

A CONFLUENCE OF MODALITIES: CONCURRENT
USE OF ON-CAMPUS, ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS,
AND ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS TEACHING
MODALITIES IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS EDUCATION



PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

- The purpose of the paper was to explore the preliminary findings associated with offering instruction across a variety of modalities. Students in a graduate level Public Budgeting and Finance course were offered three options for the delivery of instruction in the course. These options included: Face to face in-person instruction on Monday evenings from 6 pm – 9:30 pm, attending these sessions from home via Zoom, and reviewing the recorded Zoom sessions at a later date and participating in an asynchronous discussion forum.
- Students were permitted to select their chosen method and could make this decision on a weekly basis.
- The purpose was to test the feasibility of the approach and examine how students responded to the choices provided. This paper reports the initial reactions of students and how the choice of modality impacted student participation.

LITERATURE ON METHODS OF ONLINE DELIVERY MODALITIES

- Several themes are evident in the literature
 - Online education is more of a continuum than a binary choice.
 - There is great variation in the methods of online delivery.
 - Student achievement levels are similar between online and face to face instruction.
 - The research is mixed regarding student interaction.
 - Self-selection is a major component in the effectiveness of online education and student satisfaction with online course.
 - Faculty and student training is imperative for effective online education.
 - Demand for online education varies.
 - Online course design is often more time consuming than face to face courses.

METHODS

- Students were enrolled in a Public Budgeting and Finance course in the CSULB MPA program for Summer Term, 2019 (n=26). The course was six weeks in duration and afforded students the opportunity to attend in any of the following methods:
 - Face to Face once per week for six weeks.
 - Participation through Zoom video conferencing
 - Reviewing the Zoom recording at any time during the week and then participating in an asynchronous discussion forum.
- Students were aware of the unique structure of the course prior to registration and the syllabus was provided during the registration period.
- The frequency and type of participation were recorded for each student.
- A Qualtrics survey was distributed at the conclusion of the course to assess satisfaction with delivery modality.

CAVEATS

- The CSULB MPA program has been offering courses in a variety of modalities for many years including:
 - Face to face sessions that meet once per week for 15 weeks.
 - Local online courses that provide completely asynchronous delivery over 15 weeks.
 - Hybrid courses that meet one night per week for the first or second half of the semester (8 weeks). The second weekly meeting is done through asynchronous delivery (discussion board on Blackboard)
 - This was the first time that one course provided students with three unique options for attendance.
 - As such, the findings are descriptive and only preliminary
-

FINDINGS

- There was strong demand for the course. The original enrollment cap was 20 but was increased to 26 to accommodate demand.
 - There was great consistency in student selection of modality. Students who were first adopters of Zoom remained Zoom attendees throughout the course.
 - Average weekly student use by modality is represented in Table 1.
 - Modality use is represented in Table 2.
 - Student preference for modalities is represented in Table 3.
-

Table 1

Average Weekly Modality Use – PPA 555 Public Budgeting – Summer Session, 2019

*indicates the number of students who viewed the recordings each week

In-Person Sessions	Virtual Zoom Sessions	Zoom Recordings
11.75	5.5	7*

Table 2
Modality Used – PPA 555 Public Budgeting – Summer Session, 2019

Modality	Number of Respondents
Zoom Recordings	7 (36.84%)
In-Person Sessions	6 (31.58%)
Virtual Zoom Sessions	3 (15.79%)
All of the Above	3 (15.79%)

Table 3
Preferred Modality – PPA 555 Public Budgeting – Summer Session, 2019

Modality	Number of Respondents
Virtual Zoom Sessions	3 (27.27%)
In-Person Sessions	5 (45.45%)
Zoom Recordings	3 (27.27%)

FINDINGS

- Six (6) students did not review any of the Zoom recordings. These six students were all in-person attendees.
- However, six (6) students who attended in-person sessions did still access the Zoom recordings.
- Students tended to prefer in-person sessions to Zoom sessions.
- The perceived likelihood of students to enroll in courses that offer Zoom delivery is represented in Table 4.

Table 4

How likely are you to enroll in a future class that uses only Zoom sessions and recordings (no in-person meetings)?

	Number of Respondents
Extremely Likely	5 (45.45%)
Moderately Likely	2 (18.18%)
Slightly Likely	2 (18.18%)
Neither Likely Nor Unlikely	0 (0%)
Slightly Unlikely	2 (18.18%)
Moderately Unlikely	0 (0%)
Extremely Unlikely	0 (0%)

FINDINGS

- Zoom did not make it more likely that students would participate in class sessions as demonstrated by Table 5.

Table 5

The Zoom session made it more likely that you would participate in discussions than the in-person sessions.

	Number of Respondents
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)
Agree	1 (20%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	0 (0%)
Somewhat Disagree	0 (0%)
Disagree	2 (40%)
Strongly Disagree	2 (40%)

ANALYSIS

- The important findings of the research included:
 - There was strong demand for multiple modalities.
 - Selection of modality was consistent throughout the course.
 - Zoom did not lead to higher levels of classroom participation.
 - Offering multiple modality options did not add prep time or impose additional time constraints on the instructor other than setting up the Zoom session and grading the asynchronous discussions.
 - The program will expand the multiple modalities approach to additional courses in future semester to provide more flexibility to our adult learners.
-