

Promethean®



The New K-12

Education Frontier

Hybrid Learning is On the Horizon

The global k-12 education system is facing unprecedented challenges ranging from technology disparities to in-school health concerns. At the same time, the realities of COVID-19 are presenting U.S. school districts with the opportunity to restructure education with a forward-looking view on how students will learn and educators will teach in a post-pandemic world.

In a forced trial run, coronavirus-related stay-in-place measures prompted school districts to teach differently and students to learn differently – both groups from home. Although there were many pitfalls, the situation showed us, when forced, educators and students don't necessarily need to be in the classroom to engage with each other and for students to learn.

Reopening to a new normal

When school doors open again, classrooms and hallways will surely look and feel different as districts evaluate plans to keep students and staff safe. Some districts will require mandatory temperature checks, while all will try to elevate sanitary measures through hand-washing stations and schedules.

Changing traffic patterns in hallways and moving classrooms to gymnasiums to maximize space are tactics that students and educators will easily adopt.

Online learning, which is a much more significant departure from in-person teaching methods, likely will be here to stay in some form or fashion – say blended learning and/or hybrid learning.

School districts around the country may increasingly adopt both styles of learning. But what exactly are they, and is one better than the other?

This guide touches upon blended learning and hybrid learning modalities and considerations school districts may use to adopt newer forms of learning. In addition, this guide will provide specifics related to hybrid learning – which, according to Education Week, “is shaping up to be the most likely option for scheduling this fall.”

The Definitions

Depending on the district, administrators, parents, and teachers often use the terms blended learning and hybrid learning interchangeably, but they differ. With blended learning, education takes place in both brick-and-mortar schools and online. Students and teachers meet face-to-face in the classroom at the same time, and online exercises and additional content complement in-class lessons.

For instance, students might come to the classrooms for lessons, quizzes, labs, and do a portion of their work at home before they come into the classroom.

With hybrid learning, some of the students are learning in the classroom with their teacher, while the others simultaneously do their lessons online. Hybrid learning could take different forms, depending on the school district. For example, half of a school's students might come into the classroom Monday and Wednesday and the other half Tuesday and Thursday. And then they switch on the other days. Whichever half is at home does its lessons remotely. Friday could be set aside for remediation.

Some school districts are considering allowing parents to choose whether their children learn virtually or in a physical classroom. Others are looking at in-person attendance for students who are more vulnerable, such as those with special needs or from low-income families or foster care.

The idea is that with hybrid learning, the same lessons are taught simultaneously in-class and remotely.



Some benefits

By adopting hybrid learning, schools will be able to better implement social distancing measures since less people will be in the building at once. This form of education also provides:

Collaborative learning – Tools like blogs, instant messaging, and online discussions allow students and instructors to work together regardless of where they are – in-class or remote.

Increased accessibility – Students can access lessons and other material anytime and anywhere.

Personalization – Student-centric, hybrid learning makes it easier to customize learning modules based on a student's competency.

Flexibility – Districts can customize their schedules to meet the needs of students, educators and parents, while continuing to address gaps uncovered by ongoing research and user feedback.

Some drawbacks

Digital divide – Some students do not have access to either a computer or the internet in their homes.

Falling behind – Students may choose to watch several weeks of lesson plans at once, rather receiving lessons on a regular basis – which they would get in-class.

Cost – Schools might not have the resources to invest in the technology needed for hybrid learning.

No more traditional school day – Teachers might feel as if they always have to be working, long after the school day is done.

Logistics – Revising master schedules and bus schedules will be a challenge, particularly if a school opts for the first half of a day for some students and the afternoon session for others.

No vaccine against COVID-19 – bringing people back into schools poses health risks for everyone.

Steps districts and schools can take

A recent Education Week article reports district and school leaders are facing difficult, high-stakes decisions as they figure out plans for reopening schools for fall session. Further, the K12 Insight Back to School Guide says we're headed into a new and unprecedented school year in which teachers and front-line staff will bear the brunt of changes in the educational system.

Teachers will need to rework lesson plans so they can be delivered in the classroom or online from home. To update their plans, teachers should take stock of the digital technology that's already available to them from their district. This could include recording tools, apps, interactive panels, online textbooks, and other platforms. If such tools are not available, they can slowly migrate lesson plans online as education technology investments are made over time.

And if looking at investing in education technology to enable hybrid learning, consider platforms that allow teachers to maximize the virtual experience. For instance, choose technology that enables lessons to be recorded in the classroom and delivered either in class or virtually, so students get the same lesson from anywhere.

Think, too, of software that enables students to have their own digital account, so they can access instructional material, assignments, and other information related to class curriculum from anywhere.

Additionally, the importance of assessing students often is crucial to hybrid learning since walking over to students' desk and providing additional help or an alternate activity won't be possible for those learning from home. By giving quizzes after lesson plans that are delivered daily, teachers can better assess if students are learning or whether remediation is needed.

Similarly, when students are learning remotely, body language and facial expressions are often lost. So, in hybrid learning situations, students should be given more time to ask questions. Consider, too, taking advantage of apps that allow students and teachers to text one another so conversations can take place privately when needed.

A school year unlike any other

The 2019-2020 school year was a challenge as teachers were told they must teach remotely while students were prompted to learn remotely. With the upcoming 2020-2021 school year, decisions are being made and measures are being put in place by many schools to allow for hybrid learning.

Hybrid learning will undoubtedly take many different shapes and forms in school districts nationwide. It will have challenges for students, teachers, administrators, and parents. But it also provides an alternative to traditional in-classroom learning or fully remote learning. Perhaps in time and with the right educational technology, it can provide the best of both worlds.

Let Us Show You the Difference

Find out how Promethean's technology solutions can enhance teacher effectiveness and productivity, provide advanced student collaboration opportunities, and drive engagement in remote, in-classroom and hybrid learning scenarios.

Learn more about hybrid learning at prometheanworld.com/hybrid-learning.



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