Assessing Learning During A Pandemic: The Problem With “Modality”
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BACKGROUND
As we surpass one year of the COVID-19 pandemic, many stakeholders seek to measure the effects of instructional modalities on student outcomes. The instructional environment may differentially affect student motivation and performance.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
RQ1: In what primary modality were courses delivered according to the institution, instructors, and students?
RQ2: Did students’ course performance and self-efficacy differ as a function of their instructional modality?

DESIGN
Teaching and Learning During COVID-19 Study (Fall 2020 surveys)

PARTICIPANTS
- U.S. public land-grant university
- 111 instructors
- 251 undergraduate course sections
- 7,020 undergraduate students

OUTCOME MEASURES
- Course grades: 0.0 (F) to 4.0 (A)
- Self-efficacy: 1 (low) to 6 (high)
  - Academic (3 items; α = .91)
  - Self-regulation (5 items; α = .88)

DISCUSSION
- Findings reveal that instructional modality varies according to who is reporting it—particularly during COVID-19.
- Measurement decisions can lead to different conclusions about the effects of instructional modality on motivation and learning outcomes.
- Institutional and educational researchers should exercise caution both in how they measure modality and how they interpret findings.

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