High Praise for HyFlex: Teaching & Learning in the COVID-19 pandemic

[Music]

JESS DIXON: I love being in the classroom. I'm really happy to be back in here. I think the students who have had the opportunity to come into class are really appreciating it and enjoying it.

DAVE BUSSIERE: I wanted to come back and teach in person. I was nervous not about teaching in class, but about doing the dual audience it's actually worked very well, I think.

LYDIA MILJAN: Having at least, you know, three people in the room or two people in a room just allows me to have a little bit of feedback and just have a feeling that we're back into some kind of community.

JESS DIXON: I think it's a great way to engage more students. I think it's an opportunity for the university to, you know, continue with the in-person teaching that we've become known for but also gives us the chance to, you know, bring students from anywhere in the world into the classroom and be part of the University of Windsor.

[Music]

JESS DIXON: For me as the instructor, I wear my mask coming into the classroom, but once I'm behind these trusty plexiglass barriers, I can remove my mask. The students continue wearing their masks while they're seated in the classroom. We've limited seating so that everybody is dispersed in the classroom at least two meters apart. I have 30 in-person 30 online.

DAN XIAO: At the beginning, they were hesitant. They kept asking why are we using screens, not blackboards? Why do you use an iPad? But after a few classes, some said, oh, this is actually working. So, I'm very glad to hear that.

JESS DIXON: It's different. You have to think through things a little bit more, you know. There were times when if I was just teaching in a face-to-face class, I could do something very impromptu in the moment. I find that that's a little bit harder to do in the high flex classroom because, you know, in order to engage that online audience, you kind of have to think through how are you going to collect that feedback, how are you going to engage them, but once you've done it once and thought through, it then becomes much easier the second, or third, or the fourth, or fifth time.

DAVE BUSSIERE: It helps to have Alex here, as essentially, he's my TA, but he's acting really as almost like a show producer. Looking at the camera, looking at the mic, checking the chat, he'll answer simple questions because he's taken several classes with me, um, but he will then interrupt me and say the question on behalf of the virtual student.

JESS DIXON: My take particularly, the beginning of the

semestre, it really helped to reduce the anxiety levels with this setup that the new GUI was a little bit, uh, there are a few more features there than the last time I was teaching in this classroom. She's also following along online, so if the volume is turned off, which doesn't happen very often, but if something comes up, she can kind of cue me. She sits right in the front row here, so, you know, within perfect eyesight, you know, she grabs my attention really quickly.

DAN XIAO: And there are a lot of online students that are following the class synchronously. They would raise their hands to type the questions in the chat. I like to write but writing on the blackboard is very challenging for everyone to see clearly, especially if I have a lot of things going on, switching back and forth, so I use an iPad to write and project the writing. If I'm deriving the equation, I have a little slip in writing. They will put up their hand telling me, oh, it's omega one instead of omega two, so I'm very happy about those.

LYDIA MILJAN: I think that this is a good way moving forward to transition people back into the classroom.

DAVE BUSSIERE: I've checked out the videos. If you look at how clear the

PowerPoint is when I have the screen down or how clear it is when we zoom in on the whiteboard, we're delivering it virtually, and I'm ready to move all of my classes to this.

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