KEYNOTE · HIGHER EDUCATION

Towards a new horizon *for learning*

The shift to hybrid teaching models — and what it asks of a university.

Sixty-eight per cent of students now want a combination of in-person and remote classes. Hybrid is no longer a pandemic measure; it is an operating model. This session covers the case, the hurdles, the technology and the plan.

68%	7	4	6
of students prefer hybrid	hurdles named honestly	pedagogical models	moves to start on

AUDIENCE
University leaders, deans, faculty, IT and AV teams

FORMAT
Keynote, conference session or faculty address

SPEAKER
Shareef Jaffar

01 The imperative

Hybrid teaching integrates synchronous and asynchronous online components with face-to-face instruction, giving students real flexibility in how they participate while protecting the depth of the learning outcome.

Post-pandemic acceleration

The rapid shift to remote learning exposed the need for delivery that is robust, flexible and scalable. That shift is not temporary — it has become an essential tool in pedagogy.

Student expectations

Today's students are digitally native and expect flexible pathways, rich digital resources and personalised engagement. Sixty-eight per cent want a combination of in-person and remote classes.

Global competitiveness

Singapore's institutions must innovate to attract and retain top talent internationally, in line with Smart Nation and the country's digital economy ambitions.

The session opens by settling the question most institutions are still arguing about: whether this is a concession to students or a competitive position. The evidence points firmly to the second.

WHO IT IS FOR

- University and polytechnic leadership teams
- Deans, heads of school and programme directors
- Teaching faculty and learning designers
- IT, AV and learning technology teams
- Registrars and quality assurance officers
- Education conferences and sector forums



WHAT THE SESSION COVERS

01	Why hybrid has stopped being optional — and what it actually is, against blended learning and HyFlex
02	The strategic advantages, from accessibility to academic resilience
03	Seven hurdles institutions consistently hit
04	The technology stack, from core LMS to telepresence and XR
05	Four pedagogical models that work in hybrid settings
06	Where educational technology goes next
07	A six-point plan for preparing the institution

DELIVERED AS

Conference keynote

A 45 to 60-minute plenary with Q&A, sized to the programme.

Faculty address

An in-house session for teaching staff, with discipline-specific examples.

Leadership briefing

A closed session for senates, boards and management committees.

Strategy workshop

An extended format that ends with the institution's own six-point plan.



02 What hybrid actually means

Much of the resistance in faculty meetings comes from three different things being called by one name. The session separates them before arguing for any of them.

Blended learning

Online materials complement the in-person class. The classroom remains the centre of gravity.

Hybrid

Online learning substitutes for classroom learning. Students choose in-person or remote participation.

HyFlex

Students choose their mode of attendance — face-to-face, synchronous online or asynchronous — for each session.

THE PRINCIPLE UNDERNEATH HYFLEX

Learner choice. Equivalency of learning opportunity across modes. Reusability of resources. Accessibility.

Four principles that make the model defensible to a quality assurance committee — and that distinguish it from simply streaming a lecture.

THREE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

01	Flexibility in time, pace and mode, letting students adapt their preparation workload and choose how fast they engage
02	Integrated course design, so the experience is coherent across physical and virtual space
03	Emphasis on active learning and research, using both modes for discussion, problem-based learning and collaborative projects

WHY IT IS CRUCIAL FOR UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE

Accessibility and inclusivity

Accommodates international students, carers, students with disabilities, travel constraints or anxiety. Live captions, transcripts and recordings are highly valued.

Personalised, self-paced learning

Students go deeper on complex topics at their own pace, revisit lectures, and reach enrichment content through adaptive platforms.

Engagement and motivation

Interactive digital tools and varied activity lift student satisfaction.

Resource optimisation and scale

Efficient use of physical space and digital resource — more students served at lower cost.

Future-ready skills

Builds self-discipline, digital literacy and independent learning.

Academic resilience

Continuity of education through disruption, which is no longer a hypothetical requirement.







03 Navigating the hurdles

The honest half of the session. These are the seven places hybrid implementations consistently come unstuck — and none of them are solved by buying equipment alone.

CHALLENGE 01

Digital divide and equity

Ensuring every student has reliable internet and a usable device — particularly disadvantaged students.

CHALLENGE 02

Engagement and motivation

Online students can feel isolated and less motivated, and struggle with time management. Participation has to be designed, not assumed.

CHALLENGE 03

Teacher readiness and training

Dual-mode teaching demands new technological and pedagogical skill. It also increases workload, and burnout is a real outcome.

CHALLENGE 04

Designing cohesive experiences

Integrating in-person and online components seamlessly, and avoiding the time lost when activities simply take longer in two modes.

CHALLENGE 05

Infrastructure and reliability

Bandwidth, device quality, classroom equipment and technical support all disrupt learning when they fail. Audio quality is the recurring complaint from remote learners.

CHALLENGE 06

Quality and equity of experience

Ensuring online students receive attention and interaction comparable to those in the room.

CHALLENGE 07

Faculty workload

More time for course development, content creation, grading and student support — a cost that has to be planned and resourced, not absorbed.

THE ONE MOST OFTEN MISSED

Faculty capacity

Every other hurdle has a budget line. This one is paid in academic time, and an institution that does not resource it will see the model fail and blame the technology.



04 The technology

Two layers. The core stack most institutions already own and under-use, and the next generation that changes what hybrid can actually deliver.

THE CORE STACK

Learning management systems

Canvas, Moodle, Google Classroom, Blackboard — the central hub for content, assignments, grades, communication and analytics. Advanced features simplify management considerably.

Video conferencing and lecture capture

Zoom, Teams, Panopto, Echo360 for synchronous sessions, virtual office hours, lecture recording and guest speakers. High-quality audio and video are not optional.

Interactive whiteboards and annotation

Miro, Jamboard and smartboards for collaborative brainstorming and real-time annotation across both modes.

Communication platforms

The persistent channels that carry the conversation between sessions and keep remote students inside it.

NEXT-GENERATION TOOLS — IMMERSIVE AND PERSONALISED

Personalised learning platforms

Adaptive learning that tailors content to individual pace and style, identifying strengths, weaknesses and knowledge gaps.

AI tutors and feedback tools

Instant, customised feedback and support at a scale no teaching team can staff.

Automated content customisation

Generating diverse learning materials, summaries and accessible formats for diverse learners.

Learning analytics dashboards

Tracking progress and engagement, identifying learning gaps, and letting teaching staff adjust strategy in real time.

Immersive simulations and virtual labs

Hands-on experience without physical constraint — virtual dissection, surgical practice, remote fieldwork.

Robotic telepresence

Giving online students genuine presence in the room, and letting them interact with in-person classmates.

ALSO COVERED

Digital libraries

Online databases and digital collections, and the question of what a university library becomes when its holdings no longer depend on the building.







05 The pedagogy, and what comes next

Technology is the easy half. These are the four teaching models that actually hold up when half the room is somewhere else.

Hybrid-Flexible (HyFlex)

Maximum flexibility: students choose in-person, synchronous online or asynchronous attendance for each session, built on learner choice, equivalency, reusability and accessibility.

Flipped classroom

Lectures, foundational readings and recorded demonstrations are consumed before class. In-person time goes to discussion, problem-solving and deeper engagement.

Active learning strategies

Role play, case studies, group projects, think-pair-share and peer teaching — activity that requires participation regardless of where the student is.

Project-based learning

Builds communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking, using collaborative tools such as Google Workspace and Canva.

EIGHT TRENDS SHAPING THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

01	Further advances in AI — more sophisticated personalisation, intelligent tutoring and automated content creation	02	Ubiquitous XR across disciplines — complex simulations, remote fieldwork, virtual cadaver labs, immersive design studios
03	Neuroeducation and cognitive science informing how learning experiences are designed	04	Growth of micro-credentials and digital badges as flexible pathways for skill validation
05	Rising emphasis on cybersecurity and student data privacy	06	Online teaching libraries holding simulations, case studies and assessments
07	Integration of external expertise — guest speakers from anywhere, geography no longer a barrier	08	Blockchain for secure credentialing



THE THROUGH-LINE

Every trend on this list widens the gap between institutions that designed for hybrid and institutions that improvised it.

06 Preparing for the shift

The session closes on a plan rather than a prediction. Six moves an institution can begin this term.

Invest in professional development

Comprehensive training that covers both the pedagogical and the digital skills hybrid teaching requires — not a software demonstration.

Design for cohesion and engagement

Intentional course design with seamless transitions between modes. Pilot new approaches, gather feedback, refine iteratively.

Prioritise robust technology and support

Reliable, simple-to-use equipment in teaching spaces, good sound quality, and support that remote participants can actually reach.

Foster communication and collaboration

Open dialogue between academic staff and IT and AV teams, and between faculty sharing what works.

Manage expectations and set policy

Be transparent with staff and students about what hybrid can and cannot do. Write clear implementation policy, including which student populations it targets.

Focus on student wellbeing

Screen time, digital fatigue and emotional support — particularly for students already carrying anxiety.



Shareef Jaffar THE SPEAKER

MA Education, University of Nottingham · MSc Strategic Planning · LLM Corporate Governance · Certificate in Effective E-Learning Design, University of Oxford

Shareef speaks on hybrid teaching from inside the sector. He is Secretary-General and a Governing Council member of the Management Development Institute of Singapore, chairman of MDIS (Malaysia) and MDIS International College, and a director of MDIS@Tashkent and MDIS@Dushanbe — campuses that have had to make these decisions across four countries and three regulatory regimes.

WHY THIS SPEAKER

- Governs higher education institutions in four countries
- Qualified in education, e-learning design and learning performance
- 35+ years designing and delivering training across 16 countries
- Speaks to leadership and faculty audiences alike

RELATED SESSIONS

- AI in Education — the challenges of large language models
- Strategic leadership and governance for education boards
- VUCA survival and adaptive leadership
- Workplace learning strategy and blueprint development

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TrainingConcepts
Singapore · Serving clients across Asia Pacific
+65 8993 1155
enquiries@trainingconcepts.us
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