

Welcome to Hybrid-Flexible Course Design!

A brief introduction to the book

Welcome to the HyFlex World

Hybrid-flexible course designs - multi-modal courses which combine online and onground (classroom-based) students - have been used successfully for more than a decade at many higher education institutions around the world with a wide variety of courses. At San Francisco State we call this design "HyFlex"; many campuses use this term and many others use their own term. This book uses the terms "Hybrid-Flexible" and "HyFlex" interchangeably, often using the more general term "Hybrid-Flexible" to open a chapter and the shorter term "HyFlex" when referring to detailed approaches. Other names for the HyFlex approach are referenced and used when describing other specific implementations, especially in the case reports of Unit III.

Often the initial impetus for developing a Hybrid-Flexible approach is a very real need to serve both online and onground students with a limited set of resources (time, faculty, space) which leads to a multi-modal delivery solution. When students are given the freedom and ability to choose which mode to participate in from session to session, they are able to create their own unique hybrid experience. Locally, we have started acknowledging the student control aspect, sometimes referring to HyFlex as delivering a "student-directed hybrid" learning experience.

This book provides readers with strategies, methods, and case stories related to Hybrid-Flexible (HyFlex) course design so that they (you!) may make informed and thoughtful decisions about using it themselves and begin their own HyFlex course (re)design journey. More specifically, based on the needs identified for their specific context, readers will be able to:

- a. gain an awareness of the HyFlex design,
- b. determine if and how HyFlex course design could help them solve critical needs,
- c. find their own innovative HyFlex solution to their specific challenges,
- d. begin the HyFlex implementation process using strategies similar to those used by instructors described in this book, and
- e. take advantage of emerging opportunities to improve their education practice, enabling them to better serve more students.

The book describes the fundamental principles of HyFlex design, explains a process for design and development, and discusses implementation factors that instructors, designers, students and administrators have experienced in a wide variety of higher education institutions; public and private, larger and small, research-intensive, comprehensive and community colleges. These factors include the drivers, the variations in implementation approaches and constraints, and the results (e.g., student success metrics, student satisfaction). A series of worksheets in Chapter 1.4 provides specific guidance that can be used by individuals or teams engaging in HyFlex design projects at their own institution. Case reports in Unit III from institutions and faculty who have successfully implemented HyFlex-style courses provide a rich set of real-world stories to draw insights for a reader's own design setting.

Unit I: Hybrid-Flexible Course Design to Support Student-Directed Learning Paths

Unit I chapters explain the rationale for offering Hybrid-Flexible courses and programs, answering important questions related to "why?". Chapter 1.1 Beginnings provides one story of the development of the HyFlex design emerging from the background of multi-modal and blended or hybrid instructional practice in higher education. This chapter also describes other approaches identical to HyFlex that use different terms for naming, and several very similar approaches that support varied student participation modes, but don't meet our standard baseline requirements to be considered HyFlex. Chapter 1.2 Costs and Benefits for Hybrid-Flexible Courses and Programs describes many of the common costs and benefits of implementing a HyFlex approach that instructors, students and administrators experience. Discussion of specific cost-benefit relationships are included in other chapters as well, especially in the Unit III case reports, but chapter 1.2 brings them together in a concise discussion. Chapter 1.3 Chapter 1.3 Values and Principles of Hybrid-Flexible Course Design explains the fundamental values and universal principles guiding HyFlex course design. Four principle pillars provide a foundation from which designers can build effective courses and programs that meet students' needs and implement effective practices. Chapter 1.4 Designing a Hybrid-Flexible Course explains a simplified instructional design approach adapted for the HyFlex course context. The design guidance in this chapter is meant to complement and supplement effective design practice already in place and followed by instructors (and design teams) in their single-mode courses.

Unit II: Implementation and Adoption of Hybrid-Flexible Instruction

Chapters in Unit II explain how to build and deploy Hybrid-Flexible courses with specific focused discussions on the varied experiences and perspectives of major stakeholders: faculty, students, administration, and institution. These chapters discuss many of the detailed issues, experiences and design decisions that must be managed in most Hybrid-Flexible implementations; specific solutions in a variety of cases are explored in Unit III. Chapter 2.1 Teaching a Hybrid-Flexible Course describes the experience of instructors who have taught using this approach, focusing on common challenges and successes they've encountered. Chapter 2.2 Learning in a Hybrid-Flexible Course reports significant and common student experiences associated with learning in a HyFlex environment. Chapter 2.3 Supporting Hybrid-Flexible Courses and Programs explains many of the administrative factors that accompany HyFlex approaches: scheduling, workload management, logistics and more. Chapter 2.4 Expanding the Implementation of Hybrid-Flexible Courses and Programs explores the ways institutions have (or might) manage the expanding adoption of the HyFlex approach by instructors and administrators. Chapter 2.5 Evaluating the Impact of Hybrid-Flexible Courses and Programs reviews some of the research already conducted to assess the value of the HyFlex approach in courses and programs. Supplementing Chapter 2.5 is a bibliography (in Appendix A) of over 50 articles and presentations addressing Hybrid-Flexible-type approaches by any name. This bibliography is continuously revised as new research is published.

Unit III: Hybrid-Flexible Implementations Around the World

Chapters in Unit III provide specific case reports from institutions and faculty who have direct experience implementing Hybrid-Flexible courses in their own unique context. Each chapter explains 1) the need for Hybrid-Flexible, 2) the design (product and process), 3) the implementation experience, and 4) an impact evaluation (when available). Chapter authors have all designed their own Hybrid-Flexible courses either as faculty or instructional designers working with faculty. Their voices and stories provide a rich tapestry that is itself an example of a hybrid (mixed methods) flexible (changing, adaptive) approach to Hybrid-Flexible course design.

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