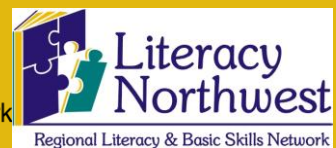# The "How To" of Hybrid Meetings

Literacy Network Durham Region
Literacy Network Northwest
Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington

Definition

Definition of Hybrid Meetings

During our research it was noted that there were many different interpretations and definitions of hybrid meetings. For this report the definition is: Hybrid meetings are **meetings or events that feature at least one group of in-person/face-to-face attendees connecting virtually with other meeting attendees**.   These meetings are always synchronous.

Hybrid Meetings Definition
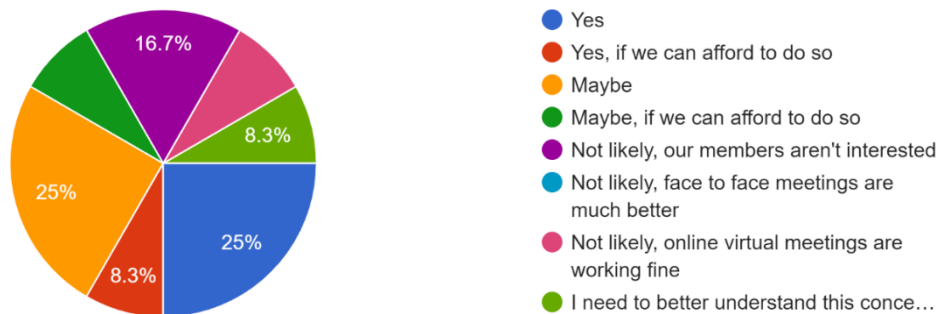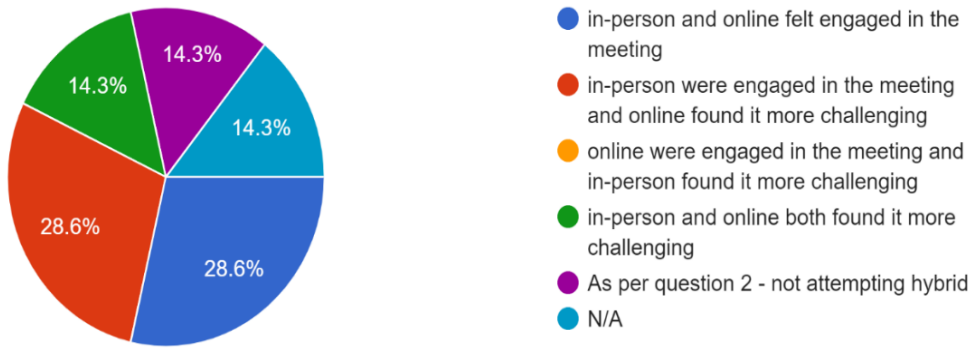
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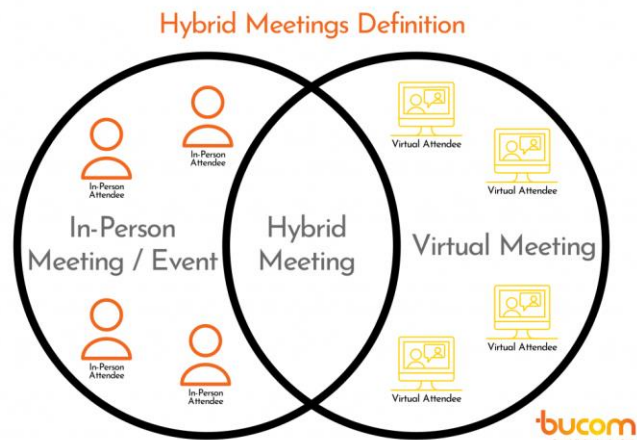
Where are we right now?

We surveyed Provincial Support Organizations and Regional Literacy Networks about hybrid meetings.

- Out of 16 responses over 2/3 of these organizations have not run hybrid meetings

    - For those that have not run hybrid meetings this is the response to "do you intend to do so in the future?"

Legend:
- Yes
- Yes, if we can afford to do so
- Maybe
- Maybe, if we can afford to do so
- Not likely, our members aren't interested
- Not likely, face to face meetings are much better
- Not likely, online virtual meetings are working fine
- I need to better understand this conce…

Pie chart values: 16.7%, 8.3%, 25%, 8.3%, 25%

- Less than ¼ do not plan to run hybrid meetings

- Equipment used for running hybrid meetings

    - 66.7% used a stationary camera
    - 1/3 used a large monitor or display screen
    - 1/3 used external microphone(s)

- The response to "how did participants say the meeting went?":

Legend:
- in-person and online felt engaged in the meeting
- in-person were engaged in the meeting and online found it more challenging
- online were engaged in the meeting and in-person found it more challenging
- in-person and online both found it more challenging
- As per question 2 - not attempting hybrid
- N/A

- As can be seen the responses are varied. One respondent did say they had focused so hard on the online people that the in-person people felt disengaged. It will be a balancing act.

Best Practices for Hybrid Meetings

Different meetings can require different rules. A Board of Directors meeting would need by-laws pertaining to voting in-person and electronically while literacy service planning meetings would not. We will provide specific processes and best practices for Board Meetings and AGMs.

Hybrid Meetings in General

- Determine purpose and style

    - On phone or virtual and in-person or a mix of all 3?

        - "One Zoom, All Zoom"

            - Some places have adopted the concept that if one person is not in-person, then all will be remote even if they're mostly all in the same office. Completely eliminates the need for hybrid meetings….but perhaps not useful to all our needs

    - Do we need to hold a meeting at all?

        - During the pandemic what used to be an email or a simple conversation turned into an online meeting. Make sure there is a reason for the meeting with expected outcomes

    - Planning for both remote and in person needs

        - Plan the meeting focusing on both remote and in person needs equally (e.g. have you heard this at a meeting? "oh yeah, Pierre's on the phone…"). Rarely are meeting agendas and activities planned with the remote people in mind

    - Chat enabled?

        - Make sure chat is enabled

    - Can you see me?

- Make sure you've checked the equipment beforehand to see if it is working or that you know how to run it

  - Venue

    - If you're using a new venue for the meeting, ask them if you can have a training session on how to use the equipment beforehand

- Identify moderator/Bridge moderator/Technical Support

  - Who is responsible for what?

    - Moderator

      - Makes sure there is a process for input from everyone (from introductions to feedback….use alphabetical to help not to miss people or a physical list of attendees)

      - Sets parameters of meeting – raising hands to speak, putting questions in chat, etc.

      - Keeps the meeting running – usually also Chairs the meeting

    - Bridge Moderator/Technical Support

      - Checks online chat to ensure those participants are being heard

      - Helps online and in-person with technical supports/questions

      - Monitors the extra equipment (microphones, cameras, monitors, flipcharts, etc.)

    - Test format/equipment

- Equipment (see pages 12-17)

  - Monitors are important to display remote participants (e.g. Zoom supports up to 49 people in gallery view)

- Camera(s)

  - At least one camera to display leaders/presenters for the online attendees. A secondary camera to display the in-person room is great, but not necessary

- Flipcharts

  - If flipcharts are being used in-person, have your Bridge Moderator replicate that using whiteboard functions online. If you're the only person being the leader and technical support, then request that the in-person people also have their laptop/tablets available and use an online whiteboard or process (e.g. JamBoard)

- Microphones

  - Good audio is more important than video. Remote users should try headsets or earbuds instead of relying on built-in microphones. Make sure to have good quality microphone(s) in the room so online participants can hear as well. Some organizations have used their conference phone calls for clearer sound

- Send agendas out ahead

  - Give at least a week for everyone to see what will be covered and include the online platform being used so everyone can check to make sure it's ready on their devices

- Create structure

  - Start the meeting on time – in person attendees may chat out in the hall, but the people online are waiting and wondering if you forgot about them

  - Start the meeting with an icebreaker. There are a lot of suggestions for hybrid icebreakers online (see References)

- Turn the camera on immediately – even if everyone is still getting organized and arriving it helps online attendees to feel a part of the meeting

- Design meeting

  - Continually ask yourself "what do remote users need to see in order to feel fully engaged?"

    - Faces of in-room attendees?
    - Shared presentations?
    - Physical documents handed out?
    - Content created during the meeting on whiteboards/flipcharts, etc?

  - No in-person side conversations – people on a call get lost with who is talking

- Platforms (see page 11)

  - Make sure the platform you use is good for what you need

    - Zoom Rooms?
    - Zoom is creating Smart Gallery
    - Microsoft is developing new types of meeting rooms
    - Stay on top of technology

- Share documents ahead

  - Using Google Drive is an easy way to share documents. All anyone needs to have access to the Drive is a Google Account (they do NOT require you to have a "gmail" account). They do need to make sure they're logged in with that Google Account to use the Drive

  - All Microsoft documents, spreadsheets, powerpoints open in Google with their apps

- Inform everyone they are being recorded

- ▪ Zoom automatically lets people know this, as do other platforms, but good to check

- ▪ This can also be added to the top of the Agenda so people are aware coming into your meeting

- Reducing audio feedback/eliminating background noise

  - ▪ Headsets/Earbuds

    - ▪ Have everyone who is virtual practice muting and unmuting themselves whether online or by phone. As the Moderator or Bridge Moderator, most online platforms do allow you to mute everyone, just inform them that you're doing this

  - ▪ Good microphone(s) for in-person speakers

- Participants (don't multi-task)

  - ▪ Remind online participants not to multi-task, just because they're not in the physical room. It's always noticeable when you go into breakout rooms and there are one or two people sitting in the lobby

- Evaluate

  - ▪ Survey everyone about their experiences noting how they attended so you can find out if one group is more engaged than the other

  - ▪ If you've used different techniques (e.g. video, whiteboard/flipchart, etc.) ask about those specifically for improvements

Hybrid Meeting Needs for Boards/AGMs

- Legal Right to Hold Virtual/Electronic Meetings

    - Make sure your bylaws allow for electronic voting and meeting attendees (currently with Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act you can make these changes as you become ONCA compliant)

- Tracking Attendees

    - Ask attendees to type their full names in the Chat Function and save chat history after the meeting (or if possible, set it up beforehand) as you will then have a full account of all names

- Motions

    - AGM - It is suggested to have a script for the meeting, so everyone is aware of their role and what will be stated

- Voting

    - Create polls for all motions for online attendees to vote (this will also work for private ballots). Set answers to "favour" "opposed" or "abstain"

    - In person voting remains the same as previous meetings (e.g. raise hand or private ballots with a scrutineer)

- The Chair or Speaker makes a motion and people can raise their hand to be the first or seconder (online raising hand can be just as quick). Do not allow for audio call outs, as this can be confusing. A script for your AGM will make this much easier and cleaner

Best Technologies for Hybrid Meetings

Platforms

There are many different software platforms you can use to facilitate a hybrid meeting. All of these use technology that allows for multiple participants to sign on at the same time and share video and voice. Most allow for the presentation of documents and include whiteboard features. There are also a number of add-on whiteboard or collaboration software systems available that are compatible with most hybrid meeting platforms. While the following is not an exhaustive list, it offers examples of the most frequently used meeting platforms:

- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Google Meet](#)
- [Zoom](#)
- [Skype](#)
- [Adobe Connect](#)
- [Go To Meeting](#)
- [Webex](#)

All of these platforms are pursuant to a variety of subscription costs that range widely. Some offer free versions that have limited time and attendee capability. Almost all provide downloadable desktop software that is accessible on computers as well as tablets and mobile phones.

Other popular add-on software includes:

- [Jamboard](#)
- [Microsoft Whiteboard](#)
- [Miro](#)
- [Stormboard](#)

Cameras

There are a variety of cameras that can be used to support hybrid meetings. There are nuances between each of the following however all cameras used can be organized in two basic groups:

Stationary Cameras:

These are the cameras that are static. These include built in cameras of monitors and laptops as well as cell phones and tablets, as well as basic stand-alone cameras. These cameras remain fixed in one place and capture a view of the room or participants.

Panning Cameras:

Some external cameras are now designed specifically for hybrid meetings and have various features that accommodate the needs of online and in person meeting participants. These cameras allow for panning in or out to varying degrees to capture a wider view of the people assembled around the camera. This panning feature can accommodate anywhere from three or four people to an entire room seated around a conference table. The field of view can range from 180 to 360 degrees. Some hybrid cameras also move or swivel mechanically to capture an image of the person speaking at any given time. These options of cameras are often portable enough to reposition around a table or room to suit the layout but tend to be more expensive.

Before selecting a camera, make sure that you have determined what conferencing platforms you are using (e.g., Zoom, Teams, etc.). Some cameras work seamlessly with certain platforms but you will want to ensure that you are buying the best camera for your software. This same consideration should be accounted for in terms of whether you plan on using a PC or Mac. While most cameras are compatible with both, it's important to confirm this before purchasing.

Product Examples

Logitech

OwlLabs

Jabra

Microsoft Store

Microphones

In hybrid meetings, an external mic or speaker may be desirable to ensure all participants both online and in person can hear and be heard clearly. There are a wide variety of microphones available in addition to those native to computers, cell phones and tablets. Often external mics are designed to produce a better sound quality and connect both through cables and wirelessly through Bluetooth. One of key objectives in selecting external mics and speakers is to minimize feedback and echoing by isolating active mics placed around the room. To this end, an external microphone can capture more of the sound at a meeting, filter out background noise or echoes and otherwise better adjust to the size and ambience of the meeting location. Meetings can achieve recording-quality sound depending on the mic and room set up.

It is worth noting that some sophisticated hybrid cameras also contain enhanced internal mics that capture better sound without the addition of a separate microphone. Also, external microphones can be used alone or as a wired set that creates a "boundary" effect allowing for immersive sound quality and capturing.

There are a variety of accessories available with the mics also that can include mounting options and features such as:

- Gooseneck and flexible stands
- Ceiling mounts
- Boundary speaker systems

- Bluetooth enabled portable speakers

- Multichannel microphone systems
- Headsets and ear buds

Product Examples

Blue Mics

Shure Mics

Poly

Monitors

Most cameras, platforms and mics are seamlessly integrated with a variety of external monitor options. Depending on the size of your room and/or group, you may wish to use an external monitor, smartboard or overhead projector.

- Desktop external monitors are available in a wide variety of screen widths with varying price points. Increasingly this product group also includes smart tv's which can stream various types of online and video content while also doubling as a computer screen. A monitor or smart tv can be ideal when you expect to access online platforms and have a small to medium number of people assembled in person and online. The use of an external monitor means you have to stream a mic or camera through a desktop or laptop computer.

- Smartboards are larger visual displays that have additional interactive features such as touchscreen technology, whiteboard functions, and can stream content or teaching software useful for online and hybrid learning. These devices can be set up in a medium or large sized classroom and also accommodate various digital teaching tools that compliment online or hybrid teaching environments. In some cases, you can stream directly from the smartboard via camera without the external use of a monitor depending on how the equipment is set up with your internet connection.

- Overhead projection monitors are often found in larger meeting spaces such as public libraries or other formal locations. These types of displays are linked to an external desktop or laptop and project video images on a large wall screen. This option allows for the largest viewing area when compared with smartboards or external monitors but are much costlier and require permanent installation.

Room Set Up

There are a wide variety of considerations to consider when setting up a room for hybrid meetings. There are not "rules" per se however the following are a list of things to think about:

- Number of participants both online and in person
- Are you presenting slides as well as viewing online participants on screen? Will you use a split screen, external monitor or smartboard to project upon?
- Is the room large? Where will you set the mic, camera or monitor? Where will the participants sit?
- Have you checked the field of vision of your camera, and will all participants in-person be visible to those online?
- How will those online appear on screen? Will the in-person participants be able to clearly see all participant videos?
- Are there power outlets nearby or do you require additional power sources or cabling?

Public Libraries

Local public libraries have become incredible resource centres where you can access equipment, advice and technology. Almost every public library will maintain meeting space that may be useful for hybrid meetings or loan/rent out more specific spaces conducive to making podcasts or video recordings, as well as loaning out technical equipment. Librarians and their IT support can help guide the selection and use of equipment and technical spaces. Many libraries are also maintaining "Maker Spaces", "Library of Things" and other specialized programming.

The following is a list of examples of what libraries can provide (not exhaustive and not available in every library):

- Loanable tech for at-home use (tablets, LED projectors, monitors, laptops, WIFI hubs, GoPro and web cams, podcast kits, mics, soundboards, etc.)
- Maker spaces can include sound booths, recording studios, computers, studio speakers, microphones, mic stands/cables, video and DSLR cameras, studio lighting, headphones and green screens/walls for in-library use. (These spaces also have equipment such as 3D printers, sewing and button making machines, laminators and binding equipment.)
- Classes and workshops on use of tech, creating podcasts, using software, etc.
- Library of things can include the loaning out of other types of physical objects such as light meters, camera tripods, scanning pens and coding kits

Recommended Equipment List

While the above provides a general overview of the sorts of hybrid equipment parameters that you may wish to consider, the following is an informal list of recommended "best picks" based on survey results and use by various stakeholders.

Platforms:

The cost of a webinar or virtual meeting platform will depend on the number of participants you can invite, the recording of transcripts and amount of cloud storage you can access for recorded meetings. Business packages tend to be more expensive than personal packages. Some of these solutions (for instance Google Meets and Microsoft Teams) are often embedded in the package costs of other software solutions.

Google Meets: Anyone with a Google Account can create a video meeting, invite up to 100 participants, and meet for up to 60 minutes per meeting at no cost. Other packages start at $7.99/month and up.

Microsoft Teams: Free to $16.00/month. Includes desktop versions of Office apps with premium features including webinar hosting, attendee registration and reporting tools, and managing customer appointments.

Zoom: Free to $319/year which includes hosting up to 500 participants, unlimited cloud storage, recording transcripts, Zoom Whiteboard - unlimited editable boards with standard features now included.

Cameras:

Logitech BCC950 – desktop video conference camera $399
Desktop video conferencing solution for private offices, home offices, and most any semi-private space.

Logitech Connect – portable conference camera $699
Portable ConferenceCam with *Bluetooth*®speakerphone for the huddle room, home office, and on the go.

Owl Labs Meeting Owl Pro – 360-degree camera $1399
Premium 360-degree camera, mic, and speaker device creates the most immersive experience for hybrid teams.

Microphone/Speakers:

Yeti Blue Mic- $179.99
Perfect broadcast vocal sound and enhanced effects, advanced voice modulation and HD audio samples. Four different pickup patterns for meetings, music, podcasts, Twitch streaming, YouTube videos in ways that would normally require multiple microphones. Produces studio-quality recordings.

Shure MV5 Digital Condenser Microphone - $129.00
Portable use, high-quality plug and play audio capture for Mac, PC, iPhone, iPod, iPad and android devices. Featuring three onboard DSP presets (vocals, flat, instrument). Includes an integrated headphone output for real time monitoring.

Budget:

Low – 0 to 100 Participants

Google Meet Individual up to 100 participants, 24-hour meeting duration	$95.88
Logitech BCC950	$399.00
Shure MVS Digital Condenser Microphone	$120.00
Standard 27 inch Monitor	$200.00
Total Per Year 1	$814.88
Annual Cost After Year 1	$95.88

Medium – 100 to 300 Participants

Microsoft Teams up to 300 participants, 30 hour meeting duration, plus Office subscription (annual cost)	$192.00
Logitech Connect Camera (one time cost)	$699.00
Yeti Blue Mic (one time cost)	$179.99
Standard Projector (without ceiling suspension kit)	$600.00
Standard Projector Screen (without wall kit)	$400.00
Total Per Year 1	$2,070.99
Annual Cost After Year 1	$192.00

High – Up to 500 Participants

Zoom Large Enterprise Ready up to 500 participants, unlimited cloud storage subscription (annual cost)	$319.00
Owl Labs Meeting Owl Pro Camera	$1399.00
Shure MV7 Podcast Microphone	$249
Standard Smartboard (without installation)	$5,000.00
Total Per Year 1	$6,967
Annual Cost After Year 1	$319

Very High – Over 500 Participants

Products can be sourced by sales teams from all companies mentioned above. Prices skew to the very expensive and require installation by IT support, electrician and/or contractor. Expect to spend more than $10,000 initially with some set ups (for instance, ceiling mounted mic arrays and professional studio cameras/displays) exceeding $20,000.

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