ORIGINAL PAPER

HyFlex- Rethinking Courses in On-line Teaching

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Abstract
Language acquisition and instruction is well thought out to be a knotty cognitive activity. In order to simplify or make the process easier, software developers have created tools in this regard. In the actual pandemic context when social distancing is a must, classes can no longer unfold the way they used to, so the shift from traditional teaching to digital education had to be embraced by all parties, in order to stay healthy. Teachers need to reinvent themselves and their methodology in order to respond to the digital natives needs, needs that have been postponed for years now, and rethink the content of their courses. Today, ICT- Information and Communication Technology tools are increasingly present in classes worldwide, and the symbiosis between computer technology and education can no longer be denied or overlooked. ICT is gaining advantage over the educational area especially in foreign language teaching and learning, as it implies the bringing of technology of video and audio embedded in class presentations, with pronounced outcome on the quality and content of teaching-learning cognitive process. More precisely, ICT can improve education and learning through its energizing, synergistic, and attractive content and also supply real possibilities for personalized educational activity. The main beneficiary of the web 2.0 based learning is the educational activity that is witnessing a complete makeover which has, beyond question, affected the way teachers organize and deliver content, the teaching and learning process themselves, and eventually research. ICTs have the ability to intensify, improve, and increase skills, to incite and engage students, to help them associate school education to activity practices, opening the path to economic practicality and applicability for future workers. In a quickly dynamical world, fundamental instruction is indispensable for student be able to approach and utilise information, through ICT tools.

Keywords: *ICT, web 2.0 based learning, E-learning 2.0, Prezi video, system of multiple intelligences.*

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What are ICT and web 2.0?

ICT is characterized by a various set of technological means and resources utilized to interact, make over, distribute, keep, and manage content. ICT for educational purposes means the evolution of information and communication technology for instruction, while the use of **ICT** in education means the transfer and acceptance of broad constituents of information and communication technology applicable in teaching and learning processes, no matter if they are on line or inside the seminar room. Moreover, "ICT in education is any Information Technology that focuses on the acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, transmission or reception of data required for the educational purpose. For example, the information about students' records, their admissions, updates of their auricular and co-curricular activities. ICT in education is any technology that deals with the exchange of information or in other words communication in the teaching learning process. Uses of Electronic learning technology like, Teleconferencing, power point presentations, CD ROM are Communication Technology which is the part of ICT."(Ugwu, 2019).

The main attributes of **Information and Communication Technology** are related to instant gratification given by the real time access to content and online information, that becomes easily available and user friendly and has geographic connectivity. In these economic processes and technological occurrences that have created a brand-new planetary economic system high-powered by technology, supplied by information rapidly accessed, the educational system must become congruous with the continuous thrive in cognition and helmeted with the technology to mange this flow of knowledge. The term **web 2.0** was coined by Tim O'Reilly in 2005 and stands for synergistic, user-centred content presentation and interactive content admission, social media and phenomena such as Web for action, technology for web usage, and design that can be incorporated into the e-learning environment. The utilization of the Web 2.0 content in both e-learning practical application and methodology is called E-Learning 2.0.

ICT can provide for individual needs of the students as well as for their **multiple intelligences** in a collaborative and individualized learning environment, that can boost the acquisition quality of groups as well as of individual learners. Present-day seminar rooms with Wi-Fi and above the head video projectors advantage teaching and teachers that put emphasis on ability and performance and are more preoccupied with the manner in which the content and information will be utilized than with the quantity and what the information is. Modern-day ICTs are capable to supply powerful assistance for all these demands and there are now numerous conspicuous models of global class settings for ability and performance-based content that largely employ these affordable technologies. The integration of content into such web-based programs, such as Prezi, for example, can assist regenerate both teachers and students.(Bărbuceanu, 2021).The HyFlex model was developed at San Francisco State University, by Brian J. Beatty, associate Professor of Instructional Technologies in the Department of Equity, Leadership Studies and Instructional Technologies and has been used since then in institutions worldwide; others, nowadays, in the pandemic context are struggling to incorporate HyFlex into their curriculum.

The disruption in normality and the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, has forced teachers and delivers of knowledge around the world to adopt a model that allows huge flexibility in physically and remotely attending the classes. Using hyflex model and creating courses to adjust to the new format is a challenge all

teachers have to face in order to keep up with the instructional continuity during such perturbation affecting health and safety. The flexibility of this model if implemented, could ensure the institutions that educational and research activity are streaming accordingly by supplying diverse ways for students to access content and partaking in learning. HyFlex courses may be misleadingly problematic to be carried out sound. The available technology and the syllabus must line up, and the available technology must function steadily for everyone, with the requirement of periodically testing and probably new fittings or fixing.''Moreover, a syllabus for an online and blended course is generally more detailed than the syllabus for a face-to-face course. It needs to include the following: a description of the course schedule and activities for each week of a term, the assessment plan with dates and rubrics, policies and procedures, and content resources (textbook, readings, audio and video resources), requirements, and locations. A syllabus template may also contain the boilerplate information specific to an institution on library access, technical support, and contact information for non-course-specific questions.''(Boettcher, Conrad 2016). The education must be corresponding for all students, assuring that no student experiences drawbacks or shortcomings due to the learning trail selected. Teachers must be relaxed and operative with asynchronous training as they some who are not can straightforwardly undervalue the quantity of energy and communication essential to involve with online students. (Chirițescu, Păunescu, 2021). Some teachers as well as faculties have drawbacks when it comes to teaching in a synchronous live-stream setting with a backchannel. Certifying that all e-course or digital content is available or designed properly can be challenging and necessitates investments in preparation time, quality of the materials, video captions and other facilities. The logistics involving a HyFlex course must practically be environmentally friendly with the space here it is unfolding. Modality unfairness—on the part of the participants in the learning process such as faculty, students, teachers, and others involved - can ruin or alter the efficacy and usefulness of HyFlex courses if the online mode is perpetually criticised and deemed inferior. HyFlex brings more accountability for the education process on students, and some might have skills deficiency, digital literacy and maturity, self-motivation to thrive in such a setting.(Bărbuceanu, 2019).

Devising a HyFlex or Hybrid-Flexible Course

The HyFlex, course is student-oriented, multi-modal acquisition experience, an educational formulation that mixes **traditional teaching** and **learning** with the format of the web 2.0 based online or **e-learning**, that can be *synchronously online*, or *asynchronously online*. An important feature of the hybrid teaching-learning model is that students, no matter where they are, should not be in disadvantage. (Chirițescu, Păunescu, 2021). Learning experiences in physical and online classes, synchronous or asynchronous, together with the way they are organized, must ensure equal opportunities for achieving learning objectives. It is up to students to determine the method of participation, thus giving them the self-reliance, malleability, and smooth engagement in the learning process. A well-developed hybrid learning model delivers better educational outcomes than traditional, face-to-face or exclusively online models. As with every model, there are pros and cons. As we have mentioned before, the educational gap will increase even more for students who do not have access to electronic devices connectivity. Of course, this growing gap is systemic and needs to be addressed from the system level.

The HyFlex system implies that education is equal, no matter the manner, but the delivery of the content and the design of the course take other forms that bring the focus on student malleability, who can attend courses remotely, while their colleagues join physically from classroom or even campus room. The COVID 19 pandemic became one of the greatest menaces of the 21st century that troubled the way teaching was performed, and also the entire facet of the global economy, plunging students, business, small farmers into the most compromising groups. (Paraschivu, Cotuna, 2021).Allowing students this flexibility transforms them from passive learners into active ones, from reproducers of information to producer of information, from depended learner to self-directed one, from individual learner to cooperative one, thus shifting the paradigm from simple retention of the facts presented during the course into problem solving based learning, wide-open bendable delivery of knowledge, irrespective of fixed schedule and location imposed by traditional learning. A subject taught in a HyFlex class requires rigorous planning, with alternative variants of activities to achieve educational objectives, variants specific to each learning environment. The hybrid education model generally aims at: access to quality education for a larger number of students, facilitating small group discussions because some students study online, and the teacher works with those who need personalized support, the use of various media for a better understanding and application of the concepts, connecting students for the development of common task-based projects.

Effectiveness for teaching and learning, challenges and outcomes

The status of active learning in online surroundings possibly one of the most important criteria for developing an operative online course is active learning—this is a term, an instruction first introduced in 1991 by Charles C. Bonwell and James A. Eison. According to their ground-breaking exertion, active learning concentrates on including students in actually taking part in the lesson, engaging them in activities—not just letting them to inertly listen to a lecture, by doing things and rationalizing about what they are doing. Permeating dialog, deliberation, writing and problem-solving has been proven to produce many profits, including student gratification, data retention and enhanced exam performance.

There are three types of interactions, in any class: **student-contents, student-student** and student-teacher. In this hybrid model, the student-content interaction takes place in the reverse part of the learning process, when the student goes through the new lesson independently, the student-student interaction is ensured through work groups and the student-teacher interaction through communication between students who are physically in class and teacher. The teacher is in class with some of the students, the other students are online synchronously. They connect to the classroom through a web-conferencing platform. If the teacher wants to transmit information or instructions, she/he can use "flipped learning" (inverted or mirrored), breaking the learning sequence from a traditional class: the teacher presents the new lesson, the students take notes, and then reinforce what they have learned. In a flipped class, the student learns the new material at home, and in the classroom, it is fixed and applied. (Bărbuceanu, 2020). In this way, the teacher and students have more time to consolidate knowledge and apply it in complex contexts. It creates time for the development of thinking skills. The teacher has the choice between recording the explanation of the new concepts alone or finding an already published recording / learning sequence online. The first version is desirable and achievable through web 2.0 based learning and Prezi video as it has the following advantages: addressing students personally, building and developing a closer

relationship with them; explaining using the terminology and teaching style they are used to; recording explanations improves the quality of the teaching act, by thinking more carefully when I recording. The disadvantage with pre-recorded, lessons is that they might not cover students' needs or lesson objectives entirely.

In a "flipped" class, students go through the new lesson at home and can research the content, materials and links embedded and take notes, or write down questions or uncertainties they might have, and try to find answers on their own, thus students become more independent in their thinking and take more responsibility for learning. Participants in the process of education, especially immigrant teachers ought to prepare to face students whose way of learning has seriously challenged. (Lăpădat, Lăpădat, 2020).One of the disadvantages of this method is that some students come to the physical class with the homework not done. In this case, the teacher can give these students time to complete their independent learning task or organize a learning group in which students discuss the content of the material before class, giving everyone a chance to find out what it is about and clarify their questions. Students who have not completed their homework assignment will learn from their peers who have already done it. (Chirițescu, Păunescu, 2021). Teachers can create groups with students who are in the classroom and separately groups with students who are online, using the ZOOM platform because it offers the option "breakout rooms" for teamwork and provoke students in thinking about this problem. (Scorțan, 2009). Managing groups might be challenging, given the fact that the teacher has to switch between physically and online groups, nevertheless an easier option to manage, but one that requires more careful planning, is that each work-group consists of both students who are in the classroom and students who are online. Thus, the communication between the online students and the teacher will be accelerated through the voice of the students who are physically present in the classroom. This model, of course, involves the idea that students have and are allowed to use their phone or computer in the classroom. The technique is completely based on technology, and technology related devices that all the participants in the process of education in the seminar room should possess: Chromebooks, Laptops, tablets, Wi-Fi, video projectors, and smart phones. (Bușu, 2018). Although it seems difficult to achieve, the model in which we create mixed groups will allow students to function as a unitary class (and not as two distinct subclasses) and will balance learning experiences, in the idea that all students will progress likewise.

The **HyFlex conceptualization** requires ability to construct the learning experience and reconsider content, colleagues and engagement level; teacher builds the course using all and any tolls and channels and manages the programme to reflect that construction. The students, irrespective of the manner they join the classroom, either physical or online, need to have full an unequivocal access to learning resources, operative use of classroom approaches being of uttermost importance so that all contributors can hear oral communication. The instructive resources must be e- learning materials and must be put at the disposal of the participants online. A significant differentiator of HyFlex concept is the flexibility of the *asynchronous possibility*, which often needs substantial preparation to be corresponding to the other educational routes. *The hybrid* concept mixes both online and face-to-face instruction and learning activities and with *flexible* concept students have the option to decide if they attend the courses face-to-face or not. A Hybrid-Flexible (*HyFlex)* course strategy allows a flexible attendance policy for students, meeting their specific needs, where students can physically choose to join face-to-face synchronous lectures -in an old-style classroom or

attend the courses online without physically joining the class and to receive feedback from the students in relation to the newly introduced new vocabulary. (Scorțan, 2013).

Ratio benefits vs costs Boosting the class capacity of enrolment by presenting supplementary **HyFlex course design,** timetable and physical / site flexibility to help more students with current resources, adjusting to students' fluctuating requirements and needs. The **hyperlinked minds** or the generation X, the digital natives are persons born and bred in the digital era; they are also stated as the "**iGeneration**" and considered having digital DNA. (Stoian, 2019).The costs of physical classroom technology are to be settled by the persons in charge in faculty/ school councils who need to evaluate the predictable immediate costs and maintenance costs over time.

Predictable **learning outcomes** are precise accounts about what the students will finally accomplish. For instance, an outcome correlated to acquiring of the new vocabulary, using it in appropriate context, in on line through minor group-discussion method, but asynchronous students might not have the same successful results, so the outcome might want to be reread, this offering the teacher a new possibility of clearing up the novel vocabulary with the help of asynchronous visual aids in order to attain the anticipated results: debates , discussions started on text messenger, and the whole classroom was involved and attentive. (Păunescu, Chirițescu, 2020). Teachers should choose the best materials in order to meet the needs of each teaching mode, either synchronous or asynchronous, identify the best resources to use, such as Prezi presentations, Prezi video, and materials for students to use offline as well, in the asynchronous mode, so the learning setting could be rousing, increasing the instruction procedure, and making education more widely reachable to all kinds of learners. (Stoian, 2019).Through audio-video input, students retain the gist and the new vocabulary easily giving teachers the possibility of reaching at a palpable result of the process of real communication, allowing them to confer sounds, colours, movement, and interaction that were not plausible in a traditional seminar room, thus boosting high emotional intelligence abilities. (Lăpădat, Lăpădat, 2020).

In a HyFlex course, the teacher delivers the digital content and chooses the best practices and activities to meet both the needs of students physically joining the class and online allowing students, no matter their learning style, to enhance their emotional intelligence, to internalize concepts they later deal with when creating new-sprung models. (Bușu, 2020).Activities in each teaching mode are not the similar for all students but are designed to lead to corresponding education outcomes, concluding that irrespective of the chosen format, teaching and learning activities should preferably present digital content successfully and jobwise, engage students with productive education activities, use genuine assessment to appraise student learning.

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