

Defining HyFlex

What is HyFlex?

HyFlex is a learning model that combines elements of in-person and online learning. HyFlex, as its name implies, is highly flexible, and allows students to move between different platforms (online and on ground) throughout the semester. The goal of HyFlex is to “break down the boundary between the virtual classroom and the physical one” (Educause, 2010).

HyFlex looks different at different institutions. For instance, at some institutions, HyFlex students have the option to attend on-ground lectures and/or online discussions and can choose between a variety of different assignments, some of which cater more to on-ground students and others to on-line students.

HyFlex at NU

At NU, due to the high value we place on face-to-face interactions and vital relationships, the HyFlex model marries traditional on-ground education and remote learning processes. This approach means that every classroom is equipped with technology that allows faculty members to interact simultaneously with an on-ground and remote population.

Students attend class together at one time, but they participate either via the Internet or in-person. In-class attendance is based on several factors including 1) room capacity (with physical distancing in this scenario), 2) number of students enrolled in the course, and 3) short-term or long-term health issues students are dealing with.

Due to this structure, students can adjust between the two modalities throughout the semester, allowing for ongoing participation should situations change such as personal or family health concerns or the status of King County’s phase. Because of this flexibility, faculty members must be well versed in both on-ground teaching techniques and in the use of remote learning platforms such as Zoom.

In the NU model, although faculty are not required to create a smorgasbord of activities for separate online and on-ground populations, all assignments need to be equally doable in both contexts. Moreover, teaching styles should be modified to accommodate the complexity of this model. In particular, classes should be slower paced and more interactive, involving regular, intentional check-ins with students about their learning.