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# 2021 Annual Survey of Online Students – Experiences in Classes (COVID-19 Edition)

## **College of the Canyons**

Santa Clarita Community College District  
26455 Rockwell Canyon  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Institutional Research, Planning, and  
Institutional Effectiveness

Catherine Parker, M.A.

Daylene M. Meuschke, Ed.D.

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## ***Introduction***

At the request of the office of Online Education, a survey was distributed to all online classes during the Spring 2021 semester to examine students' experiences in their OnlineLIVE and 100% online classes. Due to COVID-19 stay at home orders, the majority of courses transitioned to a remote modality. Remote modality included 100% online classes and OnlineLIVE classes. OnlineLIVE courses consist of scheduled class times via Zoom and primarily via Canvas, whereas 100% online is where classwork is all online, primarily via Canvas, without a requirement to meet with the instructor at scheduled class times.

Survey results were split into two reports, 2021 Annual Online Student Survey - Profile and Resources (research brief #223) and 2021 Annual Online Student Survey – Experiences in Classes (research brief #224). Research brief #223 provides respondent data on the demographics and use of resources during the Spring 2021 semester. Research brief #224 provides respondent data on learning experiences, barriers and challenges faced, and experiences in OnlineLIVE and 100% online classes. Results of this survey will be used to assess the degree to which online classes, programs, and services offered online are meeting the needs of students.

## ***Methods***

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness in conjunction with the office of Online Education, developed a survey that contained open- and closed-ended questions examining student experiences with 100% online and OnlineLIVE classes at College of the Canyons and assessing how to better support students.

### **Procedures**

Surveys were distributed to all 100% online and OnlineLIVE classes that were active during the distribution period, via Survey Monkey the week of May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Survey data was analyzed using SPSS (2020) and Excel (2019).

### **Subjects**

Overall, 13,798 surveys were distributed to students enrolled in 100% online and OnlineLIVE classes. A total of 1,302 students completed the survey, resulting in an overall response rate of nine percent.

Note: Copy of survey instrument, raw data, and open-ended comments available upon request.

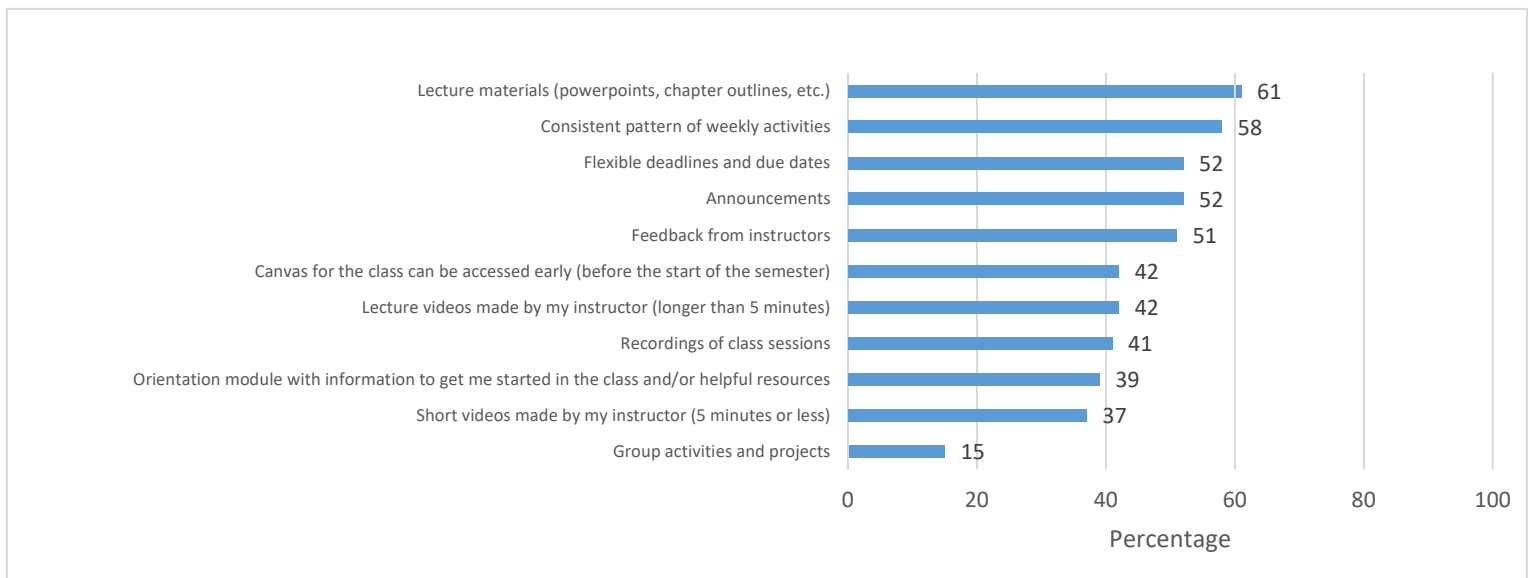
## Research Results

At the request of the office of Online Education, a survey was distributed to all online classes during the Spring 2021 semester to examine students' experiences in their online classes. Due to COVID-19 stay at home orders, the majority of courses transitioned to a remote modality beginning in Spring 2020 with the exception of essential infrastructure classes (e.g., Nursing, Emergency Medical Technician and Welding), which were permitted to hold some on-ground classes. Remote modality included 100% online classes and OnlineLIVE classes.

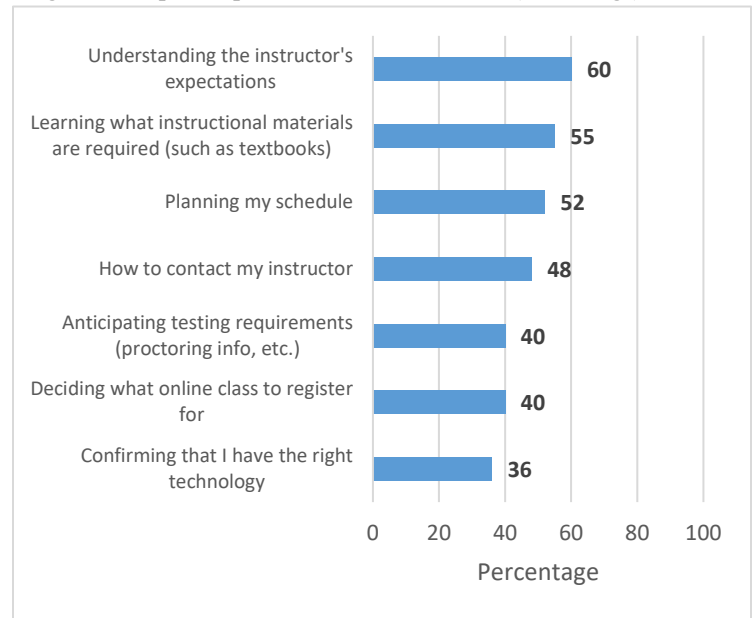
### Learning Experiences

**Features of Canvas:** Respondents were asked to indicate which features were beneficial to their learning in Canvas. Lecture materials (e.g. PowerPoints, chapter outlines, etc.) were the most beneficial (61 percent, n=799), followed by consistent pattern of weekly activities (58 percent, n=748), and flexible deadlines and due dates and announcements (52 percent, n=682, each). The least beneficial feature was group activities and projects (15 percent, n=191). See Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Helpful Features of Canvas (Percentage)**

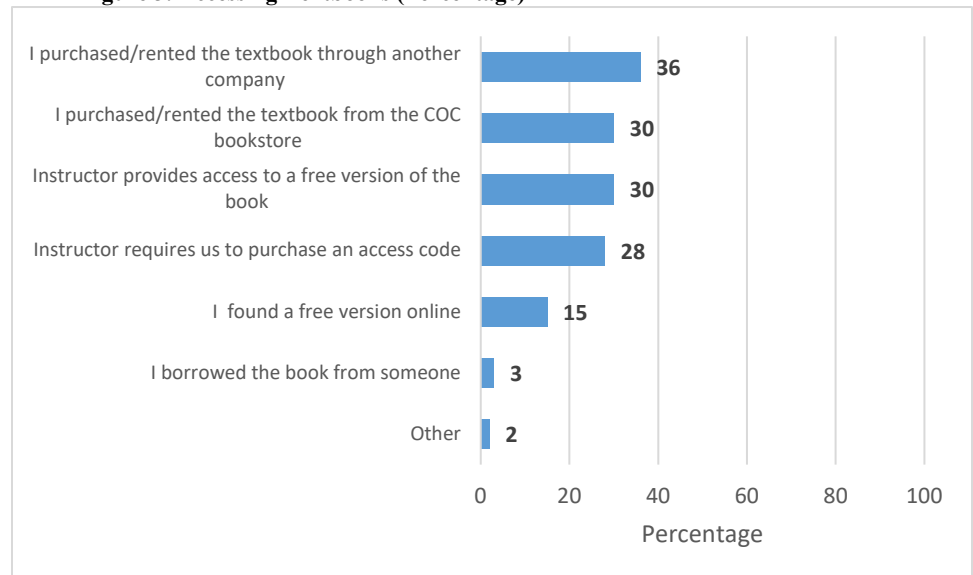


**Figure 2. Helpful Aspects of Orientation Letter (Percentage)**



**Orientation Letter:** Respondents were asked to indicate if they were aware of their instructor's orientation letter prior to registering in their online and/or OnlineLIVE class(es). Three quarters of respondents indicated they were aware of the orientation letter(s) (75 percent, n=934). Respondents who indicated they were aware of the orientation letter(s) were asked to indicate which aspects of the letter were helpful. The top three helpful aspects were understanding the instructor's expectations (60 percent, n=783), followed by learning what instructional materials are required (e.g. textbook) (55 percent, n=719), and planning their schedule (52 percent, n=673). The least helpful was confirming they have the right technology (36 percent, n=469). See Figure 2.

**Figure 3. Accessing Textbooks (Percentage)**



**Textbook Requirement:** Respondents were asked to indicate if their class(es) require a textbook. **Seventy-one percent** indicated that their class(es) required a textbook (n=930). For those who indicated that their class(es) required a textbook, just over a third indicated that they purchased/rented their textbook through another company (36 percent, n=467),

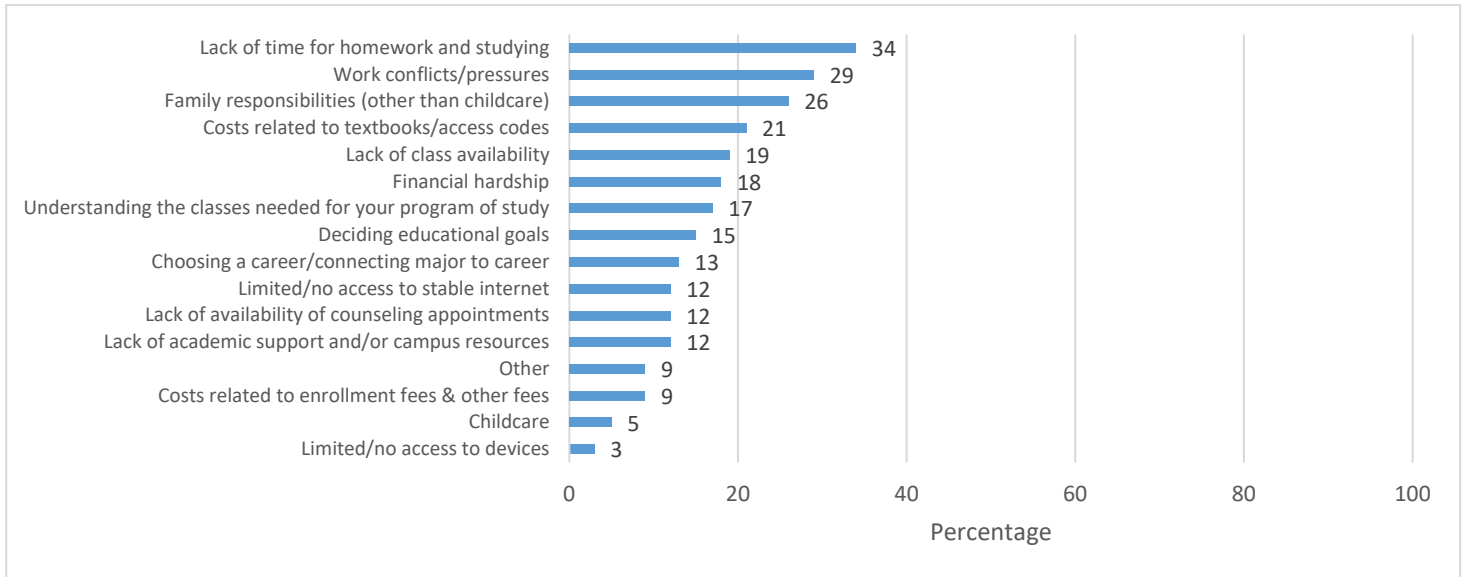
followed by they purchased/rented their textbook from the COC bookstore (n=391) and the instructor provided access to a free version of the book (n=394) (30 percent, each).

Other ways in which respondents indicated how they access textbooks included audible, borrowed, and pirated. See Figure 3.

**Barriers/Challenges:** Respondents were asked to indicate barriers or challenges in achieving their academic goals. The top three barriers were lack of time for homework and studying (34 percent, n=441), followed by work conflicts/pressures (29 percent, n=380), and family responsibilities (26 percent, n=342). Having limited or no access to devices had the lowest percentage indicate as barrier/challenge (3 percent, n=39).

Respondents also indicated other barriers they experience, including instructor, coursework/materials, learning online, mental health, working from home, COVID-19/deaths, lack of motivation, lack of campus support, Canvas/technology, time management, course availability, work, and finances.

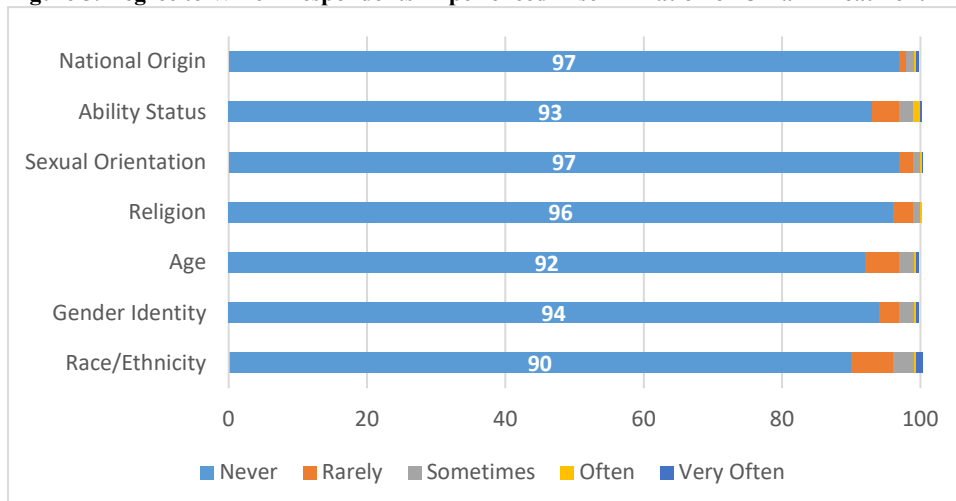
**Figure 4. Barriers Experienced (Percentage)**



**Equity:** Respondents were asked to indicate how often they experienced discrimination or unfair treatment based on national origin, ability status, sexual orientation, religion, age, gender identity, and race/ethnicity. Almost 100 percent of respondents indicated that they never experience discrimination or unfair treatment in regards to national origin (n=1081), ability status (n=1040), sexual orientation (n=1078), religion (n=1073), age (n=1024), gender identity (n=1051), and race/ethnicity (n=1015). Despite these results, discrimination or unfair treatment based on race/ethnicity had the lowest percentage of respondents who indicated that they rarely experience it (90 percent). See Figure 5.

Respondents were also asked to share any additional comments on their experiences with equity. While respondents indicated issues with coursework/course materials, instructor, campus employees, politics, disabilities, and sexism, several respondents also had positive comments about their experiences at COC.

**Figure 5. Degree to Which Respondents Experienced Discrimination or Unfair Treatment**



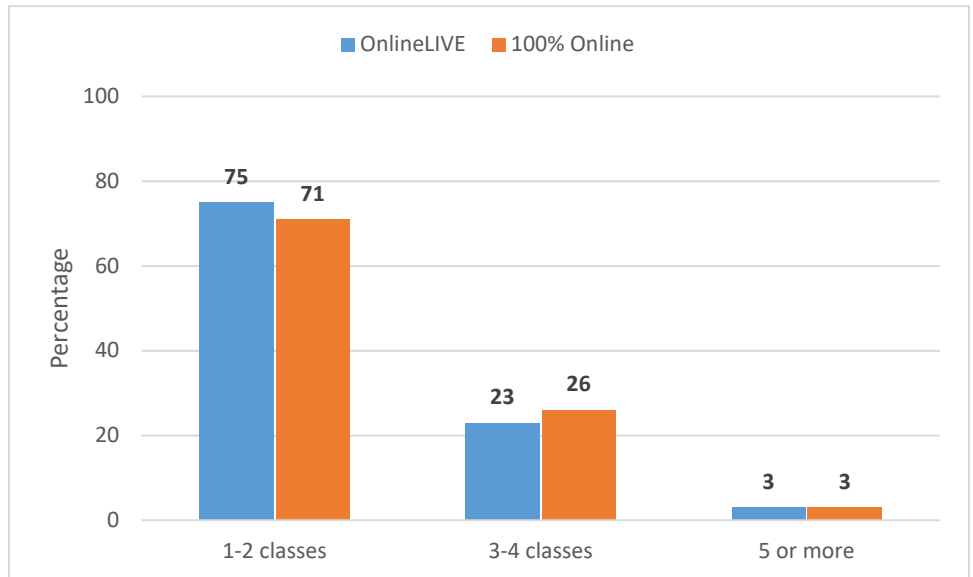
**OnlineLIVE vs. 100% Online:** Students were asked to indicate if they were enrolled in OnlineLIVE and 100% online courses. Overall 79 percent (n=882) of respondents indicated they were enrolled in OnlineLIVE and 75 percent (n=801) indicated 100% online.

**Number of Courses**

**Enrolled In:** Overall, the percentage of respondents who indicated they were enrolled in one to two courses was slightly higher for OnlineLIVE and 100% online courses (75 percent, n=629 – OnlineLIVE and 71 percent, n=531 – 100% Online). The percentage of students who indicated that they were enrolled in 3-4 courses was slightly higher for 100% online compared to OnlineLIVE (26 percent, n=196 – 100%

Online and 23 percent, n=191 – OnlineLIVE). The percentage was the same for students enrolled in five or more OnlineLIVE (n=22) or 100% Online courses (n=25) (3 percent, each). See Figure 6.

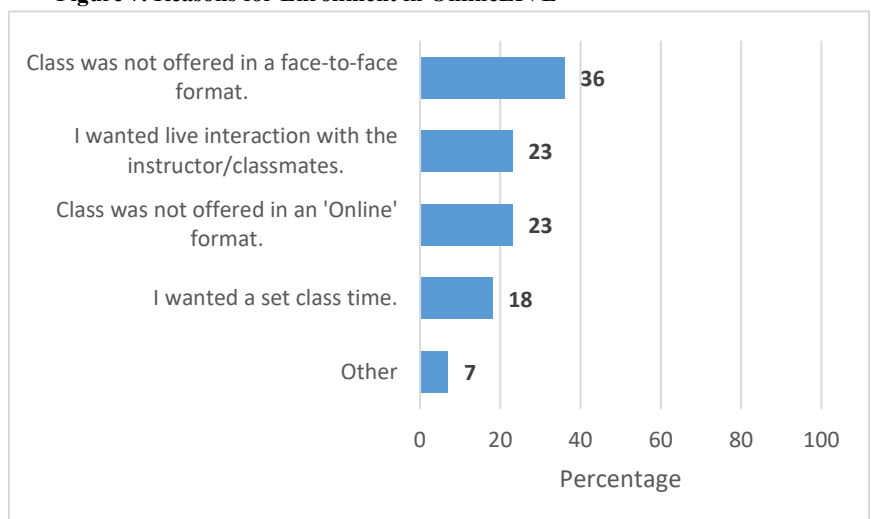
Figure 6. Number of Courses Enrolled in OnlineLIVE vs. 100% Online (Percentage)



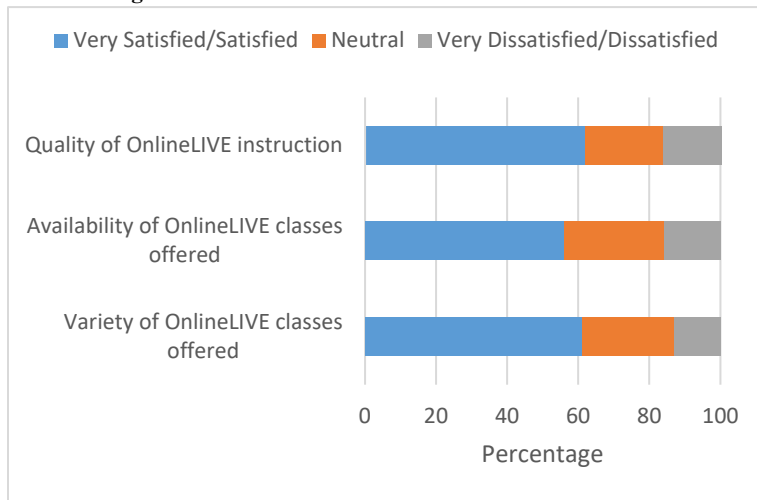
**Reasons for Enrollment in**

**OnlineLIVE:** Respondents were asked to indicate why they chose to take an OnlineLIVE class. Just over a third indicated that the class was not offered in a face-to-face format (36 percent, n=467), followed by wanting live interaction with the instructor/classmates (n=298) and class was not offered in an “online” format (n=294) (23 percent, each), and they wanted a set class time (18 percent, n=228). Seven percent indicated other reasons including: convenience, COVID-19, course offering, and they like the format. A few students expressed their dislike of OnlineLIVE courses. See Figure 7.

Figure 7. Reasons for Enrollment in OnlineLIVE



**Figure 8. Course Satisfaction: OnlineLIVE**



**Course Satisfaction:** Overall, respondents who indicated they were enrolled in 100% online classes indicated higher levels of satisfaction with instruction, classes offered, and variety of classes offered, compared to OnlineLIVE. Specifically, the majority of respondents who took OnlineLIVE course(s) indicated that they were “very satisfied/satisfied” with the quality of instruction (62 percent, n=510), while it was higher for respondents who indicated they took 100% online (66 percent, n=486). In regards to the availability of classes offered, 56 percent of

respondents who indicated they took OnlineLIVE courses were “very satisfied/satisfied” (n=462), while it was 62 percent for those who indicated they took 100% online courses (n=459). For variety of classes offered, 61 percent of respondents who indicated they took OnlineLIVE classes they were “very satisfied/satisfied” (n=502), while it was 67% for those who indicated they took 100% online classes (n=493). For course satisfaction with OnlineLIVE courses, see Figure 8. For satisfaction with 100% online courses, see Figure 9.

**Figure 9. Course Satisfaction: 100% Online**

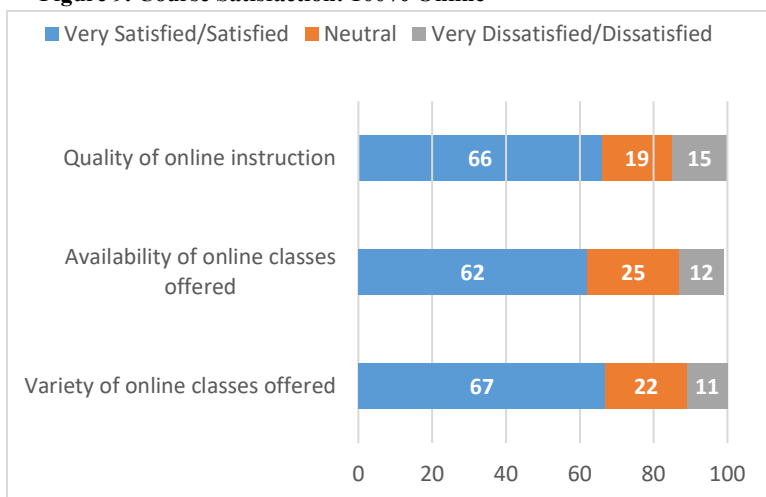
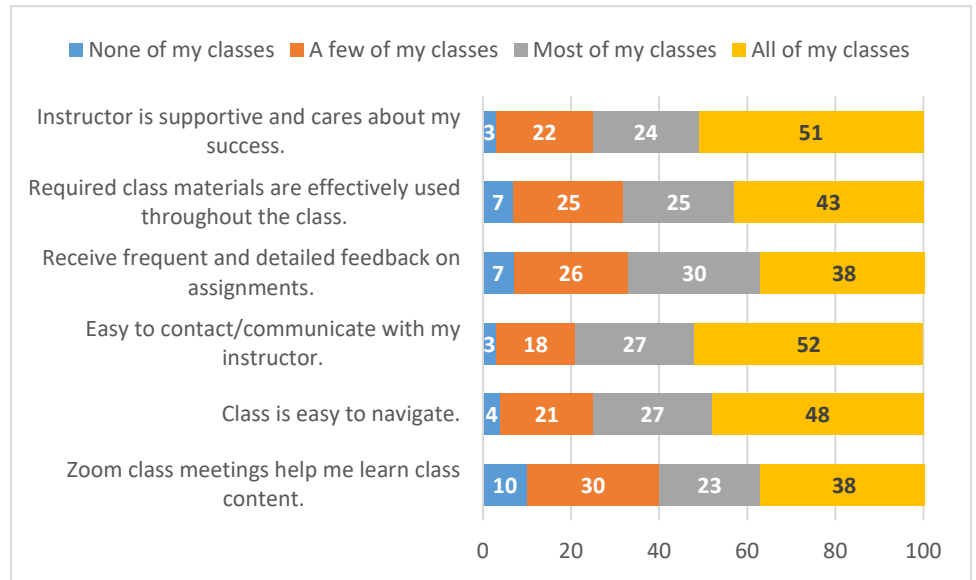


Figure 10. Aspects of Courses: OnlineLIVE

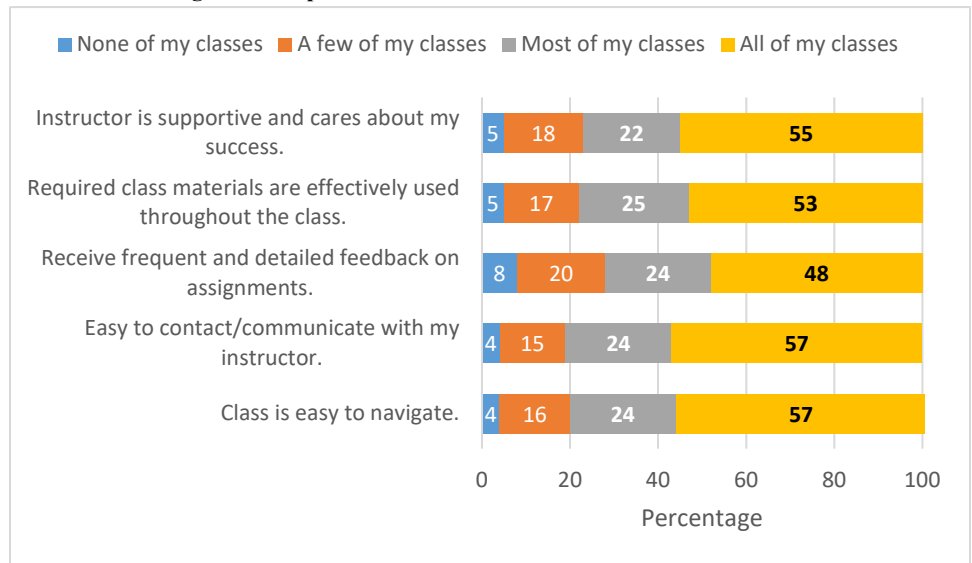
**Aspects of Courses:** Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which their courses have instructors who provide support and care, use course materials effectively, provide frequent feedback, are easy to contact, courses are easy to navigate, and Zoom is helpful (OnlineLIVE only). Overall, respondents who indicated they were enrolled in 100% online classes indicated that their courses possess those aspects, excluding Zoom, at a higher rate than OnlineLIVE courses.



For OnlineLIVE courses, only half of respondents indicated that for *all of their classes*, the instructor is supportive and cares about their success (51 percent, n=416) and it's easy to contact/communicate with their instructor (52 percent, n=416). Less than 50 percent of respondents indicated all of their classes are easy to navigate (48 percent, n=400), required class materials are effectively used throughout the course (43 percent, n=356), and Zoom meetings help me learn class content (38 percent, n=316). See Figure 10.

Figure 11. Aspects of Courses: 100% Online

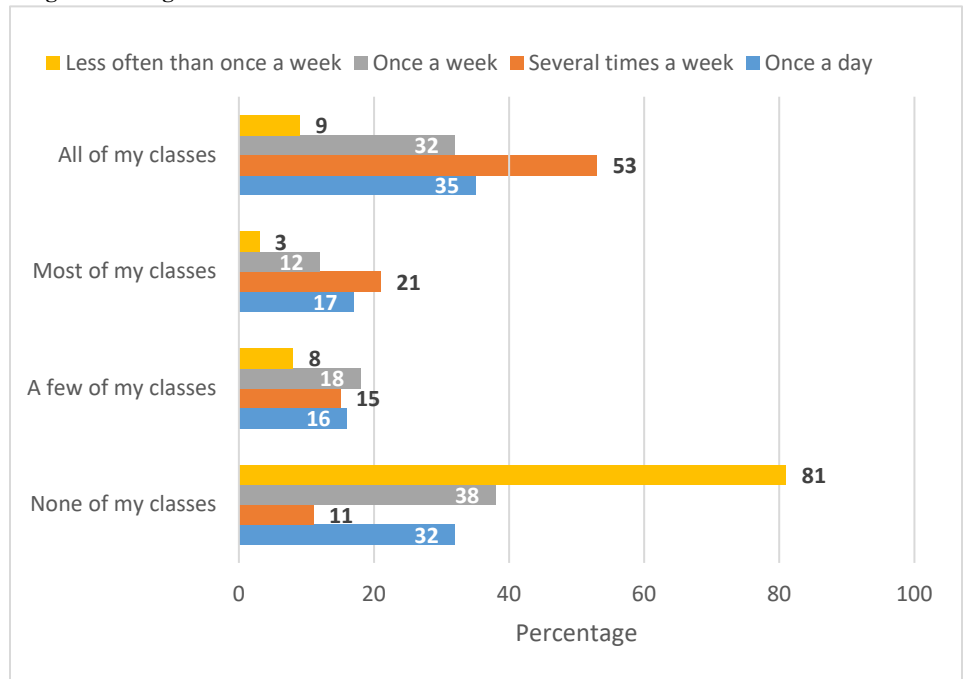
For 100% online classes, just over half of respondents indicated that for *all of their classes*, the class is easy to navigate (n=423) and it's easy to contact/communicate with their instructor (n=420) (57 percent, each), instructor is supportive and cares about their success (55 percent, n=404) and required class materials are effectively used throughout the course (53 percent, n=392). Less than 40 percent of respondents indicated that they receive frequent and detailed feedback on assignments (48 percent, n=355). See Figure 11.





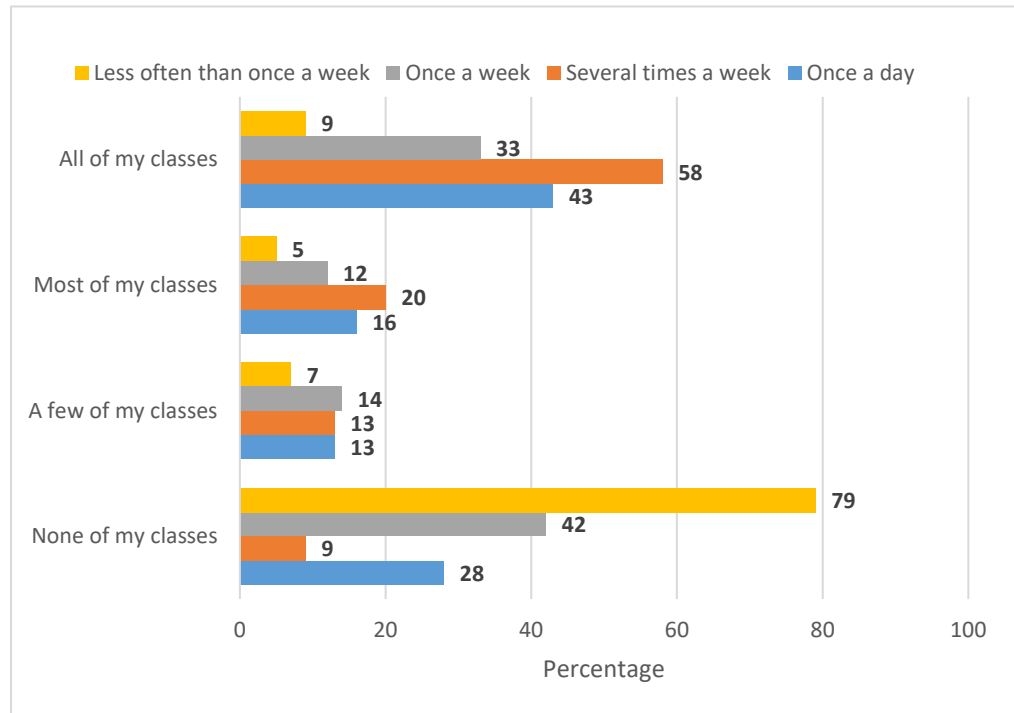
**Canvas:** Respondents were asked to indicate how often they are required to access Canvas. The majority indicated that all of their classes require access to Canvas (93 percent). For those who are required to access Canvas, 35 percent indicated that *all of their classes* require access once a day (n=243), while 53 percent indicated several times a week (n=414), 32 percent once a week (n=212), and nine percent less often than once a week (n=57). One percent (n=17) of respondents indicated that they did not use Canvas in their OnlineLIVE classes. See Figure 12.

**Figure 12. Degree to Which Canvas is Used in Courses: OnlineLIVE**



**Figure 13. Degree to Which Canvas is Used: 100% Online**

For 100% online classes, the majority also indicated that all of their classes require access to Canvas (91 percent). For those who are required to access Canvas, 43 percent indicated that *all of their classes* require access once a day (n=269), while 58 percent indicated several times a week (n=396), 33 percent once a week (n=192), and nine percent less often than once a week (n=51). Two percent of respondents (n=27) indicated their 100% online class did not use Canvas. See Figure 13.



**Online Pathway:** Respondents were asked to indicate if they would be interested in pursuing a 100% online pathway option in which they could complete their entire degree/certification with online classes that don't require them to meet at a designated time/day. Over half indicated that they are interested (59 percent, n=659).

## ***Recommendations***

- Continue to offer OnlineLIVE classes.
- Encourage the use of lecture materials (e.g. PPTs and chapter outlines), keeping a consistent pattern of weekly activities, feasibility of flexible deadlines/due dates, regular announcements, and regular feedback for instructors using Canvas.
- Examine the degree to which students feel a sense of cultural safety in 100% online and OnlineLIVE classes. Cultural safety is defined as “an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together” ([http://www.intstudentsup.org/diversity/cultural\\_safety/#:~:text=A%20commonly%20used%20definition%20of,a re%20and%20what%20they%20need.](http://www.intstudentsup.org/diversity/cultural_safety/#:~:text=A%20commonly%20used%20definition%20of,a re%20and%20what%20they%20need.))
- Use results in conjunction with Research Brief #223.
- Pilot 100% online pathways.

For more detailed information on this research brief, stop by the Institutional Research office located in BONH-224, or call Catherine Parker, Research Analyst at 661.362.5879 or Daylene Meuschke, Associate Vice President of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness at 661.362.5329.