Designing and Teaching a Blended Hybrid-HyFlex Course

Tarleton State University

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What is HyFlex?

The term HyFlex means “Hybrid-Flexible” (Beatty, 2019, p. 8). Courses designed using this model incorporate strategies and structures that engage students whether they attend classes face-to-face or remotely, synchronously or asynchronously (Beatty, 2019).

The four core principles of HyFlex instruction are:

1. **Learner Choice**: Provide meaningful alternative participation modes and enable students to choose between participation modes daily, weekly, or topically.
2. **Equivalency**: Provide learning activities in all participation modes, which lead to equivalent learning outcomes.
3. **Reusability**: Utilize artifacts from learning activities in each participation mode as ‘learning objects’ for all students.
4. **Accessibility**: Equip students with technology skills and equitable access to all participation modes (Beatty, 2016, section 1.3).

Why Blended Hybrid-HyFlex?

In this time of uncertainty, blended hybrid-HyFlex instruction offers a high degree of flexibility for students to accommodate unforeseen circumstances that may arise. Students have the option of attending class in any of three delivery modes: (a) face-to-face, (b) remote synchronous, or (c) remote asynchronous at any point in the semester as needed. Note that students may be required to attend sessions remotely to accommodate physical distancing requirements in classrooms, but no students will be required to attend face-to-face.

Designing a Blended Hybrid-HyFlex Course

In many ways, designing a blended hybrid-HyFlex course is similar to designing a traditional or online course. Rather than designing a course “from scratch”, many instructors have existing courses that can be updated to a blended hybrid-HyFlex model using a few steps.

Instruction generally comprises the following broad components: (a) the delivery of content, (b) engaging students with the material, and (c) assessment of their attainment of outcomes (Beatty, 2019). When designing a blended hybrid-HyFlex course, the instructor should
incorporate elements that allow students to attend in any of the three modalities (face-to-face, remote synchronous, remote asynchronous, and/or a combination) and ensure that students can access the content, engage with the material, and participate in assessments of outcomes. Considerations for each of the three components are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

*Considerations for Blended Hybrid-HyFlex Course Design to Deliver Content, Engage Students, and Assess Student Outcomes for Students Who Attend Face-to-Face, Remote Synchronous, or Remote Asynchronous (adapted from Beatty, 2019)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Face-to-Face Classroom</th>
<th>Remote Synchronous</th>
<th>Remote Asynchronous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Delivery</strong></td>
<td>Dynamic, interesting presentation of content</td>
<td>Instructor addresses online students similarly to in-class students</td>
<td>Instructor acknowledges online students in class recordings and in recorded messages to asynchronous students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Meaningful discussions; collaborative activities involving students and instructor</td>
<td>Instructor engages online students during in-class discussion and group activities</td>
<td>Instructor presence in online discussions is obvious, frequent, and contributes to the conversation over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment of Student Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing informal assessment of learning during content presentation and activities</td>
<td>Instructor intentionally injects opportunities for interaction to support informal assessment of learning during content presentation and activities</td>
<td>Feedback to students during instructional activities is timely, accurate, and significant (not abbreviated or trivial)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Basic Procedures for Teaching a Blended Hybrid-HyFlex Course

There are a wide variety of tools and strategies for designing courses to meet the considerations presented in Table 1. This section will address the basic procedures for teaching a blended hybrid-HyFlex course using the components addressed above. Instructors are encouraged to adapt best pedagogical practices when teaching any course.

1. Design Course in Canvas
   All courses will be automatically set up in the Canvas for the Fall 2020 semester. Instructors are directed to online Canvas resources (https://www.tarleton.edu/idt/Canvas/canvas-faculty.html) for guidance in designing courses within the learning management system. For individual help designing a course in Canvas, instructors may seek assistance and/or attend Canvas trainings with the Center for Educational Excellence or contact college-level HyFlex Ambassadors.

2. Create Activities That Engage Students Face-To-Face and Remotely (Synchronously or Asynchronously)
   The particular course activities that instructors select for courses will vary widely by discipline and instructor. Regardless of the particular activities selected, within blended hybrid-HyFlex course design, activities should engage both students attending face-to-face and remotely. Consideration should be given to students attending in any of the three modalities and how to adapt activities to engage all audiences.

   Communicating with students will also be important. Using technology like “Canvas Studio” and “Announcements” are helpful tools to inform students of upcoming assignments and changes in the class.

3. Design Assessments That Are Accessible to Students in Both Face-to-Face and Remote Environments
   Much like course activities, the particular assessments that instructors select for courses will vary widely by discipline and instructor. Instructors should ensure that assessments are available for students attending face-to-face or remotely. Canvas can be used to administer many assessment types including assignments, quizzes, and/or exams. Group projects should be designed to be completed via remote participation if a student(s) chooses. If students elect to complete a group project by meeting with group members face-to-face, physical distancing should be strongly encouraged by the instructor.

Updated 8/17/2020
4. **Synchronously Zoom while Teaching Face-to-face Classes and Recording**

While teaching face-to-face, instructors will use Zoom to reach students attending remotely.

Use your regular credentials to log in to the classroom computer. You will see a *Start Here* icon. Also, contact information for Information Technology Services (ITS) will be found on the home screen in case technology concerns arise.

*Information Technology Services has scheduled each class in Zoom. Class sessions will automatically record once the Zoom session is launched by the instructor.* The instructor will find each scheduled class meeting within the Live Zoom Class Meeting Module for Hybrid-HyFlex Instruction on Canvas or within the desktop version of Zoom. The instructor is strongly encouraged to check the Zoom class meeting link prior to the first day of classes, particularly if the instructor’s course assignment(s) has recently changed.

If an alternative host is needed (e.g., teaching assistant, guest lecturer), the instructor should click the Zoom meeting link and then *Edit This Meeting*. Then, emails for the alternative host(s) should be added in the *Alternative Host* field and Saved. Alternative hosts will need to be added to each meeting separately.

A few minutes before class is ready to begin, the instructor should launch the Zoom class meeting using the Live Zoom Class Meeting link in the Modules section of Canvas, and recording should begin automatically (verified by viewing “Recording” at the top left corner of the screen). The instructor should also affix the wireless microphone on their person to project audio to Zoom remote participants during the face-to-face class.

Instructors should launch the camera system on the classroom computer by following the steps outlined in this [guide](#); faculty can also watch this [video](#) for instructions. The wireless microphone and dynamic cameras will help ensure that Zoom remote participants can engage with the content similarly to students attending face-to-face. General purpose lapel microphones are located in a lock box in each classroom. The code to unlock is the 3-digit room number (in case of a 4-digit room number, use last three digits).

Instructors are encouraged to use the Chat feature in Zoom to engage with students attending remotely. To use the Chat feature, instructors will need to click the *Chat* button within Zoom.

5. **Make the Closed-Captioned Lecture Recording Available in the Canvas Course**

The instructor should end the Zoom meeting for all participants at the conclusion of each class meeting. Once concluded, the Zoom meeting will render and then automatically display within the Canvas course under the course link titled “Course Recordings” within a few hours. Note that the recording will automatically include
captions. Instructors should review captions for accuracy and make corrections as needed.

Instructors should note that any videos that contain student recording (visual, voice, or other) must not be shared with any class sections in which the students are not enrolled to avoid violations of FERPA.

Automated recordings will be preserved and available to faculty and students within Canvas until the end of the term.

Documenting Attendance
Documenting student attendance is an important consideration for contact tracing requirements. Instructors may consider using Attendance in Canvas for face-to-face students to check-in while students attending remotely can type their name in the chat to indicate their attendance. Asynchronous attendance can be verified by checking the video viewing log for individual students.

Contacts for Assistance in Designing or Teaching a Blended Hybrid-HyFlex Course
The following offices and individuals are available to support instructors with any aspect of designing and teaching blended hybrid-HyFlex courses.

Center for Educational Excellence
The Center for Educational Excellence assists with designing and teaching blended hybrid-HyFlex courses, including individualized assistance with instructional designers. Instructors can reach the Center for Educational Excellence via email at hyflex@tarleton.edu or can contact any of the individual instructional designers listed below.

Jim Gentry, Ed.D.
Director, Instructional Development and Course Design
gentry@tarleton.edu
254-968-9745

Diane Sudman
Instructional Designer
dsudman@tarleton.edu
254-968-1842

Pamela Huckabee
College Level HyFlex Ambassadors

Each college has a team of HyFlex Ambassadors who have been intensively trained on designing and teaching blended hybrid-HyFlex courses. Instructors are encouraged to seek assistance from any of their college ambassadors. See https://bit.ly/HyFlex-Ambassadors for a list of HyFlex ambassadors by college and department.

College Level Canvas Ambassadors

Each college has a team of Canvas Ambassadors who have been intensively trained on designing courses in Canvas. Instructors are encouraged to seek individualized assistance from any of their college Canvas ambassadors. See https://bit.ly/CanvasAmbassadors for a list of Canvas ambassadors by college and department.

Information Technology Services

The Information Technology Services staff can assist with technical issues including Zoom, classroom equipment and computers, etc.

Classroom & Lab Support
254-968-1934

Other Resources

Technology Enhanced Classrooms - https://www.tarleton.edu/cls/classroom-technology.html
Open Access Computer Labs during COVID-19 - https://www.tarleton.edu/cls/computer-labs.html

Active Learning Classrooms - https://www.tarleton.edu/cls/active-learning-classrooms.html