

Face-to-face learning is here to stay

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Nyenrode Business University in the Netherlands has decided to buck the trend of schools running to tech, they believe face-to-face learning is vital for a rounded education and are still offering a blended MBA program, including a more than average amount of face-to-face classes.

The school's leaders believe that blended learning offers the best of both worlds and is vital for students' mental health and personal development.

Nyenrode has always taken an alternative approach, with students living on its castle campus or in the city centre of Amsterdam and a willingness to house them with young children and pets on its grounds.

According to Professor Sam Solaimani, program director of the full-time MBA hosted in Amsterdam:

"As a business university social and cognitive skill set is critical aspect of our programs in educating the future leaders. It goes without saying, that we fully embrace the existing digital tools and practices in facilitating our program and preparing our students for digital environments, remote collaboration and independent working.

"In fact, many years before Covid19 pandemic, we started investing heavily in various innovative tools and techniques to 'blend' various online and offline didactical approaches. A well-timed investment with hindsight; how otherwise would we overcome the crisis when it hit us in March 2020?

"However, we believe that face-to-face interaction cannot just be fully eliminated without any consequence. While the psychology community seems to be unanimous about the detrimental consequences of lack of face-to-face communication on mental health, the business community seem to be unanimous about the effectivity of face-to-face as a powerful medium to engage, empathize, persuade, create interpersonal connection, and professional intimacy, all helping in building trust. The question, therefore, is not how to get rid of face-to-face, but the right mix of blended education enjoys the benefits of the two worlds and educates responsible, people-oriented leaders with digital capabilities."

Those at Nyenrode Business University are delighted that they can now resume classroom teaching on campus and still considering the social distancing guidelines at the same time for the health and safety for all students and staff. Not only can students from around the globe receive a visa, but they can also take part in the live classroom experience.

For more information or to speak with Professor Sam Solaimani, contact Kate Mowbray at BlueSky PR on Kate@bluesky-pr.com