Supporting Hybrid-Flexible Courses and Programs

The Administrator Experience with HyFlex Courses and Programs

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"Orville and Wilbur Wright became the first in flight because they applied a mechanical principle that followed their collaborative method. The key to keeping a craft in the air they grasped, was not to make it strong and sturdy. On the contrary, it had to be flexible. The plane itself – and the pilot at the controls – must be able to adjust easily and quickly. In the sky, with winds rushing and ever changing, there was no such thing as inherent stability – only a dynamic stability, which, though it might sound like a contradiction, actually had a lot to do with embracing instability."
Shenk (2014) p. 185

The principle of "dynamic stability" may be very appropriate for systems embracing Hybrid-Flexible (HyFlex) courses. In HyFlex classes, students are typically given full control over their decisions to participate online or in the classroom. This provides them with the ability to make participation choices based on convenience, learning progress, social interaction preferences, or other factors important to them at the time. Faculty, on the other hand, do not have choices about participation mode, since they have to provide both an online and a classroom experience supporting student learning. This bi-modal approach with student freedom to choose mode and faculty requirements to provide both modes with equal effectiveness is the essential defining character of a HyFlex design. The instruction system that results is both dynamic and stable: student faces in class often change from week to week, in-class and online participation numbers may vary considerably, and different activities may be required in various modes, yet a consistent and effective learning experience is expected by students in the classroom and by students online, requiring extensive design work by instructors (and any available design support).

Administrative systems may also need to embrace the principle of dynamic stability in a HyFlex environment; extremely challenging when most administrative systems are designed for inflexible consistency, predictability, and repeatability. HyFlex courses demand some appreciation for, and acceptance of, uncertainty as student participation mode changes from session to session and enrollment in each mode changes each session.

What are common important considerations for administering HyFlex courses? As with the student and faculty experience, the specific answer to this question is highly context dependent and varies from organization to organization, and sometimes from administrator to administrator (department chairs, deans, registrars, etc.). In Chapters 2.1 Teaching a Hybrid-Flexible Course and 2.2. Learning in a Hybrid-Flexible Course, some issues are raised and discussed from the faculty and student perspectives. In this chapter, I'll describe four administrative considerations commonly raised as important challenges or opportunities that must be met for the effective support of HyFlex courses over the long term. These four include 1) deciding to launch HyFlex for an institution, 2) enabling student schedule flexibility, 3) managing workload agreements, and 4) aligning support for students

and faculty. You can also read about other administrative concerns and solutions in some of the case reports available in Unit III.

Since almost every institution – even those working within larger university systems – has significant control over local implementations of administrative systems, policies, and practices, when HyFlex courses are brought into the curriculum decisions must be made about factors such as these four. If you want your implementation to run as smoothly as possible, and to be effective in the long run, gathering administrative decision-makers early in the process to understand HyFlex and the unique support services or combinations of existing services required of all stakeholders is a good idea. Highly recommended!

Deciding to Launch HyFlex for an Institution

The decision to begin offering courses and programs in the HyFlex mode is one that should be made carefully and begin with an analysis of the value expected to be gained, and the feasibility of an institution being able to support the effort. (See Chapter 1.2. Costs and Benefits for Hybrid-Flexible Course and Programs for more discussion on this topic.) Even at the earliest stages of the consideration of the opportunity, it's very likely that some sense of the desired value is known by decision-makers. HyFlex is innovative enough that most administrators aren't likely to seriously consider an implementation like this without some awareness of the compelling challenges or opportunities that need to be addressed. Once one or more compelling value opportunities have been identified, a feasibility analysis will help administrators or other decision-makers make the decision to move forward with HyFlex or not. In some cases, this decision is made by individual instructors, but, even in this case some sort of value expectation and feasibility analysis is performed, though it will likely be informal and may not be well-documented.

Some institutions implement HyFlex programs strategically with substantial high-level investment of effort to develop comprehensive strategic plans. Several of the case reports in Unit III of this book include some discussion of administrative planning at this level. (See McCluskey, Shaffer, Grodziak, & Hove (2012) for one example of an institutional strategic plan for their approach, branded as "FlexLearning".)

Analyzing the Feasibility of HyFlex

If you are considering using the HyFlex approach in courses or programs, you should certainly complete some sort of feasibility analysis before moving forward with detailed design, development or implementation. Moving forward without understanding the balance of cost to benefit, value to price, advantage to disadvantage, or risk to reward (pick your favorite pair of terms) is shortsighted and may lead to wasted effort if it turns out the returns to the organization or students aren't worth the cost to the instructor or organization.

What questions should your feasibility analysis answer? (For detailed guidance, see Chapter 1.4. Designing a Hybrid-Flexible Course.)

First, you should clearly establish or validate the need to use both types of delivery – online and classroom – in the same class sections. If you find that there is no solid justification for delivering instruction in both modes at the same time, with the same general set of resources, then perhaps HyFlex isn't a good choice. The type of justification needed to move forward depends on the scope of

the implementation being considered. The justification for an individual instructor may be quite simple (at minimum, instructor interest or preference) and perhaps that's solid enough for a very limited project. However, if an entire program or institution is considering implementing HyFlex in many (or all) courses, the justification may include a market analysis, thorough literature review, consultation with experts, and the engagement of an instructional design team.

Why might an organization or instructor want to deliver both modes at once? Here are some of the common reasons for moving forward with HyFlex. (See the case reports in Unit III for specific rationale used in a variety of institutions.)

1. Extend instruction to online students with existing f2f classes. (Expand market? Facilitate greater student access?)
2. Provide a socially interactive 'onground' instructional option for online students.
3. Allow students the flexibility to attend class in person or online, depending on their individual needs and wants (schedule, personality, work/family requirements, etc.).
4. Leverage online resources (archived lectures and other activities) to support unlimited student review of content. Enhance access to various learning styles or language levels through recording and multiple modes of presentation and interaction.
5. Build in capability and capacity for online delivery within an existing traditional instruction environment.
    a. Enable business continuity and/or disaster recovery plans
    b. Respond to changing needs of students and key stakeholder groups

Of course, considering the value that you can expect from HyFlex is only one side of the analysis. You also need to determine how much implementing HyFlex is going to cost various stakeholders. A few key "costs" to consider:

1. Design and development time to create new HyFlex courses, or adapt existing classroom or online courses. (Who pays? Faculty, instructional designers)
2. In the atypical case of implementing a classroom mode in an existing online course (or program), providing physical meeting facilities may be a large cost.
3. Managing faculty requirements
    a. Possibly increased workload (development time/delivery time/possible enrollment cap changes).
    b. Training faculty to teach online (or in class – faculty might benefit from teaching support in both delivery modes).
4. Determining the administration of enrollment and participation requirements (residency, seat-time, etc.).
    a. Will students be "online", "regular", or be labeled in some new way?
    b. How will classes be scheduled into rooms? (typically they won't need seats for the full enrollment)
    c. How will students be scheduled into classes? Will students be allowed to schedule two classes at once, if one or both is delivered in HyFlex mode?
5. Supporting student success through preparation and support in HyFlex.
    a. Time management (scheduling time/place to "attend" class – anytime, anywhere)
    b. Technology mediated instructional environments (LMS, email, etc.) may require additional technical support (24/7?)
    c. Self-regulation ("Am I a good online (or classroom) learner? Should I change modes?")

Once you've looked at both sides of this comparison, you may need to weight various factors to help you decide if and how to proceed with HyFlex. Every situation will have its own set of context factors and weighted variables to consider. In the end, most cases of HyFlex implementation are also cases of organization change and require effective change management strategies. See Chapter 2.4. Expanding the Implementation of Hybrid-Flexible Courses within the Institution for more on change-related factors of implementation.

Defining HyFlex

When the use of HyFlex courses in an institution grows beyond a single instructor in a few courses, and especially when administrative systems and supports are required and being asked to adapt, it's important for the institution to formally adopt a definition of their version of HyFlex (or local brand name). This increases the local legitimacy of the approach and should accelerate the development of a more stable support system across the institution, and for students, faculty and staff.

A simple definition like this one from San Francisco State may be all that is required.

> *"**HyFlex courses** are class sessions that allow students to choose whether to attend classes face-to-face or online, synchronously or asynchronously."* SF State Academic Senate policy S19-264

If your institution wants to further define your official description as way to standardize HyFlex instructional designs (course formats, materials use, activities, and more) further, you may want to do that, though you will also sacrifice an important design component of the academic freedom many faculty exercise and strongly support. You decide!

Enabling Student Scheduling Flexibility

In a HyFlex course, both fully online and fully classroom-based instruction are provided; in many cases students are given the option to attend online in either synchronous or asynchronous modes. In most institutions, it is a faculty responsibility and right to provide instruction in all formats required to support learning, so in a HyFlex environment, the faculty must be able to provide effective instruction in both classroom and online modes.

Supporting Flexibility During Registration

We've found that there are four main ways students register for HyFlex courses that most institutions use: 1) students register for a HyFlex course as they would any classroom-based course (no HyFlex difference), 2) students register in either a fully online or a classroom-based section of the same course – with sections combined (in the scheduling system) into one larger official class section, 3) students register in either a fully online or a classroom-based section of the same course – with sections combined in the LMS to create an "unofficial" larger class section, and 4) institution creates a new HyFlex course type in the registration system to accommodate scheduling flexibility while following the business rules adopted by the institution.

1. No difference

The simplest to administer for many, this approach doesn't require any changes to the way a class section is scheduled within the class scheduling system. In order to reserve the location and time for face to face meetings (both for on-campus room and in students' academic schedules), these classes are scheduled as traditional face to face classes, and students enroll in them expecting that format. Schedule notes, emails from the system or the instructor, and/or information shared in the first class meeting is used to communicate the online participation options available and introduce the students to the HyFlex format. The primary disadvantage of this approach is that students who need a fully online version of this class would not normally register for this class section since they would expect an in-class participation requirement, when the actual class format would allow their fully online attendance.

2. Split a single class section into two smaller registration sections

One way to attract students to both modes (online and face to face) is to split a regularly sized section into two smaller sections, and assign the same instructor to each section. The faculty workload might have to be reduced for each section so that total is the equivalent as one full section (see the Managing Workload Agreements section below for more about faculty workload management). The primary advantage of this approach is that students have maximum visibility of attendance options, though additional communications are needed to explain the HyFlex format with participation flexibility. The primary disadvantage may be the difficulty in balancing the two partial sections to best meet expected student demand, since in some cases more students may be attracted to either the classroom or the online section which might lead to one partial section under enrolled and the other over enrolled or with a long waitlist.

3. Combine two entire sections into a single larger class section after enrollment

A common approach when multiple sections of a single course are offered and a single HyFlex instructor is available to teach more than one section is to combine two normally sized sections into one larger section. In this case, one section is scheduled as traditional face to face (classroom) and one section is scheduled as fully online. This allows students looking for either of these modes to find and enroll in their desired format and then receive the options to participate in the other mode as well, if desired. An additional advantage is that faculty workload may be managed by assigning two identical class sections that can be taught as one single section, saving time and effort associated with some aspects of instruction.

4. Create new HyFlex course type following institution's HyFlex business rules

Class scheduling systems may have the ability to support adding new class formats that have unique scheduling parameters and that could support the student schedule flexibility that would be ideal to support HyFlex enrollment. On our campus, we use the scheduling system – unmodified – to treat HyFlex classes as online classes with face to face meeting options; a special form of hybrid class. This allows us to schedule a single class section with full enrollment (and full instructor load factors) that reserves an on-campus room at a scheduled time and alerts students to the option of online participation (either synchronously or asynchronously). We use additional class schedule notes associated with the class section to explain the participation options and flexibility to students.

Sample class note: * Marketing 431 sections 1, 2 and 3 are the same class. Students enrolled in any one of these sections may take it as an online course or as a traditional course.

This "modified business case" use of the existing scheduling system provides most of the

administrative scheduling needs of HyFlex and avoids the expense of a formal system modification.

Setting Participation Expectations

Since the primary distinguishing factor among HyFlex participation options is the way students interact while learning, it makes sense to frequently clarify interaction expectations to ensure that all participants know what to expect and can make realistic choices about participation mode. (Note: The design guidance in this section is likely to be most useful for instructors and instructional designers, but it is included in this chapter because administrators may be interested in establishing (and enforcing) design guidelines that include these aspects.)

Class participation and communication protocols and expectations should be explained before students enroll in a course if possible or at least at the very beginning of the course. Many HyFlex courses are listed as traditional courses in the course catalog so students are likely to know what the in-class expectations are before signing up for a class. Most of our students are well-trained in classroom participation protocols. However, it is unlikely that students will understand the online flexible participation options, however, unless they have taken a HyFlex course before. In some cases, student understanding also depends on the instructor's specific implementation of HyFlex, if it is significantly different than a previous instructor's practice.

Once a class begins, some students will need very specific guidance about how and when to interact online with content, the instructor, and with other students. Instructors should have a detailed explanation of protocols and expectations ready to distribute and available in multiple places as appropriate for their situation. For example, most formal classes will use a syllabus and participation expectations should be included in that document. HyFlex classes will use a course website, and the participation expectations might be highlighted on the main page of the website in some way. Weekly agendas and discussion forum prompts are also excellent places to include specific participation expectations for that week, topic, or activity.

It is also useful to periodically remind all students in a class of the overall participation protocols and expectations during a course. An instructor can observe participation patterns and may sense that participation is deficient in some important way. If this happens, it may be time for a targeted or general reminder about what is required. I've found many students are receptive to those reminders and change their participation practice accordingly.

Regrettably, some students will not change their practice, even if they "appreciate" the value they are missing. This is a problem common to every course I've experienced, unfortunately. In this way, the HyFlex experience is the same as any other course experience; dependent on the volition of students to participate actively.

In summary: Communicate participation expectations clearly, frequently, and in multiple ways that fit the specifics of your instructional situation.

Preventing a "Flex": The Case of International Students

The value to students and others in being able to participate either online or in the classroom may not be available to all students, all of the time. There may be policies and practices that restrict access to the online participation option for some students, and perhaps just for some of the time. One of the cases that commonly requires a restraint from completing a course fully online is when

students with a residency requirement enroll in one or more HyFlex classes at an institution. International students commonly are encumbered with residency requirements that may restrict their access to fully online classes, either completely or as a percentage of their enrollment in any given term. In the United States, these requirements are driven by F-1 visa regulations, and are mandated by federal law.

Example (2019 data; semester campus): The F-1 visa regulations require international students to be enrolled full time (12 units or more) during fall and spring terms, with no more than 3 units coming from enrollment in a fully online class (no required on-campus meetings). International students are allowed to complete as many fully online courses as they want as long as they also have at least 9 units of classes with an in-person participation requirement (this includes traditional hybrid courses, but may not include a fully HyFlex class). These requirements do not completely restrict a student from enrolling in a fully online course (one or more fully online courses are acceptable as long as enough fully face to face courses are also being completed), and don't restrict the student from completing a hybrid class that requires at least one on-campus meeting during a term.

Enrolling in a HyFlex class could present a problem if 1) the student has the option of completing all course requirements online (potentially at a distance) and 2) the student is also enrolled in one or more fully online or HyFlex courses at the same time. In a situation like this, the institution might have to require the international student to complete some HyFlex class requirements on campus rather than online. A policy like this would not be difficult to implement on a case-by-case basis, but might be challenging if numbers are large and administrative reporting requirements are extensive. One way an institution could address this issue is to require all international students enrolled in a HyFlex class to attend one on-campus class meeting; perhaps the first class meeting in a term would be a good choice. This approach would include a tracking mechanism for international students to ensure policy compliance, adding an administrative burden for someone on campus. However, if an institution did not want to treat international students differently than all others, and did not want to create another administrative tracking and reporting process for staff, it could decide to require all students to attend the first class meeting on campus (or at some other time in the semester), thus preventing the potential F-1 visa regulation problem. If a national student (not international) could not attend the required on-campus meeting, it may be much simpler to provide an officially approved online alternative for her rather than having to track all international students.

Managing Workload Agreements

In a HyFlex course, both fully online and fully classroom-based instruction are provided by the same instructor. In most institutions, it is a faculty responsibility and right to provide instruction in all formats required to support learning, so in a HyFlex environment, the faculty must be able to provide effective instruction in both classroom and online modes. This can require more work from faculty, and at many institutions this additional work is compensated. In other institutions, faculty are left to self-manage this additional work, and oftentimes this leads to a simple shifting of work from one area or set of tasks to a different one.

Some institutions provide additional resources to instructors teaching HyFlex classes. Four common supports are:

- **Additional stipend (pay)** for faculty who design, develop and teach a HyFlex course. This seems to range from about $1500 to $5000 depending on scope of effort, type of institution,

regular faculty pay amount, and other factors.

- **Course release** for faculty who design, develop and teach a HyFlex course. Often this is offered for the first term a HyFlex course is offered due to the increased workload in creating a fully online version of an existing face to face course. Typically this is a "one course" release (20% release is common).
- **Assigned teaching assistants** (TAs) to help manage the workload of teaching both classroom and online versions of the course. This seems to be highly variable – even within a single institution – and ranges from a single TA in a normal sized class to 10 or more in a mega-section class (1000 students in some cases).
- **Doubling up class sections** – in some institutions when courses offer multiple class sections every term, a faculty member may be assigned to two sections (one online and one face to face) but is able to run these two sections as one large combined HyFlex section. The faculty receives compensation for two classes but (in most cases) has less than a "2X" workload, since only one set of in-class sessions is required, and all instructional materials can serve students in all participation modes with one instance.

In the case reports in Unit III you may find examples of another common compensation approach: The "Unique Local Approach". Every institution has the ability to create their own compensation approach based on the specifics of the situation. Your solution may be a combination of common approaches listed above or may be uniquely your own. You decide!

Aligning Support for Students and Faculty

In a HyFlex course or program, students and faculty need additional support from the institution in several important areas. Administrators should be prepared to provide this support to ensure learning is not hindered.

Providing Support for Students

What supports do students need when beginning a HyFlex course experience? As with all instructional delivery/course modes, there are several general supports needed, and specific supports depending on the exact implementation approach being used. (See Chapter 2.2. Learning in a Hybrid-Flexible Course for more on the student experience.)

As explained above, students need basic information about their participation options; accurate and simple, easy to understand. Do they have to attend class live and in-person? If so, when? For what purpose? Which online participation options are available to them? How do they access those? It is also useful to explain the various modes and highlight reasons why someone might choose one or another, and – just importantly – why someone should NOT choose one or another mode (especially various online options). Helping students decide which participation mode to use for a given session may be more important for those students with little or no HyFlex experience and those who have been unable or unwilling to choose wisely in previous HyFlex classes.

Another general student support needed is the ability to identify courses in the class schedule available in HyFlex mode and what special arrangements are needed to enroll and participate. For example, on some campuses for large HyFlex sections scheduled in rooms that cannot meet the full enrollment capacity, students must choose either in-person or online evaluation (testing). If they choose in-person evaluation, they are expected to show up on campus during a scheduled exam time.

If they choose online evaluation, they must complete all exams online and are not allowed to complete evaluations in-person, since all in-person seats are reserved for students who registered for them. This allows the institution to manage larger enrollments that exceed room capacity, and to realize one of the key organizational value returns enabled by HyFlex: more students served with the same seating capacity.

Related to participation decisions students must make is clearly identifying the technology required to participate in various modes. Do students need personal response system "clickers" if they attend in person? Do students need other personal technology in the classroom, such as a laptop or tablet computer? Do students need headsets to participate in live online mode? Or are speakers alone good enough? If the synchronous technology used doesn't allow for student audio input, or they aren't expected to speak in class – as in many larger lecture classes – students won't need a working microphone. Do students need special plugins, browsers, or other software applications? Do bandwidth specifications matter? In synchronous modes, especially when video and audio channels are used, bandwidth may be a limiting factor for effective participation.

You may also have special access instructions for using other instructional resources that vary from mode to mode. If you are providing hard copies of readings or handouts in class and you expect online students to access these as well (synchronously in session or asynchronously at any other time), how will they do that? You'll need to consider copyright requirements, digitizing media, creating accessible documents, and perhaps more. Clearly, the more consistent the use of resources across all modes, the simpler this will be – both for your students and for instructors and designers.

Supporting accessibility with course materials.
Another important aspect of student support is ensuring that the HyFlex guiding principle of "Accessibility" is followed. For most situations, the primary area of accessibility addressed is making all course materials and activities accessible to and usable for all students. For example, audio or video recordings should include text transcripts or be closed-captioned, web pages and learning management systems must be "screen reader friendly", and all forms of online discussion should meet universal design guidelines for accessibility. (CAST.org, nd.) As more students with varied learning-mode abilities enroll in HyFlex courses and societal, regulatory and legal pressures for universal design for accessibility across the curriculum increase, this aspect becomes increasingly important, and should be designed into the course at the very beginning.

In my experience, this has also been one of the most challenging factors to address, and I don't believe that I've been able to implement this principle comprehensively (every course, all materials, all the time). Meeting the legal and policy requirements of technical accessibility with course materials is not always sufficient to ensure equitable access that leads to equivalent learning outcomes. It may be that there will always be some inequity in access to alternative participation modes, much like some students learn better verbally (listening to instructions and explanations) and some learn better visually (watching others do or view visual explanation), and some learn better by doing. Of course, some students may never realistically be able to attend class in person if they are located in a distant place or have severe time constraints preventing in-person attendance. So perhaps this principle is the most difficult and least likely to be fully implemented; however, full and equitable access is still an important goal.

Providing Faculty Support

As faculty consider using HyFlex approaches in their teaching, what support do they need? (See

Chapter 2.1. Teaching a Hybrid-Flexible Course for more on the faculty experience.)

We've seen the most significant need for faculty support in learning how to teach effectively online, which includes designing engaging online content and interactive experiences for students in all participation modes. Because the HyFlex faculty isn't giving up the traditional teaching environment (in the classroom, normally), s/he can continue to work in that context, which is normally a strength. For many faculty new to HyFlex, the main challenge is learning to teach online effectively, especially developing skills in interacting with online learners through various internet communication technologies (ICT). Presenting information is not normally a new challenge, especially with the extensive use of digital media files, presentation notes, and lecture capture solutions that become easier to use each year.

Many universities have developed robust training programs for faculty who want to transition to teaching online or in a hybrid class. Two examples are those at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee (visit their Faculty development for Hybrid Courses resources at https://edtechbooks.org/-eIf and the [University of Central Florida](https://cdl.ucf.edu/teach/) (visit their faculty development for teaching online resources at https://cdl.ucf.edu/teach/). A key component of any effective program, it seems, is to have the faculty experience learning as an online (or hybrid) student as they learn how to teach in that environment. Since many faculty still have no experience learning in an online class, or have had only poor (non-interactive) experiences in online classes, this is an important step. Interaction makes the biggest difference in offering quality online experiences to students. As open courseware and open educational resources become more widespread and expand in scope, quality information (content) is even easier to find than before. Interaction with qualified and engaged faculty experts remains the real "value-add" of a university class.

In a HyFlex course, when both online and traditional students are engaged in the same learning environment, the faculty has an opportunity to leverage the efforts and interactions of students in both modes to support and enhance the learning of all students. Online forum participation can become an opportunity for traditional student interaction as well. Interactions in the classroom can be made immediately available to live online students or can be archived for review by asynchronous online students and connected to a forum discussion for ongoing engaged learning. Common forum assignments for all students can be used to draw students together in shared discussions throughout a course. (See Chapter 2.2. Learning in a Hybrid-Flexible Course for a broader discussion of student engagement in common discussion forums.) With new and emerging technologies designed to support ubiquitous social connection and interaction, the opportunities for learning interactions are limited primarily by the creativity and the amount of time available of the faculty.

If motivated and engaged faculty are provided with good design ideas, usable technology, positive experiences both learning and teaching online, and an ongoing community to support their development as HyFlex instructors, they can do this successfully.

Technology Change Leads to Shifting Expectations

As faculty, students and administers develop some experience with HyFlex courses, their expectations may change about what is considered acceptable in terms of teaching and learning support and in terms of the "return" realized by the institution. This is a natural process which should be expected, though it does inject more change into the instructional system which may reveal new areas of [potential] conflict, and requires more effort during ongoing program implementation and the evaluation of impact.

One area of expectation change is focused on technology support for various delivery modes. As newer (and better?) technologies become available or existing technologies evolve over time, original technology functions may be enhanced and new functions may become available. For example, the Learning Management System (LMS) may add a survey (or polling) function. As faculty and students begin using the survey function and find value in completing surveys, training for newer faculty will likely adapt to include the technical and pedagogical use of LMS surveys. Faculty who have been using the LMS to support instruction without the survey may feel pressure (coming from within themselves or their programs or from the outside) to begin using surveys also. (After all, shouldn't we all be using "best practices" as early as possible?) Redesigning class activities to include surveys, whether delivered in-class or online, means change, and change requires additional effort. Effort uses resources, and therefore encumbers cost. Is the returned value with the additional cost? That's the key question the stakeholders (designers, faculty, administration) should answer.

Another area of expectation change is focused on the student digital experience. Even over the past decade that we've been using HyFlex, we've seen remarkable shifts in the "learning techscape." Pervasive mobile communications technologies, ubiquitous use of video and multimedia, and the prosumer (producer-consumer) aspects of social media being used in instruction more and more are examples of technology developments that lead to changing expectations. Whether initiated by student requests ("Hey, how come we aren't using Instagram or Twitter for this course?") or faculty interest ("I just discovered Glogster and we're going to start using it the rest of the semester!"), adding new technologies makes everyone involved change their practice, and change requires additional effort. Effort uses resources, and therefore encumbers cost. Is the returned value with the additional cost? As I stated above, that's the key question the stakeholders should answer.

Even administrators inject change through shifting expectations. Let's consider the situation of "scale creep." Assume for a moment that a traditional classroom-based course is limited to 35 students because only 35 students can fit in the classroom. If a HyFlex delivery approach was used, and the pedagogy (instructional approach) allowed for more students, then the enrollment capacity could be expanded to accommodate a larger number of students since some students would likely particpate online each session. Keep in mind that if the course is designed such that one faculty could not manage the increased workload of reading papers or grading exams, etc., then expanding the number of students would NOT be a good idea, even with HyFlex. If the course is successful with the additional number of students (let's say a total of 50, for example), an administration under extreme budgetary duress might decide to "bump up" the course enrollment by an additional 10 percent, to 55 students. Doesn't that sound reasonable? It may be reasonable, or it may not... that's not really the point I'm trying to make. A change in seat capacity, even a relatively small change of five students, injects change – to both the faculty and student experience. Change requires additional effort. Effort uses resources, and therefore encumbers cost. Is the returned value with the additional cost? Yet again, that's the key question the stakeholders should answer.

I think it is safe to say that in every healthy organization, quite a bit of change happens over time. HyFlex designers, instructors and yes, even administrators (!) should be prepared to adapt their approaches to accommodate and leverage the changes happening around them. After all, if you are involved in a HyFlex implementation, you are a change agent yourself. Since you are "doing change" to others, you should be willing to "accept change" in return. Improving our effectiveness demands it, in fact.

A Bonus Administrative Consideration - Supporting Business Continuity

<u>What Happens When the University Cannot Host Classes? (A faculty short story...)</u>

[Note: This short story was written by a HyFlex faculty shortly after a weather-related campus closure event a few years ago. The same scenario has played out several times in the ensuing years.]

Emergency notification received: campus has been closed due to loss of power from the storm.

What is a faculty to do? If you have a HyFlex class, you can simply require all your students to meet online for that session. This works well if they all have network access, the tools and ability to participate in the online mode, and the time to do so. In our graduate program, it's never been a problem.

We had occasion to do this on a recent night of classes after our university lost most electric power for several hours. An hour before our graduate courses were scheduled to begin for that evening, all classes were canceled. Because I am using the HyFlex design in the courses I teach, all I had to do was send an email to my students telling them to complete their participation requirements online (and asynchronous) for that week. Because the online option was already prepared for those students who were going to choose to participate that way already, I didn't have to create a single new resource or activity ... the online course materials and activities were already there!

I'm sure being forced into the online asynchronous mode was not convenient or simple for some students, but it was better than missing out on up to 10% of the content of their course. Graduate students, perhaps more than many undergraduates, often want to get as much as possible from their course experiences, since they are often paying dearly, in time and other resources.

There was still some difficulty, since while the campus power was off our locally-hosted LMS was off line, so students couldn't immediately access course materials during the regularly scheduled class time. With a little schedule accommodation for quizzes and such, all were able to complete the participation requirements later during the week.

It's nice when things work out well, even when unplanned events drive a change in plans. And in our geography (San Francisco Bay Area), being able to recover quickly from an unplanned event (such as a major earthquake) that could close our campus for days or weeks is very important.

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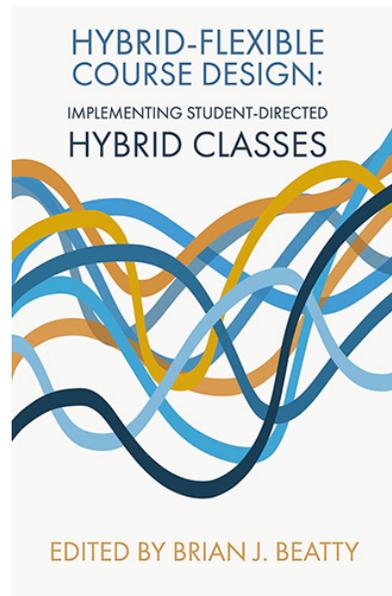
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