

EDUCATORS SPEAK



**AMRIT
NAGPAL**

Birla Open Minds, Head Preschool & ECCEd

CREATING HYBRID LEARNING SPACES – A CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF LEARNING!

In a fast paced and ever changing landscape with respect to learning and development institutions need to create a learning ecosystem that engages learners with opportunities for continuous growth and allow the learners to immerse themselves in multiple outlets for educational engagements.

Teaching from home is the new normal and the future of education. Whether through remote teaching flipped classrooms or blended learning is an integral part of the evolving landscape of education. Hybrid learning is rapidly becoming a significant teaching method to make use of during this period of uncertainty. It provides the necessary safety restrictions for students as well as staff and gives some sense of normalcy.

It is a way of integrating conventional classrooms experiences, experiential learning goals and digital content delivery that highlights on seeking equilibrium between face to face and online learning. Hybrid classrooms vary broadly according to the subject matter taught and the needs of particular groups of learners. Students are given options to volunteer in attending in person or attend a distance learning session and participate via video call, it's thus a desirable and flexible approach.

Hybrid learning is becoming a favourable style among educators, parents and students. Since it is related with technology it could be scary to adapt especially if one is already struggling with other problems in the classroom. With appropriate tools and resources one can plan lessons, deliver and connect with students online. With readily and freely available portal services and institutional learning managements systems there are contemporary solutions to new problems.

There are a number of benefits to hybrid learning, firstly its highly flexible, it caters to different learning styles, reduces the problems of student absenteeism, engages students in student collaboration and active learning so much more!

HOW TO SET UP HYBRID LEARNING SPACES?

Hybrid learning sounds wonderful on paper, but there are some challenges that one needs to consider when adapting a hybrid strategy. The biggest factor with respect to learning spaces is that it needs to be used productively. Learning spaces for hybrid learning should not only consider physical spaces but also how they interact with one another.

HYBRID LEARNING SPACE AT HOME

The most important aspect for home hybrid learning space is the spot the student chooses. Whether it is a peaceful corner or near a noisy window, the student knows where they feel productive and comfortable. Ensure the learning space is well lit either by natural light or lights from the lamps. Ensure the student has a decent device and good internet connection. Encourage students to keep the space highly organised with all the required supplies. The learning space should be used for attending classes, doing homework and assignments. Encourage the students to decorate the corner with artwork and personalise it to keep the student motivated and inspired. Once the learning space is established it is time to set goals and create daily and weekly learning schedules.

HYBRID LEARNING SPACE FOR THE CLASSROOM

Hybrid learning in classrooms means deciding the technology to use, some lessons can be taught in person while the others can be adapted and modified as per hybrid learning environments. There are three main technologies you might want to consider for successful hybrid learning.

Interactive White Board: Interactive white board is a common term used for any touch display that is used for interaction. Unlike the traditional white board the interactive whiteboard transforms into the digital world. All you need is a high quality whiteboard with the right software. This

enables you to share the content, promote student collaborations, use remote teaching strategies and so much more on a single device.

Video Hardware and Software: Most of the students will be present on video so it is important that everyone hears one another, cancel noise around and good connectivity. For this it is crucial to have a good video recording and live streaming hardware. While choosing the correct hardware you may want to consider built in as well as external microphones. Also a device with high resolution, good colour technology, high durability, retractable screens and ceiling mounted projectors can keep the device out of the student's reach and devices with less eye strain should be well calculated.

Assistive Technology: Assistive technology is the laptops, video equipment or other technologies with functions such as recording, live-closed captions, screen sharing and many more functions to modify your lesson plans and make it accessible to distant students. It can also be used in inclusive classrooms.

HYBRID LEARNING SPACE FOR STUDENT COLLABORATION

You should consider the students' hardware and software when designing lessons that call for collaborations between the students. Think-pair – share is a common collaboration strategy. It requires a few minutes of individual thinking, pairing up students and then sharing their ideas. This works well in distant students as well as in class students too. In another setting few students are in class and others join in through a video call. Synchronous education taught in-person and online simultaneously. So it can be a good option for the pandemic times where full class strength can be achieved with social distancing ...

Hybrid learning spaces are perfect for many scenarios, if you feel your arrangement is not working, try another one! Hybrid learning allows teachers to have liberty with abundant opportunities to experiment, be creative, learn and grow to enhance the teaching and learning experience and for the betterment of students and options in their learning and teaching experiences.