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Does Course Format Matter When Learning About Diversity? Exploring Student Evaluations in Online Versus Hybrid Classroom Structures

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Does Course Format Matter When Learning About Diversity? Exploring Student Evaluations in Online Versus Hybrid Classroom Structures

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Background
- HDFS 280: Family Diversity underwent a course transformation from a fully online asynchronous course to a hybrid course where students met in person one day per week
- Students feel that face-to-face interactions provide more authentic and meaningful discussion (Kemp & Grieve, 2014; Wang & Woo, 2007)
- Students report feeling more disconnected from their professor and their peers in online courses (Otter et al., 2013)
- Central Florida reports that “Blended classes generate the highest student evaluations of any learning mode” (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2010)

Procedure & Methods
- The sample consisted of 190 students (78.4% female) enrolled in the Family Diversity course during the Spring 2014, Summer 2014, Fall 2014, and Spring 2015 semesters
- The students ranged in age from 19 to 37 (%)
- Of these students: 52% completed the course evaluations and 35% participated in the survey

Measures
- Student Performance assessed by final points percentage, average quiz percentage, and average hot topic presentation percentage
- Student Perceptions Online Survey comprised of four scales sent at the end of the semester
- Course Evaluations were completed both at mid-term and at the end of the semester

Qualitative Coding
- To provide more depth to these findings, we conducted a qualitative content analysis of student comments provided on the course evaluations
- Our research question is: how do the perceptions of the class differ between students in the hybrid course compared to students in the online course?
- To answer this question, we use subgroup sampling design which allows us to compare students in the hybrid course to students in the online course
- All three research team members coded student evaluation comments, and reliability was determined based on percentage agreement
- Qualitative findings are still in preliminary stages

Results of t-test Comparing Student Perceptions for Online vs. Flipped

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Flipped</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning climate</td>
<td>4.89 (1.16)</td>
<td>5.50 (1.39)</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>4.09 (1.67)</td>
<td>4.47 (1.97)</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>3.61 (0.89)</td>
<td>4.18 (0.96)</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatedness</td>
<td>3.87 (1.64)</td>
<td>4.63 (0.85)</td>
<td>6.31*</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>9.85 (7.24)</td>
<td>10.47 (11.50)</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>5.40 (1.04)</td>
<td>5.73 (1.07)</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning gains</td>
<td>3.99 (.82)</td>
<td>4.36 (.67)</td>
<td>5.55*</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $\ast N = 48; \dagger N = 45; \ast p < .05$

Learning Climate
- Perceptions of how the instructor does or does not foster a classroom climate that is comfortable, safe, and supportive

Learning Gains
- Students’ perceptions that they learned something valuable in the course

Autonomy
- Students’ perceptions of the degree to which they have control over and influence on their course experience, ability to make input, how to engage, decision-making

Relatedness
- Students’ feelings of (dis-)like and (dis-)connection with peers in the course

Quantitative Findings
- Student Perceptions (Table shown at left)
  - Results suggest a large difference in perceptions of relatedness based on course format, with students perceiving greater feelings of connectedness in hybrid classes
  - Mean values were higher for all other variables in the hybrid compared to online
  - Mean scores reveal that students perceived they learned more in the hybrid course; the magnitude of this difference was moderate
- Student Performance (Table not pictured)
  - Results indicate that hybrid courses were associated with increases in hot topic presentation scores, with a small effect, and final points, with a moderate effect

Positive Comments
- “Overall, I was pushed out of my comfort zone and thought about topics that I had not previously recognized. The professor did a great job of making us think”
- “I’ve gained a lot of insight in this course and I love the fact that I’m able to apply concepts that I’ve learned to the world around me.”
- “I think it would be beneficial to tell students ahead of time that the class is structured around the professor rather than the student. I know that many students take online classes so that they can work on their own time and work ahead when they need to…”

Negative Comments
- “There’s ambiguity in grading and I don’t appreciate just receiving an e-mail saying that we’re doing it wrong. I’d like to hear examples of what is wrong and to know how many points will be docked.”
- “I really like being able to reflect on the different readings. I feel that it gives me time to digest what I am learning. I also really like that there are different options available to learn the material such as through online videos, lecture notes, and discussion board.”