

BOOK REVIEW

HYFLEX COURSE DESIGN AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

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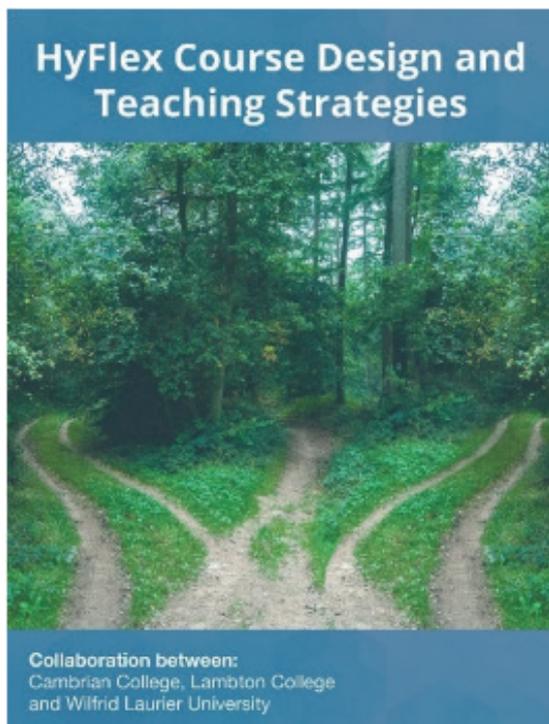
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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation in education, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, has been phenomenal. As an instructional design approach, blended learning aims to integrate online and in-person learning in a meaningful way. Blended learning offers great opportunities for learners and teachers on interaction, flexibility, and course content access. One of the blended learning models, HyFlex is considered to have great potential for higher education in the new normal. “Hy” refers to “hybrid”, and “Flex” refers to “Flexibility” in blended learning practices. In a HyFlex course design, learners can choose which mode to participate in from session to session as Beatty (2022) suggested. As a comprehensive work, this book covers the concept of HyFlex design with examples from faculty.

REVIEW OF THE BOOK

The “HyFlex Course Design and Teaching Strategies” E-Book is about HyFlex learning and teaching. The book has 4 modules, and every module has 5 units. Besides, every module of the book starts with a clear statement of learning outcomes. Through the units, there are helpful activities to support learning. It is remarkable that the book includes video interview links of experienced HyFlex. Also, there are video transcripts for each of the video. The last units of each module are about learning activities to support module outcomes.

The first module, HyFlex Course Planning, covers historical and practical explanations about HyFlex model-based courses. The rationale for implementing such a blended learning model is explained by the author. One of the most specific aspects of HyFlex courses is to let learners choose how to participate in the course. Learners can choose three modes to participate in. These modes are in-person, synchronous online via videoconferencing, and asynchronous online via the learning management system (LMS) of the course. Learners willingly choose one or many modes for learning throughout the semester. The book informs on the design approach and the fundamentals of HyFlex courses and highlights the difference between hybrid and flexible designs. It clearly implies why defining learning outcomes and objectives and why these elements are crucial in the HyFlex design concept. Afterwards, the book explains how to make a Hyflex course plan including an assessment plan. It also mentions what to do if there is already a course plan, however it leaves extending modifying process to further modules.

The second module, HyFlex Lesson Planning and Content Design, focuses on creating weekly lesson plans, the ways for increasing engagement and participation in HyFlex courses. It elaborates the need and the benefits of making lesson plans, particularly in HyFlex courses in long-term. And then the unique features of the HyFlex lesson plans are implied. Hence, it is emphasized that there are four advantages of HyFlex learning as learning choice, equivalency, reusability, and accessibility which is assisted by the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The book suggests that these elements are critical in design process. There are always unpredictable situations in the process and widening accessibility options can help reaching learners of every modality in a HyFlex course. Another issue is choosing relevant learning activities which encourage participation and interaction of learners with various modalities. The learner must interact with the content, the teacher, and their peers, therefore the book informs how to keep these connections effective.

The third module, Engaging Multimodal Learners in HyFlex Courses, covers the theoretical and pedagogical approaches of HyFlex. The most distinctive part of HyFlex is flexibility and the book explains how learners experience this flexibility throughout the course. The book discusses why engaging multimodal learners is a difficult task to complete. This situation requires creative solutions and approaches to traditional design perspective. Equity is one of the essential elements of designing HyFlex course. The book suggests prioritizing the asynchronous mode to ensure equity with the synchronous and face-to-face delivery modes. Also, it mentions that HyFlex design process usually takes more time than other blended models and gives examples of how to manage all modes in the course. Another crucial part of HyFlex courses is the tech. The relevant technological tools can facilitate managing digital learning environments which improves the quality of learning-teaching process. The book offers valuable practical and motivational ideas for increasing the effectiveness of blended learning experiences.

The final module of the book, Evaluating the Effectiveness of HyFlex Teaching, entails the importance of assessment and evaluation phase of HyFlex courses. The book mentions the lack of research that focuses on the effect of HyFlex so far. Therefore, the book offers various ideas on how to handle this process successfully. In this part, the book offers possible strategies for evaluating effectiveness when the learners, the designer, and the learning process are considered. The book emphasizes that evaluating the effectiveness of HyFlex is complex since three modes exist in the model. The book suggests using a holistic evaluation approach which suggest collecting evidence for learning from all stakeholders of the program. The book suggests multiple techniques for data collection in assessing the effectiveness of the HyFlex courses.

CONCLUSION

The Hybrid-Flexible approach is a very real need to serve both online and on-ground learners with a limited set of resources (time, faculty, space) which leads to a multi-modal delivery solution (Beatty, 2022). Present book covers crucial parts of the theory and practice of the HyFlex course design and clearly guide the readers on how to plan a HyFlex course; engage multi-modal learners and evaluate the effectiveness of HyFlex learning.

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