

Student Perceptions of Face-to-Face Versus Online Learning (during the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic)

Mindy Bettinger, Wright State University-Lake Campus, Celina, OH

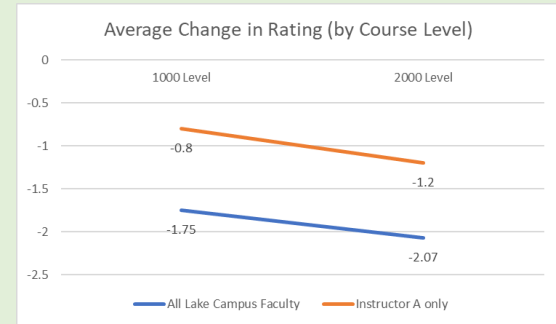
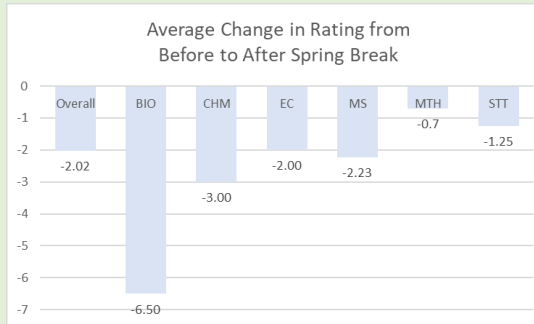
Introduction

Given the unique and unprecedented situation most colleges in the United States found themselves in during the spring of 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, many students initially taking face-to-face [F2F] courses finished the term taking those same courses in various formats online. They experienced both modalities of learning (F2F versus online) in the same term for the same courses and therefore can provide a unique perspective on the merits of each modality.

Similar to a study done by Strandberg & Campbell (2014) to assess changes in attitude throughout the semester, this study gave out two surveys – one near the start of online course delivery (n=19) and one at the end of the semester (n=10) to students of one faculty member (Instructor A). Several other Lake Campus faculty then invited their students to also take the second survey (n=37). Building on work by Watters and Robertson (2009), students were asked to compare online instruction versus F2F instruction and also identify strengths and weaknesses of each modality.

Change in Course Ratings

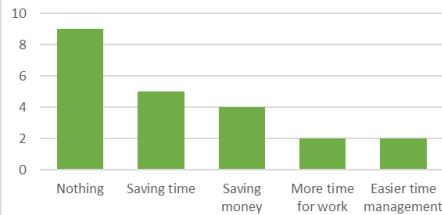
Students rated the educational quality of each course on a scale from 0 (terrible) to 10 (excellent) for “Prior to Spring Break” and “After Spring Break.” The average change in ratings for various course prefixes and course levels is shown below.



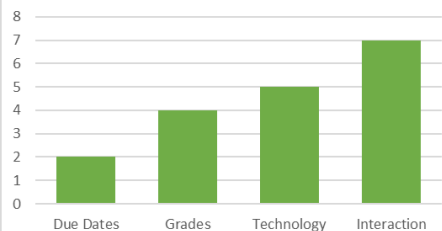
Initial Student Perceptions

Pre-Pandemic: Students of Instructor A only

Are you looking forward to anything about online course delivery?



What is your top concern about this move to online course delivery?



Discussion

- Students uniformly rated their courses as lower in educational quality after Spring Break with an average drop of 2 points on a 10-point scale.
 - Students in 2000 level course perceived more of a drop in course quality for both Instructor A and across the Lake Campus overall.
- Prior to Spring Break (F2F):
 - Students liked in-class instruction.
 - Students generally didn't have many major dislikes other than commuting.
- After Spring Break (online):
 - Students liked live video classes.
 - Students liked access to lecture material and the ability to work on their own time.
 - Students did not predict how much harder it would be to pay attention and understand content in an online setting.

Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses

Students wrote in the feature(s) of their courses that they most liked and disliked prior to Spring Break (F2F instruction) and after Spring Break (online instruction).

