Hybrid Teaching: Getting Started

At BSPH, a hybrid course format has some students participating on-site and others virtually. All hybrid courses have a .41 or .49 section (for virtual students) paired with a .01 or .60 section (for on-site students). All students in a hybrid course are expected to meet the same learning outcomes.

This document offers tips for successful planning and pedagogy for hybrid teaching.

Key Points

Facilitation	Balance	Communication	Engagement
Faculty should design instruction and technical logistics specific to the hybrid model.	The learning experience must be equitable amongst remote online and on-site modalities.	Students may not be familiar with the hybrid classroom, and clear expectations are necessary.	Despite different modalities and section numbers, students should all be engaged in and treated as a single learning community.

Facilitation

Educators must be strategic about the facilitation of a hybrid course. In this model, the logistics and instruction are differentiated between the on-site and virtual online learners. It is crucial to consider the experiences and needs of each modality for success.

Course Site Logistics

Only use the .01/.60 CoursePlus site for class content, activities, and materials; students in the .41/.49 section will be automatically added to that site's roster. Online students will use Zoom for classroom interaction and activities. Provide a link to each live Zoom session from the Schedule Builder tool in CoursePlus – either directly as a web page or, preferably, in the text of a Standard Page event.

- If you are linking the Zoom session directly in the Schedule Builder as a web page, make sure not to include the meeting's full URL in the publicly displayed Title and Additional Information fields.
- If, instead, you are using the recommended option of including the Zoom information on Standard Page, you may wish to follow the example on this page created for each individual class session. Alternately, you could follow the guidance on this CTL Blog post using a single page created for all class sessions.

Physical Classroom Logistics

Learn about your classroom capabilities from the Multimedia Room Viewer site. Carefully consider your choice of camera, microphone, and monitor display options and how it fits your instructional approach. It is not one-size-fits-all! Here are some suggestions to help you decide:

- Consider turning off tracking cameras if allowing free-flowing discussion, running debates, or breaking into groups. While great for highlighting one speaker at a time, tracking cameras aren't good for multiple speakers in the room.
- Learn what camera view to choose and why. What best supports the instructional activities and interaction? Instructors will need to think about where to stand and where the cameras and microphones are. Let your teaching style lead your choices. For example, will you want to stand behind the podium or walk around the room?
- Decide what you want students to "see." You will need to learn how to display slides, the instructor, and both online and on-site students in the classroom. All hybrid-capable rooms will have the same technical set up.
- Plan to go into your classroom early and practice with the setup and technologies. You can contact Multimedia staff to assist you (410-955-3066). Consider enlisting a peer or TA to participate virtually and report back what it looks like from the Zoom-side.

Instructional Strategy

- Plan your synchronous sessions in advance. It is an extra challenge to teach two formats simultaneously, particularly if the instructor has more familiarity with a specific learning environment.
- Adjust assessments for a hybrid environment, if needed. Here are some suggestions for how you might measure students' progress towards your course's learning objectives:
  - Frequent low-stakes, formative assessments offer opportunities for students to ask questions. They also allow faculty to gauge progress, which can be more of a challenge in a hybrid format.
  - Open-book exams can reduce the pressure that comes with timed, high-stakes exams and provide flexibility for technical challenges that often occur for virtual delivery.
  - Consider using quizzes with quiz sets which allow different versions of a quiz to be distributed randomly to students. This further ensures academic integrity in the hybrid environment.
- Design opportunities for peer interaction across modalities. Consider both synchronous and asynchronous activities.
- Consider maximizing time for class discussion by employing prerecorded lectures, while being mindful of total workload.

Balancing a Hybrid Course for Equitable Learning

The learning experience must be equitable between virtual and on-site modalities. Hybrid course delivery means that there is differentiation in the location and timing of interactions. The hybrid format merges the

on-site and online learners in a synchronous setting, which, if not carefully planned, can lead to unbalanced quality of learning across modalities (NEA, 2021). To ensure equitable learning experiences and outcomes:

- Use the capabilities of Zoom to distribute files to students as needed during a class session, but also make all resources are available through CoursePlus. This ensures everyone – in and out of the classroom – can access the resources, both during and after the class.
- Apply purposeful and consistent organization throughout the course. For example, identify objectives for each course module, week, or topic and share an agenda for each class session with students.
- Establish communication best practices to ensure all student voices are heard:
  - Decide how virtual students should communicate (e.g., "Raise Hand" function, Zoom reactions, chat, speaking aloud).
  - Closely monitor online discussion via Zoom chat during synchronous sessions.
  - Ask students, both on-site and virtual, to introduce themselves the first time they address the class.
  - During class, solicit questions from both virtual students and on-site students.
  - Always repeat in-class questions for virtual students and vice versa.
- Employ a co-instructor or TA, if possible, to help facilitate. Have them specifically engage virtual students, manage activities, and monitor the Zoom chat. If you have a small class without a TA, try rotating on-site students responsible for keeping track of the chat and ask them to note when someone wants to ask a question.

Communicating Expectations

Students may not be familiar with the hybrid course structure and the intersection between the physical classroom participants, virtual participants, learning activities, and CoursePlus content and tools. For this reason, it is essential to establish expectations (Beatty, 2019).

- Define and outline clear expectations specifically for virtual students and on-site students on the Syllabus page. For example:
  - Remind the students they are expected to attend in the course modality they registered for. Only students registered for the on-site section can attend on-site; this too should be made clear to students.
  - Clarify an attendance policy for each section of the course. Will viewing a recording post-class count as attendance, or is synchronous attendance required? What is required of an "excused" absence?
  - Plan for and share expectations for any campus closure or inclement weather events.
  - Include direct contact information for help, including planned office hours for both cohorts, TA information, and technical help.
  - Include a statement on technology use and expectations, such as making sure the Zoom app is updated and whether on-campus students should be prepared with personal audio devices

(headsets, ear buds, etc.) for interaction with their online classmates. A CoursePlus announcement before class might also be appropriate.

- Send weekly emails to the class highlighting upcoming events and deadlines. Consider including a summary of the discussion forum or other synchronous content-related discussion in a section of your weekly email. Note that these emails can be scheduled in advance in CoursePlus. This sort of communication is important for all course formats and critical for hybrid courses.

Building Community Through Engagement

It is no secret that peer interaction can lead to improved learning outcomes but facilitating interaction across different modalities can seem like a daunting task (McGrath, 2014). Faculty should plan for opportunities for student interaction to better connect students with course content and their peers (Bruff, 2020; McMurtie, 2020.) Here are a few ideas to help your on-site and virtual students form a learning community:

- Welcome individual students (on-site and online) as they enter the room.
- Social icebreakers can help build rapport with peers and encourage ongoing discussion (Berry, 2019; McGrath, 2014). Students in a hybrid course can particularly benefit from short, organized activities or icebreakers to avoid isolation and build social connections with peers (McGrath, 2014).
- Create an informal online space for all students to exchange links, articles, news, and other resources. Optional tools may include a discussion forum or wiki within CoursePlus.
- Break the class into smaller groups to participate in small group discussions, think-pair-share, or problem-solving activities. Use the breakout room function in Zoom to simulate a group experience for virtual students. Consider mixing groups for cross-modality interaction (Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning, 2021).
- Use Zoom live polling to ask students multiple-choice questions about course material, misconceptions, or share their perspectives during the class session.
- Try collaborative construction of learning practices such as collaborative notetaking, glossary, or FAQ, which can encourage active listening and teamwork among students.
- As in all classes, we will also want to embrace Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and follow University-wide accessibility requirements for all course materials. UDL fosters multiple means for engagement and making sure everyone has access to the materials is paramount to participation.

Gathering Feedback

Ask for and incorporate student feedback. A quick informal poll, exit ticket activity, or discussion asking about the class structure can give you valuable insight about what is working or not working. Use the information to improve your class logistics and activities.

For more information

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