

# Chapter 11

## Hybrid Flexible (HyFlex) Teaching in Foreign Language Education: Enhancing Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Through an Innovative Digital Pedagogy

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Hybrid flexible (HyFlex) teaching, which is assumed as a much more flexible and learner-centered instruction mode, has received great attention from educators and researchers in recent years. In HyFlex learning and teaching environment, learners can make decisions on how they attend lessons i.e., face-to-face in a real classroom, online synchronously, or asynchronously after the allotted real lesson time. The present chapter aims to introduce HyFlex teaching as a new digital pedagogical and technological approach to the mode of instruction in relation to the foreign language learning and teaching field. In addition, this chapter discusses the benefits of EFL teaching in HyFlex classroom environments along with some challenges and possible solutions proposed by instructors in the light of the current relevant literature and empirical research. Furthermore, HyFlex teaching can promote equal, inclusive, and accessible learning conditions for all students regardless of their diverse backgrounds are addressed, in turn fostering foreign language learning and teaching processes.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

A variety of instruction modes of education have emerged with the support of recent technological developments. Many institutions now offer some or all of their undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral courses online through the use of online education, blended learning, or flipped instruction as a result of the growth and improvement of technology (Köroğlu et al., 2022). Within this concern, such innovative educational models as online learning, blended learning, and hybrid learning have started to be implemented as a delivery mode of foreign language teaching in the last decades, especially since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and other natural disasters, for instance, deadly earthquakes that hinder face-to-face learning and teaching process around the world. Thus, digital instruction has become a crucial component of education all over the world (Köroğlu & Öz, 2023). Providing more flexibility and agency to learners in the process of learning, Hybrid Flexible (HyFlex) teaching has become more popular at all levels of education. In HyFlex teaching, instructors adopt not only face-to-face but also online learning platforms, including both synchronous and asynchronous conditions; therefore, learners feel free to attend lessons in their preferred mode of instruction. As Kelly (2020) advocated, the core principle of this type of teaching lies in the fact that all students are equal, and educational conditions need to be equal for each one regardless of their way of attendance to the course. Unlike and beyond blended learning, in which teachers themselves are decision-makers in the choice of instruction mode, students are the agents and decision makers of their preferred way of course delivery mode in the HyFlex teaching context, enhancing learner autonomy and agency by providing flexibility to the students in how to attend the class. HyFlex combines blended learning features with more flexibility (Abdelmalak & Parra, 2016). That is, traditional blended or flipped classroom training, in which the online and in-person components of a course complement one another but often do not overlap, does not provide this kind of flexibility (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Hill, 2012; McGee & Reis, 2012; Singh, 2003). In this regard, HyFlex teaching as a new digital pedagogical approach refers to an innovative course format that is learner-directed and learner-centered as well as a multimodal education environment in which learners have the opportunity of participating in lessons regardless of their current physical locations, all of which in turn promote equity and inclusion by increasing accessibility to teaching context for every participant learner of that class. In addition to learners, instructors can also benefit from HyFlex teaching in that they deliver each lecture once rather than teaching the same course both in-person and in online platforms

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