Hy-Flex, Hybrid, and Flipped Course Design

Hy-flex course design involves teaching a course in a face-to-face and online delivery method at the same time. It is one of the more resilient course design options because students can determine whether to be in-person or online.

This course design does not necessarily move students at their own pace. In this course design, face-to-face and online students move through the learning experiences according to thresholds for skill and knowledge acquisition as established by the instructor. The students cannot progress from beginning to end in the course without demonstrating that they have acquired skills and knowledge deemed essential to proceeding.

Still, a student could proceed through the course only engaging the instructor and their classmates asynchronously. Thus instructors must have fully developed face-to-face and online course designs for both delivery methods. The instructor plans to provide instruction to all the students in the course using the various delivery methods and encouraging course engagement in the varying modalities.

One of the benefits is that instructors no longer worry about attendance. Instead, instructors provide activities, podcasts, mini-cases, etc. that provide an equivalent learning experience for students who cannot—for whatever reason—attend class. When students complete the work, the instructor notes that they have attended class.

In planning, a modified hy-flex in which the f2f and the online versions proceed at the same pace may be the best option. Online students have equivalent, but not exactly the same, assignments and experiences as the face-to-face (f2f) students. In the modified version, faculty can operate a f2f class and broadcast to a synchronous, online group of students. Faculty may decide appoint a proxy, perhaps a TA, to ensure that the faculty member respond to questions and encourage comments from students who must attend the course online.

Hybrid course design moves the students together through the course. They are all online at the same time and all face-to-face at the same time. The course meets at a pre-established time throughout the semester. Students who attend online attend sessions synchronously with those students who are in-person. Instructors may also ask students to participate in groups or teams for learning, incorporating online students into face-to-face interactive groups.

Another version of hybrid course design has both f2f and online components. These differing components operate to complement each other. So, in a hybrid course, the class might meet one day f2f and another day online. Sometimes hybrid courses have half the class meet f2f while the other half engages in online activities. For example: in a writing course, half the class might meet f2f for instruction in editing their own work while the other half exchanges papers virtually for editing according to an instructor-created guide. The next class meeting sees the first group (has edited their own work with guidance from prof) works through the guide editing exchanged papers, while the exchanged-papers group receives f2f instruction from the prof on editing their own work.

Flipped. In a flipped classroom, the instructor produces lecture content for students to preview online. The students view the lecture content—broken into 10 minute chunks with activities or self-quizzes in-between each chunk. Then the students attend class where they practice the use of the skill or information presented in the recorded and pre-class viewed instructional portion. In a fully flipped classroom that engages an additional process such as Team-Based Learning (TBL); Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL); or Problem-Based Learning (PBL), the instructor may not speak much in the f2f classroom except to provide direction or re-direct student work.