The global pandemic hurled us into emergency response learning. With this sudden shift, the role of technology also elevated. Moving beyond the prior engineering or “FF&E” approach to technology (e.g. projectors and Wi-Fi), future success lies in recognizing technology as a platform to connect learners with digital collaboration skills at a new scale.

Many institutions discovered new opportunities and approaches to scholarship, and new opportunities to learn or teach anywhere, anytime. We all also acknowledge the things we miss, particularly the sense of community and personal connection.

This emergent moment, as higher-education discovers the next “new normal”, offers an opportunity to come together as educators, architects, and technologists to capture the best advantages from both the digital and physical aspects of the human experience.

**The Window Between the Physical and Digital Classroom**

The mass adoption of remote learning during the pandemic helped reframe what a learning environment can be. The emerging hybrid or “HyFlex” classroom trend delivers learning over several modalities (through recordings, face-to-face, remote learning, and asynchronous activities). Spaces dedicated for this use often look like a hybrid of an active classroom and a media studio, with an array of cameras, screens, and interactive technologies to foster an equitable experience for learners physically present in the classroom and those connecting remotely.

**Places to Experiment with Emerging Digital Skills**

“State of the Art” is no longer something you build, it’s a process of perpetual innovation. The Jones Media Center includes spaces for students and faculty to push the boundaries of new technologies, constantly changing the space and how it’s used. The sandbox space provides a high degree of flexibility and connectivity, including a mesh of network enabled sensors, mounting points for rapid testing (installation/demounting) of new technologies, and easily accessible pathways for wire in the ceiling, floors, and walls.