

OWL LABS

HYBRID LEARNING GUIDE



From Tech Tools to Collaboration
Strategies: Lessons learned
from one year in.

www.owllabs.com

sales@owllabs.com

3	WHAT IS HYBRID LEARNING?
5	HYBRID LEARNING TECHNOLOGY
10	HYBRID LEARNING CHECKLIST
14	HOW TO MANAGE A HYBRID CLASSROOM
17	HYBRID LEARNING RESOURCES

Incredible content just ahead.
Here's what's inside.



WHAT IS HYBRID LEARNING?



WHAT IS HYBRID LEARNING?

Hybrid learning is an educational model where some students attend class in-person, while others join the class virtually from home. In 2020, many educators became [remote or hybrid teachers overnight](#), navigating education technology for the first time. After a year of trial and error, educators have honed their hybrid teaching skills and are leveraging new industry resources to better support themselves, fellow teachers, students, and caregivers.

In a hybrid classroom, educators teach remote and in-person students at the same time using tools like video conferencing [hardware](#) and [software](#). Typically, hybrid classes include asynchronous learning elements, like online exercises and pre-recorded video instruction, in addition to face-to-face classroom sessions. When planned well, hybrid courses combine the best aspects of in-person and [online learning](#) while making education more attainable for many students.

However, hybrid learning is more than just tossing half of your syllabus into a [virtual classroom](#). Instead, it's a comprehensive approach to combining the best parts of face-to-face and online learning to create the ideal learning experience that's flexible, safe, and accessible for all students.

HYBRID LEARNING DEMOCRATIZES EDUCATION.

HYBRID LEARNING TECHNOLOGY



Your hybrid classroom will only be as successful as the [remote tech tools](#) you use. Depending on the age level of your students, you may need to choose technology with different degrees of user-friendliness. Every hybrid learning environment is supported by a different combination of tech tools. Here are the top hybrid learning tools and technology for you to choose from as you setup your hybrid classroom:



EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

[Education technology](#), or EdTech, has transformed in the past few years and is a field that includes any technology that is used to promote, access and support education. This includes any hardware, software, or other tools that assist students in attending classes virtually. Before COVID-19 made distanced-learning a necessity, many educational institutions were already relying on EdTech to help connect with their students for online classes or as part of a hybrid schedule. On the other hand, many K-12 educational institutions did not have technology in place, and were forced to adapt quickly to power hybrid learning.

Education technology is the backbone of any successful remote or hybrid classroom, and while there are many EdTech tools to choose from, popular education technology services are [Google Classroom](#) and [Apex Learning](#).

The benefits of using EdTech to support your hybrid classroom include:

- EdTech is often compatible with audio or visual platforms to assist with synchronous remote classes
- EdTech software allows students to access self-paced online courses and modules, digital resources, and online textbooks
- Online courses provide opportunities for students to work at their own pace and learn at the speed that best suites their learning style
- EdTech helps educators stay in control of their online classes, by being a digital repository for any and all virtual teaching materials
- Allows [caregivers to be part of the online learning environment](#)

VIDEO CONFERENCING SOFTWARE

Video conferencing platforms are the key to a truly [synchronous learning environment](#). Without it, the remote half of hybrid learning would consist solely of self-paced modules and activities. Due to COVID-19 and the desire to stay connected with friends, family, and colleagues while remaining at a safe distance, there has been an influx of video conferencing platforms to choose from. Popular platforms for hybrid classrooms are [Zoom](#), [Webex](#), and [Skype](#).

How to choose the best video conferencing platform for your hybrid classroom:

- Keep in mind the number of students you will be hosting on video calls and choose a video conferencing platform that supports the intended size of your virtual classroom.
- Choose a platform that is user-friendly. To ease the transition to remote classes, pick a platform that boasts being widely accessible for users of all tech skill levels.
- Ensure your platform is accessible across device types so students with a range of resources will be able to access content and attend virtual classes.
- To keep students engaged in virtual classes, you will need to add some variety to your remote sessions. Choose a platform that provides a variety of additional tools such as breakout rooms, screen sharing, meeting recording, or annotating to keep your virtual classes interactive and accessible for all students.
- For additional tech support, pick a video conferencing platform that provides their own IT support and 24/7 service so you are never left glitching.

SMART VIDEO CAMERAS

These days, many laptops and desktops come equipped with internal web cameras that are perfectly appropriate for stationary remote learning. However, to make your virtual classes as effective and enjoyable as possible, and really make them replicate the experience of in-person classes, it is wise for educators to invest in a smart video camera.

Smart video cameras, like [The Meeting Owl Pro](#), are 360° webcams that automatically pivot to follow whoever is speaking using vision and voice cues. To compare The Meeting Owl to other similar smart webcams, here is a comparison guide to help you choose the best [smart video camera for your next remote or hybrid class](#).

Benefits of using a smart video camera to enhance your hybrid class:

- Students who are new to hybrid classes may feel isolated as they first adjust, smart video cameras help to ease that transition by better mimicking the atmosphere of in-person classes than standard web cams
- Smart video cameras are best utilized during remote activities to boost student engagement, such as lectures and presentations
- Students joining class from home can easily see and hear their teacher and fellow students, giving remote students the feeling that they're in the classroom as well to further support student connections
- Smart video cameras are a great tool to support camaraderie between in-person and remote students as part of a hybrid learning model, by making interactions between students more natural and accessible



With the Meeting Owl Pro, students can join and participate in their classes from home instead of just watching them. We can move the Meeting Owl Pro closer to the whiteboard for math classes or into the center of the classroom for small group discussion in world language classes so remote students can truly participate. The Camera Lock feature helps remote students focus on the whiteboard or an in-class presentation as well.”

—MELISSA WHELAN, DEAN OF STUDENT LIFE, TRINITY HALL SCHOOL



LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)

Learning Management Systems (LMS) are software applications that include the administration and delivery of educational courses and materials to students. They are user-friendly inclusive portals that often include digital textbooks, related virtual resources and materials, and online texts and quizzes. Students can work through their LMS at their own pace, guided by deadlines set by their teacher. Meanwhile, educators can use the LMS to track student progress.

Popular Learning Management Systems for remote and hybrid courses include [Blackboard](#) and [Canvas](#).

How to use your LMS to support your hybrid class:

- The interactive features included in your LMS, such as message boards, can promote remote collaboration and discussion between students
- Many LMSs are compatible with multiple devices, making them widely accessible for remote students
- LMSs can scale to meet the needs of any sized classroom or organization, to be inclusive of any learning environment
- Most LMSs are [Open Source](#), meaning they are free and online-based. Therefore, Open Source LMSs have existing online communities that offer support and assistance for any issues, troubleshooting needs, or peer to peer networking

HYBRID LEARNING CHECKLIST



To ensure you are setting up a successful hybrid learning environment, we've created a checklist for administrators, teachers, and IT teams. When teaching and supporting students who are both at home and in the classroom, you'll need to think about how education will be delivered, from technology to process. You'll also need to consider how you'll support students, teachers, and caregivers in navigating online classrooms and [hybrid learning tools](#).

Here are some resources for how to set up your hybrid classroom and adapt education for hybrid students:

- [What is Hybrid Learning?](#)
- [How Educators are using Remote Technology in the Classroom](#)
- [Synchronous vs Asynchronous Learning 101](#)
- [How to Create a Collaborative Learning Environment](#)
- [How to Set Up and Manage a Google Classroom](#)



Considerations for Administrators and Teachers

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

- Think about the number of students who will be online and in the classroom, considering the latest social distancing rules
 - Consider the number of students attending class in-person versus remotely + take daily attendance
 - Will the instructor teach from the classroom or from home?
 - Will the students be in pods, and attending only a few selected days a week?
- List the goals and objectives of your hybrid class
- Vary class lengths or weekly schedules to prevent fatigue or maintain focus
- Outline and create a list of the tools and resources you will use to source and create course content, designed for hybrid learning
- Create a schedule or guidelines for when will you use face-to-face or online learning tools for teaching
 - Think about which classroom activities are best suited for synchronous, face-to-face learning and which classroom activities are best suited for online learning

MANAGING THE CLASSROOM

- Examine how students will be evaluated and assessed and if this will change based on learning location. Think about:
 - Homework assignments
 - Projects
 - Quizzes
 - Tests
 - Class participation and engagement
- Review how schools schedule state or district-wide testing or standardized testing so students can be proctored while safely social distancing
- Communicate classroom and course expectations to students
- Set new expectations for parent-teacher communications

LEARN AND OPTIMIZE

- Evaluate the success of your hybrid class
 - Track student engagement measures dependent on your curriculum
 - Provide forums where teachers, students, and parents can voice their feedback about the hybrid classes
- Consider how you will support students and parents
 - Hold office hours for students to meet with teachers 1:1 for additional tutoring or other support
 - Provide clear (and easy) instructions for hybrid and online learning
 - Provide resources for parents to support their students

Considerations for IT

- Find out if your classrooms are enabled with hybrid learning technology
- Determine if students have the tools they need to learn remotely; considerations students will need:
 - Computer, laptop, tablet, or mobile device
 - Secure Wi-Fi connection
 - Printer to print out assignments (optional)
- Evaluate the privacy and security policies of all hybrid learning software and hardware technology you're considering
- Consider securing your network with a VPN
- Train all teachers to use hybrid learning tools and technology
- Create a quick & clear contingency plan for IT problems:
 - Plan how you will troubleshoot technical problems that students and teachers encounter virtually
 - Map out common issues students, teachers, and caregivers might run into and how to stay ahead of them
 - Determine who is responsible for addressing technology problems
 - Create a communication plan for students, teachers, and caregivers to communicate with IT for any issues

HOW TO MANAGE A HYBRID CLASSROOM



The [benefits of hybrid learning](#) are vast and will continue revealing themselves long after you have transitioned your classroom into a hybrid learning environment. To manage your hybrid classroom successfully, we've created a list of our top tips and tricks to ensure you are putting your best hybrid foot forward.

The New Hybrid Teaching, Learning Approach + Attitude

- Be flexible— as you move through the course, redesign it to lean into the strengths of your students and to accommodate for any weaknesses
- Integrate the online and the in-person, remember that a successful hybrid course is only as strong as the relationship between the two halves
- Be open to feedback, and be open to really learning from your students' experiences
- Embrace your hybrid community— if you find yourself stuck or with questions, turn to other hybrid instructors that you respect for their advice
- Set long and short term goals for yourself and your class, then communicate these expectations to your students
- Once you have your course outline, work backward from the last assignment to the first to ensure all assignments, resources, and class materials serve your course directly
- Reserve in-person class time for activities such as:
 - Synchronous group brainstorming sessions
 - Communicating class expectations and outlining individual responsibilities
 - Establishing a collaborative, trust-based learning environment
 - Call and response presentations
 - Providing immediate feedback to students
- In addition to the majority of personal assignments, other activities that can make up the online portion of you class can include:
 - Self-paced learning and activity completion
 - Automatic grading programs such as multiple choice or True/False quizzes
 - Asynchronous group discussions
 - Written critical analysis and thoughtful discourse
 - Video or aural content consumption
- When sourcing materials for your class, look for hybrid course resources on flagship education websites and discussion forums
- Have fun!

Rethinking Your Approach

- Use online work to offer targeted learning plans, extensions, or 1:1 teaching for individual students
- Provide mobile learning options for the online portion of your course
- Don't overload your classes with online assignments, just because they can be completed anywhere doesn't mean that they take any less time than face-to-face work
- Incorporate virtual training sessions with any instructions necessary for any students who have not completed online coursework before
- Before the start of your course, do a trial run of the online portion to ensure all virtual materials work smoothly
- Use technology to supplement your digital materials and to make the home learning environment as close to the classroom as you can

Supporting Your Students

- Explain the expectations of your hybrid class early and often—if it is new to you, then it is probably new to your students as well
- Provide students with self and time management tips so they aren't left treading water as soon as they step out of the classroom
- Connect your students to a trusted IT resource for any technical issues that might arise
- Incorporate a visual element—like a chart, timeline, or map—to show your class how they will be assessed on both virtual and in-class assignments

HYBRID LEARNING RESOURCES



To help you along on your hybrid learning journey, here are some additional resources:

1. [Technology in the Classroom: How Educators are Using Remote Technology as They Return to School](#)
2. [Everything You Need to Know About Education Technology & Distance Learning](#)
3. [Top 7 Classroom Technology Tools](#)
4. [What Teachers Are Saying About The Meeting Owl](#)
5. [Top 8 Classroom Setups Using The Meeting Owl](#)
6. [Zoom Summer Academy + Owl Labs Are Helping Teachers and IT Leads Get Hybrid Learning Ready](#)
7. [Synchronous vs. Asynchronous Learning: What's the Difference and How to Use Each Learning Method](#)
8. [Rethinking the Classroom: How K-12 Schools Are Adapting to a Post-Coronavirus World](#)
9. [What Is a Virtual Classroom?](#)
10. [How to Create a Collaborative Online Learning Environment](#)
11. [Everything You Need for Successful Distance Learning Programs](#)
12. [7 Institutions That Are Using Technology to Create Top-Notch Distance Learning Opportunities](#)

ABOUT OWL LABS

Owl Labs is a collaborative tech company revolutionizing how the world communicates, through its inclusive and immersive video experiences. Built for modern businesses and classrooms, Owl Labs is dedicated to empowering hybrid and remote organizations with its award-winning technology and robust product suite. The company's flagship product, the Meeting Owl, features a wifi-enabled, 360° camera, microphone, and speaker with Owl Labs' proprietary AI technology, that automatically focuses on the speaker using audio and visual cues. In 2020, the Meeting Owl Pro was honored as one of [TIME's 100 Best Innovations](#). Owl Labs continues to champion the hybrid work conversation with its annual [State of Remote Work](#) reports. To learn more about Owl Labs and to join the Work and Learn from Anywhere Movement, visit www.owllabs.com.

Turn your classroom into a [hybrid classroom with Owl Labs](#). Learn how the Meeting Owl Pro, a 360-degree video conferencing camera, can support student engagement and participation in online learning.

See It In Action

