

Eastern Kentucky University

Encompass

Pedagogicon Poster Gallery

2021

Flexible and Equivalent: Redesigning an Undergraduate Nursing Course in HyFlex Format

Jennifer Miller
Bellarmino University

Julia Beren
Bellarmino University

Follow this and additional works at: https://encompass.eku.edu/pedagogicon_postergallery

Recommended Citation

Miller, Jennifer and Beren, Julia, "Flexible and Equivalent: Redesigning an Undergraduate Nursing Course in HyFlex Format" (2021). *Pedagogicon Poster Gallery*. 1.
https://encompass.eku.edu/pedagogicon_postergallery/1

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by Encompass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pedagogicon Poster Gallery by an authorized administrator of Encompass. For more information, please contact Linda.Sizemore@eku.edu.

Flexible But Equivalent: Redesigning an Undergraduate Nursing Course in HyFlex Format

Jennifer Miller, PhD RN CMSRN and Julia Beran, MSN RN OCN CNE

BACKGROUND

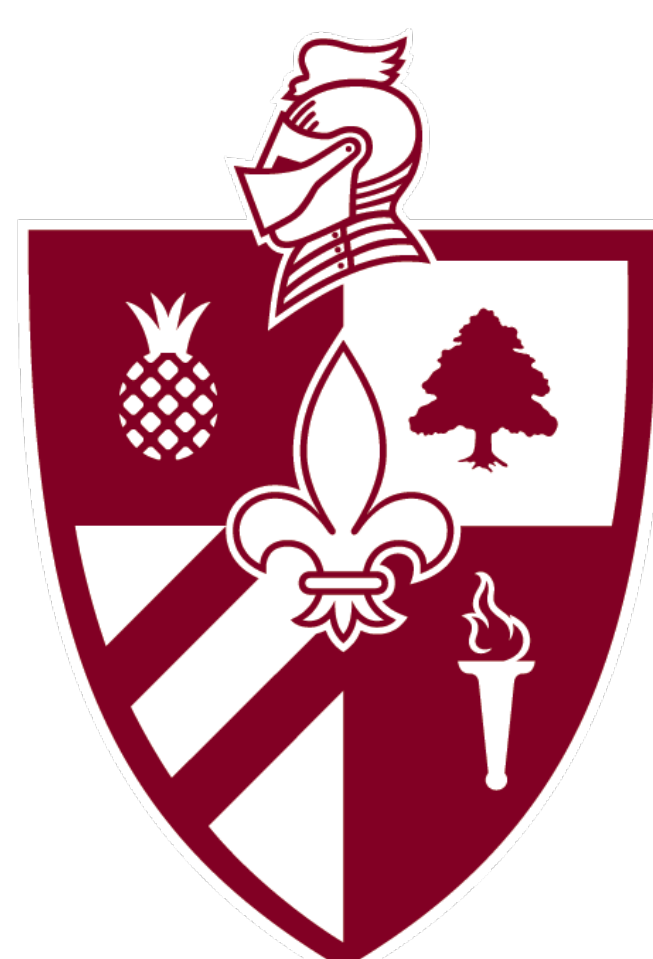
The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges in 2020, forcing most universities to transition to offer alternate and creative solutions for instruction in the 2020 – 2021 school year to keep students, faculty and the community safe. An undergraduate nursing program was tasked to redesign a course traditionally taught face to face to meet these needs without interrupting the progression of the nursing students in the program.

Offering hybrid style or HyFlex instruction is one such solution. The premise of the HyFlex model is that synchronous online and face to face instruction is combined, allowing students to choose how they attend.¹

Four fundamental values of HyFlex course design include: learner choice, equivalency, reusability, and accessibility.¹ These principles are defined in Table 1.

PROBLEM

The number of students enrolled in each section of a didactic Foundations of Nursing course exceeded the capacity of the classrooms when a six-foot social distancing parameter was calculated. Nursing administration and faculty were faced with deciding how to reach students synchronously to provide the most engaging learning experience, while abiding by the COVID-19 guidelines prescribed by the government.



BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY
IN VERITATIS AMORE
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

METHODS

Course Format: Each one hour and 50-minute lecture was divided in half. A flipped classroom design was implemented, in which the instructor provides content to review prior to class and the students spend class time applying and expanding knowledge.² Half of the students attended the first 50 minutes of the class period, while the other half attended the last 50 minutes. This allowed space for any student to come to the physical classroom during their designated time.

Pre-Class Expectations: Students were provided recorded video lectures on the Learning Management System (LMS) and were expected to watch these prior to arriving to class. Formative checkpoints were embedded in the lecture to check student’s knowledge. Students were also required to respond to a discussion board post that introduced them to a case study that was going to be reviewed in class that week.

Synchronous Sessions: Students could attend their designated class period face to face or on the meeting platform Microsoft Teams. Teams was utilized during every class period to engage those who were unable or preferred to join from home. The classroom was equipped with a webcam and microphone.

The focus of the synchronous session was the apply the week’s content to a case study. The pre-class work familiarized the students with the case, and they worked in pre-assigned groups to answer specific follow up questions.

The groups of 4 - 5 students were the same from week to week. Students interacted with one another via Teams if all members were not in the classroom. Collaborative Microsoft OneDrive cloud documents ensured that all students could participate and contribute from anywhere, and the course faculty could monitor the group progress while they were working.

Role of the Asynchronous or Absent Student: In case of absence, students could view a recording of the synchronous session later. However, faculty strived to provide an opportunity for active learning as well. There was an assignment specifically for these students that required them to view the recorded sessions and then answer several follow up questions about the case study addressing the professional nursing role, the nursing scope of practice, and applicable nursing skills. This helped keep the student engaged and accountable for watching the missed content.

RESULTS

The HyFlex format ensured that students could participate weekly in synchronous class activities, regardless if they needed or preferred to attend virtually. The flexibility was essential as some students were asked to quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure and were unable to attend face to face classes. The consistency of the groups and activity format laid the groundwork for an efficient class period.

Informal surveys were conducted by faculty after six weeks of instruction, allowing students to adjust to the technology and routine. Students were generally positive about the format of the class (Table 2). Based on this positive feedback, the faculty kept the format of the course the same for the second half of the semester.

Table 1: HyFlex Principles

HyFlex Principle	Definition	Examples
Learner Choice	Course design provides meaningful alternative participation modes and enables students to choose between participation modes daily, weekly, or topically ¹	A flipped classroom approach allowed students to view lectures asynchronously, and then attend class face to face either in the classroom or virtually via Microsoft Teams. They could choose their participation mode from week to week.
Equivalency	Course design provides learning activities in all participation modes which lead to equivalent learning outcomes ¹	Students in all participation modes viewed the same recorded lectures and participated in the same discussion boards and synchronous case study activities weekly
Accessibility	Students must be equipped with the core skills and technology necessary to participate in either mode to experience the core component of flexibility ¹	Students were required to have a tablet or laptop computer as a part of the program admission outlines. Microsoft Office products were utilized with the University’s subscription. Students could access Teams and the LMS on their smart phone in case of internet connection issues. Technical support was available through the University Help Desk.
Reusability	Course design utilizes learning activities in each participation mode to become valuable objects for all students in the course ¹	Recorded video lectures, recorded synchronous class discussions, discussion board posts, and collaborative documents were available to review on the LMS for all students

CONCLUSIONS

Redesigning an undergraduate Foundations of Nursing course to meet the needs of the students during the COVID-19 pandemic involved being resourceful with technology, space and implementing flexible teaching and learning strategies. Faculty were able to take some well-established approaches such as flipping the classroom and using unfolding case studies and transform them into a flexible classroom experience.

Keys to success included consistency in the activities and group assignments in the classroom, and implementing the four HyFlex principles: learner choice, equivalency, reusability, and accessibility. Challenges included expected technical problems, an adjustment period to the new class structure, and engaging students attending virtually.

Other software platforms could be used in lieu of Microsoft Office applications for meeting and collaborating on documents. The strategies discussed in this course design could be translated to variety of courses in nursing and other fields.

Table 2: Student Survey Comments

Student Comments Regarding the HyFlex Foundations of Nursing Course at Midterm

- “Discussion boards help me a lot with applying the materials to a specific situation.”
- “The case studies help in application and understanding the full concept.”
- “The weekly activity is helping me understand the information on another level rather than just memorizing. Working on these assignments help me think about putting the information into a clinical setting.”
- “I like the in-class activities working with other students on answering questions, my group always has really good discussion.”
- “I like the discussion board as they help me think critically.”

REFERENCES

1. Beatty, B. J. (2019). *Hybrid-Flexible Course Design*. Open Scholars Press. <https://openscholarspress.org/hyflex/>
2. Crews, T., & Butterfield, J. (2014). Data for Flipped Classroom Design: Using Student Feedback to Identify the Best Components from Online and Face-to-Face Classes. *Higher Education Studies*, 4(3), 38-47.