# HyFlex Report

DETC-DCCC Joint Workgroup

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The Los Rios district’s response to the recent pandemic has opened new doors in the delivery of educational opportunities to students. The following report is the result of a desire to meet students’ needs for flexibility in scheduling, provide quality learning modalities, balance faculty workloads, and secure equity across our student population.

Additional "flex" modalities present an option to provide equitable access to courses, including learning opportunities, class materials, resources, and other success measures for students. Because the instructor and student are separated by distance and/or time, these “flex” modalities are classified as Distance Education (DE). Refer to the Appendix for a comparison chart.

Los Rios’ primary transfer institution, CSU Sacramento, has outlined available [instructional modalities](https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/course-modality.html) on their website. We have attempted to align our definitions of HyFlex and SyncFlex with those of CSUS to minimize confusion for students enrolling at both institutions simultaneously.

## HyFlex

**Modalities: In-person, Synchronous online, Asynchronous online**

**Definition:** Students choose between three options of how, when, and where they attend class. Students can decide which option to select week-by-week throughout the semester.

* Option 1: Meet at the scheduled class time in person in an on-campus classroom.
* Option 2: Meet at the scheduled class time through a remote connection.
* Option 3: Attend asynchronously completing class sessions using online materials.

**Example:** Class meets MWF 9:00-9:50 AM. in MND 1003 *and* via a live Zoom connection *and* available asynchronously via Canvas.

## SyncFlex

**Modalities: In-person and Synchronous Online**

Notes: This modality differs from HyFlex in that there is *no asynchronous online option*. CSUS calls this “HerkyFlex” to fit within their mascot branding.

**Definition:** Students choose between two options of how, when, and where they attend class. Students will make their selection about which option they will take upon enrolling in the class:

* Option 1: Meet at scheduled class times, in-person, on campus.
* Option 2: Meet at predetermined scheduled class times online through a remote connection.

**Example:** Class meets MWF 9:00-9:50 M. in MND 1003 *and* via a live Zoom connection.

## HyFlex and SyncFlex Considerations:

Teaching the same group of students simultaneously using multiple modalities offers unique challenges. Faculty, students, and support staff should consult the following before opting-in to a HyFlex or SyncFlex course.

### Operational

* How will these modalities be coded? Fully online, partially online, or other form of DE?
* How will attendance be measured for students selecting the asynchronous option?
* How will attendance be measured if a student switches between modalities?
* How will retention be tracked for HyFlex and/or SyncFlex courses? How will your department know which of the three modalities had the poorest retention?
* How will vaccine mandates affect enrollment in HyFlex or SyncFlex courses?

### Instructors

* **Instructor Attendance:** on-campus presence at all scheduled meeting times is expected
* **Workload:** if you’re not already comfortable teaching synchronous and/or asynchronous online modalities, this is a heavy lift.
* **Technology:** how will instructors receive training for using the equipment?
* **Classroom Management:** how will the instructor engage all synchronous students, both on-campus and via live remote connection.
  + During class, how does the instructor make eye contact with all students if the camera is in one location and the Zoom screen is in another location, and neither within the same field of view as the in-person students?
* **Regular and Effective Contact:** how will the instructor ensure regular and substantive interaction with students selecting the synchronous and/or asynchronous options?
  + It’s tough for remote students to know who is speaking in the physical classroom because there is not a highlighted box around the speaker like there is for remote attendees.
* **Course Design**: how will the instructor ensure that each modality provides students opportunities to develop skills necessary to achieve course outcomes?
* **Equitable Learning Opportunities:** how will the instructor ensure that students will experience equitable learning opportunities regardless of the modality they select?
* **Preparing Students:** how will students know what is expected of them?
* **Student expectations of privacy:** will the camera in the room show what’s on the devices being used by in-person students?
* **Performance release:** If a session is recorded and put online, any students whose faces can be seen will need to sign a performance release.

### Students

* **Understanding Modalities:** how will the District ensure students understand these new modalities, and how they affect their course selection?
* **Access to Technology:** do students know the technology requirements for the course, and if so, do they have access to the required technology?
* **Comfort with Technology:** are students comfortable using webconferencing software, an online learning management system, and other technology tools to access course materials and interact with their peers and their instructor?
* **Student Engagement:** are students prepared to engage in course activities, even when accessing the course remotely or asynchronously?
* **Recordings:** are students comfortable with being recorded if they plan to attend the course synchronously or on-campus?

### Room Setup and Support

* Does the room have a **microphone** so that remote students can hear in-person students clearly no matter where they are sitting in the room?
* Does the room have a microphone capable of **distinguishing the current speaker from the ambient noises** in the room, including side conversations among in-person students?
* Will there be a **screen at the back of the room** so the instructor can have the in-person students and remote students in their field of view? If so, will it be big enough so that the instructor can see remote attendees and whatever instructional material is being used?
* What kind of support will be available **in the classroom**? Will it be comparable to the support offered for ITV courses in the past?
  + ITV had at least two support people for each and every class
  + “With proper support staff in the room each time”
* What kind of support will be available to students who **access live sesssions remotely** ?
* How do we properly and appropriately **edit and archive recordings**?
  + Who will ensure recordings protect student’s right to privacy?
  + Who will archive?
  + Who will edit the videos (ex: length, removing down-time, etc.)
  + Who will caption the videos?

## Final Thoughts

If Los Rios adopts this new model in an attempt to be more nimble in support of our students, its success will depend on continuous assessment and a willingness to be nimble in how “flex” our instructional modalities will be. This includes effective professional development for instructional faculty and the classified professionals that will likely be needed to support this mode. The most important consideration of supporting “flex” instructional modalities will of course be student enrollment, engagement, and success.

## Appendix: A Comparison of Instructional Modalities

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Modality** | **Classification**  **DE or Not DE** | **DE Curriculum Approval Requirement** | **Notes** |
| **On-ground & In-person** | Fully on-ground instruction  Not DE | None | All instruction is on-ground, in person. Content may be posted in the Learning Management System (LMS). |
| **Asynchronous Fully Online** | 100% Online  DE | Yes, unless in an emergency | All instruction is asynchronous using the LMS but office hours are likely synchronous. |
| **Partially Online** | Less than 100% Online  DE | Yes, unless in an emergency | Course has in-person requirements, as approved through curriculum. Online instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Regular meeting times are listed in class schedule. |
| **Synchronous Fully Online** | 100% Online  DE | Yes, unless in an emergency | All instruction is synchronous online. Regular meeting times are listed in the class schedule. |
| **Partially Synchronous, Fully Online** | 100% Online  DE | Yes, unless in an emergency | Some portion of instruction is synchronous online. Regular meeting times are listed in the class schedule. Remaining instruction is asynchronous. |
| **SyncFlex** | Synchronous Online and/or On-ground  DE optional | Yes, unless in an emergency | Students choose whether to attend synchronous online class sessions or on-ground live class sessions. No asynchronous component. |
| **HyFlex** | Synchronous or Asynchronous Online and/or On-ground  DE optional | Yes, unless in an emergency | Stacking 3 modalities: Students choose whether to attend synchronous online class session or on-ground live class sessions or to complete work asynchronously in the LMS. |