

Hybrid flexible (HyFlex) - course model

Characteristics

- The HyFlex model is a form of hybrid teaching.
- Teachers teach students in their classrooms and at the same time "beam" others in from a distance; in addition, a recording is made so that engagement with the content can also take place asynchronously.
- All activities in presence, in the online room and for asynchronous engagement with the content are coordinated so that all students, regardless of how they participate in the course, have the same opportunity to achieve the teaching-learning objectives.
- The model requires students and lecturers alike to rethink their approach to learning and teaching and the role that technology can play.

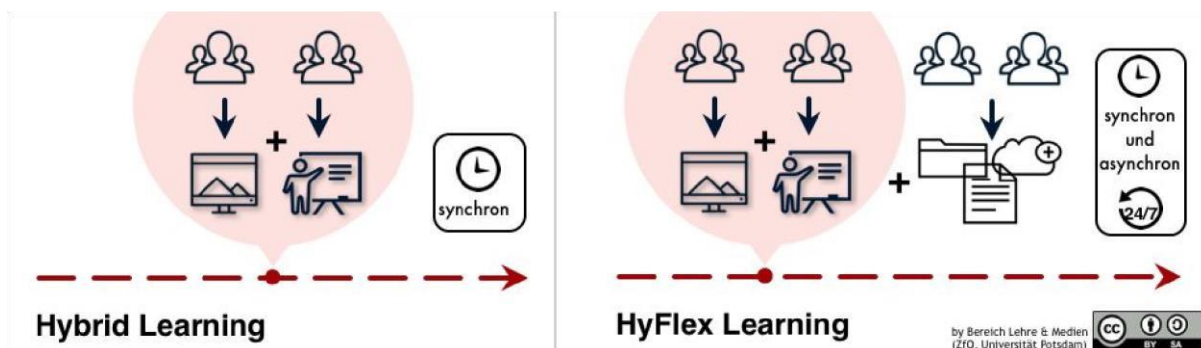
Up front:

The HyFlex model is demanding and recommended for teachers who already have experience with online teaching.

*"Finally, perhaps my biggest takeaway was that **most everything an instructor needs to do in a hybrid and physically distanced classroom is going to take more time and mental effort.** There's a new workflow to even the simplest of teaching activities, and the learning curve for that workflow will be different for each instructor. I've already been using a lot of technology in my teaching (presentation software, polling software, videos, podcasts), so I was able to pick up the new workflow fairly easily. By the third classroom demo of the day, I was already feeling pretty confident about what would work and what wouldn't. But teaching in these contexts will take some practice, and will require some faculty to learn some new skills. I would be frank with my students about this and invite them to help me find ways to make the learning environment as effective as it can be."* (Derek Bruff, July 2020, cited by Beth McMurtrie in: Teaching: Making Hybrid Teaching Work for You: <https://www.chronicle.com/newsletter/teaching/2020-07-30>)

What is behind the HyFlex model?

In this model, each course date with all associated learning activities is offered in a real room on campus and synchronously online. Each course date is also recorded so that students can also "participate" asynchronously. The course format was developed at San Francisco State University and has since been implemented and further developed at other universities. (Cf. p. 2: [The HyFlex Course Model. 7 things s you should know about](#), 07/2020)



An important aspect of the HyFlex design is that students can be fully engaged remotely, without cut-offs, participate. They are expected to participate in discussions, activities, and assignments. [For implementation ideas, see the post: Hybrid teaching approach] The course resources and tools are set up to allow for equal participation. The asynchronous option is also a valuable way to be able to review difficult material from a course in which one has participated.

This form of hybrid teaching, proponents say, provides options for students who cannot come to class for health or logistical reasons. It opens options for students who are interested in other places to stay, a social space. This format includes functions and supports that enable the
Enable students to fully engage in the learning experience. Students benefit from the
Flexibility offered by the HyFlex model. By providing multiple pathways for students to access and participate in learning, HyFlex can support a diverse student community. For the situation around the Corona crisis, there would be the possibility of having students rotate through real spaces. For example, a third of the students in a large lecture course could come to the course on a given day, while the others tune in via Zoom.

Flexibility of the students

Students can decide how they want to participate for each course session or activity. The HyFlex approach offers students autonomy, flexibility, and seamless engagement regardless of where, how and when they join the course. Central to this model is the principle that learning is equal regardless of mode. In developing the approach, the focus has been on student flexibility, but the benefits extend to faculty as well. For example, a faculty member could "attend" a course remotely with some students, while other students physically attend from a room on campus.

Reconceptualising and rethinking the roles involved

The HyFlex approach requires teachers to re-conceptualise student learning experiences and a Rethinking the way students interact with the teacher, content, and peers. The
Teacher develops the course, tools, and channels and organises the curriculum. All participants, regardless of how they choose to participate, must have equal access to learning resources, the teacher, and fellow students.

The effective use of classroom strategies and/or technology is crucial to ensure that all
Participants can hear verbal interactions. All learning resources must be available online and the
Students usually participate in a text chat along with the live video of the session. Students need constant access to the chat, which may require a separate screen in the physical course room or a fixed URL for the chat stream. Sometimes a teaching assistant or student in the class helps to moderate the chat or other feedback channels (backchannels).

Some students need guidance on the HyFlex approach, including course protocols, technologies needed, support required and how to choose the best approach. Lecturers and students often need to adjust their habits to ensure that online participants are included in discussions and other activities. A key feature of HyFlex is the asynchronous option, which often requires significant faculty preparation to be another and equivalent option to the other learning pathways. Simply streaming all F2F classes, for example, does not meet the definition of HyFlex.

Recommendations

- **Plan course completely as an online course**
Design a fully online course and consider the face-to-face part of the course as an extension of the core coursework. If you expect most of the teaching and learning to take place in your classroom, this would have too much weight and the students participating online will not be sufficiently considered. By organising your course in this way, you minimise the risk of your distance learners passively watching you engage with students in the real room. Allowing more "nimble, spontaneous actions" during class will also make this time more interesting for all students. (Advice according to Jenae Cohn, Stanford University)
- **Need to provide and adapt the materials**
Ensure that all materials, assignments, group work and other activities (e.g. in Moodle) are available online so that students can access them equally, no matter where they are at the time of the course.

- **Role of the lecturers**

Sharpen for yourself the role of lecturers in designing a teaching-learning setting. It comes fields of action, such as the moderation of different student groups. Here the Involving students for specific tasks can be helpful, so that they can teach at

Give up responsibility. Try to think of the online space as a place to connect and regroup and review content.

- **Encourage students to find ways to connect with each other**

Creating a sense of community is probably one of the bigger challenges. Students can be good at creating their own tools and communities. You just have to show them sometimes that this can be their active part in the course.

- **HyFlex offers itself as a lover project for teachers with online teaching experience**

Almost everything a teacher has to do in a hybrid and physically distanced classroom requires more time and mental effort. There is a new workflow for even the simplest classroom activities, and the learning curve for that workflow will be different for every teacher. Teaching in these contexts requires practice and requires teachers who want to acquire new skills.

Challenges for HyFlex courses!

- Technology and curriculum must be aligned.
- The technology must work consistently for all, which requires testing and possibly new installations or upgrades.
- Learning must be equal for all students. It must be avoided that no student is disadvantaged because of the chosen learning path.
- Ensuring that all course material is accessible can be a challenge.
- Lecturers need to be aware of the ways of working in synchronous and asynchronous settings. It takes a lot of effort and interaction to guide online students well.
- The model is sometimes at odds with policies and practices that, for example, limit enrolment to the number of seats in a course room, and with students' expectations of privacy when sessions are recorded.
- HyFlex gives students more responsibility for learning. It takes maturity and self-motivation to succeed in such an environment.

For implementation ideas on how to facilitate active learning and discussion for all participants in hybrid scenarios, see the handout: Hybrid Teaching Concepts.

For a more in-depth discussion:

EDUCAUSE: The HyFlex Course Model. 7 things you should know about. (07/2020):

<https://library.educause.edu/-/media/files/library/2020/7/eli7173.pdf>

Brian J. Beatty: Hybrid-Flexible Course Design. Implementing student-directed hybrid classes:

<https://edtechbooks.org/hyflex>

Beth McMurtrie: Teaching: How To Engage Students in a Hybrid Classroom (07/2020):

<https://www.chronicle.com/newsletter/teaching/2020-07-09>

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