

THE HYBRID LEARNING PLAYBOOK

A Guide for Learning Experience Facilitators

By Cindy Huggett, CPTD



Defining Hybrid

Hybrid learning is a synchronous, facilitated experience that has a mixture of participant locations: some together onsite, others remote.



In some contexts, such as university or education settings, hybrid may refer to a blended learning journey with some asynchronous components. However, in the workplace, hybrid learning is a single, mixed audience experience.

Types of Hybrid Events

Traditional Hybrid

Most participants are together in the same physical space. A few participants join (via video conference or virtual classroom) from remote locations.



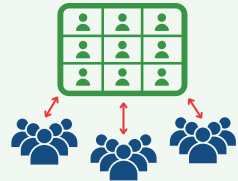
Remote-Centric Hybrid

Most participants are individually connected to a virtual classroom from various remote locations. A few co-located participants meet together in the same physical location and share a single connection to the virtual classroom.



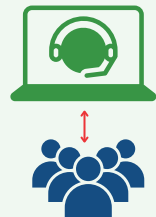
Multi-Part Hybrid

Groups of participants join together in various locations, connected as a whole group via video conference or virtual classroom. In other words, one group may be in a conference room in New York, another group together in Atlanta, and a third group together in Tokyo. The three groups connect to each other via a video conference.

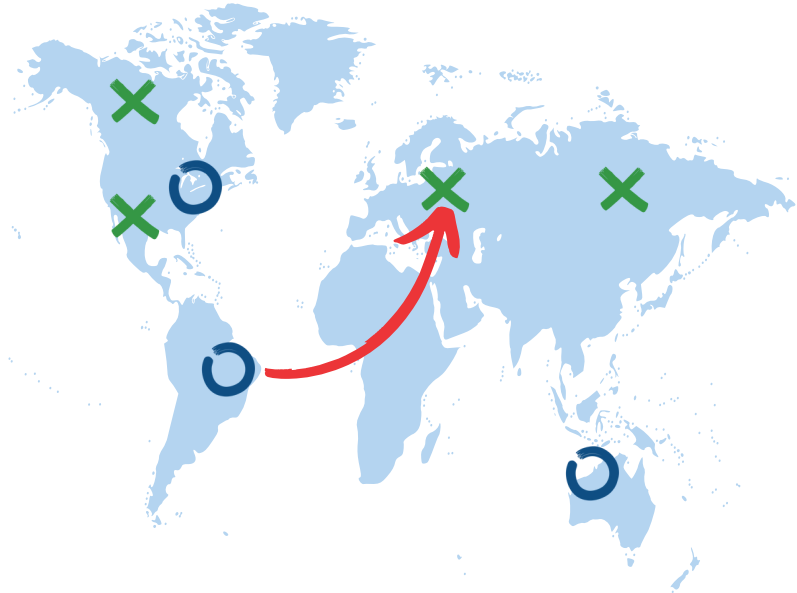


Facilitator Hybrid

Participants are co-located but the facilitator joins from a remote location, via video conference or virtual classroom.



Challenges of Hybrid



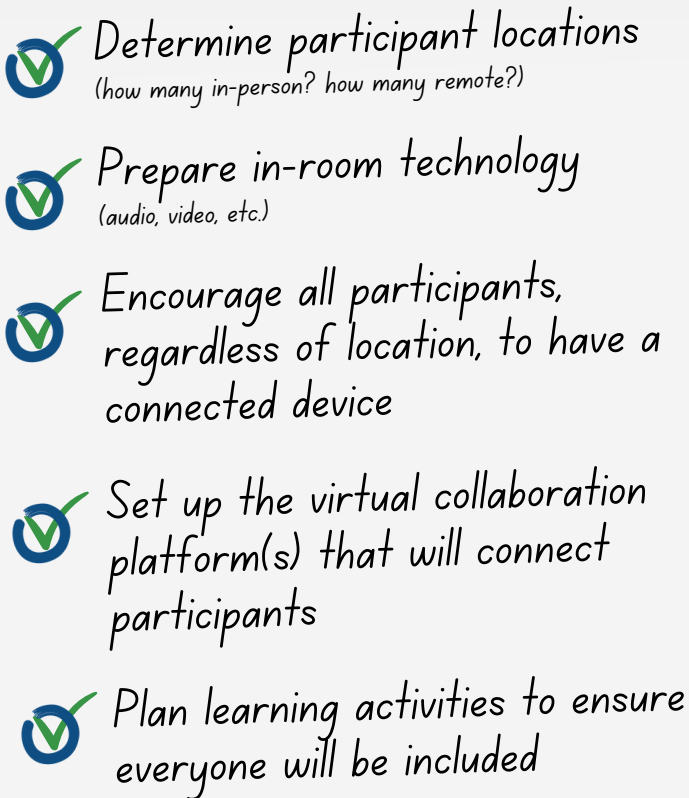
Hybrid learning has a myriad of challenges, most notably that participants have different learning experiences from being in different environments. Remote participants feel isolated and may struggle to engage. Audio may be difficult to hear, and facilitators too often focus on the in-person attendees.

Therefore, successful hybrid learning strives to equalize the experience for all participants, regardless of their physical location.

Key#1 to Hybrid Success

Advanced Preparation

Successful hybrid learning experiences rarely happen by accident. They require intentional advance preparation. A checklist of items to plan ahead include:

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- ✓ Determine participant locations
(how many in-person? how many remote?)
 - ✓ Prepare in-room technology
(audio, video, etc.)
 - ✓ Encourage all participants, regardless of location, to have a connected device
 - ✓ Set up the virtual collaboration platform(s) that will connect participants
 - ✓ Plan learning activities to ensure everyone will be included

Key#2 to Hybrid Success

Clear Audio & Video

Audio



Effective communication only happens when the audio connections are clear and easy to hear. Hybrid learning facilitators should ensure that everyone in the physical room can be heard when speaking, and that remote attendees have clear connections. Position microphones so that all can be heard, and encourage remote participants to use quality headsets.



Video



Effective hybrid environments allow participants to see one another via video. Arrange the classroom so that everyone can be seen on camera and ask remote participants to join with their video on. If the meeting space has video screens or special hybrid room panels, use the technology to emulate a natural setting. Take frequent breaks to avoid video fatigue.



Facilitation Tip



Facilitators should look into the camera lens while speaking, to focus on the remote audience. Use natural breaks to look elsewhere, such as scanning the in-person room, or to look at the virtual classroom's chat area. If notes are needed, place them in your line of sight so that you can sound conversational without reading from a script. Keep your gaze on the lens as much as possible.



Key#3 to Hybrid Success

Create a Shared Experience

Effective hybrid learning events include everyone, regardless of their location. Technology helps, but it's the facilitator who establishes and maintains an inclusive environment. Therefore, leading discussions in a hybrid learning environment requires different techniques than leading in-person and virtual classes. Its important to be more structured in order to allow for input and inclusion.

Establish Environment

Recognize each participant as an individual. Greet them, use their names, build rapport and encourage conversation. Establish group guidelines for participation, such as asking for no sidebar conversations that would exclude remote attendees.



Ask Directed Questions

Be precise when asking discussion starter questions and be clear about how participants should respond. For example, ask, "Who can relate to this challenge? Click on 'yes' if you can, or 'no' if you cannot."



Manage Discussion

Establish an order for responses (remote first!) and seek frequent input. It may feel more structured, but it enables conversation.



TIP:
Keep a "remote first" mindset!

Typical Roles in Hybrid Learning Success



Learning Facilitator

Enables learning by creating a safe environment for discussion, practice, and collaboration. Teaches new content, guides discussions, enhances content, makes connections to real-world application of the content. Ensures inclusion by using a 'remote first' mentality to provide extra focus on those who are not in the physical classroom.



In-Room Moderator

Responsible for the in-room activities during hybrid events, and for helping to engage all attendees. Assists learning facilitator with classroom management, discussions, and collaboration.



Tech Producer

Responsible for behind-the-scenes tech support. Partners with the facilitator(s) and participants to help with any technology needs.



Chat Champion

Helps keep an eye on the virtual classroom / video conferencing tools, including Chat, Reactions, and other participant input tools.



Mute Monitor

Assists with the audio controls to help ensure everyone is clearly heard. Assists with the audio controls to help ensure everyone is clearly heard. Able to help mute/unmute participants as needed.



Remote Partner

An in-room participant who serves as a "buddy" to remote participant(s), helping them to see and hear everything going on in the room.

Inclusive Hybrid Learning Experiences

Use these sample facilitator phrases to create an inclusive and equitable hybrid learning experience for all participants, regardless of their location:

“ Who has a thought on this case study? Please click on raise hand. If not, just click on ‘no.’ ”

“ Let’s type these responses into chat. There are 15 of us, so I’m looking for at least 15 responses. ”

“ I’ll be silent while everyone types on the whiteboard. Please click on raise hand when finished adding your thoughts. ”

“ On a scale of 1-10, how easily could you use this new technique in your daily conversations? Lets use video so we can all see – you can either show your hands using your fingers, or jot your number on paper and raise it until visible on screen. ”

Notice how each item uses inclusive phrases like “let’s”, “we” and “us.” It also invites everyone to participate in the discussion.

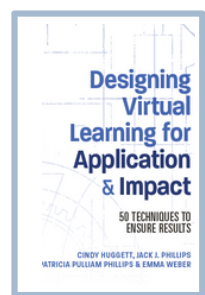
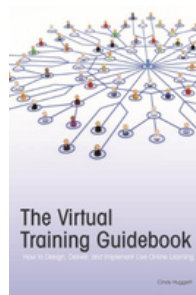
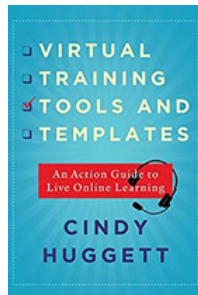
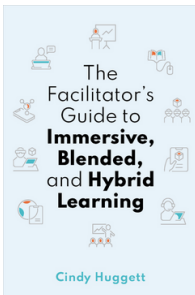


About the Author



Cindy Huggett, CPTD, is a leading virtual training and hybrid learning expert, 20+ year pioneer of online learning, and award-winning guide to organizations wanting to create lasting learning impact in today's global workplace. Having written five acclaimed books on virtual training, Cindy is known for developing engaging learning solutions through practical, cutting-edge workshops, speaking, coaching, and consulting for partners and their teams globally. Based in Raleigh NC, she serves clients globally.

Other books by the author



Contact Cindy for assistance with your virtual and hybrid learning strategies, or to upskill your facilitators to create engaging hybrid learning experiences.

