Old Dominion University

Online and Face-to-Face Comparisons for Academic Program Assessment

Why do we need to compare online and face-to-face programs?
To ensure that both online and face-to-face (f2f) delivery methods support the attainment of student learning outcomes, the program should compare courses that are offered in both online and f2f environments for at least one measure within an assessment plan. This ensures that an equally high quality educational experience is being provided to students in both online and f2f learning environments.

Who needs to compare online and face-to-face programs?
The online and f2f comparisons should be conducted by programs that offer more than 50% of the curriculum online as well as f2f. In these cases, students are able to complete 50% or more of the coursework through online or web-based component.

What needs to be compared?
The unit of analysis here are the learning experiences and assignment(s) within a course (not the students). The measure identified for assessment of the student learning outcomes should be compared between the online course offerings and the f2f course offerings.

If your assessment plan includes a course that is only taught using one delivery method, please indicate this within the assessment report and a comparison is not needed.

> ### OPTIONAL Analysis of Student Types (campus or web)
> If programs are interested in analyzing data by student type (campus or web), they are welcome to do so; however, this is NOT required by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment for program assessment.

What are the reporting expectations?
Programs offering more than 50% of the curriculum online as well as f2f need to clearly report comparable assessment data each year in their Academic Assessment report submitted in Weave. This information should be used and discussed within each degree program to determine if modifications are necessary. The University is required to report this information for our regional accrediting body SACSCOC.

How can we make online and f2f comparisons given the changes in teaching modality during Fall 2020 and Spring 2021?
> Option 1 – Compare across years: Student performance from Fall 2020 online courses could be compared to Fall 2019 f2f courses.

> Option 2 – Compare course types: Student performance from traditional or historically online courses could be compared to the f2f courses that were offered and/or to the remote teaching courses that were online taught online due to COVID.

How exactly do we make online and f2f comparisons in our assessment results?

Please see examples provided below.

Examples

The Old Dominion University Sample BS degree can be completed in both online and f2f formats. As such, student can complete the W course SAMP385W - Writing within the Discipline in either delivery method. The program uses the research paper from SAMP 385W to evaluate written communication within the program.

Faculty teaching the online and f2f courses send the assignment scores and related feedback to the program's assessment liaison, so a comparison between the two courses can be made. This data is then shared and discussed with faculty in a department meeting. Any necessary changes to the course are also discussed.

Example 1 – Differences in Learning Environments (online vs f2f), target partially met

Target: 80% (80/100) of students will score an 80 or higher on the research paper rubric.

Target Status: Partially Met

Results: 79.5% (159/200) of students scored an 80 or higher on the research paper rubric in SAMP 385W. Online and face to face comparisons were made.

Analysis of Results: SAMP 385W f2f sections, 85% (85/100) of students scored an 80 or higher and SAMP 385W online sections reported 74% (74/100) of students scored an 80 or higher on the paper rubric. Based on this data, the course experiences are not comparable because one learning environment is meeting the target while the other environment (online) is not.

Faculty teaching in both learning environments reported that students were able to clearly state their purpose in the research paper. However, faculty teaching the online courses found that many of the students struggled to synthesize the literature and to write a complete and well justified argument. All faculty mentioned that while mechanics is not taught in this course, many students still struggled to write a paper free of major misspellings.

Analysis of Improvements Over Time: With the addition of a citation exercise this year, students' ability to correctly use and cite sources has improved this past year.

Action Plan: To address learning environment differences – Learning modules will be created in fall 2017 to give students extra resources related to (1) the synthesis of literature and (2) writing a comprehensive argument. These resources will be made available on the blackboard site for both the online and f2f courses.

Additionally, a mini exercise on mechanics will be piloted in fall 2017 to reduce the number of mechanical errors in the research paper.

Example 2 – No Differences in Learning Environments (online vs f2f), target not met

Target: 80% (80/100) of students will score an 80 or higher on the research paper rubric.

Target Status: Not Met

Results: 61.5% (123/200) of students scored an 80 or higher on the research paper rubric in SAMP 385W. Online and face to face comparisons were made.

Analysis of Results: SAMP 385W f2f sections, 60% (60/100) of students scored an 80 or higher on the research paper rubric. SAMP 385W online sections, 63% (63/100) of students scored an 80 or higher on the research paper rubric. Based on this data, the course experience is comparable because there is little to no difference between the f2f and online scores.

Faculty teaching in both learning environments reported that students were able to clearly state their purpose in the research paper. However, many of the students struggled to synthesize the literature and to write a complete and well justified argument. While mechanics is not taught in this course, a majority of students are not able to write a paper free of major misspellings.

Improvements: With the addition of a citation exercise this year, students' ability to correctly use and cite sources has improved this past year.

Action Plan: To improve synthesis, a second mini literature review will be piloted in fall 2017 to improve this outcome. For this assignment, students will be engaged in a peer review process to further enhance their comprehension of synthesis.

Faculty teaching the course will meet to discuss best practices for teaching students' argument development and share assignment prompts. Strong assignment prompts will be shared with the program and preloaded as a teaching resource for faculty on the blackboard site. We may also consult the new center for faculty development at ODU.

Glossary of Terms
Online Course – A majority of course instruction is delivered through online or web-based component.

Blended courses - Also known as hybrid or mixed-mode courses, are traditional lecture classes where at least 50% of the traditional face-to-face instruction is replaced by online or web-based components. Thus, a portion of the course contact hours is not delivered in the traditional face-to-face setting.

Face-to-Face Course – A majority of course instruction is delivered in a traditional face-to-face setting.