

Requirements for the return to face-to-face delivery: The necessity of classroom intimacy and designing for small groups in future curricula

Advance HE T&L Conference
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CURIO

*"The value of education is not the learning of many
facts but the training of the mind to think."*

Albert Einstein

Introductions



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Curio

Curio is one of the fastest growing education consulting and services organisation in the Asia-Pacific, now in the UK.

At Curio we:

Advise education providers on their strategy and people.

Design, develop and deliver learner-centered experiences through an understanding of how the human brain learns and develops.

Develop and embrace technologies that make education, learning and development more efficacious and efficient.

Bring together the creative and curious to improve learning and teaching experiences in all contexts.

Netiquette

- Please participate, you are what gives this workshop purpose
- Please use the chat function to add questions and feedback throughout the workshop
- Whilst we would like you to mute your microphone during the presentation, feel free to unmute and contribute at any time



Outline of the workshop



Chapter 1

Socio-constructivism for
groupwork and learning
together



Chapter 2

Effective planning of both online
and offline teaching activities



Chapter 3

Small group teaching: Let's re-
design a classroom

The post-pandemic context

Effects of 2020 on curricula design

- **Technology for learning:** The pandemic has illuminated what can be done with this online space. it can be engaging, enriching and accessible.
- **Redefining engagement:** The interactions and discussions that students take part in online can say much more about engagement than lecture attendance.
- **Creative assessment:** Open-book assessments, such as producing case studies, writing policy briefing papers and recording podcasts reward curiosity and academic inquiry.
- **Students as partners:** Students can help shape the format of live activities by giving regular feedback, which is easier to provide and track online.

r/ [redacted] Posted by u/ [redacted] 3 hours ago

What don't you like about online learning?

Miscellaneous

I'm just curious, what is the worst part of online uni for you? Is there anything that could be done to change it? I see lots of people talking about how much they hate it here, and I have a few guesses why, but I would love to hear what specifically sucks about it.

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[redacted] 21 points · 1 hour ago

Sitting down hours on watching lectures + being on zoom tutes just drains me. It's like day in day out staring at the computer, with no social interaction (apart from zoom tutes I guess)-you lose motivation quickly

The problem

as reported by
students and staff
online



Poll: do you agree / disagree with this statement?

The lecture was ailing before COVID.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree



Back to campus?

- **Safely getting staff, students (and researchers) back to campus.** Tutorials, lab work and small-group seminars, will continue in 2021, with the notable exception of the traditional lecture.
- **Teaching space is much more problematic.** The absolute limit of 100 students in one space, narrow seat aisles and close seat spacing make them difficult to adapt. Online lectures will still be necessary for the foreseeable future.
- **Successfully delivering small group teaching.** The reconfiguration of course structures and for example furniture relocation. The opportunity to provide this type of teaching up to capacity limits will be valuable in supporting retention and improving the student experience.
- **The faint silver lining? A long-term shift towards small group teaching,** supplemented by high quality online materials, rather than reverting to the large lecture as we knew it.



Chapter 1

Socio-constructivism for groupwork and learning together

Let's examine

Community of learning

Why is this important?

- Without a community of learning a student's learning is informed solely by their personal assumptions and previous knowledge
- Community amongst students exposes them to diverse perspectives and creates a more robust repository of knowledge that students are invested in as co-creators
- Teachers enhance this through the supplementary posts you add to discussion forums and the personalised feedback the teacher provides both in the classroom and online

An active teacher in the online environment will help:

- Clarify concepts
- Professional expertise
- Extensive knowledge in the field
- Reminds students of their value in the discussions
- Model desired discussion board behaviours
- Asking forward moving questions

The research

Context: Community and Social-ness Promote Learning

- *“...the social process of developing shared understanding through interaction is the “natural” way for people to learn...” (Hiltz, 1994: 22)*
- Its impact is established widely in the research literature: “socialness” has a positive impact on learning, relationship development, and student satisfaction levels (online and offline) (Garrison, 2011; Lowenthal, 2009).
- Stems from Vygotskian notions of peer interaction and its benefits for collaborative learning (1978)



Small group teaching

Learning is a social and collaborative activity where people create meaning through their interactions with one another

- 5-7 learners
- Close proximity classroom seating
- Consider demographics and diversity
- Self managed groups function when members learn enough about one another
- Develop explicit behavioural norms for group identity
 - Problem solving perspectives
 - Different worldviews
 - Work experience approximation
- Student's grade reflects individual performance, group performance, and peer evaluation

Any questions so far?





Chapter 2

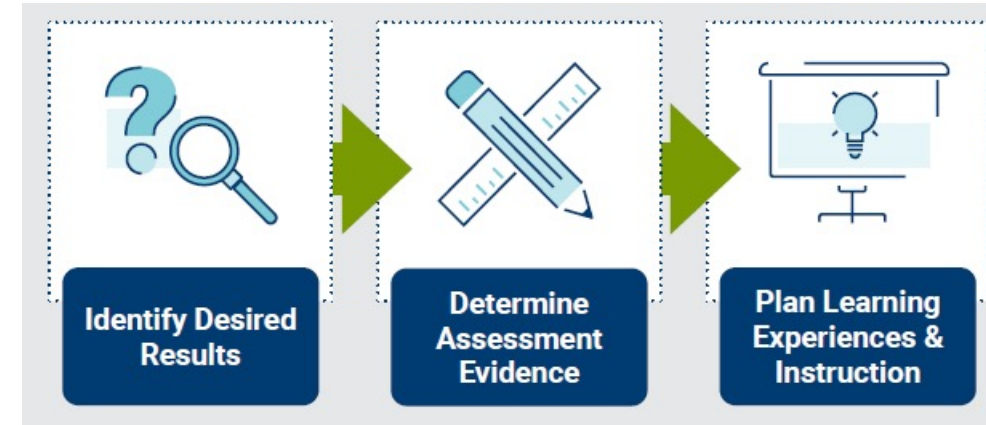
Effective planning of both online and offline teaching activities

Let's examine

“I didn’t sign up for this”

How to Address This Reluctance to blend/hybridise

- Start with the immediate and basic needs, enhance when and as you can
- Work together and use the people and resources available to you within your school
- Think about what may stay online and what may revert to campus-based teaching later
- Backward Design approach - start with your learning objectives
- “Walk in the shoes” of your students
- Retain personality, and unique pedagogic style and flair



Backward Design

Bowen, Ryan S., (2017). Understanding by Design. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. Retrieved from <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/understanding-by-design/>.

Let's hear from our audience

Exemplar practices and anecdotes from the frontline

What do you know now about blended (or online?) teaching that you wish you had known at the very beginning?

Let's hear from our experienced online educators – or anyone that has taught across 2020/2021?



Reimagining teaching post-2020

What is our role as academics and SMEs?



– Mohamed Noor, Dean of Natural Sciences within Trinity College of Arts and Sciences

<https://learninginnovation.duke.edu/blog/2020/05/how-duke-faculty-kept-teaching/>

- **Amplifying** - Drawing attention to important ideas/concepts, both in the course materials and in student comments or other work.
- **Curating** - Selecting and arranging readings, videos, and other resources to scaffold concepts
- **Aggregating** - Finding and displaying patterns in discussions and other communications
- **Modeling** - Demonstrate the skills you expect from your students - both in terms of interaction and analysis
- **...Expertise**

<https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/34528/pages/types-of-presence-teaching-presence>

Blending high quality group experiences

And why does this matter more now?



Synchronous group learning activities:

- Lectures, seminars, tutorials, demonstrations, laboratories
- Scheduled webinars, events, chats or videoconferences
- Benefits: motivation of joint experience, feedback, keeping on track, value in learning together, accountability

Asynchronous group learning activities

- Group discussion boards, live team quizzes, collaborative documents
- Benefits: learners can choose time, place and pace, large variety of authentic alternatives, often easier for collaboration

What is the right “mix” for your classroom for synch and asynch? Why??

Reimagining your blended classroom

Serving both online and f2f student groups

- Consider equity of student access
- Consider tech limitations and familiarity
- Consider your access to a 2nd resource (doc student, TA, other student in room?)
- Don't repeat yourself: don't have multiple lecture streams, BUT:
 - Do consider some recorded concept videos
 - Do consider having a f2f lecture/seminar that is being "broadcast"
 - Consider how these two differ/work in sync
 - Provide ONE f2f tutorial/workshop, and an equivalent online workshop (recorded, but consider release time/date)

Online collaboration spaces

Where students can engage when not in the room



Discussion forums (can be assessment related and or targeted towards social engagement of students)



Free group collaboration spaces, Miro, Trello, Zoom whiteboards



Give students autonomy in choosing a collaboration space:
WeChat/WhatsApp → these are often INVISIBLE to you

Reimagining the same lecture: Breakout Rooms (pairs; 10mins)

- Content duration: 120 mins
- Lectorial time in timetable: 60mins
- Student numbers: 45 in the room, 45 online
- Unit topic name: Institutions in Society
- Lesson name: The Model Day University
- Lesson Details: In this class, students will understand the history of the university as an institution both pre and post-enlightenment. They will investigate the role the university plays both in societal, economic, and political paradigms.
- Students will hear from a variety of university administrators on how to lead a university in the modern age, and compare and contrast this modern mission with past historical examples of learning institutions from the past. Students will leave the class with a greater understanding of how and why their universities are structured in the way they are, and perhaps provide some interesting hypotheses of “what next” for these important institutions.

You don't need to know the content! Plan how you would best structure this, for blended transformation, incorporating group sizes, activities, tasks etc.

What should a compelling and exciting mix of live and recorded activities look like for this lecture?

Reimagining Lectures

How to make blended teaching more exciting?

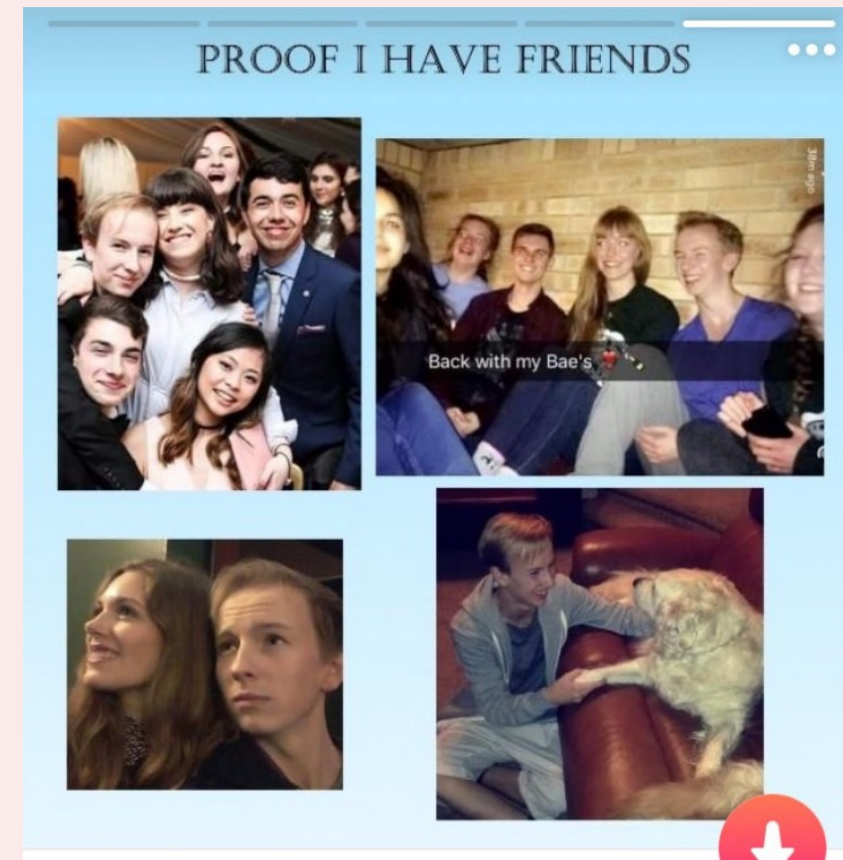


- **Breaking the content up:** i.e., have a recorded video that is then followed-up with discussion questions or a particular activity to encourage a higher level of engagement of students
- **Have live sessions or webinars:** this is where your **module** comes to life. You could have webinars or live sessions that goes for about 40-45 minutes (which includes: Theory, Activities, Assessments) (*think: where in this lecture are students likely to ask questions...that's the LIVE part to retain*)
- **Encourage application/reflection:** in your classes (or webinars/live sessions), encourage students to reflect on their personal experiences and to think about what you are talking, how they can apply it back to their own workplace?
- **Confidence with the technology:** Settling on the best video conferencing solution for you and your cohort and becoming comfortable with available features.

Blended Activities

For small group discussions;

- Focus on cross-cultural and global examples in case-studies
- Accommodate ESL learners (multi-modal learning materials)
- Teams has real-time transcription, but can be done with Google Docs also
- Consider “collage” type intro activities, bring in the visual, rich media to support
- Consider whiteboard for aggregating conversation and/or visual aids
- Consider a “show and tell” where there is co-creation of learning materials. Each week, invite students in to co-present or share.
- A weekly takeaway goal for seminars: get students to use their mic!



Your role as an educator to foster intimacy and social trust

A supportive teacher, facilitator and expert?



Have purposeful collaboration: set this expectation, but design for it also



Create an environment of exploration and discovery of NEW or BOLD ideas



Allow students to share their experiences in both ideas and their learning relevant to their personal and professional lives



Get students to co-create and contribute within the course



Chapter 3

Small group teaching: Let's re-design a classroom

Some design and management considerations

Flexibility in teaching space arrangement: think about both cohorts

Don't forget the experience for your offline and online students!

Studies demonstrate that students prefer more flexible seating arrangements (Harvey and Kenyon, 2013).

The key is to design the arrangement of the room to allow for minimal transition time between different types of learning, rather than the way that the instructor prefers.

Think about what you want to accomplish:

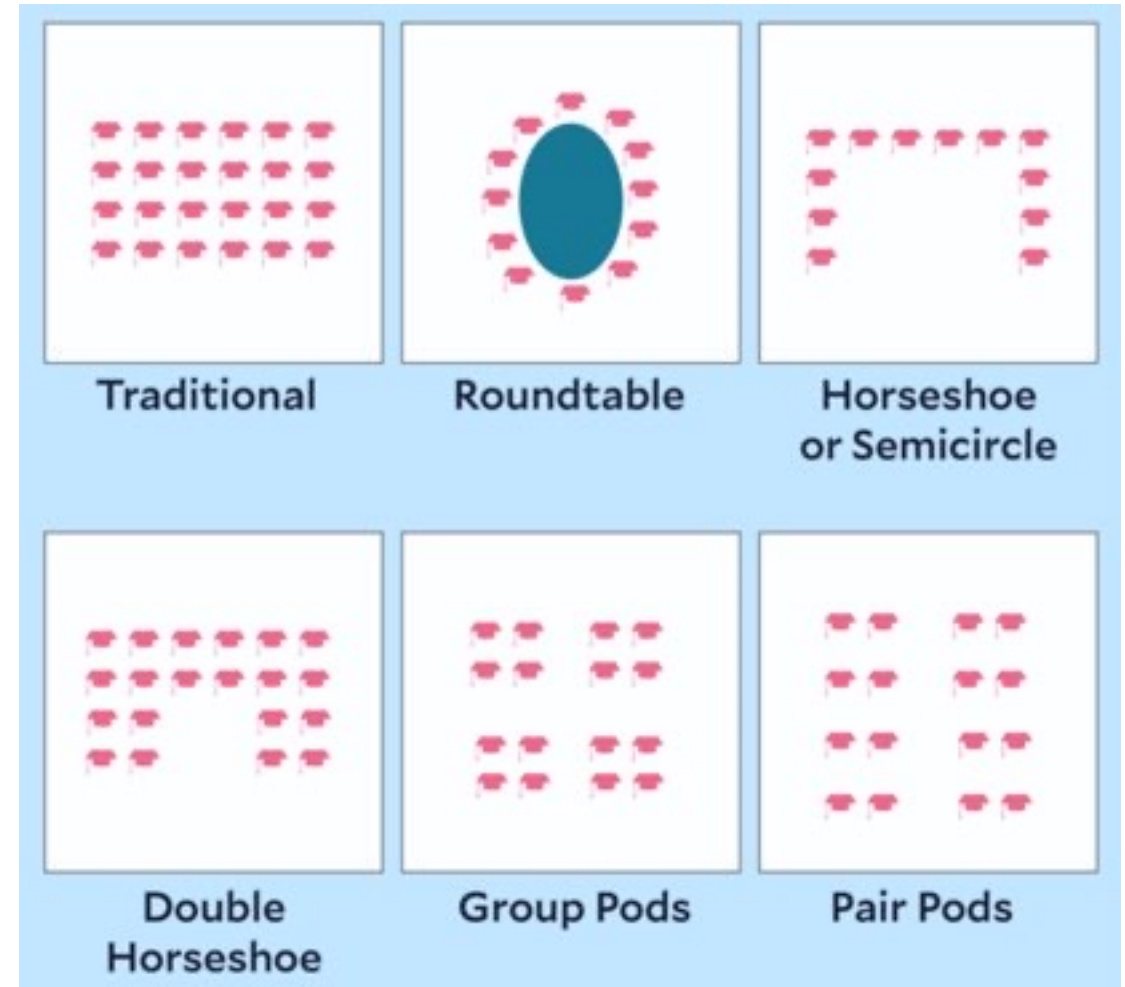
- Higher levels of independent work seat learners in rows
- Decrease disruptive behaviors seat learners in rows
- Group/collaborative learning seat learners in groups
- International learner groups with strong cultural similarity seat learners in groups
- Problem solving or case-based teaching seat learners in groups
- Group discussion put learners in a circle/roundtable

While designing the room arrangement; minimise blind spots, minimise traffic bottlenecks, and maximise access of instructor to students.

Common technologically-enhanced room layouts

How might this look post 2020?

- Research suggests that seating arrangements can impact how the instructors communicate with learners and how learners interact with one another. This has flow on effects for engagement, motivation, and focus (McCorskey and McVetta, 1978).
- The set-up of the classroom space shapes teacher pedagogy, their choice of activities, and levels of on-task learner behaviour (Brooks 2012, Rands and Gansemer-Topf, 2017).



Source: Yale's Poorvu Centre (2021)

Don't forget where the technology is placed!

Where is the technology for you? Your students?

- To conduct effective Hyflex or blended teaching, you will need at least ONE extra screen.
- This is so YOU as teacher can see students learning remotely. Often, this is your own device (BYOD)
- And perhaps one EXTRA screen reflecting these same faces back to your students (especially for discussion-based tutorials and class).

Q: Where would the screens be placed here?

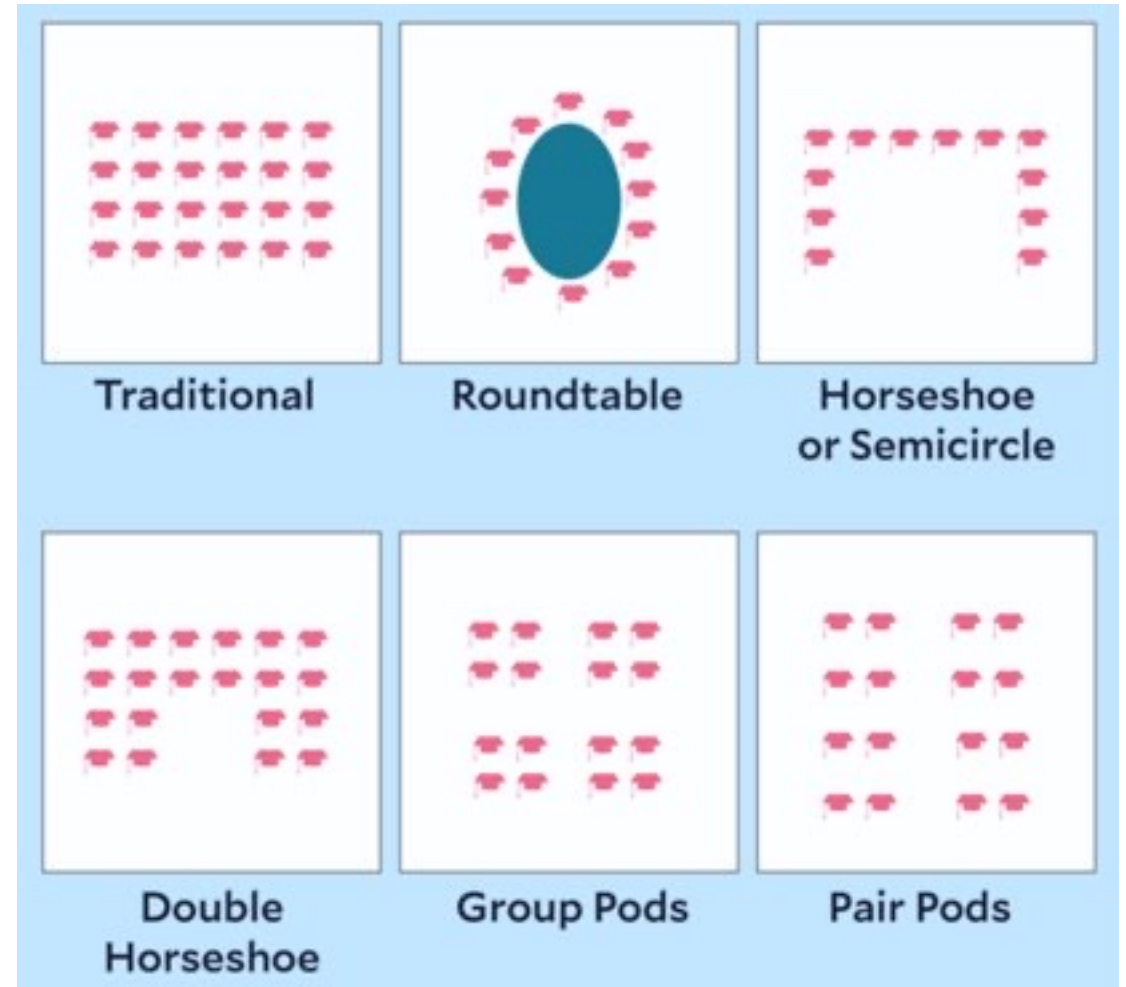
1. Miro activity: Bringing it all together (15 mins)

A. Re-design a classroom space for small group activity, considering technology for those “not in the room”. Choose a space layout and place the three screens:

1. Presentation screen (slides)
2. Teacher’s screen (notes)
3. Student screen for faces of others

B. Indicate directionality of screen/arrows to show where they face? **(5 mins)**

C. Start from your own teaching experience. Re-design an instructional activity to better accommodate f2f and remote learners and think about the instructions to both cohorts. **(10 mins)**



Source: Yale's Poorvu Centre (2021)

Q&A

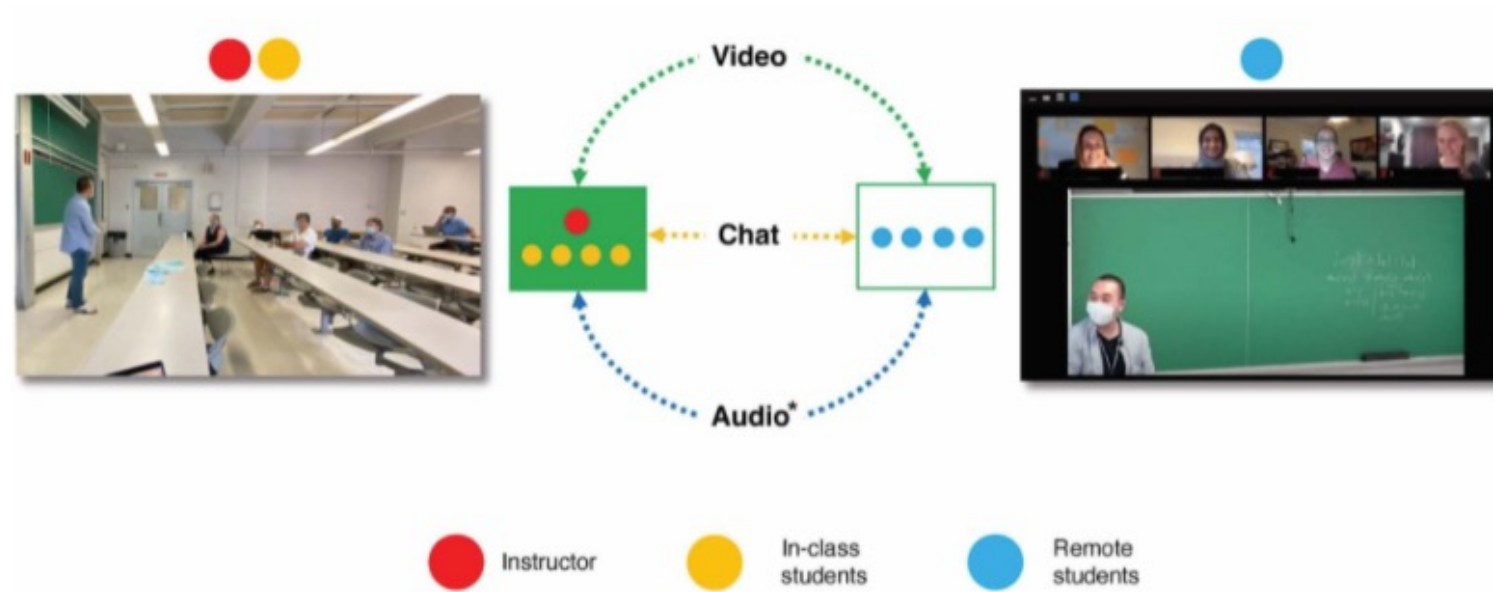
End of Workshop

Thank you

End of Workshop

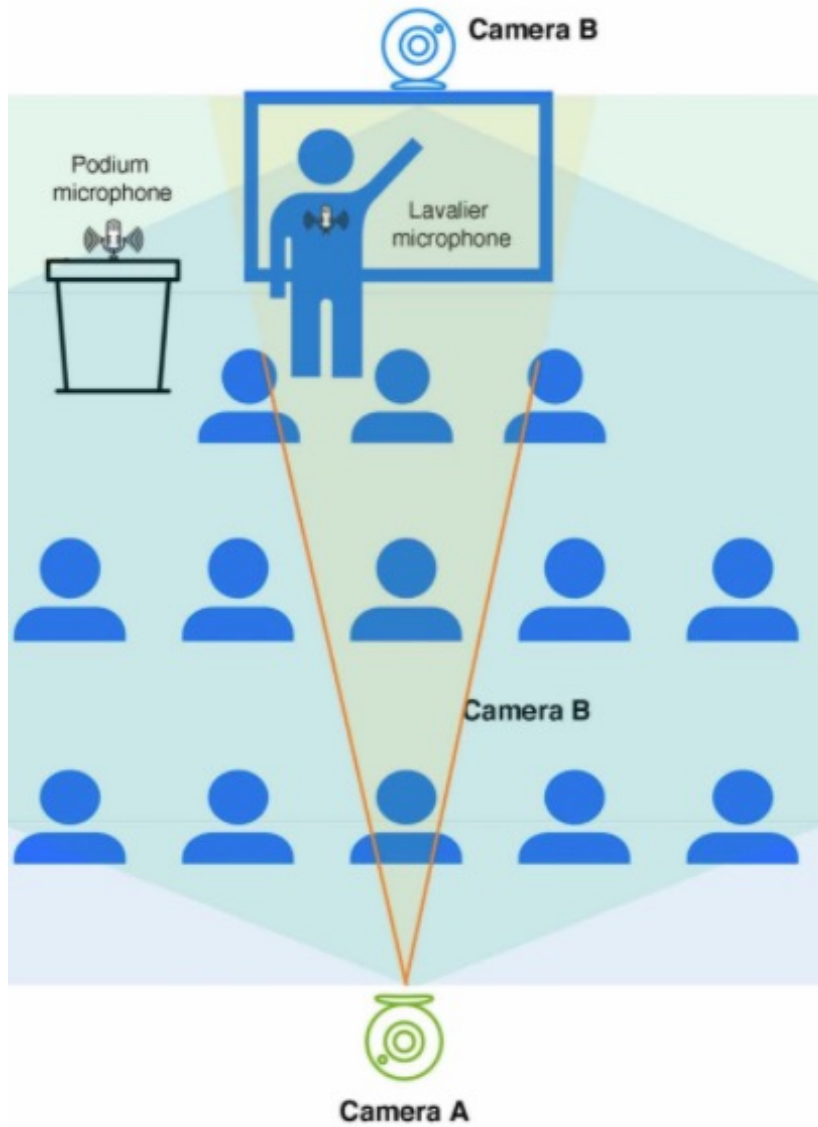
Appendix

Different approaches to setting up and running HyFlex activities



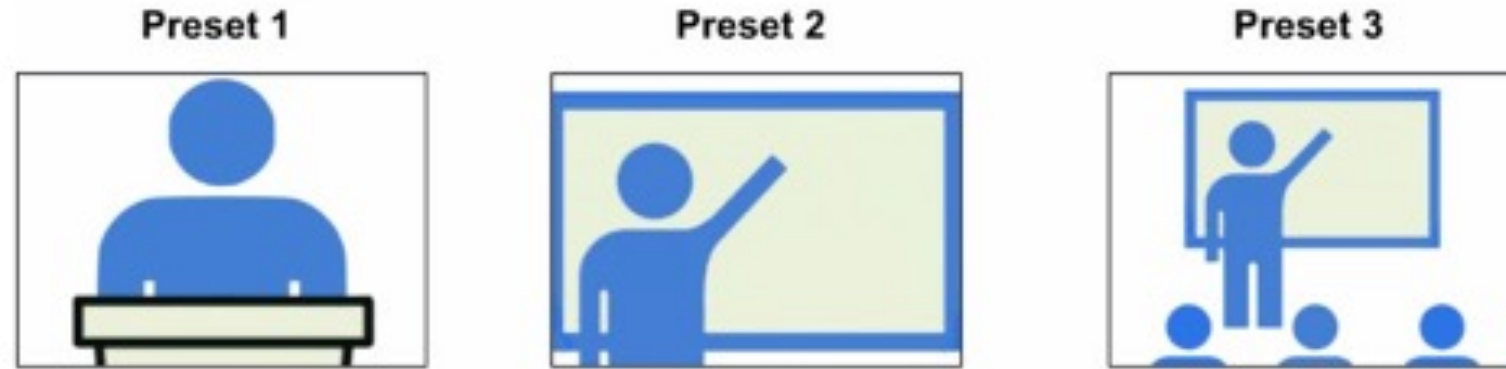
The interplay of a HyFlex class: Instructor, face-to-face students, and remote students linked by video, audio, and chat technologies. In the background of this setup, the course management system (at Columbia, CourseWorks) hosts materials and interactions for the whole class.

Different approaches to setting up and running HyFlex activities



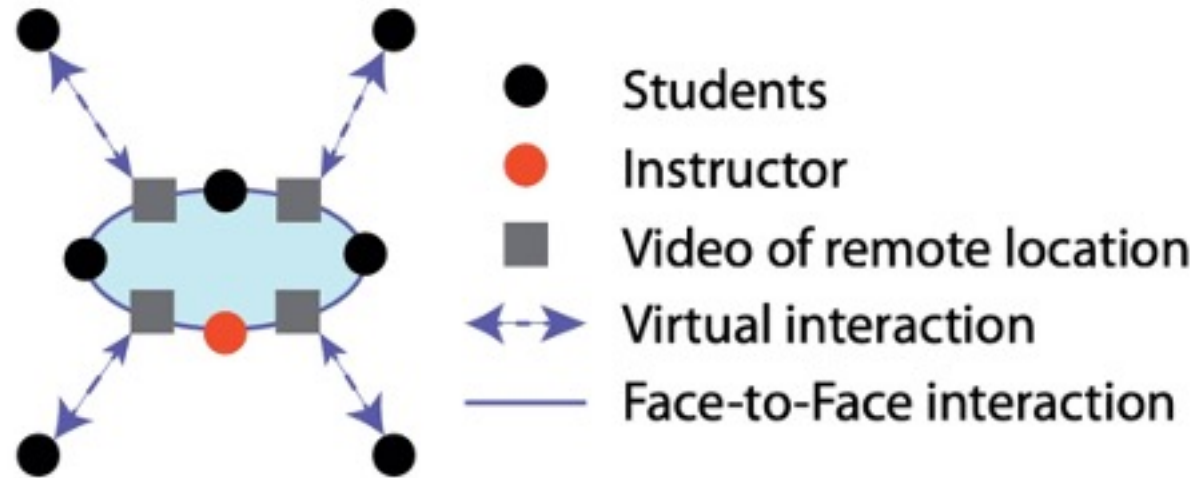
A lecture-oriented HyFlex setup, centering on an instructor presenting to students.

Different approaches to setting up and running HyFlex activities



A touch panel for the HyFlex setup in Figure 2 allows the instructor to toggle between pre-sets for camera A, the camera trained on the front of the room, and camera B, which provides remote students a view of their in-person peers.

Different approaches to setting up and running HyFlex activities



A distributed video model for a smaller seminar, from ([Bell et al., 2014](#)).