

HyFlex Instruction at CUNY: A Whitepaper

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Purpose and Scope:

This paper focuses on flexible online and onsite education at CUNY and the technology needed to create innovative HyFlex learning spaces. HyFlex education provides students with learning opportunities in-person and asynchronously/synchronously online simultaneously. While becoming more widespread during the pandemic, institutions of higher learning worldwide have been adopting this innovative structure that allows participants to choose their learning experience and their learning environment (Beatty, 2019).

In this paper, we explore:

- The definition of HyFlex, with a discussion of specific modalities
- How to maximize student learning and growth in a HyFlex environment
- The technology needed to effectively teach in a HyFlex course modality
- Overall HyFlex benefits and challenges
- HyFlex at CUNY, including discussion of pilot studies, surveys, training courses, and what has been learned
- Future directions and the long-term goals of HyFlex
- Resources, recommendations, and case studies to support HyFlex learning at CUNY

Introduction

HyFlex instruction was initially developed as a bridge to fully online instruction, so in-person and online students could be served at the same time (Beatty, 2019). This was especially helpful in situations when institutions were able to combine an in-person and fully online modality to allow for increased enrollment. HyFlex found renewed purpose post pandemic, as colleges and universities were trying to slowly draw people back on campus, while still adhering to social distancing mandates. An advantage of HyFlex is that it allows colleges and universities to resume classroom teaching under a variety of situations and circumstances (Maloney & Kim, 2020).

Although the convenience of HyFlex has been stressed in the literature, there are also strong pedagogical reasons as to why students may choose a HyFlex course. HyFlex learning allows students to personalize their learning experience, giving students choice regarding the modality and style in which they learn best. HyFlex learning also has benefits in terms of accessibility, giving students who work part-time or full-time jobs, students with mobility issues, or students with visible or invisible disabilities an alternative way to learn and access curriculum. HyFlex classroom environments naturally follow the major principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (CAST, 2022), creating innovative, engaging, and equitable classroom spaces.

Why HyFlex Now?

Post pandemic, the world is changing, and the college campus is no longer seen as only a physical space. Students are voicing choice and preference in the way they want to attend class. HyFlex learning recreates and redefines the typical higher education learning space. This parallels what is happening in the workforce, where flexible “in person” hours are the norm, and remote work is becoming more popular (Penrod, 2022).

However, funds and resources must be invested to make HyFlex work. The online and in-person experience must be equal for students. One cannot teach in person, set up a zoom, and call a class “HyFlex”. Instead, HyFlex teaching involves preparation and support. This includes developing instructor skills in technology, pedagogy, and learner engagement specifically for the HyFlex modality (Romero Hall & Ripine, 2022), as well as making sure working HyFlex technology is available on campuses for instructors who choose to teach in this modality. Equally important, technical support staff must be available to assist faculty and ensure a seamless instructional experience.

Discussion of Modalities

According to recommendations from the CUNY Mode of Instruction Working Group (Feb. 2022):

“A HyFlex course provides students multiple learning paths and is distinguished from other mixed modality courses by relying on individual student choice from session to session, rather than having the instructor determine the modality for any given lesson. The number of formats available to students will vary from course to course. HyFlex courses typically include a combination of in-person, synchronous online, and asynchronous online contact hours. Contact includes instruction, learning activities, and interactions (both student-student and/or student-instructor)”.

A HyFlex classroom generally contains three modes of instruction: In-class instruction, online synchronous instruction, and fully asynchronous instruction. A description of the modes of instruction included in HyFlex are below, including the hardware and tools needed for each modality:

Table 1.

Mode of Instruction	Description	Instructor Tools Needed	Student Tools Needed
In Class	Students attend class on campus, in a physical classroom space equipped for HyFlex learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom Space• Audio for Mic/Sound• Video Camera(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom Space• Computer (optional)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen or Smartboard • Reliable Internet Access • Technology Support • Web Conferencing Tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliable Internet Access (optional)
Synchronous Online	Students attend class live via video conferencing software such as Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate, or Google Meet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Space • Mic/Sound Set Up • Video Camera(s) • Screen or Smartboard • Reliable Internet Access • Technology Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer with working mic and video camera • Reliable Internet Access • Quiet space to work and participate in class
Asynchronous Online	Students participate in class on their own time using a class learning management system (such as Blackboard or Google Classroom)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer • Reliable Internet Access • Space and time to design asynchronous modules and participate in the asynchronous component of class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer • Reliable Internet Access • Quiet space to work and participate in class

Some instructors may choose to only run a course in two modalities. For example, an instructor may choose to run a class only asynchronously and in person, or both in-person and synchronously. Decisions regarding modalities should be based on pedagogical considerations and student need. Student choice is inherent in the HyFlex model, as each week, students should have freedom to choose which learning modality may work best for them given the instruction and activities planned, as well as their own specific schedule (Committee on Academic Technology Subcommittee on Enhancing Teaching, Learning, and Support, 2021).

Student Experience and Pedagogy

In a HyFlex environment, it is essential that students and instructors are partners in learning. This means that students have a good understanding of what HyFlex is, and what their responsibilities are as agents of their own learning experiences. Instructors need students to know that the classroom experience is one where students are expected to be highly engaged, whichever modality they choose. To prepare students for these options, instructors should provide clear instructions on their syllabus and within the content of their first class regarding the definitions and expectations of HyFlex learning. For example, will students get a choice in the way they participate in class for every session, or will some sessions be fully in-person? Will exams or assessments also be given in a HyFlex modality? Instructors can also provide students with a questionnaire or survey asking them which modality they may prefer to engage in and why. Additionally, students can also be surveyed on what challenges or difficulties they anticipate in any given modality and what faculty or institutions could do to assist. If a student learns best with a professor in front of them, perhaps an in-person modality may work best. If a student learns best visually and/or auditorily, a synchronous environment may be ideal. If a student identifies themselves as an intrinsically motivated, self-directed learner, an asynchronous environment may be a good fit. Although we know that some students may choose a HyFlex modality because of distance and/or convenience, this should not be the only reason behind modality choice. Some students, for example, choose an asynchronous mode of instruction out of convenience, but may not be able to keep up with the content and/or amount of independent work involved. If this does happen, the instructor should have a conversation with the student, centered on the potential benefits of the student choosing a modality that works best with how they learn and input information.

Well-designed HyFlex courses are ones in which all students have relationships with each other – relationships that transcend modality choice (Kirby & Thomas, 2021). As an example, asynchronous students should have asynchronous contact time with their in-person and synchronous classmates. This can be easily achieved by creating group asynchronous assignments that all students can participate in. Synchronous students should take time to build relationships with asynchronous and in-person classmates as well. Instructors can open their physical and virtual classrooms a bit before class time so that synchronous and in-person participants can engage in “before class” chatter and relationship building. All students can build relationships with their HyFlex course instructor by attending synchronous, asynchronous, or in-person office hours. Instructors can also make sure they get mid-term feedback from their students so they can adjust the HyFlex experience as needed to reach all learners. Mid-term feedback can be collected by a survey or open discussion board prompt. A sample mid-term feedback survey can be found in the appendix of this document.

Technology Needs and Support

It is essential to note that technological support (for both instructors and students) in HyFlex learning is fundamental, because if the technology fails, the HyFlex classroom model also fails. If the college campus cannot support HyFlex technological recommendations, then the HyFlex modality should not be offered on that particular campus. There should be assigned HyFlex

technology experts at each CUNY school who can troubleshoot and assist instructors and students as needed. One of the greatest challenges of HyFlex learning at CUNY has been a lack of technological support, and so paying attention to the technology needs of faculty and students is of utmost importance. It is not enough to have college helpdesk staff on call for HyFlex “emergencies”. Instead, instructional computing/technology support staff should be ready to assist faculty teaching in a HyFlex modality both during the day and evening. Additionally, dedicated HyFlex classrooms are helpful, as they eliminate the need for instructors to “set up” their HyFlex space upon entering to teach. If dedicated HyFlex rooms are not available, instructors should have time to access the room prior to their classes to test and ensure the technology is up to task and ready for their lesson. Setting up HyFlex cameras and microphone systems can take a while, and so having a classroom prepared beforehand eliminates any technology preparation or troubleshooting instructors must address prior to class start. The table below outlines the roles and responsibilities of campus administration, instructors, and students when the HyFlex instructional modality is utilized optimally on campus.

Table 2. HyFlex Roles and Responsibilities

HyFlex Roles	HyFlex Responsibilities
Campus and Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides HyFlex classroom space • Provides instructor and educational technologist access to HyFlex courses, modules, or professional development seminars • Provides working microphone and camera systems in room (Portable camera/mic systems may be used, but should be seen as substitutes if all other technology fails) • Provides dedicated HyFlex technology support • In larger classes, provides a teaching assistant to monitor chat/troubleshoot classroom tech issues with remote students (suggested by the Committee on Academic Technology Subcommittee on Enhancing Teaching, Learning, and Support, 2022).
Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in HyFlex training courses, modules, or professional development seminars • Builds course and content in chosen modalities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs syllabus, welcome letter, and any forms/surveys for students focusing on the HyFlex modality. • Creates a positive HyFlex classroom culture • Facilitates/teaches the course • Engages students in all modalities • Assesses students in all modalities • Grades/evaluates all students
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtains the resources necessary to participate actively in their chosen modality (this may include computer, working camera and mic, reliable internet service, access to learning management system, and access to a quiet space to work/engage in class if participation is synchronous or asynchronous) • Engages with other students in all modalities • Participates actively in their modality of choice. • Successfully completes assigned coursework • Actively engages with the instructor through coursework, responses to feedback, and/or office hours if needed.

The Benefits of HyFlex

The benefits of HyFlex are many, including flexibility. Students can attend and engage with their class virtually or within a traditional physical classroom space. HyFlex learning also provides more equitable access for students with a range of occupational and family obligations and a variety of physical and emotional dis/abilities. For example, a student with mobility issues who finds it difficult to access public transportation, or a student who suffers from anxiety can have the opportunity to attend class asynchronously or synchronously. The HyFlex classroom space is also helpful for students with a variety of learning preferences. Students who prefer a more social, interpersonal learning experience can attend in-person or synchronously; students who

prefer more self-paced classes can participate asynchronously. HyFlex learning environments also allow for continued, uninterrupted instruction given specific circumstances – for example, a citywide health or safety emergency, or a snow day (CAT Subcommittee on Enhancing Teaching, Learning, and Support, 2022). A significant benefit of HyFlex instruction is the ability to open classes and campus activities to students who live far away from campus – creating an ability to increase both enrollment and student engagement (Bower et al., 2015).

Challenges

One of the greatest challenges of HyFlex is the physical space and technology difficulties inherent in the model. For example, if portable technology (like OWL's or cameras/mics on tripods) are used, there may be issues with the security of equipment and/or frequent need for repairs. If a classroom is equipped with HyFlex technology, there is a need for maintenance and support of that technology. Although the literature supports HyFlex teaching in both small classes and large lecture-based classes, experience has shown that unless there is adequate technology and on-call technical support, HyFlex may not work in a large lecture space (Hunter College Hyflex Community Conversations, 2022).

There are also instructor considerations when it comes to teaching HyFlex classes. Many faculty members need support in developing a course in 2 or 3 modalities, including planning specific and relevant instruction, activities, and assessments. College Centers of Teaching and Learning can be of immense help here (CAT Subcommittee on Enhancing Technology, Learning, and Support, 2021). There is also cognitive overload and additional teaching anxiety that can happen within the classroom due to having to attend to synchronous and in-person modalities all at once, including if/when there are technical issues (Huang, 2017). For example, if internet connection in a classroom fails briefly, students attending class synchronously lose instructional time. Instructors then must go through the process of “admitting” students to class again and catch synchronous students up to the rest of the class. Instructors should be aware of this and have the tools, training, and support to work through different possible HyFlex classroom situations.

Student challenges include missing all or parts of a class because of technology issues, as in the example above, and/or choosing a learning modality that may not work for them, thereby affecting their progress in class (Detna et al., 2022). Some students may choose a synchronous or asynchronous format because of flexibility and time constraints, but an important question needs to be asked: “Is the time expenditure by students equivalent in whichever mode they are participating in?” Student time invested needs to be equitable, therefore in-person and synchronous students need to be spending the same amount of time in the classroom as compared to asynchronous students. Also, just as instructors need preparation to be good HyFlex teachers, students need targeted mentoring and specific knowledge focusing on how to succeed within a HyFlex learning environment. This means discussing with students how to choose the modality that may work best for them. Brian Beatty (2021) does this by asking students to journal weekly about how class is going for them. He asks about individual student progress and

understanding, as well as how modality choice may have affected their learning. For example, a student may share how they usually participate asynchronously, but, after listening to a recorded lecture, wish they had been present for the in-person discussion. This type of instructor-student interaction may lead to increased student self-awareness regarding modality choice and individual course learning. College administration and those who advise students also need to have a clear understanding of what a HyFlex modality is, so that the expectations of the modality are clearly communicated to prospective HyFlex students.

Hyflex at CUNY – The Pilot Project, Surveys, and Lessons Learned

In the 2021-2022 academic year, 599 instructors from seventeen CUNY colleges taught in a HyFlex modality. They taught one thousand fifty-two HyFlex courses, serving 9,455 students. In March of 2022, CUNY created a check-in survey completed by faculty who had taught in the HyFlex mode during the Fall 2021 semester. Eighteen responses were collected from 10 colleges. Overall, twelve out of eighteen respondents felt comfortable or very comfortable teaching HyFlex. Faculty felt like students generally appreciated the HyFlex option. Several faculty members mentioned that there needs to be some time reserved before class to assist in setting up technology and the overall HyFlex classroom. The biggest issue reported regarding HyFlex instruction was the lack of needed technology and/or tech support. Overall, instructors felt like the HyFlex training given by CUNY in the form of a facilitated Blackboard course was helpful.

Some respondents did suggest that HyFlex may be done best when there are multiple instructors or an instructor and teaching assistant(s) in the room. This was deemed especially important for large lecture classes. That way, one instructor can work with in-person students, and the other instructor(s) or assistant(s) can handle technology, assist in monitoring the synchronous chat option, and collaborate with students online. A handful of faculty members recognized that the HyFlex format may be a catalyst to start exploring co-teaching models at CUNY.

A second CUNY survey, completed in May of 2022, had 90 respondents from twenty-six CUNY colleges, immediately illustrating an increase in instructors choosing to teach in a HyFlex modality. Most instructors surveyed offered a combined online and in-person synchronous modality, while 40 faculty also provided an online asynchronous modality. A majority of instructors responded that they felt prepared to handle most aspects of teaching a HyFlex class, although many identified that technology at their college was not optimal and/or presented a challenge during class time. Audio and video quality for students was commonly reported as an issue. Fifty three out of eighty instructors responded yes to the statement “students took advantage of the flexibility of the HyFlex course”, and many instructors communicated that they would be interested in teaching a HyFlex course in a future semester and/or would recommend teaching a HyFlex course to others.

Comments from the May survey included:

“I appreciate the motivation behind it, but I think a two-format option (in-person/synchronous) would be sufficient and provide the flexibility for most students’ needs. If an asynchronous option is needed, that would work better as a standalone course”.

“This is a good initiative and I hope CUNY as a whole as well as individual campuses continue to support it moving forward, especially around funding for procuring the technology and for training additional faculty on the pedagogical implementations.”

“...I'd like to say that I'm in favor of HyFlex, so long as the students find it to be useful and effective. I really want to know more about the students' feelings on having taken HyFlex courses.”

Future Direction and Long-Term Focus: Moving Forward with Hyflex

Given the specific CUNY challenges of HyFlex technology procurement and dedicated HyFlex assistance and support, CUNY should make it a priority to ensure that each college that is dedicated to this modality has the technology and space needed to make HyFlex work. Dedicated Hyflex classrooms are helpful, to give faculty the time and space between classes to attend to any technological issues that may arise when teaching in a HyFlex format. It is also important to note that specific types of programs may have different HyFlex technology needs. For example, visual arts, music, or dance HyFlex classrooms may need more specific technology as compared to a lecture-based class (Beatty, 2020; Skopec, 2021).

Faculty, staff, and administrator training is also essential. CUNY has gone through two rounds of faculty development through a facilitated mixed asynchronous and synchronous online course via Blackboard with much success. The course consisted of core readings and videos on HyFlex teaching and learning, synchronous gatherings to discuss the HyFlex modality, and guest appearances by Dr. Brian Beatty, who many consider to be the founder of HyFlex. There was also the opportunity for participants to submit a course plan and syllabus for peer feedback, as well as the chance to practice HyFlex technology in a CUNY HyFlex classroom space. Many college Centers for Teaching and Learning also hosted their own HyFlex community conversations, where instructors teaching within a HyFlex modality could share ideas, challenges, and provide support to one another. In the future, HyFlex training modules should be housed in an easily accessible format, possibly through the CUNY Academic Commons. Asynchronous HyFlex training should be partnered with either CUNY- sponsored or college sponsored professional development opportunities focusing on HyFlex teaching and learning.

Recommendations and Considerations for Implementation

Ideally, a HyFlex instructor should first build out a completely asynchronous course shell so that students who do not choose to engage with the course in-person and/or synchronously can attend the entire course asynchronously. An asynchronous course shell can also serve as a resource throughout the class week for in-person and synchronous students, providing course module instructions, readings, videos, and guiding questions. The asynchronous course shell can contain recorded mini-lectures, relevant readings, videos, podcasts, discussion questions, links to formative or summative assessments, and kinesthetic or collaborative activities for students to engage in.

Creating a positive HyFlex classroom community also helps in creating an engaged, intellectually stimulating HyFlex course. The first thing instructors can do to create this culture is to send a welcome letter to students before the course start, explaining the course modality, student technology needs, expectations for student participation, and where students can reach out for support. A sample welcome letter is provided in the appendix of this document (CUNY Hyflex Training, 2021).

The second thing an instructor can do is create a syllabus that reflects the unique nature of the HyFlex classroom. This includes having a description of what the HyFlex modality is, so students can clearly understand the structure of the course. There should also be instructions on how students access class within all three formats: In person, synchronously, and asynchronously – including any links and/or passwords to video conference sessions, and specifics for user friendly access of the learning management system the course is housed in. An instructor-recorded video welcoming students to the class and including the above information is also a helpful addition (CUNY HyFlex Training, 2021).

During the first class, the HyFlex format, as well as the student choice inherent in the format, should be thoroughly discussed. Surveys can also be given out focused on student learning preferences and to determine whether an asynchronous, synchronous, or in-person format may be the best choice for the individual considering their unique learning goals and needs. Of course, some students will select an asynchronous or synchronous format because of distance – but it is important for students to be aware that the modality they choose affects the way they may experience the course. A sample survey is provided in the appendix of this document.

Throughout the class, it is essential that the instructor teaching a HyFlex course provide an equitable learning experience for all students – including lectures, interactive and engaging activities, instructional materials, and assessments (Lehman College Hyflex Site, 2021). One modality cannot be more developed, superior, or easier to access than another. The HyFlex student must experience the same instructor quality in each modality, and the HyFlex student must also be able to access the ideas and thoughts of their peers in each modality. One modality should not be segregated from another. This means that course design in all modalities is of utmost importance.

Instructional Best Practices for Active Student Engagement

- If an instructor does not have access to a teaching assistant, in-person students can be called on to provide assistance. For example, in-person students can rotate as “chat monitors”, alerting the instructor anytime a synchronous student poses a question or a response to a question in chat. An instructor can also choose to not use chat during class sessions, requiring synchronous students to participate verbally just like in-person students.
- Instructors should make sure their HyFlex discussions do not favor asynchronous or synchronous students over in-person students, or vice versa. It is very easy for the instructor to only focus on the students in one modality, whether it be in-person or online. It is important to ensure that all students get the same amount of attention and support.
- Collaborative notetaking and/or collaborative slide creation can be a way for students in all modalities to participate together. Collaborative notetaking can be especially helpful during HyFlex group work.
- If an instructor is going to use polling tools, they should use tools that can also be accessed both asynchronously and in real time.
- Based on instructor experience, mixing in-person and synchronous students in a group may not be possible due to sound/microphone limitations within a classroom. Therefore, homogeneous groupings (synchronous students in breakout rooms, in person students working together within a room, asynchronous students working together remotely given their unique schedules) may work best.
- Presentations are a great way to provide an equitable experience for all. In-person and synchronous students can present in real time within the classroom or through video conference software, and asynchronous students can pre-record a video presentation, giving everyone a chance for student and instructor feedback.

Future Direction of Hyflex at CUNY

In the Spring of 2021, Chancellor Felix V. Matos Rodriguez charged CUNY to support campus endeavors surrounding HyFlex teaching and learning. The Chancellor viewed HyFlex as a path towards greater equity and access for all students at CUNY. To fulfill that charge, the CUNY

School of Professional Studies worked to create an effective and engaging professional development training program for faculty interested in teaching HyFlex. They also worked to create a group of college liaisons to serve as a contact and support for faculty engaged in this path (CUNY HyFlex Pilot Site, 2021).

As teaching within a HyFlex modality at CUNY evolved, the liaison group documented practices and further questions, as well as organized guest speakers to introduce and discuss the intricacies of HyFlex teaching. HyFlex quickly became a CUNY First “class attribute” and will become an official Mode of Instruction as early as Spring 2023. A website on the CUNY Academic Commons has also been built dedicated to those interested in HyFlex teaching and learning, so that all who want to teach in this modality can advance in HyFlex experience and pedagogy. The site (<https://hyflex.common.gc.cuny.edu/>) contains general information about the HyFlex modality, as well as an asynchronous course faculty can take if they are interested in pursuing HyFlex teaching at CUNY. Module one of the course defines the term HyFlex and introduces the topic. Module two is focused on equity and outcomes of HyFlex teaching. Module three contains content on creating a HyFlex classroom culture. Module four concentrates on planning, instruction and assessment in HyFlex teaching, while module five gives faculty a chance to explore the case studies contained in the whitepaper and provides a listing of further HyFlex resources to explore. To continue positive support for HyFlex teaching, CUNY stakeholders must continue to provide information, funding, as well as pedagogical and technical support to those who wish to teach in a HyFlex modality.

Appendix:

Sample HyFlex Letter Template:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LUM5vNQ4PmEcJM-7RwLqphYfjMmtrKB6sUoUmWfXy/edit?usp=sharing>

Dr. Brian Beatty Sample HyFlex Syllabus:

<https://sfsu.app.box.com/s/mpp7zrdbi9e92rxbinzkdp3gi5rot8ql>

Student Teaching/Practicum Sample HyFlex Syllabus:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/11FLyRq3Ex2ZRJI4HnHudbgXk5Xuf64Jp/edit?usp=sharing&oid=104722971557611580922&rtpof=true&sd=true>

HyFlex Course Design Examples:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gokdIjWbfERADiswIUBL4hE81hEnNiEYmBzRUeDfUdk/edit?usp=sharing>

Sample HyFlex Questionnaire:

<https://forms.gle/9YvAJpqGz5STjued6>

Sample HyFlex Mid-Term Feedback Survey:

<https://forms.gle/Vsif7MXdfqSobJ4c9>

Case Studies for Discussion

Case Study 1:

Professor A is an instructor teaching a graduate education course at CUNY. She has decided to teach her course in a HyFlex mode of instruction for the following reasons:

- She strongly believes in student choice in education/instruction.
- Her students are working teachers, with work, family, and personal responsibilities.
- Her students are experienced in online learning and teaching and are comfortable accessing a course in various modalities.

To prepare her students, the professor set up many activities/structures before the start of class. First, she wrote a letter to all her students, introducing herself, the class, and what is meant by the term HyFlex. Second, she modified her syllabus to match the HyFlex mode of instruction. Third, she invited all students to come in person during the first class, so they could experience the in-person HyFlex experience. For all other classes, students had the choice in which modality to participate in the class (asynchronous, synchronous, or in-person). Finally, all students, at the first class, took a HyFlex learning preference assessment, to see what modality might work best for them. They discussed this self-assessment in class.

At the beginning of a given week, the professor would post a video lecture and all course materials within the class learning management system. For asynchronous students, she posted questions and activities that would be discussed/completed within the in-person and/or synchronous environments. All students had access to the same materials, lectures, activities, and discussion questions in all modalities. Overall, they had a positive experience with HyFlex, except for some minor technology glitches that occurred for the students who participated in the class in a synchronous way. Her students asked for more HyFlex class opportunities moving forward.

Reflection: What elements worked within this HyFlex class? What are your thoughts about the instructor having all students come in-person for the first class? If you were to create a HyFlex “self-assessment” for your students, what would that look like? What elements might it contain?

Case Study 2:

Professor Sparks is a humanities professor who teaches large lecture classes to undergraduates. He was excited about the prospect of teaching a HyFlex class, as his online, large lecture asynchronous class worked well during the pandemic. He attended a college wide HyFlex training seminar and took advantage of all the materials available. They were very helpful in preparing his first HyFlex class.

To prepare for the class, he wrote a welcome letter to his students, introducing himself, the class, and the HyFlex modality. He modified his syllabus to match the HyFlex mode of instruction and decided to teach in all 3 modalities: asynchronous, synchronous, and in-person. He had most of his asynchronous lectures, videos, and materials prepared – so the prospect of teaching the class in all three modalities did not feel daunting. He felt well equipped, trained, and enthusiastic about this new form of classroom instruction.

However, when he got to his classroom, he realized that he would only have a few minutes before class to set up for the HyFlex modality, as the lecture hall was used by another professor before his class who was not teaching in HyFlex mode. Numerous times during class, the technology failed or worked inconsistently, leading to interrupted instruction for his synchronous students. Technology support was also inconsistent.

Because of this, as the semester went on, students decided to choose the asynchronous modality as a default. The professor only had a handful of in-class students, and because of the technology challenges during class, synchronous attendance declined. For the next iteration of the course, the professor decided to only use an asynchronous and in-person HyFlex option, to better meet his student’s needs.

Reflection: What elements worked within this HyFlex class? What could have been changed and/or further supported so that the instructor and students could feel successful? How can instructors continue to support students when HyFlex technology is inconsistent?

Case Study 3

Professor Smith is an adjunct instructor teaching within a HyFlex clinical counseling program. He likes the HyFlex modality because of the flexibility it gives students. He also likes the HyFlex modality because it offers the opportunity for students outside New York City to actively engage in the program he teaches in – allowing for a diversity of clinical perspectives.

Students in Professor Smith’s class can choose to attend class in 3 modalities: in person, synchronously, or asynchronously. However, all students in class tend to choose the synchronous or asynchronous online option, except for the rare day when one or two students choose to attend class in-person. This means that Professor Smith commutes to class each week but logs on synchronously from the classroom to give his lecture/engage his class in activities.

Although Professor Smith is fine with this format, he is reflective about the fact that his students only choose to learn asynchronously or synchronously. He doesn’t mind making the commute to class, but he also feels that the commuting time is wasted when no one shows up to class in-person. He wants his students to have free choice (and an in-person option), but realistically knows that the students who attend class asynchronously and synchronously are satisfied with their choice and are progressing well in terms of content and instruction.

Reflection: Regarding planning, does it make sense to plan for all three HyFlex modalities if students are only attending in two modes? What are the benefits and challenges of this? Should Professor Smith do more to encourage students to participate in-person, or should he continue the free choice option?

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