

Transcript for HyFlex in Action Event: Welcome & Opening Remarks (BCcampus)
BCcampus event held on February 15, 2022
Host: Clint Lalonde
Opening Comments: Mary Burgess, Executive Director, BCcampus

CLINT LALONDE:

Good morning, everyone and welcome to HyFlex in Reaction: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. And I think when you have an event called The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, it's kind of a prerequisite. That you have a host named Clint, and that's me. I'm your host, Clint Lalonde. I am from BCcampus and I will be the host and MC for today's event. I am coming to you today from the traditional territories of the Lekwungen speaking peoples of the Songhees and Esquimalt nation. I've been a settler here on the island in these territory since 1994. I grew up in Treaty Six territory of the Cree, Stoney, and Ojibwe Nations.

We have a fantastic day of HyFlex learning goodness ahead of us today. And I'm going to run down the full schedule in just a few moments. Close to 200 participants today. And I'm going to hand it over to our Executive Director at BCcampus, Mary Burgess in just a moment here. But first, I do want to go over some of the housekeeping things and I want to start with the schedule for today.

This is what our day is going to look like. So, we have some opening remarks with Mary coming up in just a moment followed by our first session. We have three sessions. Today. The first session is going to be from Royal Roads University. and it will be focused on the logistics and technology involved in HyFlex learning. Then we will have a 15-minute break at around 11:15. 11:30 we'll come back and go to the College of New Caledonia (CNC) and do our second session, which is some of the considerations for HyFlex: "What problem are you trying to solve?" And we will have some discussions around that. Lunch break from 12:15 to 1. At one o'clock. Our third, our third session of the day from the University of the Fraser Valley looking at the human elements of HyFlex learning. Break from 1:45 to 2. And then our final activity, which will be coming up with a set of principles around HyFlex, HyFlex in Action principles. That will be Olaolu Adeleye and Helena Prins from BCcampus will be facilitating that final session. And then Tracy Roberts will come back to close up the session for today.

It is going to be highly interactive all day today. And so, to go along with that, as you may have noticed, we have this booklet, those of you who registered earlier get a physical booklet like this or should have received a physical booklet like this. I'll get you to grab it if you don't have a closed by, keep it close by during the sessions. We have lots of spaces for notes in the book. So, feel free to write this, take notes as we go through the session today. It's got the schedule in it and some more information about what's going to happen for today. But basically, scribble on this right on it, make your notes. There's a takeaway for you and you will probably refer to it at the end of the day and that final activity.

The other thing you might want to keep handy is a second device. This will be a highly interactive day. All the sessions have breakout rooms or polls, some kind of participation from you throughout the day. So be sure to keep that second device Close and handy.

We also do have close to 200 participants. A wonderful turnout today. So, I'll just remind everybody that when we are in this main space, to please keep your microphones and cameras off. Just to save some bandwidth, there will be lots of opportunities for you to participate and interact. And we'll ask you to turn on your cameras. If you feel comfortable to turn on your cameras and turn on your microphones to participate. At some points throughout the day, we might be sending you off to some breakout rooms to do some small group work. So be prepared for that and be ready to participate throughout this full day. It's HyFlex in action, reaction day.

Okay. So, I'm now going to pass it off to the BCcampus Executive Director, Executive Director Mary Burgess, for a few opening remarks.

MARY BURGESS:

Thank you so much Clint and really my deep thanks, Huy ch q'u to Darlene and Barish both. Those were really wonderful ways to start the day. So, I really want to acknowledge that and want to acknowledge all the BCcampus folks who have been scurrying around getting ready for today.

As Clint said, my name is Mary Burgess. and I am lucky enough to be the executive director at BCcampus. My pronouns are they and them. I'm going to start with a personal introduction.

My dad is Harold Robinson. a retired high school teacher and my late Mom was Lonnie Robinson nee McLeod, who spent her career in the k-12 system as a school secretary. Both of my siblings also work in the public education sector. My ancestors on my mom's side, came to what's now known as Canada as uninvited settlers in the 1800's from Scotland. And my grandparents on my dad's side, came from Scotland and England as uninvited settlers in the early part of the 20th century. My family, as educators, farmers, loggers, mill workers, and businesspeople contributed to the oppression of Indigenous people, as have I. My siblings and I are committed to reconciliation and are currently unlearning and re-learning how to be different in the world than we were taught to be.

I am extremely lucky to have been raised on the ancestral and still territory at the Cowichan Tribes who have never given up their title to their land or been compensated for it. And I want to acknowledge this morning from Barish's beautiful music that people from that community who went to Cooper Island residential school.

For the past 30 years. I've been an uninvited settler on the gorgeous territory of the Lekwungen speaking people, now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. And the WSÁNEĆ people, whose historical relationships with this land continue to this day. And I'm very excited to see

those communities taking land back to steward it in the way that it should be. I'm grateful to the families, communities and ancestors for all they share with us, including how to live sustainably and ethically on this land.

It's so great to digitally connect with all of you today. Thank you so much for being here with us. We are truly honored that you have chosen to spend some of your scarce and valuable time with us.

I want to start by physically locating in my, locating myself in a space. I'm in the basement of a 111-year-old house with what I care about around me. Books, as you can see, family pictures. I'm facing south in what's now known as Victoria, towards the Salish Sea. And I'll ask you now to look around the space that you're in. What do you see? Is there a window you can see out of where are you in relation, relation to other places on the land and sea near you? And maybe I'll ask you to put one thing in the chat that you see in your physical space. Or something about the land that you're on. So we can all imagine you, instead of just seeing your face or a name on a screen and also you can be grounded in your location. So, what do you see?

Bob, frost on the tree tips your cute puppy, I love it. You'll also face south and see beautiful trees, mountain, your children. Gary oak, so many awesome Gary Oaks here. Gently falling snow. How fantastic. A messy counter. I have one of those also. A green park. I love that some of you have some snow. Ravens, awesome. A veggie garden that's so cool. More people seeing Gary Oaks. Furry sidekicks, rocks on the windowsill. I also have rocks on a windowsill. Aw Chad, you're stuffed up, two-year-old. I'm sorry to hear that. Sky, your cup of tea, cedar trees. You're in your 111-year-old house too! That's so cool! I love it. Thank you, everybody. And just keep going with that as you feel inclined.

Thank you for joining me in that exercise. I think now more than ever, it's really important to ground ourselves both in physical locations and in our bodies. And I really appreciate and Darlene helping us do that this morning. It can really help us stay present and in the best state for learning and collaboration, which is what we really want to do today together.

So, we are gathered in this virtual space around our common interests and hybrid flexible learning environments.

One of the aspects of HyFlex that really resonates for me is that it comes from a desire to include everyone. The idea is to meet students where they are by design, not as an after the fact retrofit. HyFlex has the power to make students we marginalize and our system more likely to learn what we want them to, what we want them to. And so, for me, HyFlex is about equity, It's about opportunity and it's about inclusion.

I'm going to use that segue to talk a little bit about inclusion at this event. At BCcampus, we've done a lot of learning about inclusion in the last couple of years. And this event applies some of that learning. For example, in terms of the way the program runs, the technologies we're choosing to use, and the elements like captioning that we're doing. To link us back to HyFlex,

we can take those small learnings and make a more inclusive environment in which more people are welcomed not only to attend, but also to participate.

As Clint mentioned, today, we're considering three themes. The first is the human element of HyFlex design, in which we'll look at lived experience in that mode. The second is the logistical factors that should be weighed when we're in the design stage of HyFlex learning. And also, we want to think about your thoughts on the future of this mode. Now that we know more, what should we consider for the future of the HyFlex learning environments. And we're also really excited to showcase the outstanding work of our colleagues who are meeting the current challenges of learning and teaching with compassion, creativity and care.

And speaking of those colleagues, I want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank our partners at today's event. Royal Roads University, the College of New Caledonia, and the University of the Fraser Valley. They are quite different institution types. And all three have dedicated scaled learning designers and educators working at the space. And I am so grateful that they are willing to share what they're doing so we can all learn from them.

You may already know that we had intended this event to take place in person on those campuses, as well as online. And Omicron dashed those plans for us. But here we are still getting together. And to me, isn't that just the perfect demonstration of why we need HyFlex? It's like the universe wanted us to learn something the authentic way today. And having said that, I want to situate us a little bit, contextualize our situation. Where do we find ourselves at this moment in time?

Well, we're coming up on two years of ambiguity and trying to do our best while being collectively traumatized, not just by the pandemic, but also by the various ways in which our society is divided. And I don't use the term traumatized slightly, it is very serious. The effects of this time will be far-reaching, and they will go on for many years to come, perhaps even generationally. So, we're not in a great place, maybe mentally, emotionally, and we've been kind of hanging on by your fingernails for a couple of years, hoping and then having that hope dashed repeatedly. Ignoring those facts is not going to help us regulate our nervous systems.

At the same time. I feel some kind of glimmer. We have learned so much in the past two years. There are very few people who want to go back to the way things were. Many of us recognize that the before times were problematic and that we need to do better. I feel Hope Rising. I feel the wisdom of experience and collective problem-solving starting to come together. And all of you here today is evidence of that.

One of the ways we want to try and do better is to demonstrate to our choices about program and instructional design, a commitment to student success regardless of the disruption in the world, in the life of a student, in the life of a faculty member.

We want to provide continuity in cases of illness of all kinds, abilities of all kinds and circumstances of all kinds. And that is really at the heart of HyFlex, that commitment to student

success for all students, not just the students who fit, instead narrow perspective many have of the lives of students.

And so, I would say what we've been doing during the pandemic is not HyFlex. What we've been doing is covering holes in a bursting dam. People who are already marginalized by our systems processes, policies, and culture were further marginalized during the pandemic. We know from data that's already been collected that the pandemic made things worse for Indigenous students, for Asian students, for Black students, and other students of color. For women, for queer people, for the mentally ill and the physically disabled, and for those whose socioeconomic status does not allow them the privilege of flexibility for so many others.

So, we want to do better than that. Let me repeat that. We want to do very much better than that, and I know we can.

So, let's flip to the idea of talking about HyFlex a little more deeply because I want to make sure that we're on the same page in terms of a definition. I'm not talking about blended learning or online learning with recorded lectures, upload it to a learning management system. The idea here is to not only serve but serve well those students who need flexibility. So, let's talk about where the term comes from.

Dr. Brian Beatty of San Francisco State University began the development of the hybrid flexible course design model. And in his view, HyFlex has four key elements.

The first of those is learner choice. And this means that there are alternative participation modes that are meaningful and allow students to choose the mode of engagement that works for them. It is really important to notice here that we're talking about meaningful engagement because that actually gets to learning design, not just the use of technology or not use of technology. Meaningful engagement and learning are not the same for every student. It's not the same for even one student across their learning journey. So, we need choice that supports that.

The second element is equivalence. And this means that the modes provide equivalent learning outcomes. So whichever mode is chosen, the learning has been intentionally designed to enable students to succeed at learning outcomes. And learning outcomes are key element here because it's a method we can use to test our theories about equivalents. Remember that in these settings, the student, the activities that students do to get to an outcome may not be the same across modes because the modes are not the same. We must stop thinking of online learning environments as replications of brick-and-mortar classrooms and see their potential as discrete learning environments.

The third key element is about reusability and not is around artifacts from your learning activities being captured and re-used in other modes. And this includes both learning resources from the instructor as well as what students create. This one is a real cool one for me because it touches on the notion of open pedagogy and students learning from each other. So, despite

what I said earlier about the modes being different, there are some things that work in both modes. And we want to take advantage of that and not be doing things from scratch every time. Let's look for efficiencies. And so that the learning, this is also in a case where students can learn from each other using resources created from students. So, an example of that would be a bibliography created by a previous section being used across modes and new sections.

And the final key element is accessibility. And this means that students are equipped with the technical resources and skills to be able to equitably access all modes. Universal design for learning principles is considered and implemented. And notice here that we're not just talking about making the technology accessible. Do the students know how to use it? Do the educators know how to use I use it? So that's a consideration as well.

Those are some aspirational goals, right? And I think that is something It's really important for us to be thinking about. This is not how it is right now. It's aspirational. It's possible. We absolutely need to acknowledge that right now. We have neither supports nor the knowledge to fully realize those goals. But this is where it starts with people dipping their toe in the water of something new and seeing its potential.

We're looking to evolve our system, to uphold these principles and systems do not evolve overnight, especially gigantic ones like a post-secondary system. Changes like this happen incrementally. One, compassionate disruptor at a time. They replicate in classrooms, and in faculty meetings, and at events like the one was in together today. So, buckle up, get ready for an engaging day. I hope you all get something you can take away and ponder so that we can move this work together forward.

Thank you.

CLINT LALONDE:

Thank you very much, Mary.

Couple of things that stuck out for me there about this desire that we have. We want to do better and, and, and really support and become these compassionate disruptors. And looking at the people who are in this room here, I can tell we have 200 people who are ready to become compassionate disruptors and who have a desire to do better by being at this event.