

Demystifying Hyflex Teaching in the era of Covid-19: A Peek into the Lived Experience of Educators and Students

Abstract: Online teaching! Blended learning! Asynchronous classes! Blended-synchronous! Hyflex! Over the last year, Covid-19 has provided the opportunity for faculty to explore a multitude of ways to create classrooms. Both students and faculty struggled incessantly to adapt to the new normal and make best use of their present situations. Frustrations led to innovation and amidst this commotion, we all witnessed the reincarnation of the ‘Hyflex model of teaching’ at various institutions all across the nation. This session will provide faculty and students alike to share their best practices and lessons learned from the last year of online learning.

Three Key-Words: Hyflex modality, challenges, motivations

Type of session and length of time: Roundtable Discussion, 60 minutes

As the Covid-19 pandemic spread over the last year, higher education classrooms could be compared to a scene cutout straight from a Hollywood movie, where change happened almost instantly. The onslaught of the COVID-19 virus upended the ways education was traditionally being delivered and what we witnessed was a complete transformation of the higher education landscape from in-person classrooms to an online environment. Faculty, educators, and learners nationwide were not left with any option but to embrace and learn new technologies, irrespective of the fact if they were technology averse or not (Dick et al., 2020). Just little over a year, since the first case of COVID-19 in the US was identified, as we look back, terms like online teaching, blended learning, asynchronous classes, blended-synchronous do not sound nearly as alien as they once did. In the course of the last year, both students and faculty struggled incessantly to adopt to the new normal and make best use of their present situations. Frustrations led to innovation and amidst this commotion, we all witnessed the reincarnation of ‘Hyflex model of teaching’ at various institutions all across the nation.

Hyflex approach (Liu & Rodriguez, 2019) is “a student-directed, multi-modal learning experience and provides students with autonomy and flexibility no matter where, how, or when they engage in the course” (Dick et al., 2020, pg. 5). Further explaining this concept, Abdelmalak and Para (2016) preferred that Hyflex is a unique blend of online and traditional delivery method in a single course where students have the flexibility to select both the ‘when’ and ‘how’ for attending the course. The myriad modalities that Hyflex could possibly offer are, “students can complete the course synchronously in-person, synchronously online, asynchronously online, or a combination of the methods in a single course” (Keiper et al., 2020). As per a recent report by AACSB (2020), 79% of all AACSB schools decided to move their Spring traditional courses to Hyflex or virtual modality in order to finish the spring semester.

Despite the popularity of Hyflex model during COVID-19 as a teaching modality, many institutions of higher education are still in conundrum about what constitutes Hyflex (MSU, 2020). This modality for course delivery is still in its infancy making it difficult for the administrators, educators, and instructional designers to define and delineate the universal best practices needed for adopting this modality. Therefore, the purpose of this roundtable session is to understand what constitutes a Hyflex model of teaching. Once our audience share their understanding of the modality, we would seek to understand the various challenges, motivations, struggles, and successes of planning and implementing a Hyflex Model of Teaching; from both the educators' and students' perspective.

We hope that through this brainstorming session on Hyflex Modality, we will be able to gain a variety of insights from our session participants which will equip our faculty with a new perspective and resources as they are planning to embrace this new normal modality of teaching. Additionally, since students' voices will be integrated, this will roundtable will further assist faculty to design a more inclusive Hyflex course environment.

Goal: This panel will result in newer insights regarding the effectiveness of the Hyflex teaching modality as we learn the challenges and successes from both educators and students alike.

Session Timeline	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
10 minutes	Welcome & Introductions
5 minutes	Background Overview
20 minutes	Questions for the Educators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What is your definition of 'Hyflex Teaching'? ✓ What aspect of a course will make it a good candidate for 'Hyflex or Blended Synchronous Teaching'? ✓ What were some of the challenges during the planning phase?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What were some of the challenges during the implementation phase? ✓ What kind of support did you receive from your institution to offer this modality? ✓ What support did you not receive that you needed? ✓ What are the learnings or the ‘Aha Moments’ from this unique experience of yours? <p>Questions for the Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What is your definition of ‘Hyflex Teaching’? ✓ What was your first reaction when you heard that the course will be offered in a Hyflex modality? ✓ What were your likes and dislikes pertaining to this modality of teaching? ✓ Would you go back to this modality of teaching again? Why or why not?
20 minutes	<p>Debrief in Large Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review key learnings from small group discussions. • Brainstorm a list of best practices to share with participants.
5 minutes	<p>Wrap-up</p>

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