



A Hyflex Course: Bridging the Gap Between Online and In-person Students

SPEAKERS

Tierney King, Jeremy Caplan, Holly Klawitter, Dorian Rhea Debussy

Tierney King 00:01

This is the Faculty Focus Live podcast sponsored by the Teaching Professor. I'm your host, Tierney King, and I'm here to bring you inspiration, energy and creative strategies that you can utilize in your everyday teaching. Teaching students in the classroom while simultaneously teaching students online is hard. How do you bring students together when some are in class and some are online? What tools can you use to cater to this type of hyflex or hybrid teaching? In this episode, we'll explain different tools and techniques you can use in a hyflex setting. We'll go over a couple of best practices to keep in mind when designing a course like this. And lastly, we'll cover more online tools you can use to help bridge the in-person and online students together and make it feel more like a cohesive class session. To start Jeremy Caplan covers Pear Deck, Nearpod, and Jamboard tools you can use when engaging students in different locations, in his program, How Can I Teach with Confidence in the Hyflex Classroom?

Jeremy Caplan 01:04

Simultaneously teaching students in person and also another group of students remotely can feel like pedagogical juggling. Ensuring that students in both contexts are engaged and learning actively requires a suite of tools, tactics and techniques. But when we're engaging with students in two different locations, both in-person and remote, sometimes it's helpful to create an interactive kind of a presentation using a tool like Pear Deck, Nearpod. There are other versions of this, you can also do so by incorporating interactive tools into a traditional presentation tool. But if you use a tool like Pear Deck to create an interactive presentation, then students remotely can engage with the questions on your slides, just as those students who are in person can. So the way Pear Deck works, if you're not familiar with it, it allows you to put an interactive activity onto the slide. Now instead of just looking at that slide, students can on their own device interact with it, they can answer the question, they can share their own thought. They can draw something, they can circle something, they can choose a number, they can put themselves on a spectrum of opinion or belief or thought or understanding on a particular question that you've posed. And they can interact in various other ways with the slide, you as the instructor can then integrate the responses from those students who are remote with those students

who are in person. And you can show those results on a projected screen that's visible to those students who are remote as well as to those students in the classroom. In addition, students can see the results if you share them on your screen, on their own laptops or their own device that they're using. So that enables all students to feel connected to the core activity, the core learning the core presentation materials that you're sharing in the classroom. And I find that it helps bridge the gap between those students who are actually in the room physically and those who are attending remotely, you can also use a Jam board, which is a free Google product, or FigJam, which is another kind of similar web based digital collaboration platform to allow students to put post its digital posts or digital images onto individual pages. And what I like to do is to set up different questions on each different card. And as the class progresses, the students can engage with that idea with that concept, whether they're remote, or whether they're in person. And again, this is another way of drawing a bond between those students who are remote and in person because they're all in the same physical space. So even if they're not, they're in the same digital space, even if they're not in the same physical space. So students can be answering the question on the Jamboard, annotating each other's post it, adding images, commenting on each other's images, all within the same shared space. Now, one tip, if you're using Jamboard or some other kind of digital bulletin board space like it, you can create a simple template if you have a small class with all of the students names on it. And then you can have them attached to their name some particular element. So for example, an icebreaker, you can have the students attach a picture of their hometown, to their name. And that's a simple activity within the context of that digital bulletin board. And again, this can help bring together the remote students with the in person students. If you have a larger number of students, you can allow them to create their own name card and to put it on the board close to their view on a certain topic and across the spectrum. Do you primarily agree with this or primarily disagree with this, and they can drag their post-it with their name next to their side and then you can have a discussion about that belief or opinion or perspective that the students have.

Tierney King 04:48

In addition to bringing together remote and in person students, you also want to make sure you're designing your course with best practices in mind, such as ensuring students have access to all the same time tech and including resources to help support students. In this session, Dorian Rhea Debussy explains a few of the best practices for high flex course design and delivery,

Dorian Rhea Debussy 05:11

Maybe you're doing an in person session in a synchronous online session. So you've got a tech setup in the classroom where it's live streaming, what's happening, right? So the best practice there, in that particular style of a hyflex course, right, would be making sure that you're also engaging those online students so that you're not just treating them as this like audience that doesn't get to engage, you decided to engage online today. And so you don't actually get to, have any live interaction. So encouraging folks that are in the virtual setting, if it is a synchronous virtual setting, to drop things into the chat to, you know, feel just as able to engage questions and conversations, right. And that very much can look very different depending on the tech setup that you have on campus. And the tech that just exists like in the classroom and your comfortability with it too, of course. So really, if you're if you're in that particular situation, that best practices, really thinking through how you can bridge the gaps and how you can make sort of the same learning outcomes happen. And for me, it manifested in very

specific ways. But that is maybe very different for folks that are doing a hyflex course in like the natural sciences versus the social sciences where I teach. But again, you know, again, one size doesn't fit all, and that is totally, totally okay. The other sort of area that I wanted to talk about in this particular session in relation to best practices for hyflex teaching, is really recognizing and overcoming some of the course delivery challenges. And so, when we're talking about course delivery challenges, hyflex courses, really automatically include two ways that people can access course materials. So really, like you can do it in person, you can do it online, right, and you can switch back and forth between them throughout the term. And you know, that really, as a, as an instructional style provides a lot of benefits to students. So when we're thinking of like, this is like a challenge that can be created for students, right? We could sometimes have a challenge, especially if we're thinking of like maybe lower income students, right? Like maybe students with with a lower income background, maybe they don't have all the tech that allows them to more readily engage some of those online components in the same way, right. And so if that is the challenge we're seeing, we fall back on this best practice, in hyflex instruction then, and what we would say and , I think regular, like traditional, or even online instruction, right, of making sure that you're connecting with other offices to get that student the support they need, right. So a lot of campuses more and more offering like student emergency support funds and things like this, where students, particularly from lower income backgrounds are able to access various financial services that maybe aren't even loans right. To get things like the tech they need. A lot of us so many of these challenges arise during particularly spring 2020. Dare I mention the semester where everyone was sort of scrambling and it was immensely frantic and traumatizing for many of us, right of like trying to pivot at the same time, we have like an emerging global health crisis that we're still like barely learning about right back in back in spring 2020. So you know, the best practice really is to rely on the support services from other offices across your campus and to really intentionally connect with them when you need them, but also in advance.

Tierney King 08:39

As you keep in mind these best practices, you also want to consider ideas on how to foster participation and engagement among students. In this program, Holly Klawitter explains tried and true approaches to blended and flipped course design.

Holly Klawitter 08:54

We all know that the delivery the method that you use to get your information to students matters, face to face, online, hybrid delivery methods, they've become a and will continue to become more seamless. Personally, all of my classes are pretty much now a form of a hybrid delivery, because I rely heavily on technology in my classes. After creating opportunities for students to apply contents. Another way for students to have an opportunity to analyze and reflect on their learning is to use polls analysis component, and is the next domain in Bloom's taxonomy. And so let's apply that in an online format. You can use polls to reflect on their thoughts as well as other class results. If you're able to provide group results to them in real time. It allows students to engage with content and draw conclusions not only about their responses, but about those of their peers. That's one way in an asynchronous learning environment that you can still connect students together. Similarly, infographics word clouds, class wikis, those tools, including discussion threads can also be great ways to have students engage with one another by exchanging ideas. I want to talk a little bit about discussion threads because I feel in an online classroom, that's one of the standards that is done as a way to have student participation and

engagement where you want student answers to be unique and engaging with one another. One of the ways that I have done this to enhance the blended learning format in an online environment is to divide those discussion threads, students into small groups as well. I may have group A, which is assigned four students, group B, which is assigned three to four students, Group C, and the students are able to talk with just those three or four students and their discussion question, which allows them to read their peers comments in a way that's a little more meaningful rather than looking at 20 all at once and knowing how do I respond? Who do I respond to? That is one way that I have found to keep those discussion threads personal, and really engaging with students. Another suggestion would be to engage with variety to get to a variety of responses would be to maybe identify five or six questions on the topic that they have read about or viewed videos on for the week, and allow students to select two or three of those questions to answer. This way, you're gonna get a variety of responses, students won't most likely pick the same questions, and it's going to make a more meaningful discussion as well as still getting the variety of perspective. It's just a good way to have students engage with one another, and increase some autonomy for them.

Tierney King 08:56

Lastly, Jeremy Caplan offers more online tools to help assess if your students, both in-person and remote, are retaining and understanding the content in his program, How Can I Gauge Online Learning Through Engaging Activities and Assignments?

Jeremy Caplan 11:59

You can also ask students to draw and create a visual connection of visual concept map, or explain a concept through arrows and kind of pointing keywords to other words, and they can submit this simply by taking a little snapshot with their phone if they have a phone and adding that to your Learning Management System or to your online meeting software. So there are simple ways for them to actually practice using visuals even just on paper. You can also use the online whiteboard tool in your online meeting software to allow students to visually draw something out. Or you can use other tools like whiteboard.com, which has free whiteboard software, or even Google draw drawing tools which are also free. Another way of allowing students to kind of incorporate online exercises to check for understanding and to show their understanding is to invite them to record Flipgrid videos about a particular concept. The great thing about Flipgrid is that people can kind of have a dialogue with one another students can explain the concept in their own words. And another student can say, Oh, I like the way he explained that. And it made me think of this or it made me think of that. Another approach you can use is to allow students to annotate material online. So you can give them some text in a Google Doc, for example. And Google Docs allows anyone to highlight some section of the text and then add a comment. And they can then respond to others comments or others can entertain other parts of the document. So that's a way of seeing if students really understand and if you ask them to comment on the key parts that address a certain topic or certain issue, you can see what they think of as important on that issue. And you can see if they understand the concepts and the ideas based on the annotations that they include. You can also use a tool like hypothes.is for this, where students go on to other texts online on the web, and add their own comments and respond to one another's comments. So there are multiple ways that you can use online tools to gauge understanding through interacting actively with text.

Tierney King 13:54

Whether you're driving to work, or you just need 15-minute think session, we hope the Faculty Focus Live podcast will inspire your teaching, and offer ideas that you can integrate into your own course. For more information on the resources included in this episode, please check out the links provided in the episode description.