Instructional Modes for the New Normal:
In-Class, Synchronous or Asynchronous?

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Abstract

The recent pandemic had forced educational institutions all over the world to shift to online instruction. Having done that, the question remains: how should we proceed when come back to normal? Which online instructional innovations should we keep? This research attempts to answer those questions by comparing three modes of instruction: in-class, synchronous, as well as asynchronous within the same course, semester, and instructor. The research analyzes responses from students on instructional characteristics: instructor involvement, interaction amongst students, interaction with instructor, course design, student satisfaction and learning experience. Data collected is analyzed using a repeated measure design with pairwise comparisons to understand how student perceptions of instructional characteristics differed across these modes. The study also explores differences in actual learning outcomes. Results showed that students have overwhelmingly perceived all instructional characteristics to be better facilitated with in-class instruction than with either of the online modes, except for course design which showed no significant differences. It is also seen that students perceive synchronous and asynchronous instruction to have much similarity. Commentary from students suggests that online instruction may need a shift, not just in technology, but also in practice. Student noted that with the shift to online instructional modes, they would like to see increased flexibility, willingness to personalize support, and timeliness of responses.

Keywords: instructional modes, student satisfaction, new normal, e-learning, synchronous, asynchronous, repeated measures design

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