Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Cluster Hybrid Method

The coordinators of two PLATO courses are using an alternative hybrid approach to conduct their courses. We call this BYOD Cluster Hybrid (**B**ring **Y**our **O**wn **D**evice) and we're continuing to test and refine this method. This might be of interest to some of you. It's simple technically but requires in-room participants to bring laptops or tablets to the meeting.

Basic scenario for BYOD Cluster Hybrid

Requirements: the room in the host location must have a robust Wi-Fi service that can accommodate all the devices brought to the class. The majority of the in-person participants bring their own devices (laptops or tablets) to the class. The course coordinator should bring a speakerphone (which can be provided by PLATO).

Managing the class: The course coordinator sends the Google Meet or Zoom link for the class to all class participants. In-person participants bring their own laptops or tablets to the class and join the 'meeting.' If some in-person participants don't bring a device, they will need to share one with a classmate. The online participants will join the meeting from their remote locations.

There must be only one active microphone in the room and only one device outputting to speakers (the speakerphone). All other devices must be muted (microphones) and silenced (speakers). The speakerphone should be placed near the center of the group, which serves as the speaker and microphone for everyone in the room. If online participants have trouble hearing in-person participants, the in-person folks should try to speak louder and/or sit closer to the speakerphone. Side conversations in the classroom should be kept to a minimum because they interfere with the online participant's ability to hear and understand the main speaker.

When the Google Meet or Zoom screen layout is on gallery view, everybody can see and hear everybody else. When an online participant wants to speak, they can raise their hand electronically. Everyone in the meeting room will see that, making it easier for the online class members to participate equally.
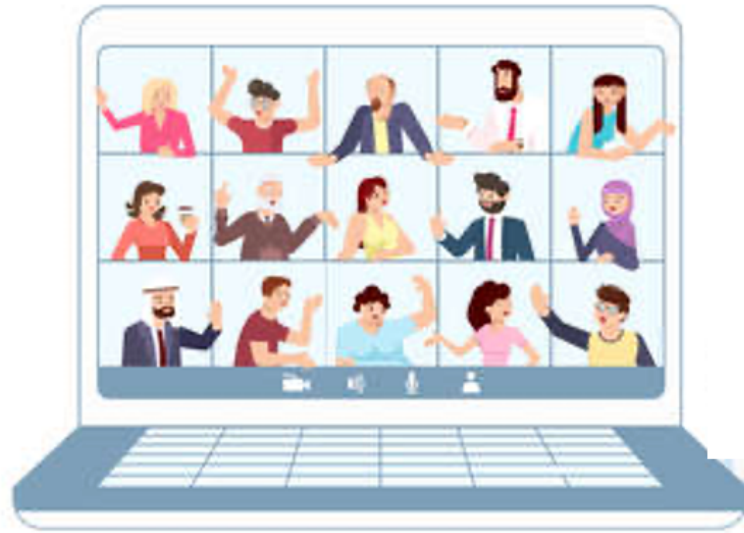
This approach is less dependent on getting the technology right than the other hybrid systems. It may also engage the in-person participants more in collaborating with their online classmates.

Regarding in-room devices, Zoom works well with laptops or tablets. Google Meet works best with laptops, though tablets can work. Feel free to contact us for more specifics.

For more information about how to set up your course using this hybrid method and to become aware of potential technical issues, contact Bill Colwell at wscacct@live.com. If you need a speakerphone, contact Paul Thompson at pthompson1@outlook.com.

The following graphic illustrates this cluster approach.

What everyone sees on their device

Participants in a meeting room

Online participants