Instructor and Student Perceptions of Course Experiences in Online and Face-to-Face Classes

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Individual Development > Teaching Improvement
Educational Assessment > Faculty Evaluation Curriculum Review Program Assessment Accreditation
Background for Study

- Growth in Web-based course formats
  - Face-to-face vs. online formats

- Disciplinary differences in teaching
  - Structure (hard vs. soft)
  - Application (pure vs. applied)
Research Question #1

Do approaches to instruction vary by course format and disciplinary category?

- Lecture
- Discussion/recitation
- Seminar
- Skill/activity
- Laboratory
- Field experience
- Studio
- Multi-media
- Practicum/clinic
- Other
Research Question #2

Do teaching styles vary by course format and disciplinary category?

- Stimulating student interest
- Fostering student collaboration
- Establishing rapport
- Encouraging student involvement
- Structuring classroom experience
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| I. Stimulating Student Interest | 4. Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter  
8. Stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses  
13. Introduced stimulating ideas about the subject  
15. Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really challenged them |
| II. Fostering Student Collaboration | 5. Formed “teams” or “discussion groups” to facilitate learning  
16. Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own  
18. Asked students to help each other understand ideas or concepts |
| III. Establishing Rapport       | 1. Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning  
2. Found ways to help students answer their own questions  
7. Explained the reasons for criticisms of students’ academic performance  
20. Encourage student-faculty interactions outside of class (office visits, phone calls, e-mail, etc.) |
| IV. Encouraging Student Involvement | 9. Encouraged students to use multiple resources (e.g. data banks, library holdings, outside experts) to improve understanding  
11. Related course material to real life situations  
14. Involved students’ in “hands-on” projects such as research, case studies, or “real-life” activities  
19. Gave projects, tests, or assignments that required original or creative thinking |
| V. Structuring Classroom Experience | 3. Scheduled course work (class activities, test, and projects) in ways which encouraged students’ to stay up-to-date in their work  
6. Made it clear how each topic fit into the course  
10. Explained course material clearly and concisely  
12. Gave tests, projects, etc. that covered the most important points of the course  
17. Provided timely and frequent feedback on tests, reports, projects, etc. to help students improve |
Research Questions #3

Do required academic skills vary by course format and disciplinary category?

- Writing
- Oral communication
- Computer applications
- Group work
- Mathematical/quantitative work
- Critical thinking
- Creative/artistic/design endeavor
- Reading
- Memorization
Research Question #4

Does impact of course circumstances vary by course format and disciplinary category?

- Physical facilities/equipment
- Previous experience teaching course
- Substantial changes in course
- Desire to teach course
- Control over course decisions
- Students’ level of preparation
- Students’ level of enthusiasm
- Students’ level of effort
- Technical/instructional support
Research Question 5 & 6

Do students’ perceptions of teaching expectations vary by course format and disciplinary category?

- “The instructor expected students to take their share of responsibility for learning.”

Do students’ perceptions of instructor achievement standards vary by course format and disciplinary category?

- “The instructor had high achievement standards in this class.”
Method

- Instrumentation
  - IDEA Online
  - Faculty Information Form
  - Student Ratings Diagnostic Form

- Data source
  - Student ratings for approximately 300 institutions
  - 5,272 F2F classes (58% response rate)
  - 13,416 online classes (50% response rate)

- Coding of disciplines
  - 95.4% agreement
### Instrumentation

Students rate frequency of 20 teaching methods and progress on 12 learning objectives.

**Institution:**

**Course Number:**

**Time and Days Class Meets:**

Your thoughtful answers to these questions will provide helpful information to your instructor.

Describe the frequency of your instructor's teaching procedures, using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 = Almost Never</th>
<th>2 = Occasionally</th>
<th>3 = Sometimes</th>
<th>4 = Frequently</th>
<th>5 = Almost Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**The Instructor:**

- [ ] 1.1 The instructor shared a vision or set of goals for course and student learning.
- [ ] 1.2 Field based experiences were incorporated into the course.
- [ ] 1.3 The instructor used innovative teaching methods.
- [ ] 1.4 The instructor's lecture style is motivating.
- [ ] 1.5 The instructor's presentation style is organized.
- [ ] 1.6 The instructor's organization of course content is clear.
- [ ] 1.7 The instructor's sense of humor is appropriate.
- [ ] 1.8 The instructor's teaching style includes a balance of lecture and interactive elements.
- [ ] 1.9 The instructor's voice is clear.
- [ ] 1.10 The instructor's visual aids are effective.
- [ ] 1.11 The instructor's use of board is effective.
- [ ] 1.12 The instructor's pacing is appropriate.
- [ ] 1.13 The instructor is prepared and uses appropriate teaching aids.
- [ ] 1.14 The instructor is knowledgeable about the subject.
- [ ] 1.15 The instructor is organized.
- [ ] 1.16 The instructor is responsive to student needs.
- [ ] 1.17 The instructor is supportive.
- [ ] 1.18 The instructor is approachable.
- [ ] 1.19 The instructor is fair.
- [ ] 1.20 The instructor is empathetic.
- [ ] 1.21 The instructor is enthusiastic.
- [ ] 1.22 The instructor is respectful.
- [ ] 1.23 The instructor is enthusiastic.
- [ ] 1.24 The instructor is fair.
- [ ] 1.25 The instructor is empathetic.
- [ ] 1.26 The instructor is approachable.
- [ ] 1.27 The instructor is supportive.
- [ ] 1.28 The instructor is organized.
- [ ] 1.29 The instructor is knowledgeable about the subject.
- [ ] 1.30 The instructor is prepared and uses appropriate teaching aids.
- [ ] 1.31 The instructor's use of board is effective.
- [ ] 1.32 The instructor's pacing is appropriate.
- [ ] 1.33 The instructor's visual aids are effective.
- [ ] 1.34 The instructor's voice is clear.
- [ ] 1.35 The instructor's sense of humor is appropriate.
- [ ] 1.36 The instructor's organization of course content is clear.
- [ ] 1.37 The instructor's presentation style is organized.
- [ ] 1.38 The instructor's lecture style is motivating.
- [ ] 1.39 The instructor used innovative teaching methods.
- [ ] 1.40 Field based experiences were incorporated into the course.
- [ ] 1.41 The instructor shared a vision or set of goals for course and student learning.
- [ ] 1.42 The instructor is knowledgeable about the subject.
- [ ] 1.43 The instructor is organized.
- [ ] 1.44 The instructor is responsive to student needs.
- [ ] 1.45 The instructor is supportive.
- [ ] 1.46 The instructor is approachable.
- [ ] 1.47 The instructor is fair.
- [ ] 1.48 The instructor is empathetic.
- [ ] 1.49 The instructor is enthusiastic.
- [ ] 1.50 The instructor is fair.
- [ ] 1.51 The instructor is empathetic.
- [ ] 1.52 The instructor is approachable.
- [ ] 1.53 The instructor is supportive.
- [ ] 1.54 The instructor is organized.
- [ ] 1.55 The instructor is knowledgeable about the subject.
- [ ] 1.56 The instructor is prepared and uses appropriate teaching aids.
- [ ] 1.57 The instructor's use of board is effective.
- [ ] 1.58 The instructor's pacing is appropriate.
- [ ] 1.59 The instructor's visual aids are effective.
- [ ] 1.60 The instructor's voice is clear.

Twelve course learning objectives are listed below. Not all will be relevant to every course. Describe the amount of progress you have made in each (even those not pursued in this class) by using the following scale:

1. No progress
2. Small progress: I made small gains in this objective.
3. Moderate progress: I made some gains on this objective.
4. Substantial progress: I made large gains on this objective.
5. Exceptional progress: I made outstanding gains on this objective.

**Progress:**

- [ ] 1.1 Gaining factual knowledge; terminology; classifications; methods; trends;
- [ ] 1.2 Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, theories;
- [ ] 1.3 Learning to apply course materials to improve thinking; problem solving; and decision making;
- [ ] 1.4 Developing specific skills; competencies; and problem solving needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course;
- [ ] 1.5 Acquiring attitudes in working with others as a member of a team;
- [ ] 1.6 Developing creative capacities: writing, inventing, designing, performing art, music, dance, etc.;
- [ ] 1.7 Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.);
- [ ] 1.8 Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing;
- [ ] 1.9 Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems;
- [ ] 1.10 Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values;
- [ ] 1.11 Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view;
- [ ] 1.12 Developing an interest in learning more by asking my own questions and seeking answers.
Course Description Items (FIF)

- Faculty respond to these questions
- Typically answered toward end of term
- Do NOT influence evaluation

**Contextual Questions (Research Purposes):**

The IDEA Center will conduct research on these optional questions in order to improve the interpretation of student ratings.

1 Contextual Questions (Research Purposes):

1. Which of the following represents the primary approach to this course? (Mark only one)

   - Lecture
   - Discussion/lecture
   - Seminar
   - Laboratory
   - Field Experience
   - Studio
   - Multi-Media
   - Practicum/Clinic
   - Other

2. If multiple approaches are used, which one represents the secondary approach? (Mark only one)

   - Lecture
   - Discussion/lecture
   - Seminar
   - Laboratory
   - Field Experience
   - Studio
   - Multi-Media
   - Practicum/Clinic
   - Other

3. Describe this course in terms of its requirements with respect to the features listed below. Use the following code to make your responses:

   - N = None (or little) required
   - S = Some required
   - M = Much required

   -  A. Writing
   -  B. Oral communication
   -  C. Computer applications
   -  D. Group work
   -  E. Mathematical/quantitative work
   -  F. Critical thinking
   -  G. Creative/artistic/dec
   -  H. Reading
   -  I. Memorization

4. Rate each of the circumstances listed below, using the following code to respond:

   - P = Had a positive impact on learning
   - N = Had a negative impact on learning
   - I = Neither a positive nor a negative impact
   - ? = Can't judge

   - A. Physical facilities and/or equipment
   - B. Your previous experience in teaching this course
   - C. Substantial changes in teaching approach, course assignments, content, etc.
   - D. Your desire to teach this course
   - E. Your control over course management decisions (objectives, texts, exams, etc.)
   - F. Students' level of preparation for taking the course
   - G. Students' level of enthusiasm for the course
   - H. Students' level of effort to learn
   - I. Technical/instructional support

5. Please identify the *actual* type of student enrolling in this course (Mark only one)

   - 1 = First-year students/sophomores seeking to meet a "general education" or "distribution" requirement
   - 2 = First-year students/sophomores seeking to develop background needed for their intended specialization
   - 3 = Upper level non-majors taking the course as a "general education" or "distribution" requirement
   - 4 = Upper level majors in this or a related field of study seeking competence or expertise in their academic/professional specialty
   - 5 = Graduate or professional school students
   - 6 = Combination of two or more of the above types

6. a. Is this class:
   - Yes
   - No

   b. Taught through distance learning?
   - Yes
   - No
RQ1: Do approaches to instruction vary by course format and disciplinary category?

Percent of Instructors Indicating Primary Approach to Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Course Format</th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>Lecture (62%)</td>
<td>Lecture (39%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion (6%)</td>
<td>Discussion (18%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skill/activity (9%)</td>
<td>Skill/activity (19%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft</td>
<td>Lecture (38%)</td>
<td>Lecture (23%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion (13%)</td>
<td>Discussion (23%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skill/activity (22%)</td>
<td>Skill/activity (24%)</td>
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RQ1: Do approaches to instruction vary by course format and disciplinary category?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure</td>
<td>Lecture (50%)</td>
<td>Lecture (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion (22%)</td>
<td>Discussion (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skill/activity (10%)</td>
<td>Skill/activity (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied</td>
<td>Lecture (28%)</td>
<td>Lecture (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion (29%)</td>
<td>Discussion (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skill/activity (17%)</td>
<td>Skill/activity (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multi-media (16%)</td>
<td>Multi-media (16%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RQ2: Do teaching styles vary by course format and disciplinary category?

No meaningful differences in teaching styles
RQ3: Do required academic skills vary by course format and disciplinary category?

• Online instructors require more:
  • Writing
  • Computer applications

• Face-to-face instructors require more:
  • Oral communication
  • Group work
  • Creativity within soft-applied disciplines
RQ4: Does impact of course circumstances vary by course format and disciplinary category?

- F2F > online in:
  - Instructor perception that physical facilities/equipment had a positive impact on learning

- Online > F2F in:
  - Instructor perception that technical/instructional support had a positive impact on learning
RQ5: Do students’ perceptions of teaching expectations vary by course format and disciplinary category?

Online > F2F in:

• Students’ perception that instructor expects them to take their share of responsibility for learning
RQ6: Do students’ perceptions of instructor achievement standards vary by course format and disciplinary category?

No effects for discipline or course format
Limitations of the Study

• Limited to classes that use IDEA
• Blended classes excluded
• Limited to questions on the IDEA instrument
• Strictly quantitative approach
• Student response rate
• Faculty response rate about 85%
Key Findings

• F2F instructors:
  • More lecture
  • Especially in hard disciplines

• Online students:
  • Perceive greater instructor expectations that students take share of responsibility for learning
Key Findings

- Online instructors require more:
  - Writing, computer applications

- F2F instructors require more:
  - Oral communication, group work
  - Creativity within soft-applied disciplines
Questions?

www.theideacenter.org

Visit our IDEA Help Community!