

Instructor and Student Survey Responses on Remote Teaching and Learning

Academic Senate* and Institutional Research and Academic Planning June 2020

Overview

The Systemwide Academic Senate surveyed instructors about their experience with remote instruction during the 2nd half of the spring semester/Spring quarter, receiving just over 4,800 responses across all nine undergraduate campuses, with an estimated 25 percent response rate and greater representation at Merced and Irvine and lower representation at Berkeley, Los Angeles and Riverside. Of those respondents, the majority (around 65 percent) had professor titles (just over 30 percent full professors, around 12 percent for both associate and assistant professors, and around 8 percent for adjunct professors). Just over 5 percent of respondents were teaching professors, around 20 percent were unit-18 lecturers, and less than 10 percent were graduate student instructors (GSIs who were instructor of record). The data below is only reported in total, not by respondent type.

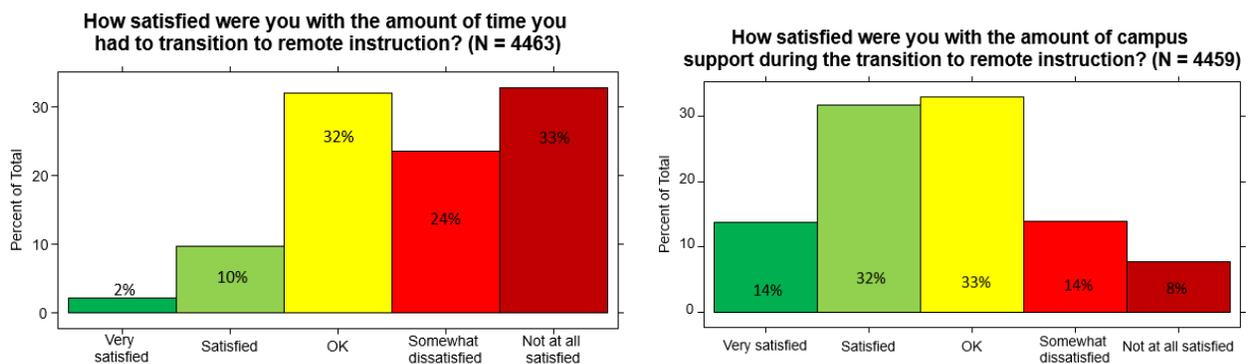
The Systemwide Academic Senate partnered with UC Office of the President’s Institutional Research and Academic Planning unit to incorporate questions about remote instruction into the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) that is currently being administered. As of May 12th, almost 33,000 undergraduates had responded to the survey, representing a preliminary 17 percent response rate, higher for students at Berkeley, Merced and Riverside and less at Los Angeles and Santa Cruz (because the survey more recently began at those two campuses).

See Appendix I for detail on response rates for survey results used in this summary.

Transition to remote instruction

Instructors had less than two weeks to transition their in-person classes to remote instruction to address the COVID-19 pandemic and regional and statewide guidance to shelter in place. 57% of respondents were somewhat dissatisfied or not satisfied at all with the amount of time they had to transition to remote instruction.

Regarding campus support during this period, 46 percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of campus support. 67 percent also responded that the campus provided adequate resources to support instructors’ swift transition to remote learning.



* We thank Hannah Kramer from UC Davis for her diligent and timely work on this survey.

A number of respondents noted excellent resources were made available, but there was not enough time to use them. In the rush to get off campus, some instructors commented they didn't have access to materials they left in their offices. As they converted courses to remote instruction, a number of instructors described also had to help with their children's remote schooling, take care of loved ones and address other COVID-19 related concerns. Some were overwhelmed with the amount of email communication, hoping to receive more personal coaching and short videos with tips. A couple of instructor comments included:

"I would have wanted a customized video on how to use Zoom, and a bit more time to practice."

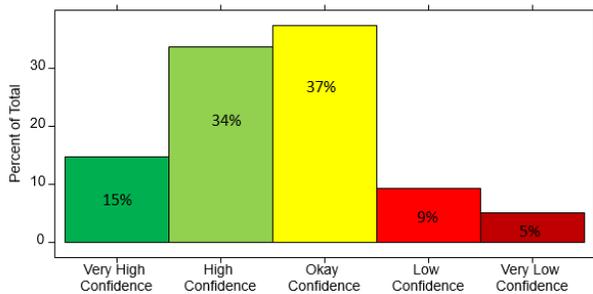
"We received technical training but no pedagogical counsel on how to reframe a syllabus for going on-line and how to implement teaching strategies that would make our course content more accessible to students in an on-line format. I would have appreciated pedagogical assistance with actually designing on-line class (types of classroom interactions, group work on-line, length of teaching sequences, efficient use of visual materials, etc...)."

A few instructors commented they hoped the decision for Fall 2020 could be made soon, so they would have more time to transfer their courses to remote instruction if needed.

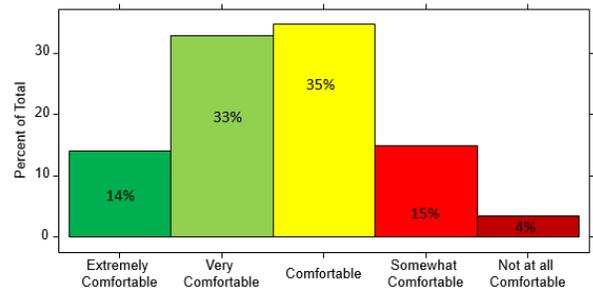
Equipment and space

Instructors expressed greater confidence in using remote learning tools than undergraduates. For instructors, around 85 percent responded they had confidence (okay to very high) using the campuses' learning management system and just over 80 percent responded a similar level of comfort with remote teaching tools.

How confident do you feel using your campuses' learning management system, such as Canvas? (N = 4645)

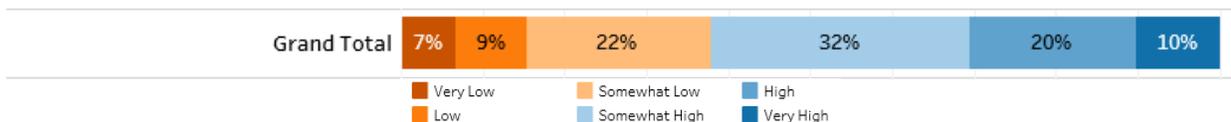


How comfortable are you using remote teaching tools (e.g., Zoom)? (N = 4506)



In comparison, preliminary Spring 2020 UCUES results showed 62 percent of undergraduates responding had high confidence about using tools for remote learning.

My confidence using tools for remote learning is



The majority of instructors relied on a laptop, compared to other devices and over 85 percent indicated their laptops, desktops and tablets were usually or always fast.

Table 1: Is your device fast enough?

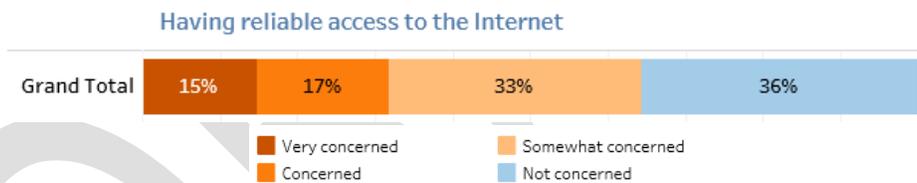
	#	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Laptop	4,087	2%	11%	49%	37%
Desktop	1,233	3%	8%	40%	49%
Tablet	961	2%	9%	34%	55%
Smartphone	476	4%	15%	42%	38%

However, a number of instructors commented that they had to purchase equipment to support their remote teaching needs, including video cameras and sound equipment.

“The resources came, but were significantly delayed making startup of spring quarter difficult. I sought my own resources before the campus made many available. I purchased tablets for my TA, and a new laptop to enable me to maintain the quality of my classroom experience online.”

“We need webcams so we can turn the camera to different directions to show different things. We need high-quality microphones, too. Students complain that audio is not as high quality as highly produced professional podcasts they listen to.”

Campuses took steps to get students the necessary equipment to learn remotely, including hotspots to support internet connection. Preliminary Spring 2020 UCUES results found 36 percent of undergraduates responding were not concerned about having reliable access to the internet, but 17 percent were concerned and 15 percent were very concerned.



Some instructor comments in this area included:

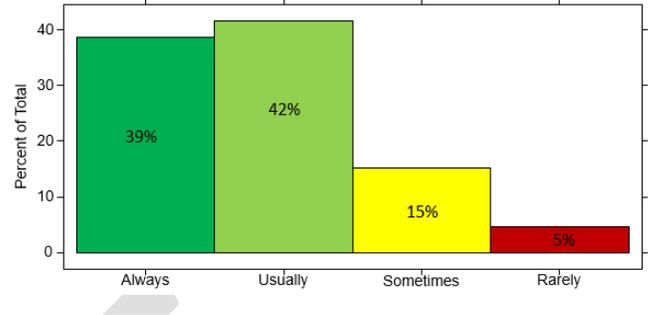
“The bigger problem, I think, is that they're dealing with technical limitations. Their videos sometimes won't upload, or won't record as expected in the first place. Canvas corrupts their zipfiles for some reason. Their internet connection drops out, or their device battery dies during class -- etc.”

“Many students have unreliable internet. You never know if you will have a good or bad internet day. The class [has] to be much more regimented, which means less organic conversations.”

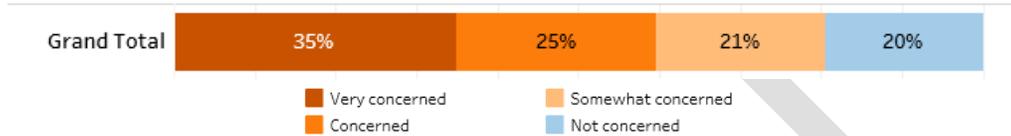
In addition, just above 80 percent of instructors responded they always or usually had access to a quiet space to teach, with 20 percent indicating that was sometimes or rarely the case.

But preliminary Spring 2020 UCUES data found undergraduate respondents had greater concern about access to appropriate study space, with 60 percent indicating they were concerned or very concerned.

Do you have access to a quiet space to teach? (N = 4807)



Having access to an appropriate study space



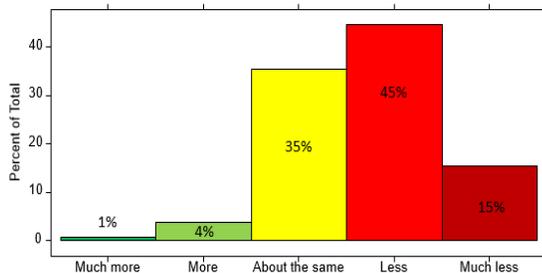
Early assessment of remote instruction/learning

It is impossible to decouple an assessment of the remote learning experience from the COVID-19 experience. As one instructor stated:

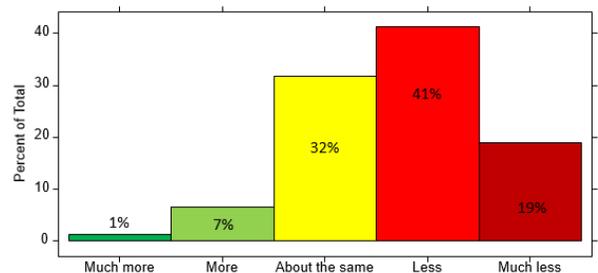
“I think that far less is being learned right now because our students are expected to attend classes that still have typical exams, paper assignments, etc. during a pandemic. We are in a crisis, and no amount of online maneuvering can ease the extreme anxiety and grieving that our students are experiencing.”

Sixty percent of instructors surveyed felt their students learned less or much less with synchronous and asynchronous lectures, compared to in-person classes.

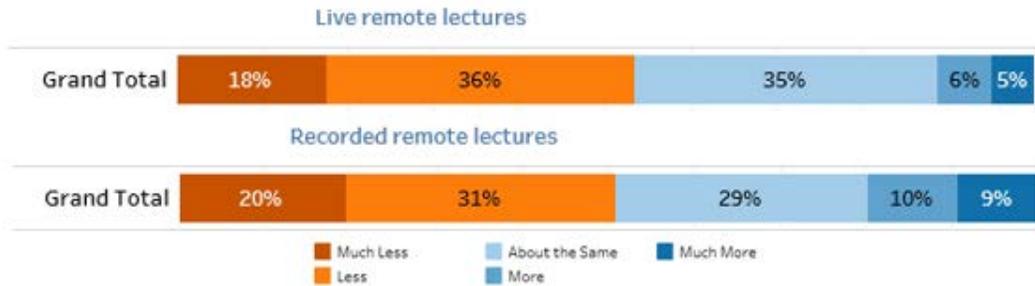
Compared to in-person classes, at this stage, do you think your students have learned more or learned less from synchronous lectures delivered remotely? (N = 3832)



Compared to in-person classes, at this stage, do you think your students have learned more or learned less from asynchronous lectures delivered remotely? (N = 2447)



Preliminary UCUES data shows 54 percent of undergraduate respondents found they learned less or much less in live remote lectures and 51 percent found they learned less or much less in recorded remote lectures, than in-person classes.



There were pros and cons to live and recorded remote lectures. Live lectures provided some interaction between instructors and students, with an ability to immediately respond to questions. Instructors were encouraged to either tape live lectures or produce recorded remote lectures, in part to support students with unstable internet connections, those who had difficulty with adequate study spaces, or for those living in different time zones. Recorded lectures also provided students with an ability to go back to review content, if necessary. Several instructor comments highlight these challenges.

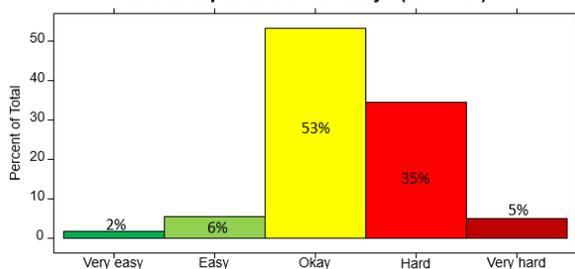
“Approaches to class recording need to be more nuanced. Recording is necessary for some students to participate at all, but students attending synchronously are reluctant to participate in class discussions with recording on. This needs substantive thinking through w/participation of faculty, admin, and IT.”

“I’m teaching a large lecture course through both synchronous lectures and recordings of those lectures. Even in the pure live format, I have not found it workable to engage in the to-and-fro Q/A sessions that used to be an integral part of my lecturing.”

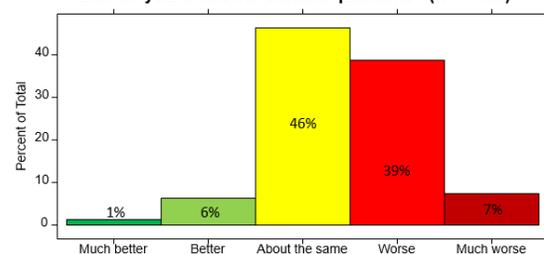
“Teaching asynch means I don’t see the students. I hold regular office hours but the students don’t really attend. My TAs offer synch sections and I have been attending those on a rotating basis. But with in-person classes I generally talk with students for up to 30 minutes after class - and they come to my office hours. And frankly giving a lecture to a room full of people is much more connecting than making audio recordings at my desk alone. Compare going to the theatre versus watching tv at home. Something gets created in the room dynamic of a lecture that doesn’t exist in this asynch online format. The dynamic energy exchange of a lecture connects us. I miss it. And the students are getting less of me and the content.”

Forty percent of instructor respondents indicated it was hard or very hard to communicate course expectations and 46 percent indicated it was hard or very hard to answer student questions. Students expressed less concerns about communication on course expectations and feedback from instructors.

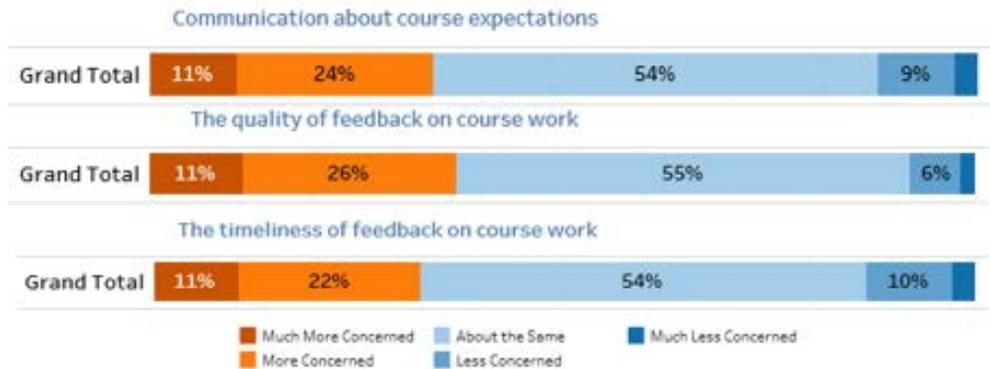
Compared to in-person classes, was it easy or hard to communicate course expectations remotely? (N = 4481)



Compared to in-person classes, how well did you feel remote learning allowed you to answer student questions? (N = 4480)



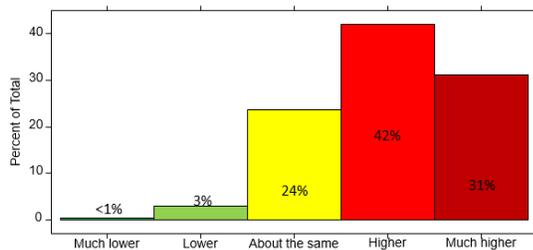
Preliminary UCUES responses showed 35 percent of undergraduate respondents were more or much more concerned about communication of courses expectations, 37 percent were more or much more concerned about the quality of feedback and 33 percent were more or much more concerned about the timeliness of feedback on coursework.



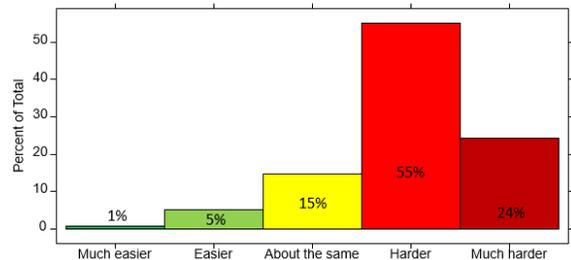
Seventy-three percent of instructors reported that their workload was higher or much higher compared to in-person classes, with one instructors sharing:

“Recording videos takes longer than showing up in a class and lecturing. Preparing exercises for them to do remotely is more time consuming than having them do them in class. The absence of question and answer opportunities in class means there are gaps in how much I can elaborate on the material, which means I am often trying fill in the gaps with follow up emails, instructions and written refinements of what was in the videos. As well, the volume of emails with students is higher. I also feel more of a responsibility to monitor individual students to see whether they are falling behind or disappearing (these are 25 max. classes). The amount of material I write and upload on our LMS is far greater. I need to look over and grade online discussions and peer to peer exercises that otherwise would be live in class (in addition to the submitted assignments that were always in the course). All these things have added to the workload.”

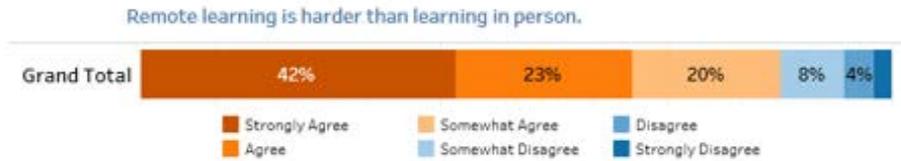
Compared to in-person classes, is your workload higher or lower for remote teaching? (N = 4489)



Compared to in-person learning, do you think that remote learning is harder or easier for students? (N = 4466)



In addition, 79 percent of instructor respondents thought remote learning was harder or much harder for students. Preliminary UCUES data showed 85 percent of undergraduate respondents somewhat to strongly agreed that remote instruction was harder than learning in person.



Instructors identified a number of ways and challenges to supporting the remote learning experience.

“I don't see faces or don't hear voices. I provide opportunities for breakout rooms where I pop in but often times their videos are not on (and they prefer not to turn video on) and no one is talking. Setting up norms for participating happens more naturally in-person classes. I have not been able to set up similar norms for online participation.”

“Much of my teaching approach relies on continued student centered interaction/teaching with the students. I field questions consistently in all my lectures, encourage discussion, stop and think periods and use tools like clickers to increase active learning. The sense of isolation that I perceive and my difficulty trying to see our students' faces hampers my pedagogical approach.”

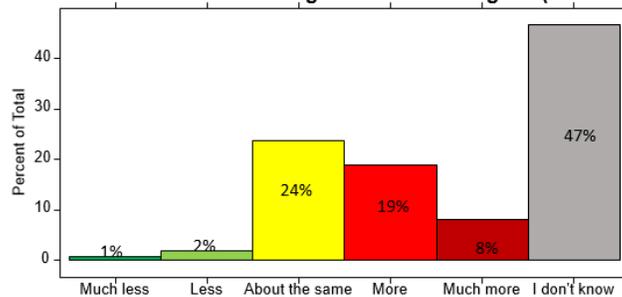
“Some people seem to learn better with remote learning while others don't. Some people appreciate the flexibility and the opportunity to engage with the course material more deeply alone, while others like the opportunity to ask questions and interact with class in person. I think it is important to offer various ways of teaching/learning to meet these diverse demands.”

Exams and online proctoring

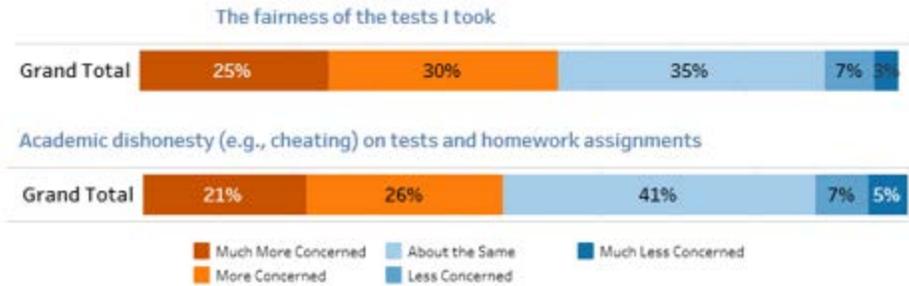
One significant challenge for instructors and students were decisions about online proctoring and exams, which were somewhat tempered in Spring 2020 because of greater flexibility with pass/not pass grading. But if remote instruction continues in the fall, greater guidance will be needed in this area.

Almost half of instructor respondents indicated they couldn't assess academic dishonesty, but over one-quarter believed it was more or much more prevalent than with in-person classes.

Compared to in-person classes, do you feel that the amount of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating) on tests and homework assignments has changed? (N = 4481)



Preliminary UCUES responses showed that almost 60 percent of undergraduate respondents were very concerned about their ability to do well on tests and assignments in online courses. Fifty-five percent were more or much more concerned about the fairness of the tests they took and 47 percent were much more concerned about academic dishonesty.



A number of instructor comments highlighted concerns in this area:

“We need better exam proctoring services. This is my number one source of stress as I have no way to guarantee academic integrity. We currently use ProctorU, but have been told that we cannot require students to use it. Which means it is useless to us.”

“Students are very stressed out. It is impossible to proctor the exam: it is both intrusive and ineffective. We all as profs need to find a better way to assign exams.”

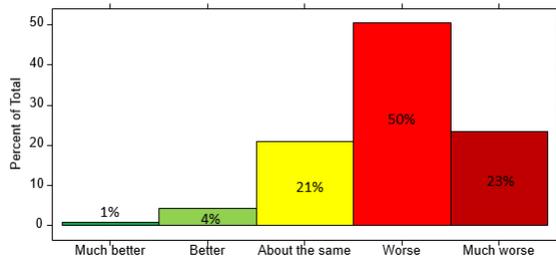
“Lots of software support when things go wrong during lecture. Exam platforms and learning and using them, and having them not crash when a large class accesses their exams on WebWork.”

“No good recommendations of how to carry out exams while maintaining academic integrity.”

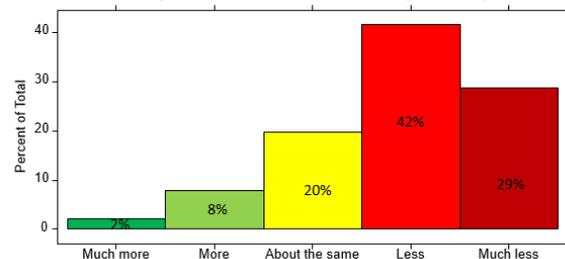
Quality of interactions between faculty, GSIs and students

Across the board, faculty, GSIs, TAs and students highlighted challenges about the quality and quantity of interactions, including the loss of casual contact before or after class, inability to see social cues or read faces to determine if students are grasping materials, and reluctance to ask questions in recorded lectures. Over 70 percent of instructors believed the quality and quantity of interactions with students was less or much less when compared to in-person classes.

Compared to in-person classes, was the quality of interactions with your students better or worse during this period of remote teaching? (N = 4487)



Compared to in-person classes, was the quantity of interactions with your students more or less? (N = 4491)

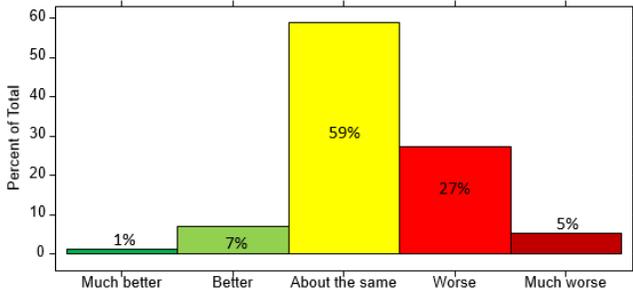


Preliminary UCUES responses show around 60 percent of undergraduate respondents found the quality and quantity of interaction with faculty worse or much worse when compared to in-person classes.

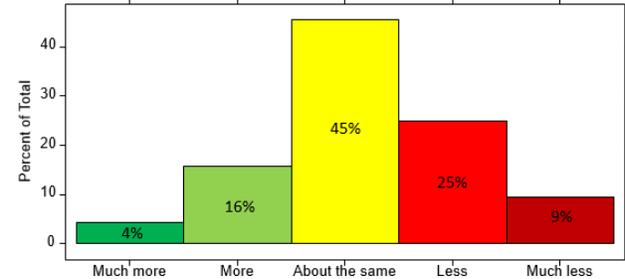


For instructors, just over 30 percent indicated the quality and quantity of interactions with TAs was worse/much worse or less/much less when compared to in-person classes, with almost 60 percent indicating the quality and 45 percent indicating the quantity was about the same. Instructors were also asked how well they felt remote learning allowed their TA(s) to interact with students with 63 percent responding it was worse or much worse, compared to 6 percent indicating it was better or much better.

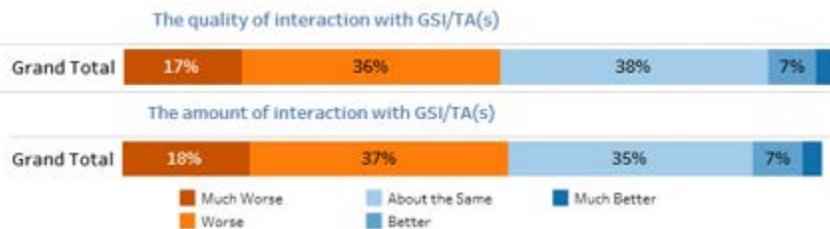
Compared to in-person classes, was the quality of interactions with your TA(s) better or worse? (N = 2499)



Compared to in-person classes, was the quantity of interactions with your TA(s) more or less? (N = 2488)

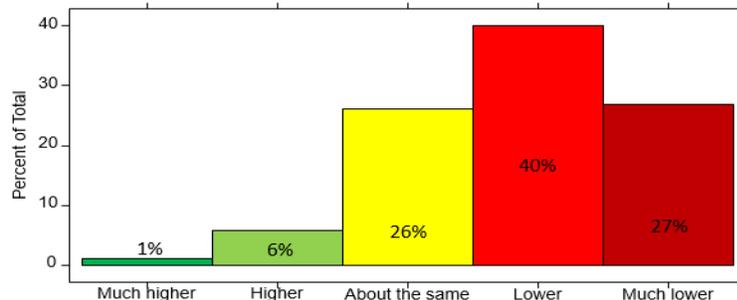


Preliminary UCUES data shows around 55 percent of undergraduate respondents found the quality and quantity of interaction with GSI/TAs worse or much worse when compared to in-person classes.

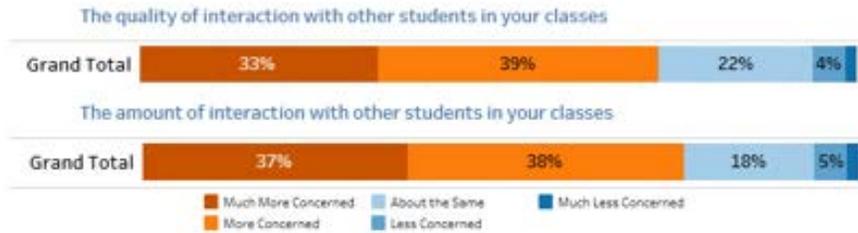


Just under 70 percent of instructors reported they had lower or much lower student participation in synchronous lectures, compared to in-person classes.

Compared to in-person classes, is the amount of student participation in synchronous lectures higher or lower? (N = 3843)



Of greater concern to students, preliminary UCUES responses showed just over 70 percent of undergraduate respondents were more or much more concerned about the quality of interaction with one another in classes, with 75 percent more or much more concerned about the amount of interactions with other students.



Instructor comments highlighted some of these challenges supporting interactions in a remote instruction environment:

“Remote learning seems to present either a real or perceived barrier to in the moment interaction. While I use polls, breakout rooms, and chat, the level of interaction just is not the same. Additionally, I am not getting to know my students like I have in the past. Students are rarely speaking to me before class or after class, as was normal when classes were taught in person.”

“I think students are desperately wanting more interaction, but Zoom formats cannot even begin to provide this.”

*“Forming study groups is much harder, when you can't get to know people in the same room. There's no sense of physical learning space -- students can't get into the classroom flow when they're in some bedroom somewhere. The struggling students are falling through the cracks, because it's hard to identify them, and harder to *really* personally help them over Zoom/email. The students who are excited about math also are falling through the cracks, because I'm not there to identify their talents at office hours, direct them to suitable enrichments, etc.”*

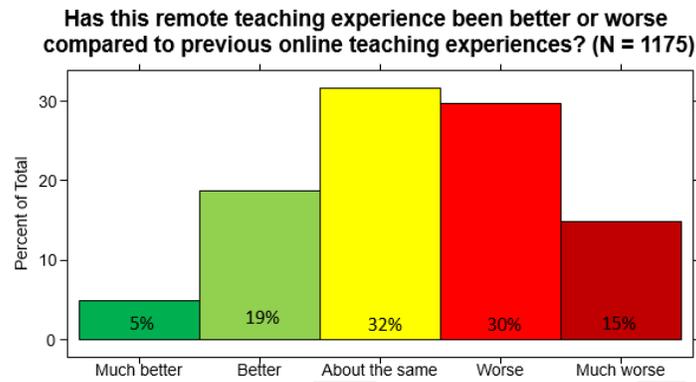
“As for quality and quantity, it's not worse or better really, but just different. I teach a very interactive class with a lot of Q&A and I am now using the chat box feature in Zoom to do that. I think I am having a different set of students who are far more comfortable interacting in this way rather than shouting answers out in an in person class.”

Remote instruction compared to prior online experiences

Remote instruction is different from online courses, as reflected in this instructor’s comment.

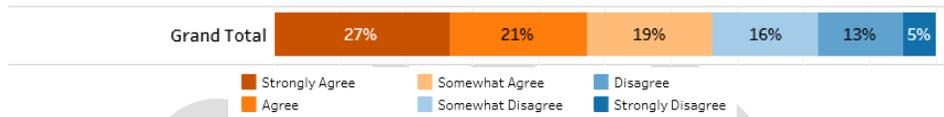
“I am sure there are students who excel at online learning and some who do poorly in general based on their innate learning styles. My son remarked that courses that are built to be offered online are much better than the hybrid courses being offered now. He said they feel disorganized and the teachers have not yet figured out all the kinks of assessment and accountability for doing the reading and assignments. Online courses can work beautifully if they are created carefully. Some subjects matter does not lend itself naturally to online learning and some does. There are so many factors that go into creating a good online learning experience.”

Most instructors had not experience working with online technology or teaching flipped/hybrid courses. Twenty-six percent of respondents had previous experience teaching courses with both face-to-face and remote components (e.g. flipped classrooms or other hybrid designs) and 13 percent of respondents had experience teaching a course entirely online. Of those who had previous online experience, 24 percent indicated the remote teaching experience was better but 45 percent indicated it was worse.



For UCUES respondents, 48 percent agreed or strongly agreed that remote learning was worse than previous online experiences, while 18 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement.

My remote learning experience in this period is worse than previous online learning experiences that I have had.



Appendix I

Academic Senate Instructor Survey responses rates

	Est Population*	Survey Responses	% of Responses	
Berkeley	2,564	365	14%	8%
Davis	1,441	652	45%	15%
Irvine	2,469	749	30%	17%
Los Angeles	4,090	773	19%	18%
Merced	927	227	24%	5%
Riverside	1,951	225	12%	5%
San Diego	1,800	792	44%	18%
Santa Barbara	1,332	342	26%	8%
Santa Cruz	446	200	45%	5%
Total	17,020	4,325	25%	100%

** red denotes estimates of survey population*

The third column in the above table estimates the percentage of those asked to complete the survey e.g. of those who received the Remote Instruction Instructor Response survey, 44% of UC San Diego instructors responded, 45% of UC Santa Cruz instructors responded and so forth. The fourth column estimates the percentage of total responses for each campus e.g. 8 % of systemwide responses are from UC Berkeley, 15% from UC Davis and so forth.

UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) response rates

