Faculty guide for hybrid instruction (online and in-room)

EXPLANATION

We understand that teaching in a classroom is different than teaching online. What works well for communication and understanding in one of those realms may not work in the other. Success in one realm doesn’t necessarily translate to success in the other. Student and Instructor expectations are not likely to be met with a solution that focusses on just one of those realms. Students desire their instructor’s attention, and instructors expect their students’ attention during a class.

The IWU hybrid classroom plan does not claim to fully optimize a realm that equalizes the expectations and experiences of both online and in-room instruction and learning. The instructors may not be able to provide undivided attention to in-room students because some students will be in Zoom, drawing the instructor’s attention away from the in-room students; and vice-versa.

Instead, the IWU hybrid classroom plan intends to provide the online students with a window and voice into the in-room classrooms, through a camera and microphone. The instructors will need to consciously devote extra care to the online students, because they may not be in view while the instructor is addressing the in-room students.

BENEFITS

Scalable

Our solution utilizes industry standard connectivity such as USB and 3.5mm audio connectors. This allows us to maximize compatibility with nearly all computers that would be expected to provide Zoom connectivity between students and instructors.

Configurable

While the devices are able to be relocated, removed, extended, and other possible optimizations, they should be considered permanently installed. While the camera and microphone can be moved a few feet, they cannot be removed from the classroom in which they are installed. Instructors can raise and lower stands on which webcams and microphones are mounted. They can move the wheeled teaching station, several feet in whatever direction is allowed by the tethered cables. Extending cables, exchanging mounts, and other significant location changes must be approved by, and requested of IMT (x2209). Also consider that other instructors share most classrooms, and what might work well for one instructor and class, may not work at all for another instructor or class.

Minimalist

With the exception of the Student Center’s large meeting rooms, most of the changes introduced by the inclusion of webcams and microphones are of minor impact to the existing instructional technology within the rooms, allowing instructors and students to feel comfortable within familiar environments and AV technology. The BSC meeting rooms are being used as classrooms for the first time, and the newly provided technology (interactive flat panel) may also be unfamiliar. We feel that the extra functionality and flexibility which accompany the provided AV technology in these large meeting rooms will be worth the initial adapting process which both students and instructors will experience there.

In most classrooms, instructors (guest lecturers, students giving presentations) will be able to bring their own devices (laptops, tablets, and sometimes smart phones) or use the provided desktop PCs as sources to display graphics or video on the screen, and audio through the installed speakers. Not all rooms have all the same connection types available, although all rooms (except Center School) do have HDMI connections available. We recommend visiting the classroom, before the first day of classes, to verify that your own device will connect to the teaching station’s HDMI cable, unless you plan to use the provided desktop PC.

Types of Classroom Technology

BYOD

These rooms have a display, and speakers, but they lack a source computer. Instructors should bring their own laptop or tablet, and an adapter to connect to HDMI if their connection is not HDMI.

Standard Classroom

These rooms have a desktop PC, but also have HDMI cables for connection of an instructor’s laptop. These rooms have either a Logitech webcam, or a Document Camera, which typically aim downward at a document placed on the desktop, but can be aimed in any direction (toward the instructor, or toward the students). Larger rooms will also have a wireless microphone (either body-worn lapel mic, or hand-held mic).

Dual/Matrix displays Classroom

Some classrooms have multiple displays.

Some of these multi-display rooms can only show identical content on all of the displays.

 This is done so that every seat in the room has a good view of the displayed content.

But some other multi-display rooms are capable of showing multiple sources simultaneously.

 This is done for two pedagogical functions:

1. To show the students two (or more) images for comparison or reference, or
2. To allow student groups to collaborate at their own local display

In each of IWU’s dual or matrix display classrooms, there is only one desktop computer, and one camera and microphone connected to it, for use as a standard classroom.

So, in terms of Hybrid classroom technology, there is no difference between a Dual/Matrix classroom and a standard classroom.