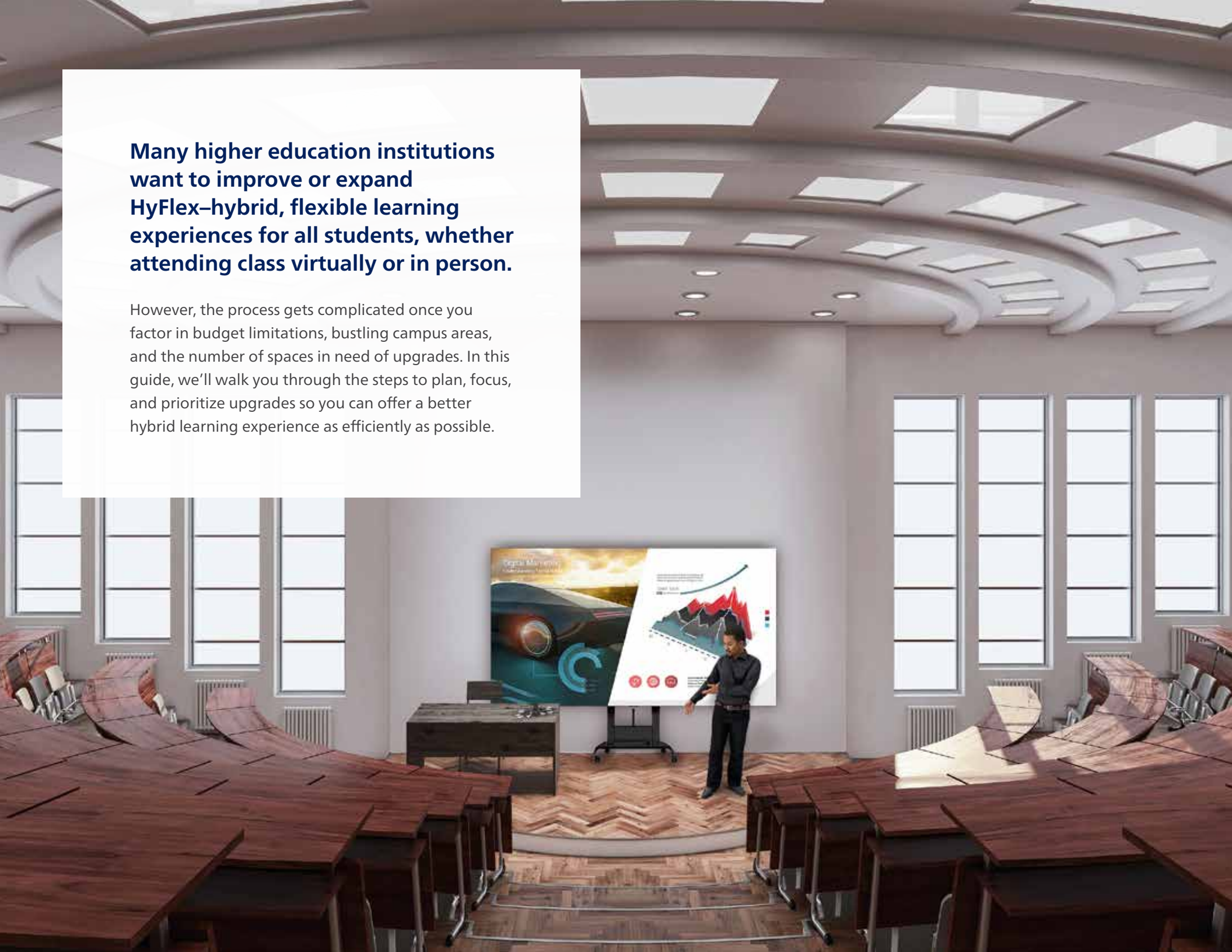
4 Steps to Maintaining the HyFlex Learning Experience



Many higher education institutions want to improve or expand HyFlex–hybrid, flexible learning experiences for all students, whether attending class virtually or in person.

However, the process gets complicated once you factor in budget limitations, bustling campus areas, and the number of spaces in need of upgrades. In this guide, we'll walk you through the steps to plan, focus, and prioritize upgrades so you can offer a better hybrid learning experience as efficiently as possible.

Start with your goals

Higher education IT departments were once expected to implement technology and keep it working, but now you own a growing list of responsibilities. After the recent expansion of HyFlex education, you are expected to positively impact the new hybrid university learning experience.

How do you ensure students and faculty are equipped to effectively learn and teach, whether in person or from home?

You can start improving your HyFlex classrooms by defining your goals. Every HyFlex teaching experience technology upgrade you plan, build, and integrate will greatly impact users, so their viewpoints will be the biggest factor in setting goals.

Consider instructors who have to provide the same instruction and materials to students in the room, as well as anywhere else in the world. Then determine how to give those online and in-class students an equal experience. With so many new moving parts to the college learning experience, it's a challenge to effectively create goals that align with the needs of all users. The next step will walk you through surveying your users to understand their needs.

Survey end-users to build a flexible, inclusive, and accessible hybrid campus

Room occupancy and workflows will influence your decisions, but the most important factor should be which upgrades will address the most essential user needs.

Start by surveying professors and students about their experiences, likes, pain points, and wish lists for HyFlex technology. Student and faculty input will help you determine which technology needs to be updated, and which will be quick fixes versus longer projects.

In addition to the survey, factor in your budget, shipping times, and installation windows. This process allows your IT teams to plan phased approaches to procuring and integrating new audio visual (AV) and unified communications (UC) solutions. Then you can sort projects by which can be completed overnight, during mid-semester breaks, and between semesters.

We recommend conducting regular surveys at both the beginning and middle of the semesters. You can then address issues as users get acclimated, and when they're in the swing of work, including:

- Student and faculty needs
- Online learning difficulties
- Campus AV and UC solution adjustments and bug fixes
- Large infrastructure upgrades for winter and summer breaks

The surveys will allow you to decide which projects can be completed during a single break or require a phased approach. The next step is to factor the survey results into your upgrade scenarios.

Define your HyFlex classroom upgrade scenarios

Outline upgrade options based on your goals, budget, integration logistics, and user survey results. Consider these common scenarios:

Prioritize less disruptive upgrades

Some projects can't wait until a scheduled break, but fortunately, many of these issues will be quick fixes. Other times, budgets are so you can only make upgrades and small fixes that improve day-to-day work. Here are some examples of simpler projects that can have a big impact on the HyFlex education experience.

Upgrade asynchronous learning management platforms.

The benefits of this overnight upgrade is that it expands learning flexibility, streamlines lesson administration, and integrates synchronous and asynchronous learning management systems. The integration enables:

- Virtual classroom streaming and collaboration
- Gamification, quizzes, and surveys
- Lecture archiving
- Virtual office hours and scheduling

Connector tools like Cisco's Webex Education Connector integrate their web conferencing platform with your LMS. Instructors can provide links and hold class within the LMS so students don't have to switch between tools, providing a better experience for online students.

Introduce interactive projectors.

Another simple but impactful classroom upgrade is to transform a standard whiteboard or wall into an interactive display. A projector like Epson's BrightLink 725Wi WXGA 3 LCD Interactive Laser Display lets students see content in greater detail. The in-room projector allows those in the back of the classroom and those online to easily see projected content.

Conduct redesigns in phases.

Some larger projects that take more time are ideal for implementing during winter break. You can minimize integration logistics issues because there aren't as many students in the classrooms.

Use winter break for upgrade projects like:

- **Integrating and upgrading custom lecture capture.** Enable or improve broadcast and recording for live streams, content review and study, and on-demand lecture review.

  Consider installing auto-tracking cameras, camera switching for presenter and content switching, and mobile camera and screen mounts.

Possible Lecture Capture Upgrades Using Legrand AV

Auto-tracking cameras **Mobile camera and screen mounts**	Vaddio IntelliSHOT auto-tracking cameras or Vaddio RoboTRAK presenter tracking systems Chief IntelliSHOT camera mounts	
Camera switching	Vaddio AV Bridge 2X1 presentation switcher	

- **Integrating lecture capture with interactive whiteboard displays.** Users will be able to broadcast and share content on LED screens for seamless clarity. It also allows users to wirelessly screen share presentations simultaneously from any collaboration platform.

Possible Whiteboard Integration Upgrades Using LG

DVLED Display	LG 136" LAEC Series AIO DVLED Display	
Interactive Whiteboard	LG 75" UHD TR3DJ-B Series Interactive Whiteboard with IR Touchscreen	

- **Enhancing audio for different HyFlex learning environments.** Improve audio in all types of environments, particularly for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math)—including labs, classrooms, and lecture halls. Standard audio solutions can only do so much, so consider using a break in classes to implement solutions that amplify voices and minimize background noises.

STEM solutions may include microphones, an audio hub, a control table, as well as table, ceiling, or wall speakers. Classroom microphones may be linear or ceiling, while table array mics work well for at-home learning.

Possible STEM Audio Solution Upgrades Using Shure

Hub Ecosystem	Shure STEM Hub	
Microflex Array Microphones	Shure STEM Ceiling Microphone Array	

Complete major overhauls during summer break.

Try to make major changes to the school's infrastructure when environments are rarely in use. If the project isn't too costly to do in one initiative, you can use the summer break to complete mass AV and UCC modifications like projectors, microphones, UC platforms, audio systems, digital whiteboards, and video conferencing cameras.

You can also use winter break to survey faculty and students to explore technology options for holistic or agnostic solutions for your summer upgrade plan.

Leverage third-party expertise and discount contracts

Once you have outlined your goals, surveyed users, and prioritized projects, it pays to consult with an expert. Whether you want to complete a few HyFlex upgrades or a full catalog of AV and UC projects, AVI-SPL has the access and expertise to design and integrate your solutions within your budget and time windows.

AVI-SPL has dozens of state contracts and access to 100+ AV vendors. These relationships ensure we can get the HyFlex learning solutions you need faster. We also have access to state and national education technology discount contracts for publicly funded colleges and universities.

Build a more inclusive, accessible HyFlex campus

Improve the user experience by implementing hybrid and flexible tools in the right spaces at the right times.

Learn more

Make sure your AV and UCC technology improvement checklist is completed by the time students and faculty get back to your hybrid campus. Want help conquering that list? Contact us today.

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