



Flexible Learning Options
Teaching and Learning in the Wake of COVID

Executive Summary

This report delineates a range of teaching and learning modes currently being used or proposed in post-secondary education in British Columbia following the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report is intended to support conversations about course and program design and delivery at Camosun College so that we may move forward with a shared understanding of key terms and in alignment with provincial and national trends and the scholarly literature.

The process of determining effective and appropriate course and program delivery modes combines both pedagogical and administrative decision-making processes. While keeping in mind space, technological, and logistical requirements, the decision on how to deliver programming must ultimately come down to answering the question: How we can create the most effective learning environments possible to allow students to achieve course and program learning outcomes?

The range of options available is not determined by any particular technology. Educational technologies will continue to evolve into the future and will afford certain capacities while necessitating adaptive instructional strategies and training opportunities. Instructors and professional services faculty are ready for this challenge and have shown through the COVID-19 pandemic that they are up to the task.

We propose here a consolidated set of defined course delivery modes. These broad definitions are proposed in response to the need for institutional consensus, in alignment with the Canadian Digital Learning Research Association [CDLRA] **Modes of Learning Spectrum** and in reference to recent scholarly literature on key terms such as hybrid, blended, and hyflex learning environments.

In-Person Learning

In-person learning is a design approach where learning takes place in a shared **physical** space, e.g., a classroom on campus, lab, field school, etc. Such an approach may utilize educational technologies, a Learning Management System (LMS), for example, to facilitate learning both within and outside the classroom but instruction takes place primarily within a shared physical setting.

Online Learning

Online learning takes place in an online environment. It may include synchronous (face-to-face **at the same time** via video- or tele-conferencing tools) and/or asynchronous (not concurrent, sometimes called self-paced) activities. Online learning often makes use of similar tools as in-person learning such as an LMS, but it may not. Online learning spaces are distinct from in-person spaces and thus require different design approaches. The variety of learning environments possible in online settings means instructors require a different set of tools and supports to develop and implement successful teaching strategies.

Hybrid Learning

A hybrid learning experience is any combination of in-person and online or distance modes. In aligning with the CDLRA definitions, we are using hybrid here not as a specific mode, but as an umbrella term which captures a variety of formats including, but not necessarily limited to:

Blended learning (also known as mixed mode)

A form of hybrid learning which blends in-person and online instruction and where all students generally follow the same mix of online and in-person activities. In some cases, particularly when traditionally in-person courses are moved to a blended model, online activities may replace some in-

person activities. This practice is variously referred to as blended, hybrid, or mixed mode, and has important consequences for scheduling and registration procedures.

Multi-access (also referred to as hybrid)

Students can choose their mode of delivery, either online or in-person, at the point of registering for the course. For example, in a multi-access course with synchronous meetings, all students would meet at the same time, but from different locations v some in-person and some online. Students participate through the same mode of access for the duration of the course. Note this does not refer to multiple sections of a course each with each section offered in a different format.

Hyflex

A hyflex course is a multi-access (hybrid) course where students have the flexibility to change their mode of interaction (online or in-person) during the course.

Recommendations

The diversity of available definitions presents some challenges going forward, especially in terms of emerging modalities and terminological ambiguity. It is also encouraging to see the potential for developing consensus, with organizations such as the CDLRA taking the lead. Here are some preliminary thoughts on what to do with information contained in this report.

1. Many of us will continue to colloquially use the term blended to describe what is essentially an in-person c } μ Œ • Á] š Z • μ • š v š] o } v o] v } u % } - p e r s o n t e c h n o l o g y U š Z > Z • μ % % } Œ š o Œ v] v P X _ ^ š Œ] š o Ç • % I] v P U Z } Á À Œ U Á Z v Á •

Introduction Understanding & Defining Flexible Learning Environments

Learning- and learner-centered instruction is inherently flexible. It must be. If an instructor is to truly and meaningfully respond to learner needs, experience, cultural background, prior knowledge, skill-level, and other contingent and contextual factors (e.g., child or elder care duties, work obligations, etc.) then an instructor must necessarily be flexible in how they approach course design, lesson planning, and teaching modalities. In other words: flexible teaching is not a new idea. Many instructors have been practicing it for years and decades. Let us start by giving credit where it is due.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the dramatic pivot to emergency remote learning put an intense spotlight on teaching modes

In-Person

In-person learning is a design approach where learning takes place in a shared **physical** space, e.g., a classroom on campus. Such an approach may utilize educational technologies to facilitate learning both within and outside the classroom (e.g., electronic texts, a Learning Management System [LMS], etc.), but instruction takes place primarily within a shared physical setting (Johnson, 2020, p. 8).

resources, for example, face-to-face courses using video conferencing (UBC Educational Technology Support, n.d.). In the context of emergency remote teaching, courses were adapted to the online environment such that a video-conference meeting replaced an in-person meeting, but otherwise the course structure remained unchanged, i.e., it was not designed as an online course even though it made use of online tools and teaching strategies. Such a course may be considered online synchronous (or face-to-face) learning rather than blended learning or intentionally-designed online learning.

On-page teaching by definition is synchronous AND, more importantly, place-emphasis in original). The debate hinges on whether the virtual space constitutes a **place** which is a philosophical question we will not answer here. Virtual synchronous spaces are, to be clear, a different kind of space than the in-person classroom. They require

use the label blended

Conclusion & Recommendations

The diversity of definitions outlined above presents some challenges going forward, especially in terms of emerging modalities and terminological ambiguity. It is also encouraging to see the potential for developing consensus, with organizations such as the CDLRA taking the lead. Here are some preliminary thoughts on what to do with the above information.

1. Many of us will continue to colloquially use the term blended to describe what is essentially an in-person course with a portion of instruction delivered via technology. Referring to a course where online instruction takes the place of a portion of what would otherwise be in-person instruction. A possible alternative, to avoid confusion, would be to label such a course as mixed mode rather than blended.
2. We need to decide between hybrid and multi-access (or some other word) to describe a course that is offered simultaneously in-person and online, but where students decide at the point of registration that they will participate in one or the other mode. While hybrid is used consistently in the literature to describe this format, this usage creates potential confusion. Use of hybrid as an umbrella term.
3. We need to decide how to describe a course that is (a) offered simultaneously online and in-person AND (b) students have ongoing flexibility in how they participate. Any course offered in this format should be explicitly labelled as hyflex.
4. As has been the case since the founding of the college, in-person can and should continue to be used to describe a wide range of effective flexible teaching and learning practices including flipped learning, in-person classes with extensive use of online tools, land-based learning, experiential and immersive education, and so forth.

Online **t** All instruction/interaction happens online. Activities may be synchronous and/or asynchronous and may make use of an LMS, video-conferencing, and other platforms as required.

Remote **t** Sometimes used as a synonym for distance learning. In the context of COVID-19, remote learning is the emergency adaptation of courses designed for in-person delivery to online delivery as a way to distinguish such courses from intentionally-designed online learning.

Self-paced **t** In a self-paced course, students work on their own timeline, sometimes within the confines of a prescribed start and end point, but more often in an open-ended framework. Common examples include orientation or on-boarding courses (Health and Safety) or Massive Open Online Courses

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Synchronous

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I-12 [Nicola Valley Institute of Technology](#)

Uses term [virtual hybrid](#) in contrast with face-to-face to describe adaptation during COVID, but not explicitly defined. Does define online in its Online Learning page (link above).

I-13 [North Island College](#)

These two modes appear to be mirror versions of each other, which would indicate flexibility is only at the point of registration, rather than through the duration of the course.

I-14 [Northern Lights College](#)

No explicit descriptions. Indicate a blend of online and face-to-face courses, rather than a blend within a given course.

I-15 [Okanagan College](#)

I-16 [Royal Roads University](#)

I-17 [Selkirk College](#)

Definition of hybrid aligns with blended or mixed mode. Definition of HyFlex (also with the capital letters) includes choice in the mode of assessment, not just in mode of access.

I-23 [University of Victoria](#)

Does not explicitly define instructional methods, but clarifies using timetable comments, from which the definitions in the table are drawn. Instructional methods include: course with field component, face to face, face to face with some online, online, online with some face to face, and work term or exchange.

I-24 Vancouver Community College

Could not find a page with definitions, but course outlines and some program descriptions refer to face-to-face, face-to-face with some online, and online. Found some links to Intranet (pages that probably contain this information, but it does not appear to be publicly available).

I-25 [Vancouver Island University](#)

Appendix 2 | Definitions of Course Delivery Modes BC PPSE

The spreadsheet attached includes defined delivery modes and their definitions for all public post-secondary institutions in BC. The definitions are derived from the information provided via the links in Appendix 1. In some cases, no definition is provided and the field is thus left blank.

Based on either the label alone (if no definition is available) or on the label and definition together, each

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Institutions are organized alphabetically and categorized by type.

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I #1 COLL Langara College

Hybrid

Mixed Mode

We will have some online and some on campus delivery. These sections will begin with "M". The in person portion of the course will have scheduled

I #2	INST	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	Online	Online	Online learning allows the student to complete courses without having to attend regularly scheduled classes. However, most classes have scheduled start and end dates meaning students must work through the assignments according to the course syllabi (provided by the instructor). Learners will interact with the instructor and other students through the internet so each student must have access to a computer and reliable internet access.
I #3	COLL	North Island College	Hybrid	Digital, HyFlex	connecting to an on campus class from off campus, through a digital connection, instructor may teach from different campus locations, defined start and end dates, access to a computer and the internet required, indicated by DLH in course code
I #3	COLL	North Island College	Hybrid	On campus and digital (Blended)	includes both digital delivery and on campus instruction, digital delivery may be scheduled or unscheduled, scheduled, on campus meeting times, defined start and end dates, access to a computer and the internet required, indicated in course code by campus location and 'B' (ex: CRB = Campbell River, blended)
I #3	COLL	North Island College	Hybrid	On campus, HyFlex	on campus, with virtual connections to other campuses, instructors may teach from one or more campus locations, defined start and end dates, access to a computer and internet not required for lectures, indicated in your course code by campus locations and 'H' (ex: CRH = Campbell River, HyFlex)
I #3	COLL	North Island College	In person	On campus, scheduled	on campus, scheduled classes, defined start and end dates, access to a computer and internet not required for lectures, indicated in your course code by campus location and the letter 'S' (ex: CRS = Campbell River, scheduled)
I #3	COLL	North Island College	Online	Digital, continuous entry	off campus, individualized instruction and meeting times, student specific start and end dates, access to a computer and the internet required, indicated by DLC in course code
I #3	COLL	North Island College	Online	Digital, scheduled	scheduled live online meeting times with instructor, defined start and end dates, access to a computer and the internet required, indicated by DLS in course code
I #3	COLL	North Island College	Online	Digital, unscheduled	no scheduled class time, instructor may schedule optional live online meeting times, defined start and end dates, access to a computer and the internet required, indicated by DLU in course code
I #4	COLL	Northern Lights College	In person	On campus	
I #4	COLL	Northern Lights College	Online	Online	
I #5	COLL	Okanagan College	Hybrid	Blended	courses are simultaneous face to face and online synchronous class delivery.

I 15	COLL	Okanagan College	Hybrid	Hybrid	classes alternate between face to face and synchronous delivery, or face to face and asynchronous delivery: the entire class meets for face to face sessions and the entire class is online for synchronous delivery with at least one session of each mode each week.
I 15	COLL	Okanagan College	In person	Face to face	classes are delivered in person
I 15	COLL	Okanagan College	Online	Online asynchronous	classes don't require that students log into the class and meet at specific times. Students can access class materials anytime and the class is specifically developed to allow a high level of interaction with the course materials along with regular professor/instructor interaction.
I 15	COLL	Okanagan College	Online	Online synchronous	classes are like traditional on campus classes where students must be in the class (virtually) at specific time. Synchronous classes are delivered and taken in real time or "live" (virtually) and the time will be indicated in ClassFinder.
I 16	TEACH	Royal Roads	In person	Classroom	Students will be expected to participate in scheduled facilitated session(s) based on a previously established schedule. Session(s) are in person (face to face) and take place on site at Royal Roads University or another previously determined location.
I 16	TEACH	Royal Roads	Online	Asynchronous online	Asynchronous simply means learning doesn't take place live. Students will not be required to have set class meeting times and, instead, students will be provided with learning material and assignments to complete within set deadlines. Online learners can access coursework anytime they choose using our Management System (Moodle).

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I #6	TEACH	Royal Roads	Online	Synchronous online	Synchronous literally translates to “at the same time.” In synchronous courses, students will be expected to participate in scheduled facilitator led sessions based on a previously established schedule. Similar to webinars, synchronous online courses invite learners to interact through web conferencing tools (such as Zoom). Synchronous courses will expect students to be online at pre established dates and times and may require that they have (or purchase) headsets, webcams and/or microphones.
I #7	COLL	Selkirk College	Hybrid	Hybrid	An instructional method where the curriculum is designed intentionally and thoughtfully to integrate in person and online learning experiences. In person teaching time in the hybrid method is reduced, but not eliminated, with the balance of learning being facilitated asynchronously through digital/web based technologies, or offline learning opportunities. Typically, 50% -80% of the total course learning hours are completed in online and asynchronous formats in hybrid courses.
I #7	COLL	Selkirk College	Hybrid	HyFlex	An instructional method where the curriculum is designed intentionally and thoughtfully to provide choice to learners all the way through the course and/or program. HyFlex is not: Hybrid (combination of both online and in person) where the modality, learning activities, and evaluations are prescribed; Any combination of modalities, where in one or more modality, there is no choice, e.g. synchronous attendance is required. In HyFlex, learners have full choice in how they learn and how they are evaluated.
I #7	COLL	Selkirk College	In person	In person	An instructional method where learners and instructors meet in real time in the same physical location to facilitate instruction and learning. This is typically on campus, though it may be in other location (e.g. fieldwork, clinical courses in a hospital, field trips, weekend remote classes). In person courses may intentionally and thoughtfully incorporate digital technologies into the curriculum to enhance learning.

I 17	COLL	Selkirk College	Online	Asynchronous online	An Asynchronous online course utilises digital/web based technologies to facilitate the curriculum and does not require real time communication. Asynchronous courses have no required face to face, synchronous online, or on r campus activities, including assessment. Although these courses usually have a set start and end date, and due dates for assessments, learners can otherwise access and participate in the course at times and places of their own choosing. Asynchronous courses may provide optional online synchronous/real time learning opportunities, such as office hours, tutorials, or exam review sessions.
I 17	COLL	Selkirk College	Online	Synchronous online	A Synchronous Online course utilises digital technologies to facilitate real time interaction between instructor(s) at one site and learners at other sites. These courses typically have regularly scheduled real time meetings, and may involve using text, video, or voice communication in a real time setting. Synchronous courses may be recorded for review by learners as needed.
I 18	RSCH	Simon Fraser University	In person	In person	Any in person classes will generally have an assigned room. Some courses may also have an in person event – for example, a one time visit to campus during the term.
I 18	RSCH	Simon Fraser University	Online	Remote asynchronous	means that the course component is expected to be completed remotely that week at a time of your own choosing.
I 18	RSCH	Simon Fraser University	Online	Remote blended	asynchronous lecture, synchronous tutorial
I 18	RSCH	Simon Fraser University	Online	Remote synchronous	means that the course component takes place at a set time, and you'll be expected to attend remotely at that time.
I 19	TEACH	Thomson Rivers University	Distance	Print self paced	Study on your own at your own pace, along with Open Learning Faculty Member support. Typically, required materials are sent to you, but you may need internet access for others.
I 19	TEACH	Thomson Rivers University	In person	In person	In person courses, excluding practical and clinical placements, typically have specific start and end dates. Registration deadlines apply. Completion times vary between five days and several weeks. You physically attend and study in a lab, clinical/practicum placement, workshop or classroom. Materials may be provided.
I 19	TEACH	Thomson Rivers University	Online	Online paced	Work through the course in virtual collaboration and interaction with other members of your cohort, along with Open Learning Faculty Member support. Typically, course content and most required materials are delivered online. You may need to source other supplemental materials.

I #9	TEACH	Thomson Rivers University	Online	Online self paced	Study individually at your own pace, along with Open Learning Faculty Member support. Typically, course content and some required materials are delivered online in a learning content management system, such as Moodle. You may need to source other materials on your own.
I #0	RSCH	University of British Columbia	Hybrid	Hybrid	The course component takes place in person, but will also be provided online for students who cannot come to campus.
I #0	RSCH	University of British Columbia	In person	In person	The course component is taking place in person
I #0	RSCH	University of British Columbia	Online	Online	The course component is fully online.
I #1	TEACH	University of Northern British Columbia	Hybrid	Audio conferencing	Audio conferencing uses interactive telephone connections between classrooms at two or more campuses, with the instructor located at one of these campuses. Audio conference classes are scheduled at regular meeting times and may be supplemented with handouts and/or site visits.
I #1	TEACH	University of Northern British Columbia	In person	Face to Face	In this method, the students and the instructor are present in the same classroom, with regularly scheduled meeting times and locations. Some face to face courses are scheduled in intensive sessions. (one week or alternating weekends, etc.) Face to face courses will indicate the campus site in the same with alternating

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