Learning Stakeholders Engagement Survey Sample

This is a sample survey for school networks, colleges and universities to engage stakeholders before building a hybrid learning protocol.

Survey for staff

Begin by describing your chosen hybrid learning model to clear any ambiguities or misconceptions.

1. Does everyone in the faculty have access to a device and high-speed internet?
2. Will your organisation need to provide devices for teaching staff?
3. Are you, as an educator, satisfied with the current software and EdTech resources for our hybrid learning model?
4. If not, what resources and training need to be in place for you as an educator to help you conduct hybrid learning?
5. What do you want students to know when they complete their hybrid learning courses?
6. Can the course learning objectives and goals be met with hybrid learning?
7. Which goals can be better achieved face-to-face and which would suit an online learning environment?
8. What new learning opportunities do you envision with online asynchronous discussion and collaboration?
9. Conversely, what challenges do you anticipate with online asynchronous discussion and collaboration?
10. What do you think the term's schedule in hybrid learning should look like?
11. How do you prefer to see coursework graded when using face-to-face and online activities?
12. What do you think needs to be done to help students focus and manage their time when learning from home?
13. How will your organisation provide support for students who need help with technology? (Lost passwords, inability to access the course etc.)

Survey for Parents/Students

Begin by describing your chosen hybrid learning model to clear any ambiguities or misconceptions.

1. Do you (students and parents/guardians) have access to a device and high-speed internet at home?
2. Will your institution need to provide devices and hotspots for students?
3. How would you rate your student/child's experience of remote learning during the closures of 2020?
4. Please explain why you gave this rating to question 3.
5. What was the biggest challenge with remote learning for you?
6. Are you satisfied with the current software and EdTech resources for hybrid learning?
7. If not, what resources and training need to be in place for you as a student/parent?
8. What do you think needs to be done to help students focus and manage their time when learning from home?
9. How will your institution provide support for students who need help with technology? (Lost passwords, inability to access the course etc.)
10. What would you recommend/suggest the institution do to improve our approach to remote/hybrid learning going forward?

✅ Hybrid Learning Checklist

1   Download the itslearning app (Google Play - App Store) ☐

2   Develop a hybrid eLearning plan that is built around your needs ☐

3   Provide detailed instructions to staff, students and parents ☐

4   Create a central hub for all lesson plans and learning materials ☐

5   Ensure and maintain open communication channels ☐

6   Complete a dry run of your process with key stakeholders ☐

7   Resolve issues and refine hybrid learning process for optimum results ☐