Hybrid Learning in English Language Teaching

Hybrid Learning in English Language Teaching:

Motivation, Challenges and Opportunities

Edited by

Okon Effiong, Bill Batziakas
and Karima Ben Abbes

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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This book first published 2024

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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Foreword

Rod Ellis

I have been working in English language teaching (ELT) for more than 50 years but mainly as a teacher educator-researcher. My first two jobs however were both as a teacher. In 1965, I spent a few months in a small Berlitz school in Spain. From 1967 to 1970, I worked in a newly built secondary school in a very rural area in Zambia. Teaching then meant face-to-face and the only aids were a textbook, readers and a chalkboard. How far we have come! If I were starting now I would have the internet at my service and would need to know how to use it either to supplement face-to-face instruction or to replace it. A notebook computer, tablet or mobile phone (non-existent) in my early days would be an essential tool of the trade. A completely new vocabulary has come into being as reflected in the chapters in this book – online instruction, the hybrid classrooms, the virtual lesson, digital platforms, synchronous interaction, and asynchronous interaction. A brave new world indeed! I do find myself wondering however, to what extent this brave new world is evident in the situations I started my career in. I suspect to some extent it is at Berlitz but maybe still not at all in my bush secondary school in Zambia.

A common thread in the papers in the book is that technological advances bring huge advantages but also problems for language teaching. I thought I would draw on the most recent technological advance – artificial intelligence (AI) – to help me identify these advantages of problems. I enlisted the help of Claude+ and asked it to tell me about the problems and advantages of web-based technologies for teaching a foreign language. I will summarise what it came up with, and have added my own commentary.

Problems:

1.   Lack of face-to-face interaction

Interaction is, of course, possible digitally so it is incorrect to talk about a 'lack' of it. However, there is a problem I think with the quality of it. We miss so much of the richness of interaction when we communicate via the

internet. Interaction is, of course, essential for language learning as my work in second language acquisition has shown.

2.   Technology challenges

Is there a teacher that has not experienced frustration in handling software, connectivity issues and account management? I have a personal dread of new technology but, when pressed, I bite the bullet and try to control my frustrations.

3.   Cheating and plagiarism

Successful language learning is dependent on the struggle to learn and access to AI can remove the need to struggle. I should be careful here though as I am making use of AI here now! Perhaps what is needed is to encourage a critical assessment of what AI can provide us with as I am attempting to do.

4.   Extra work

The extra work that Claude+ identified was developing online courses and materials and monitoring students. I myself have experienced this in an online course on task-based language teaching I have taught recently. In particular, monitoring students' contributions to a discussion board was very costly in terms of time. But then, again, AI may help both with course development and monitoring providing of course it is used critically. For example, we may be able to use AI to provide feedback on students' writing.

Claude+ identified no other problems. It might have considered 'motivation'. Not every teacher will be 'motivated' to use technology; not every learner will be motivated to learn using technology. I personally will always prefer to teach face-to-face and thus see technology ideally as a supplement rather than a replacement.

Advantages:

Interestingly, Claude+ comes up with a much longer list of advantages than or problems. Presumably, this is because the data it has drawn on (whatever they are) give greater credence to advantages.

1.   Flexibility

Claude+ says "teachers can often teach from anywhere on their own schedule". But in fact online classes have to be scheduled just like face-to-

face classes. But it is true that teaching can take place anywhere and indeed I have conducted online classes wherever my travels have taken me.

2.   Scalability

Online course can accommodate more students. This is likely to be seen as an advantage for cost-aware administrators but it is a potential problem for teachers who are likely to find their workload increased. Large classes are not ideal for language learning.

3.   Asynchonicity

Claude+ says "course materials and assignments can often be reviewed and completed on students' own time." This is true (assuming students are motivated) but in fact asynchronicity is also a feature of traditional teaching. Setting homework has always had an important place in teaching. Perhaps the greatest advantage is that online resources hugely enhance access to the input that is essential for language learning.

4.   Data insights

What Claude+ means by this is that online learning platforms provide insights into how students engage with the course materials. This seems to be a very significant advantage. The teacher cannot just find out whether students have completed the online instructional activities but how well they have done them and how much time they spent on them. All valuable information that can feed back into teaching.

5.   Creative expression

The claim here is that developing an array of online materials can spark teachers' creativity. Well, in my early teaching days I got a lot of satisfaction in developing my own teaching materials, so I do not need online access for this. However, the web certainly provides teachers with much richer resources for developing materials than were available to me in Zambia.

6.   Career opportunity

Claude+ notes that "online teaching opens up more and better career opportunities" because teachers are not constrained to teach only in the location they are in. They can teach in multiple sites. I can see the advantage here but also the danger. Maybe if online teaching had been available back in 1967, I would never have got to go to Zambia and would have missed out on the experience of my lifetime.

So let us be cognisant of what technology and online access can give us but let us also take care to adopt a critical perspective when looking at both its dangers and advantages. The contents of this book will help readers to achieve this.

June 2023

Author's bio

Professor Emeritus Rod Ellis is a Kenneth W. Mildenberger Prize-winning British linguist. He is currently a Research Professor in the School of Education, at Curtin University in Perth, Australia. He is also a Professor at Anaheim University, where he serves as the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Ellis is a Visiting Professor at Shanghai International Studies University as part of China's Chang Jiang Scholars Program and an Emeritus Professor of the University of Auckland. He has also been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand. He has published many textbooks and journal articles on Second Language Learning and Acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

LIZ ENGLAND

The pain and anger faced by teachers at the start of the World Health Organisation's 2020 announcement of a global pandemic was just beginning in early 2020 and it continues today. There are few statements one can make about "all teachers worldwide;" but one is this: "We have all witnessed sea changes in our professional lives over the past several years." None of those changes were of our own making. Fortunate to have worked with teachers on five continents in less complex times 1984-2020, I have first-hand knowledge of the lengths to which teachers go in order to find a way to meet challenges they have not, themselves, created. The motivation, challenges and opportunities in ELT are with us all today – here in Virginia and worldwide – and for the foreseeable future, too, thanks to COVID and thanks to resources such as this book.

In some respects, it was no surprise to hear about teachers in my own country who sit in their cars parked on the streets in front of apartment buildings where several of their students live and where Internet connections are weak. These teachers provide lessons via hotspot on their personal mobile phones to students huddled together in one bedroom for their biweekly lessons. I should not have been in tears when I learned the tragic story of a teacher I had known and worked with who had 20 years' service at the university. She returned, in the late spring during a brief hiatus in the statewide lockdown, to her English Language Program Director's office, to find her office door locked and her key didn't work. She was told by the administrative assistant to go immediately to the dean's office, where she was told by the dean, "Sorry, but we're downsizing. You're fired." While her story is not uncommon and her fight led to a better job (with higher pay), this story is essential for others to know. Indeed, readers will relate to their own professional lives and those of their family members and friends in education. And a recent report by an independent McKinsey publication reassures us that "The Big Quit" continues until this day and is not predicted to end any time soon. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/ education/our-insights/k-12-teachers-are-quitting-what-would-make-them-stay.

Beyond US borders, the stories continue: With invitations accepted in a dozen countries worldwide, I have been fortunate to learn virtually about the work of hundreds of teachers including those in Argentina, Bolivia, India, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Tunisia, Morocco, and my beloved second home, Egypt. There are too many stories to write those here. One stands out however and requires mention: At the Qatar University Seventh Annual Virtual International Conference on Language Teaching, I presented a keynote on the topic of hybrid learning in ELT, with the generous funding of the United States Department of State Office of English Language Programs in Bahrain. In the lead-up, online presentation, and the follow-on to that virtual event, there were many stories of motivation, challenge and opportunity. It was, in some part, because of those conversations that this book appears here. My own story adds to those already noted. My heart and helping hand go out to all of those who have asked for help; while for those teachers whose stories remain silent, know that you're not alone now. The world is filled with others, like yourself, who've either found extraordinary strength and resiliency or who have found an exit button and left the field of ELT. To all, I am your ally and supporter and this book is for you.

The co-editors and authors of this book, *Hybrid Learning in ELT: Motivation, Challenges and Opportunities*, are aware of these facts. They too have lived through these challenges. In addition, this book brings us evidence for opportunity, and indeed even some pleasure, as we identify and use valuable resources contained here in order to move forward into the next decade and beyond.

Drawing on excellence in educational backgrounds and professional experience in teaching, research and service, and diversity among contributors in high, medium, and low resourced contexts, co-editors, Drs. Effiong, Batziakas and Ben Abbes, offer a menu of chapters containing evidence-based studies. Anyone who cares about teaching and learning - teachers, teacher educators, graduate students, program leaders, professional educational associations, and parents - are all offered an abundance of already tested tools for teaching and learning: each chapter is a new opportunity for adaptation and use.

In addition to useful, the book is organised in a way that makes sense, in these four sections - Technology in Hybrid Classrooms, Learner Factors, Language Skills Development, and finally, Classroom Management. Together, the content of chapters in each of the sections engage and inform us all on ways of moving forward in these changing times – wherever we

are on our career paths: novice, mid-career, veteran, and even semi-retired professionals. Sections address the following chapter topics:

Section 1 opens with Gabriel Maggioli's paper that provides a launch for the whole volume: he presents results of a carefully designed and clearly described research project on impact of the pandemic on teachers in South America. For me, there is comfort in carefully designed research with conclusions that are based on clearly presented facts. There has been so much emotion and stress lately and we all need findings from actual research. In the opening chapter, Gabe connects the work he did for our own book on teacher education with the experiences of learners. Please see Maggioli, G. (2023): A Framework to ENABLE Teacher Learning (England, L., Kamhi-Stein, L., and Kormpas, G. (2023): *English Language Teacher Education in Changing Times: Perspectives, Strategies, and New Ways of Teaching and Learning*, pp. 81-96). The opening chapter in Effiong et al's edited volume gives us a sense of confidence and hope, moving forward into the adventure we are sure to ride in the coming decade and beyond. The following chapters in Section 1 address specifics on technology applications in hybrid teaching with these subtopics: theory-based tech integration and Padlet use. If you aren't familiar with the theoretical basis for tech use in hybrid settings and if you aren't using Padlet, these chapters will be a must for you. And for those of us already familiar with these subtopics, refreshing is helpful now and then!

Section 2, Learner Factors, takes us into the world of learner centeredness and a reminder for how important those are as we navigate hybrid classrooms now and in the future. We have here an array of English language teaching contexts in these harrowing times: Greece, India, and Qatar. Contributors in Section 2 continue what we saw in Section 1, a presentation of details on evidence-based work: all chapters in Section 2 emphasise the diversity found worldwide and specifically in each of these countries – variety of ages and proficiency levels, as well as diversity in local and national policies and cultural traditions. Readers will most assuredly have "Aha!" moments: finding examples of problems they have never previously, do not currently face (and may or may not face in the future), as well as familiar challenges – some comfortable and others painful – leading readers to nod in agreement! Descriptions of highly innovative approaches to learner needs is the big take-away for readers here.

In Section 3, researchers in Macau, Qatar and Brazil offer an array of challenges that hybrid teaching and learning have brought to them as they have identified valuable new ways of addressing instructional challenges in

the teaching of specific language skills in hybrid classrooms during and following the pandemic in those three countries. Feedback systems in a skills-based curriculum, how students perceive critical thinking instruction, and the use of an exceptionally innovative tool for formative assessment using reflective processes. All of us can learn from these three studies: How to teach our students to communicate well in English and how to assess their progress – all (or at least partially) online?

Section 4 addresses Classroom Management issues in hybrid settings. There is a refreshing "don't mince words" feel to the chapters in this section where real-world teachers report on their outstanding work as teachers and researchers in the complex world of "pivoting." I wonder how others feel; but personally, I find that word to be used too often and it's like this:

Admin to teacher: "You need to teach online. Next Wednesday. And oh, you get no resources, no training, and no pay for doing it."

Teacher: "Hm, well, it's going to take some time for us to get this all going."

Admin: "Oh. Really? Why?"

Classroom management issues and extraordinarily professional and nuanced thinking and creativity are demonstrated by contributors here who provide instructional research reports from Morocco, United States, and Qatar, too. "Pivoting" and all its "tip of the iceberg" issues right here.

The past three years have been a bombardment of new ideas for language education and teacher education; and there is no sign that the sense of stress accompanying it will end soon. One example is the recent explosion in artificial intelligence (AI) tools, some of which have, as of this writing, been banned in at least two countries. And the pain and anger addressed at the start of this introduction and the "sea changes in our professional lives" – none of it appears to be ending in the coming years. In fact, it's just going to continue: chaos is the "new normal!" The resiliency of what we have called "heroes without capes" in our own book (*ibid*, p. 228) cannot be overstated: many of us have now seen the positive outcomes of our resiliency and our abilities to manage change; and this book will help us to continue to do so.

Positive outcomes do indeed come from chaos; and the contributors – co-editors and chapter authors – are here to remind us all of examples of that fact on a truly global scale with representation from ten countries worldwide sharing their research: from Brazil, Costa Rica, Greece, India, Macau,

Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, United States, and Uruguay. Authors of these chapters bring accessible perspectives and useful tools that can help us all.

Best wishes to you on your career path in English language teaching and learning! May good days be with you always!

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Author's bio

With an academic career in language teacher education in the United States and on five continents, **Professor Liz England** has enjoyed contributing to projects focusing on educational program design, implementation, and evaluation for universities, ministries, and private and government agencies. She has worked extensively in the Middle East and North Africa as well as on both short- and long-term assignments in over 30 countries worldwide. Author of many books, chapters, and journal articles, her recent research focuses on career path development and she has published the first book on the subject in 2019, *TESOL Career Path Development: Creating Professional Success* (Routledge). Her newest co-edited book (England, Kamhi-Stein, and Kormpas) *English Language Teacher Education in Changing Times: Perspectives, Strategies, and New Ways of Teaching and Learning* (Routledge, 2023) focuses on our work during the global pandemic. Dr. England looks forward very much to her first virtual visit to.

PART I

TECHNOLOGY IN THE HYBRID CLASSROOM

CHAPTER 1

EXPLORING NEW TEACHING SCENARIOS: A BRAVE HYBRID WORLD

GABRIEL DIAZ MAGGIOLI

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Abstract

The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the progressive return to face-to-face teaching have prompted many educational institutions around the world to rethink the way in which they deliver their services. The consequences of the pandemic on students' and instructors' emotional health as well as the fear of contagion forced institutions to implement alternative teaching modes. This chapter focuses on a research project undertaken at a private university in South America, where a technology-mediated, hybrid, and flexible approach to teaching and learning was implemented starting in 2021. As it was the case with many innovations originating within the context of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), the implementation of this particular pedagogical arrangement was not devoid of problems. The research project sought to understand how instructors across the university and their undergraduate students perceived the implementation of the model. To this end, two independent questionnaires were administered, one for instructors and one for students. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of those instructors and students who had responded to the questionnaires. The findings revealed that the proposed pedagogical innovation brought about both challenges and rewards to both the instructors and the students who participated in classes remotely.

Keywords: higher education; technology-mediated instruction; hybrid; flexible; remote learners; instructors

1. Introduction

The compulsory migration of teaching and learning to technology-mediated or technology-supported environments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is now generally referred to as Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), and it demotes denote any educational provisions implemented during the pandemic and in its aftermath, acted as a substitute for face-to-face interaction and not directly planned and organised as instances of rigorous online learning (Hodges et al*., 2020*). In other words, the main goal of ERT, according to Hodges et al. (2020),

> "…is not to re-create a robust educational ecosystem but rather to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional supports in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis."

In this context, the implementation of a HyFlex® model, together with its technology should be seen as one more response the university implemented to help ease the consequences of the health crises originated by the COVID-19 virus. Because of this, the innovation should not be conceived of as a move towards distance learning in any of its forms.

The study was undertaken at a private university in a South American country. The university encompasses four schools offering undergraduate and graduate programs in various academic disciplines. There is also an institute which offers exclusively graduate courses at the master's and doctoral levels in a specific discipline, too. Most classes are offered in three different shifts from Monday to Thursday: morning, 8:00-12:00am; afternoon, 1:00-5:00pm, and evening, 6:00-10:00pm. Students are able to choose the shift which they prefer based on their personal circumstances. Many students work or have family commitments and this flexibility in their choice is one of the key factors that distinguishes this particular university from other ones. The university also offers courses taught by well-known scholars in their respective fields and generally appears in international rankings of higher education institutions, featuring high among top-ranked universities in the region.

The research project was undertaken during the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023, specifically from March to July, when most classes were offered in the hybrid and flexible configuration using the HyFlex® modality, since this was the first semester where the return to face-to-face teaching was possible. The Schools Council, comprising the President, the Provost, and the Deans of all the colleges, commissioned a research study aiming at gaining insights into the faculty members' and

students' experiences with the innovation, with the hope that the findings would help them make informed decisions in terms of subsequent educational policy. The researchers included two faculty members with specialisms in education and 1 expert on educational technology from each of the schools. The two education specialists undertook the research design and also designed the instruments of the research project, as well as they were in charge of the data collection process in each of the schools. The four educational technology specialists undertook the implementation of the in-depth interviews and collaborated in the analysis of the data for each of their schools. Moreover, there was an administrative assistant in charge of all communications with participants. Questionnaire data were gathered during the 2nd and 3rd months of the semester, i.e. April and May), and interviews were implemented during the 4th month, i.e. June.

2. Literature review

Different versions of hybrid learning have been in operation since the 2010s. In particular, an approach titled HyFlex®, a combination of the terms 'hybrid' and 'flexible', has been in operation in various universities around the world since 2012 (Beatty, 2022). This approach blends the use of highly sophisticated technology to capture the live action of the on-site class with technological tools to interact with students who attend the lesson remotely. The modality makes use of intelligent cameras, which follow the instructor automatically zooming in on board work, for instance, and combining high-quality resolution images with state-of-the-art microphones which have the capacity to cancel environmental noise.

However, beyond the technological aspects involved in the modality, its creator (Beatty, 2022) identifies four powerful core pedagogical values, which give rise to four key principles setting this approach apart from other forms of hybrid delivery. First and foremost is the value of *learner choice,* which translates into providing students with a meaningful alternative to their participation in academic activities. This choice affords students the opportunity to actively participate in class wherever they may be and whenever they may be available. The second core value is *equivalency,* which can be summarised as providing students with learning activities and experiences that allow them all to achieve the learning outcomes specified for a particular course. The third core value, which focuses on instruction, is *reusability*. This refers to the fact that the materials and activities created for on-site and online teaching become learning objects that afford all learners an equal chance of success. Lastly, the fourth value is that of

accessibility, which has to do with the affordance to all learners of equal opportunities to access the course and participate in it.

It should be noted that these four values were not equally incorporated as guiding principles of innovation in the university where the study took place. In fact, at the onset of the pilot use of HyFlex® in 2021, only the values of *equivalency* and *usability* were taken into consideration. Because of the still existing limitations posed by the pandemic, students did not have the choice to attend on-site, so the necessary accessibility of the face-to-face class was not in place.

While HyFlex® has been in operation for over a decade, it was the interest of the researchers of this project to focus on contemporary studies on the impact of the model. Hence, they sought literature generated between the years 2019 and 2022 in order to explore what research on the model, particularly within the constraints of the pandemic, had yielded. The first and most noticeable finding in this regard is that the literature on the impact of HyFlex® in teaching and learning has yielded disparate and contradictory results. For instance, a study of student perceptions, similar to the current study, was carried out by Kohnke & Moorehouse (2021) and yielded both advantages and disadvantages to the model. Among the advantages, participants highlighted the flexibility afforded to them by the choice of type of attendance which allowed them to accommodate different life situations to their academic development. On the minus side, the study showed the difficulty experienced by remote students to communicate with the instructor and peers who were attending classed on-site. The authors conclude that a key area to focus on in implementing a HyFlex® approach is the good use of the technology available, including screen sharing capabilities, video conference facilities, document sharing, image capture, and so on.

In a similar vein, Shah et al. (2021) studied the perceptions of students on hybrid learning via virtual laboratories. Participants included instructors and students in a chemical engineering programme. Their findings supported the perception of a positive learning experience for students. One area, which was highlighted in this study, was the access to immediate and ongoing formative feedback for both on-site and remote students alike. However, it was also shown that the model poses extra demands on instructors in terms of lesson preparation, feedback provision, and assessment of learning. Another study of perceptions on HyFlex® was undertaken by Hoffman et al. (2021) with the purpose to understand the post-graduate students' experience with the modality. Those researchers carried out a series of

hybrid seminars with post-graduate students combining synchronous tutorial sessions with the use of a shared document that all students could access. These same seminars had been taught in this modality prior to the pandemic. This was a collaboration among seven universities each of which was in charge of one of the seminars in the programme. This particular research project found no significant change in the levels of learning of students, that is, the students involved in the seminars prior to the pandemic learnt the same as those taking the seminars after the pandemic, and thus highlighted the collaborative nature of their endeavour as a key factor in promoting flexibility, student choice, and accessibility.

The same findings in terms of students' learning yielded in the work of Rhoads (2020) whose study sought to assess the impact of and differences between a 16-week on-site course and a similar one implementing the HyFlex® approach. While there were no statistically significant differences between the levels of student attainment of learning outcomes in either course, there were statistically significant differences in student satisfaction with the HyFlex® course in terms of the variables of choice and accessibility. In terms of learning, a further study was carried out by Armellini et al. (2021) compared the level of appropriation by students of academic discourse in a Microbiology course. The study compared two modalities, one exclusively online and one using the HyFlex® modality. This study did not find any statistically significant difference in terms of student learning outcomes in either course.

A few research projects have highlighted specific disadvantages of the HyFlex® model, particularly for faculty members. For instance, Lei & Lei (2019) found that faculty using HyFlex® in their courses complained about the work overload that such a course demands. This was particularly noticeable in terms of lesson planning as well as in paying equal attention to both on-site and remote learners. Participants in this study highlighted their lack of pedagogical preparation to implement the modality. These findings were corroborated by Pregowska et al. (2021) who found that the main difficulty experienced by faculty when using HyFlex® derived from their lack of professional development needed to correctly implement the model. Participants reported feelings of frustration, which in some cases resulted in them leaving the teaching profession. In contrast with other studies mentioned previously, participants in this last research project reported a decline in students' learning as a result of participating in a HyFlex® course.

3. Methodology

The study of perceptions can be undertaken within a qualitative research perspective. Perceptions shed light on contributions from participants, which may be subjective in terms of how they understand phenomena. Thus, these perceptions emerge from participants as the research project evolves and as they interact with the phenomena in question. Specifically, in the context of this project, perception is understood as "consciousness about a certain mental content, [as] perception is an experience, [and] it implies being aware of particular qualitative phenomenological constructs" (Palma Muñoz, 2017, p. 92).

In order to understand the perceptions of the participating faculty and students, two qualitative questionnaires (Clarke et al., 2020) were created. These consisted of open-ended questions, which gave participants the opportunity to provide their accounts on their teaching and learning experiences using the HyFlex® modality, as well as those aspects of this particular pedagogical arrangement which facilitate or hinder teaching and learning. Additionally, there was the administration of a structured interview protocol (Díaz Bravo et al., 2013; Rainford, 2020), which was used to corroborate or challenge the initial findings from the questionnaires. Questionnaires and interview protocols were independently validated by three reviewers who were external to the university and were specialists in instructional design and technology-mediated learning, teaching, and assessment. Their comments and suggestions for improvement were incorporated into the first draft of the instruments. A pilot study with a small sample of faculty members and students was conducted in order to build up the trustworthiness of the instruments.

The questionnaires for faculty members contained questions aimed at understanding how experienced they were with hybrid teaching, what advantages and disadvantages they perceived in the model, how they perceived the value which students placed on this model, and requested suggestions for improvement. The questionnaires for students focused on perceptions of their own learning in a hybrid course, their interaction with instructors, their attendance preferences, and also requested suggestions for improvement. The questionnaires were distributed electronically to all faculty members in the university who were teaching a hybrid and flexible course during that semester. Along the same lines, student questionnaires were distributed electronically to all the students who were participating in those courses.

Return rates for questionnaires were deemed highly satisfactory, as almost 23% of all faculty (n=232) and 20% of students (n=1,063) responded. The high return rate is in itself an interesting finding since it points to the fact that the focus of the research study was of high interest to instructors and students alike. During the fourth month of the semester, an open call for instructor and student volunteers was sent to all schools in the university but the return for interviews was not as strong as that of the questionnaires, as only 20 faculty members and nine students participated.

The data were analysed using Inductive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clark, 2021), which consists of four phases: approximation to the data, understanding of the data, organisation of the data, and interpretation of the data. These four phases conformed to an iterative process, which was carried out throughout the research project, thus allowing the constant refinement of the themes which were emerging from the data. Data coding was shared by all the researchers and individual initial codes were refined by at least two other researchers in the team. After all the data were transcribed and coded, the emerging themes were used to organise the results.

In terms of ethical provisions, the electronic questionnaires contained an informed consent form as their cover page. If participants agreed to participate, they would be redirected to the questions. Otherwise, if they were explicitly indicating that they were not willing to participate, they would not be able to access the questions. A separate informed consent protocol was given to all interviewees prior to conducting the interviews.

4. Results

Given the high return rate for questionnaires, it was possible to quickly achieve data saturation. The main themes emerging from the data were also confirmed through the interviews, which speaks to the trustworthiness of the research study. Because of the open nature of the questions in both the questionnaires, a number of themes emerged. The section below will first present the results of the questionnaires followed by the results of the interviews.

4.1. Results from instructor questionnaires

Instructor questionnaires shed light on various aspects of their perception of HyFlex® and reported both advantages and disadvantages to this modality.