Teaching a HyFlex Course: Best Practices and Ideas to Consider

Definition

A Hybrid-Flexible (*HyFlex)* course uses a blended course design that allows students to choose how they will attend. Students can attend synchronous sessions in-person or online without physically attending class.

Considerations

1) Student learning must be equitable amongst online and in-person students.
2) Students should be engaged in a single learning community, regardless of how they participate.
3) Designing HyFlex courses can be time-consuming.
4) Logistical and technical issues may arise when delivering classes using technology.

Tips for Success

Set expectations in the syllabus and in class.

Students don't always understand the concept of a blended course and the relationship between the classroom and online components. Communicate to students the expectations for both in-person and online participation during synchronous sessions. Clearly outline all the expectations in the syllabus and provide students a map for the course.

Create equitable learning experiences for both your in-seat and remote learners.

- Monitor online discussion and reference them within the face-to-face meetings to confirm their value.
- Repeat questions from in-seat students for remote learners and look into the camera when addressing remote learners.
- Ask questions to and solicit comments from remote learners and allow time for engagement.

Utilize your TA in online sessions.

If you have a TA: connect with them and establish what they will do during in-person lectures (i.e., running the online Zoom chat and letting you know when there are questions or hands raised). Clarifying roles for the classroom will help you and your TA communicate effectively during class sessions.

Prepare your classroom technology.

- Follow the guidelines you went over in your meeting with Classroom Facilities.
- Make sure you've arrived early enough in your classroom to get your technology ready.
- Stand near the mic/speaker pod or wear the lanyard mic.
- Confirm that remote students are seeing the correct information on the screen.

Blended courses are most successful when online learning activities match or complement face-to-face activities.

> Beatty (2019) argues that "one of the four guiding values/principles of HyFlex is Reusability**:** Utilize artifacts from learning activities in each participation mode as 'learning objects' for all students" (Ch2.1). This means that all resources, activities, and materials should be equally available for all learners.
>
> For example, while HyFlex courses contain synchronous sessions for both remote and in-person students, there may be instances where students cannot attend. Consider recording and archiving the activities of the classroom for students to review later. The "learning object" of the class recording can be posted in Sakai for asynchronous viewing by students.

Tips and Examples

[Tips for Teaching HyFlex and Staggered Hybrid Courses with Remote Learners](#). This page from Grand Valley State University provides a detailed list of tips for teaching HyFlex or blended courses, including a step-by-step guide for getting ready for the classroom.

[Active Learning in Hybrid and Physically Distanced Classrooms](#). Derek Bruff, Director of the Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching, provides examples and tips for promoting active learning in a blended classroom.

[Examples of HyFlex Sessions and Lesson Plans for Varying Class Times.](#) This Google Doc provides examples of HyFlex lesson plans structures for varying class times, including 50 and 70 minutes, as well as smaller synchronous sessions.

[HyFlex Instructional Strategies Chart.](#) Use this chart to help determine how your synchronous and asynchronous students can have equivalent learning experiences.

Resources and Further Reading

Beatty, B. J. (2019). [*Hybrid-Flexible Course Design*](#) *(1st ed.)*. EdTech Books.

> This book provides readers with methods, case stories, and strategies related to Hybrid-Flexible (HyFlex) course design. As an open electronic resource (OER), it includes worksheets and case reports from institutions and faculty who have successfully implemented HyFlex-style courses.

Bergstrom, M. (2020). [Teaching HyFlex: It's a Genre Problem](#). *Faculty Focus*.

> This article argues that HyFlex is a new teaching genre and is different than an in-person, asynchronous, or Zoom course. It offers a new way of orienting thinking to best make use of the classroom.

Educause. (2020). [7 Things You Should Know About the HyFlex Course Model](#).

> This article provides an overview of the HyFlex model and includes links to further reading.

Kelly, K. (May 7, 2020). [COVID-19 Planning for Fall 2020: A Closer Look at Hybrid Flexible Course Design](#) [blog post].

This post provides an overview of HyFlex learning, as well as a detailed planning rubric, implications for the classroom, and a list of pros and cons.

Kelly, K. (June 4, 2020). Helping Students to Be Successful (Resilient) Online and Hybrid Learners During COVID Transitions [blog post].

This post provides a discussion of the ways in which HyFlex instructors can support student learning and the ways in which students can support their own learning in a HyFlex environment.

McGee, P., Reis, A. (2012). Blended Course Design: A Synthesis of Best Practices. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, v16 n4 p7-22.

This study examines publicly available guides, documents, and books that offer best or effective practices in blended course design to determine commonalities among such practices.

Polyakova-Norwood, V. & Frass, L. (n.d.). HyFlex Course Delivery: A Practical Guide. Center for Teaching Excellence, Univ. of South Carolina.

This guide explains the delivery modalities in simple, operational terms and provides recommendations for course organization, lesson delivery, and active learning implementation for students.