

Results from the Fall 2020 Student Online Learning Experience Survey:  
An Executive Summary

Citrus College conducted a collegewide student survey in November 2020. The focus of the survey was to better understand students’ experiences, needs, and behaviors with respect to online learning during the fall 2020 term. A total of 664 Citrus College students responded to the survey.

Questions in the brief survey instrument were grouped in six categories: 1) instructor communication; 2) utilization of support services; 3) technology; 4) library resources; 5) registration plans; and, 6) approaches to online learning. To better understand the respondent pool, the survey also collected general information, including respondents’ educational goals and participation in special support programs (e.g., EOPS, STEM TRiO, etc.) as well as general demographic data. The survey concluded with an opportunity for students to provide “other comments.”

**1. Instructor Communication:** Respondents were presented with seven statements regarding instructor communication and were asked to provide their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*.

Instructor(s) Clearly Communicated...	Percent of Respondents Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
...how they could be <b>reached</b> to receive help	87%
...expectations for <b>logging into Canvas</b> daily or weekly	83%
...expectations for <b>attending Zoom/Canvas real-time</b> sessions	80%
...grading policy and how <b>grades</b> will be determined	78%
...expectations for <b>camera usage</b> during real-time sessions	69%
...how to <b>access</b> online student support resources	66%
...what <b>skills and behaviors</b> are needed to be successful in the online learning environment	65%

**2. Utilization of Support Services:** The survey asked students to identify which services they utilized or accessed during fall 2020 term. From among a list of 13 support services, responses showed:

- 92% checked Canvas daily or weekly;
- 88% utilized Zoom/Canvas real-time sessions;
- 54% accessed online counseling appointments;
- 33% accessed Admissions and Records and/or Financial Aid services;
- 12% utilized the Canvas help function;
- 10% joined online tutoring sessions
- 6% utilized the TeCs Student Help Desk; and,
- 4% utilized online Student Health Center services.

**3. Technology:** When asked about the use of the camera for synchronous class time, 64% of students indicated they use a camera. Nearly 20% of these students indicated that the camera they use is on a smartphone and, one in three (33%) respondents indicated they did not use a camera for real-time instruction.

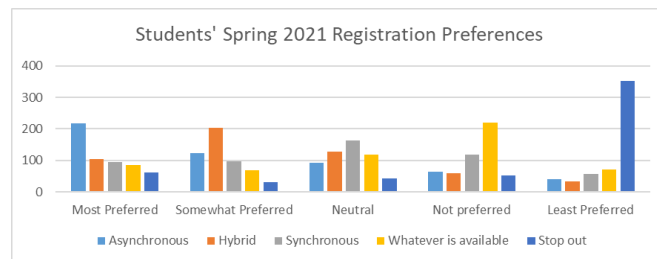
Concerned that some Citrus College students may have needed to drop a fall 2020 term class due to limited access to technological resources, responses showed:

- **74%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they needed to drop a class due to **unreliable internet**;
- **75%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had to drop a class due to **unreliable hardware**; and,
- **71%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had to drop a class because they did not have **the required software to complete coursework**.

**4. Library Resources:** Students were asked how limits to library resources were impacting their experience. Data showed:

- **64%** of respondents believed lack of access to study rooms/space made it more difficult for them to complete coursework;
- **50%** of respondents indicated lack of access to printing services impeded their ability to complete coursework;
- **45%** of respondents said inability to access reserve textbooks was negatively impacting their ability to complete coursework; and,
- **24%** of respondents indicated that the inability to utilize library computers made it more difficult for them to complete their fall 2020 coursework.

**5. Registration Plans:** Students were reminded that winter and spring 2021 courses would again be remote and, they were asked to rank their registration preferences on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the most preferred and 5 being the least preferred. Of the 88% of respondents who opted to answer this question (N=583), data was varied in a way that provided no concise preference. Asynchronous instruction received the highest response of most preferred (n=217), and “stop out” (not planning to take classes until it is safe to return to campus) received the highest count of least preferred (n=352). But Asynchronous also had about the same number of combined respondents of most preferred, somewhat preferred, and neutral combined (n=431) as hybrid instruction (n=434) with the three choices combined.



**6. Approaches to Online Learning:** The final question asked students to consider their personal learning style and identify those styles among the 13 listed that they believe are the most effective in helping them learn course content. Among students who responded to this question (N=544):

- 83% indicated flexibility when completing exams (exam is open for a limited period of time);
- 72% indicated having pre-recorded lectures supported their learning;
- 58% believe real-time instruction is critical to their success;
- 56% indicated that having external resources (i.e., YouTube, library databases, publisher materials) is helpful;
- 30% believe discussion rooms and threaded discussions are helpful;
- 29% find break-out rooms and real-time discussions important to their learning;
- 23% indicated being able to pre-record their presentations supported their success;
- 19% see specific software (i.e., LabFlow, Adobe) as helpful;
- 10% think group projects are useful in their online learning;

- 10% find real-time student presentations helpful;
- 7% think real-time exams (Zoom) contribute to learning; and just
- 6% find Proctorio-proctored exams helpful.

As a follow-up to question 6, students were asked to list what they find to be the most positive aspects of learning online. Some common themes emerged from student responses:

a) Time, in various contexts, was a common theme mentioned by respondents:

*“Online classes [are] more accessible since I work full-time in addition to attending classes. It isn't always easy to attend in-person classes when you have to work around a job.”*

*“I enjoy not having to drive to campus, fight for a parking space, and make sure I'm not late to class, etc. It's much simpler and easier to attend class from home.”*

*“Working at my own pace and being able to complete work on my own time by the due date. Having the flexibility of working around my full-time job has also enabled me to register for multiple classes versus a traditional classroom setting which limits my options.”*

*“I can save more time to study than before [when I used] to wait for transportation.”*

*“[The] convenience of being at home and listening to lectures around my work schedule.”*

*“Being able to spend more time with my family.”*

b) Respondents commented on benefits of online teaching and learning.

*“I prefer pre-recorded lectures so I can always go back if I missed something or if I'm confused or if I didn't hear [everything]!”*

*“Convenience, easier to schedule study time, ability to review lectures multiple times because they're recorded.”*

*“...it's easier to take tests since they are all open note [w]hich is like the real world, I suppose.”*

c) Students also commented on the safe and relaxed nature of working from home:

*“[Working at home] makes it safe for myself being at high risk of COVID.”*

*“While I do prefer in-person classes, I am thankful to be home where I feel much safer and am able to still keep up with my studies.”*

*“...flexibility in attending school regardless of fear of pandemic and my family's well-being.”*

*"I can do my work in pajamas and stay up as late as I want to do homework..."*

**Respondents' Demographic Information:** The survey collected a range of demographic data to better understand the sample:

A majority of students (64%) indicated their primary educational goal was to transfer. Twenty-three percent said they were focused on earning an associate's degree. Among respondents, 38% indicated they were part of the Citrus College Promise program. Students completing the survey represented other special support programs including I Will Complete College, EOPS/CARE, CalWorks, Veteran Success Center, DSPS, and STEM TRiO indicating representative samples from a wide range of programs and services.

Other demographic data showed that among respondents:

- 60% were under 25 years of age;
- 52% identified as Hispanic, Latino/a, Latinx; 16% identified as non-Hispanic White; 8% identified as Asian; and, 3% identified as African American;
- 50% of respondents said they were a first-generation college student; and
- 75% identified as female.

The final question on the survey asked for comments regarding online learning at Citrus College. One hundred and forty-seven comments were recorded covering multiple themes.

Some respondents utilized this space to present their frustrations:

*"I find it frustrating when [I try] to get a hold of services in real time. Nobody is able to respond back in real time when issues arise."*

*"Online learning has been a quite unfortunate. I feel as if less information, communication and knowledge is being passed to us due to the limits of Zoom classes. We cannot truly interact with one another to learn, we cannot be properly educated through online classes..."*

*"Please be careful when using the Proctorio Chrome extension. I understand that the purpose of the extension is to monitor the test-taking process, but if there is a security breach of any kind within the Proctorio servers, the data received from student and professor computers could very easily be stolen as it taps into every part of your system including microphone and camera."*

*"Proctorio is EVIL and should not be used."*

Students have found many positive aspects to remote instruction:

*"Because everything is done on Canvas, the calendar on the page shows me my entire week and when everything is due as opposed to in-person when I would have to remember the day-- that's a little perk I didn't think I'd get."*

*"...with online classes I can schedule at better times without having to leave my kids with a sitter and drive late at night."*

*“I think the school and professors have handled everything so well; I know this must be just as difficult for them as it is for students and I know they are doing the most they can in these trying times and I would just like to say thank you.”*