



UC San Diego

HERBERT WERTHEIM SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN LONGEVITY SCIENCE



zoom vs CLASSROOM



How Learning Preference Impacts Student Experience

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BACKGROUND:

As in-person learning returned post-COVID, some courses kept online elements, raising questions about each format's effectiveness. While online learning offers flexibility, in-person learning provides real-time face to face interaction.

OBJECTIVE:

To determine **how students' preferences on learning formats impact overall academic experience**

METHODS:

- Cross-sectional survey of UCSD undergraduates (n=50) in May 2025
- Anonymous survey via Qualtrics
- Distributed through email, social media, and direct outreach
- Measured preferences for in-person vs. online/podcast formats
- Self-reported outcomes included:
 - Academic satisfaction
 - Job preparedness
 - Content retention

RESULTS:

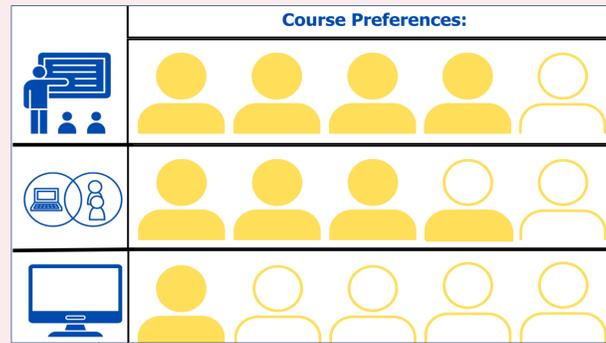


Figure 1. Course Format: Preferences

- **4 out of 5** students prefer in-person courses
- **3.5 out of 5** students prefer hybrid formats
- **1 out of 5** students prefer fully online courses

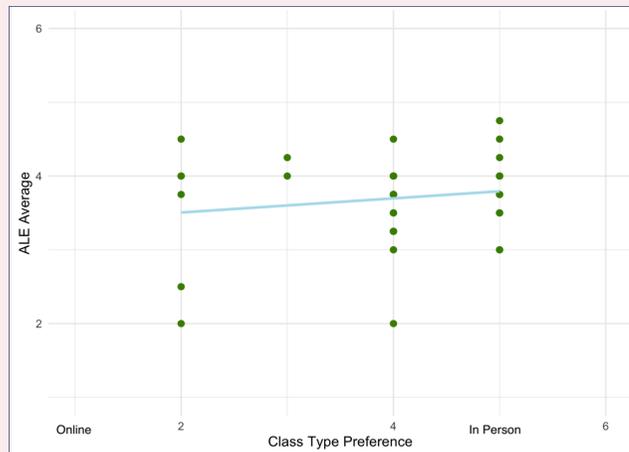


Figure 3. Class Type Preference and Academic Learning Experience (ALE) Average

Those who **preferred in-person** classes reported slightly **higher academic satisfaction** on average (r= 0.157)

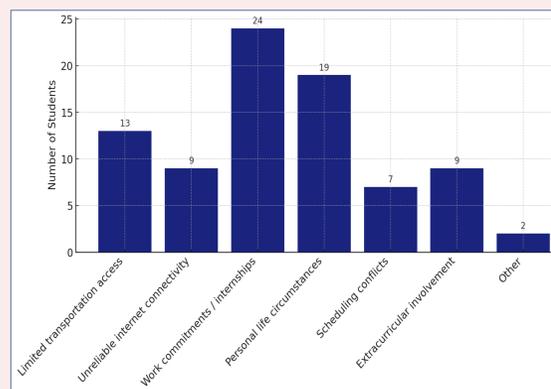


Figure 5. Barriers of In-Person Courses

Students reported **work commitments, personal circumstances, and transportation** issues as top **barriers** to attending in-person classes.

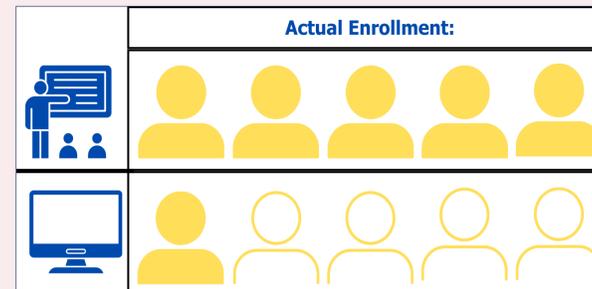


Figure 2. Course Format: Reality

Nearly **ALL** students reported majority in-person courses, both generally and for major courses

Only **1 out of 5** students reported online courses

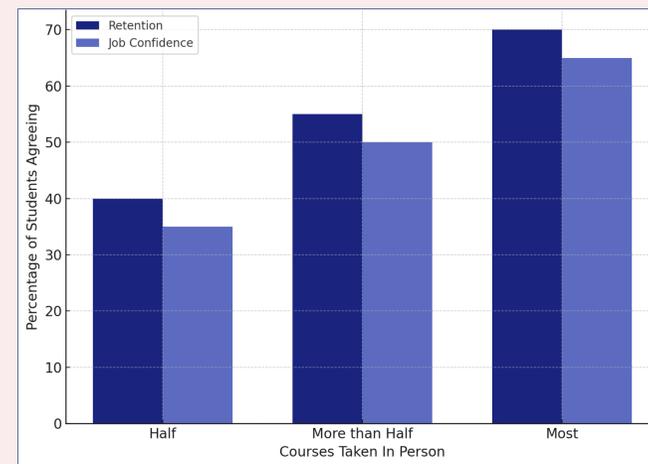


Figure 4. Retention and Job Confidence

P-value for retention = 0.000

Students with more **in-person** courses reported **higher confidence in job readiness** and **better retention** of course material.

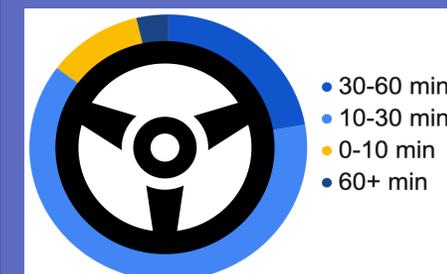
CONCLUSION:

- UCSD undergrads **prefer in-person classes**.
- Students who took more in-person courses felt **more satisfied** and **retained content better**, showing that **learning format matters**.
 - This trend stayed the same for both commuters and non-commuters.
- **Confidence in getting a job didn't vary** by format.
- 81% responses came from health and biology majors. Future studies should include larger and more diverse samples.

IMPLICATIONS:

- **Universities should expand in-person options**, especially for hands-on classes.
- Students also **need more flexible schedules and format choices**.

Figure 6. Commute Time for Students



Scan me!

