Transcript HyFlex Learning: Let's Summarize Ed by Husam Aldamen

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Welcome to my channel let's summarize. My name is Husam Aldamen and today we're going to talk about a teaching method called HyFlex.

Now the majority of us are aware of four modalities for teaching students, face to face, blended, hybrid, and online. Face-to-face, that's clear to everybody. Blended is when there's physical presence for both the students and the faculty member within the same classroom, however, the teaching is augmented with IT. Hybrid is when the students and the instructors sometimes meet face to face and sometimes they are working and engaging online. Online, obviously means that they can meet synchronously or asynchronously of course without being in the same physical space.

However, the idea of HyFlex combines two things, hybrid and flexible. Hybrid because students are allowed to meet face-to-face or sometimes to be online. Flexible because they get to choose when to make that decision. They get to choose when to come to class or when they are going to be online. So, for example, as an instructor I am delivering my class to a group of students that have decided to come, that was their choice, today, another group is going to be online with us engaging at the same time Synchronously, and then another group that is going to be online but they're not synchronously with us but they will be engaging asynchronously .

So effectively Hyflex produces three modalities, face-to-face, synchronous online and asynchronous online. Now, HyFlex was originally developed by Brian Beatty from San Francisco State University. He wrote an excellent blog about this in 2010. Now, he mentioned that this particular method is predicated on four different principles. Number one, learner choice, which means that students should have the choice to choose if they want to come to class to be in the physical presence with the instructor to be engaging online synchronously or to be online asynchronously. The second principle, equivalency, which means that all activities should be designed so that there is participation that does not leave any one of those three groups out and that's a challenge obviously and we'll talk more about that. Number three, reusability, which means that lots of this content that is applicable to the face-to-face group will and should be used for those that are going to be online and vice versa. Accessibility which means that students should have access to all he means that are necessary to enable them to choose any one of those modalities, they should be able to come to class, they should be able to engage online synchronously, and they should be able to, participate online asynchronously if that's their choice. So, they should be empowered and should be given the right tools in order to be able to engage in any in any one of those different modalities.

Today, we're going to take a look at two different papers that have looked at this model in detail. Number one, is a paper that was published in the faculty by Maria Ferrero this was in July 2020, entitled hybrid flexible class, a professor's guide to HyFlex teaching.

Now the author says the following. She begins by giving this excellent example. She says imagine that you are asked to repair your own computer. How would you be able to do that? Number one you've got the first choice, by calling an expert on the phone, maybe, and having them explain to you exactly what needs to be done, take you step by step. So, the expert is telling you what to do. Second choice, to go online and to download some manual that has all of the steps written, so you go through them one by one and then you fix your computer. The third choice is to actually turn to YouTube and watch a video that mirrors exactly what needs to be done. So, you can open your tablet on one side and then, as you're taking a look here you're going through and fixing your computer step by step. Now, for many of us perhaps the third option is the easiest because it's right there, it's visual, it's audio, it's written, it's right there in front of us, we get to see everything. However, this is what the author says how about if you're a type of learner that needs to read specific details? Well then you can watch the video and then you can go back to option two and you can read. How about if you go through option three and option two and still find specific areas that you still don't understand? Then perhaps you can call an expert, which is option one. So, effectively HyFlex allows you to move back and forth between those modalities as and when you choose. So, week one, the student might want to come to class face-to-face. Week two, they might want to be completely online asynchronous because perhaps they're not feeling well or they have to travel because of a sports game or because they have some sort of an engagement and they're unable to attend either synchronously online or face-to-face. The following week they come back face-to-face, the week after that they are online but they are synchronous, so they switch back and forth depending on the modality that suits them best, depending on their situation.

Now, this paper talks about various things. Number one, students as active learners. Now it says that in order for this modality or this approach to work all three groups have to be fully engaged. Some might say we can understand people that are face-to-face or those that are online synchronously being engaged but how can you engage that third group which is online asynchronously? They're not with you. Well this is where the design of the course comes to play because the instructor has to design it in a particular way where there are activities that are done outside the meeting time and that's where all groups have to be engaged in those activities not just the online people that are doing this asynchronously . The paper also talks about how do you involve those three groups. Well it provides various suggestions, for example, using podcasts video recordings, collaborative note-taking perhaps using things like discussion forums.

All of these tools could be used by any one of those three groups and that's how they can actually learn from each other, and this is where the reusability item that Brian Beatty was talking about where things that are used only by the online folks usually

stays with them but within a HyFlex model whatever they do is also going to be seen and used by the other groups and vice versa.

The paper talks about the challenge of skill and knowledge assessment perhaps the most challenging component. How do you assess students within these three different modalities? Well, once again this is where we have to think outside the box our regular exams perhaps are not going to be the solution we have to think about. Maybe open book exams, case studies, hybrid paired work, video presentations, back channel discussions, Socratic seminars, blog posts, all of these could be items that are used to assess students in the three different modalities that we have just talked about.

However, the paper concludes by saying the following, without the proper technology HyFlex will not work. Now, the proper technology is for the instructor to be able to reach out to those three different groups to be able to have Internet speed so that he or she can communicate with their students, and on the other side students that are going to be signing up for these kinds of courses that use this kind of modality, once again they have to have the right tools, they have to be empowered, they have to be in a place where they have the connection to the internet and to have all of the software and the hardware that is needed in order to execute this task and do well in the class.

Another paper that also talks about HyFlex is one that was published in the Chronicle of Higher Education by Kevin Gannon, now this was in October 2020, entitled Our HyFlex Experiment: What's Worked and What Hasn't. This paper talks about this particular person's experience in HyFlex. He begins by saying HyFlex provides flexibility it allows students to move back and forth, but he has mentioned that there are different lessons that he has learned.

- Number one, HyFlex courses are very difficult to develop and Deliver, they need enormous support by the institution, both on the financial and the professional development levels.
- Lesson two, HyFlex courses were initially developed taking into account graduate students in an educational technology program that's where it was first applied and it worked okay, of course, gradually it became popular, students like it obviously, however would first-year students be able to make those choices that their colleagues or peers that are in a very advanced graduate program, with many of them, perhaps, already in the job market and are working so that kind of flexibility works well with them, but how about first year students?
- Lesson three, it's not for all courses, especially, not for those that are discussion based because you need that constant engagement which sometimes is not available in HyFlex flex modality.
- Lesson four, we need to help students to understand how to work online. We cannot just take students that have not worked in this environment before and have not studied in this environment and ask them to make choices because they might make the wrong choices thinking that they think that they know how to do it, but in fact, they don't.

- Lesson five, we have to think about equality. There are students that are economically disadvantaged and are unable to have the right equipment and the right internet speed. So, we have to take those into account when we offer these kinds of courses and we have to be clear with our students about this.

Lastly, it concludes that students in this particular class or this experiment they liked this modality; however, the author provides us with the following, he says given a choice, students are not necessarily opting for the mode that is best for them they sometimes opt for the mode that is convenient but not for the right reasons

I want to hear your opinion about this and I'm going to provide you with mine.

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In an age where flexibility is something that is valued by everybody, HyFlex courses could provide our students with this kind of flexibility. However, we have to take into account that not every student understands what needs to be done in order for this to be successful, and not every institution is ready to provide that kind of support. So, with all of the trends that are happening now, it's important to realize that the most important thing is providing education that is going to be valuable for our students, yes, flexibility is important, however, will they learn, that's perhaps the most important question that needs to be asked. If all of the items are in the right place, students are aware and ready, able to make the choices that are best suited for their future, the technological hardware software is available, institution is behind you 100%, the faculty member is excited about this, sure let's give it a try. However, we have to be careful with this modality and we have to be sure that at the end we do the right thing by our students.

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