

# TIME FOR CLASS

— COVID-19 EDITION —

## PART 1: A NATIONAL SURVEY OF FACULTY DURING COVID-19

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This spring, higher education institutions engaged in a rapid and unprecedented movement to remote teaching and learning that exposed a new cohort of faculty with no prior experience teaching online to the use of digital learning tools and techniques. This transition occurred in the context of emergency remote teaching online<sup>1</sup> versus the careful design and delivery of a course always intended to be delivered online. Typically, high-quality online courses are carefully developed over several months by a team, as opposed to this spring's rapid transition with varying levels of support. Yet, counter to the prevailing sentiment in the popular press, this transition left many faculty with a *more positive* perception of online learning. However, the shift also exposed major challenges, which include instructor and institutional readiness, consistency of experience, gaps in student access and readiness, and trust in institutions' ability to solve for these issues. Understanding these challenges and identifying ways to create solutions as we collectively move forward to plan for an uncertain fall is the focus of this summary report and others forthcoming in the series.

This report presents the first results from an ongoing series of surveys and focus groups with faculty designed to understand the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning in higher education. More than 4,000 faculty at over 1,500 higher education institutions nationwide have thoughtfully shared their experiences. This first analysis focuses on understanding the extent of the spring 2020 transition to remote learning. Specifically, it focuses on the impact on faculty and students, course delivery, digital learning tool adoption, and on identifying priorities and plans. Future installments in the series will focus on understanding evolving hybrid delivery approaches and their impact on instruction, tools, and practices; professional development priorities; impacts on access and equity; and the specific experiences of faculty teaching introductory courses. The massive transition to remote learning and the aftershocks of the pandemic on subsequent academic years offers a historic opportunity to study how higher education can change rapidly. Moreover, this period comprises the sum total of thousands of individual faculty members navigating a public health disaster. The goal of this special research series is to capture, amplify, and contribute to the stories of the faculty population.

At the time of this report's release, we are still amidst much uncertainty. Many institutions are still finalizing the details of their fall instructional plans, and we continue to monitor these varied plans and instructional models. However, what is certain is that there will be no "back to normal." The impact of a global pandemic and economic crisis has created a shift in how, when, and where student learning occurs.



*The impact of a global pandemic and economic crisis has created a dramatic shift in how, when, and where student learning occurs.*

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1. O'Keefe, L., Rafferty, J., Gunder, A., Vignare, K. (2020, May 18). Delivering high-quality instruction online in response to COVID-19: Faculty Playbook. Every Learner Everywhere. <http://www.everylearnereverywhere.org/resources>

As a result of this shift, institutions are caught in a near-term balancing act, trying to:

1. Meet undergraduate student (and parent) expectations for robust delivery of face-to-face learning experiences and address equity gaps
2. Support exhausted faculty as they continue to adopt new teaching practices and tools to deliver high-quality, flexible, and equitable hybrid and online instruction
3. Reimagine new instructional models that can deliver high-quality, flexible, and equitable remote learning as schools respond to pandemic recurrence scenarios

The increased use and adoption of digital learning tools and techniques to enable learning and flexibility is here to stay. And a professoriate that has largely worked tirelessly to support students in the unprecedented spring transition needs support to be ready for this new reality.

FINDINGS COUNTER PUBLIC PERCEPTION IN KEY AREAS



Prevailing Perception	What Faculty Tell Us
The great transition to remote teaching entailed faculty simply changing from teaching face-to-face to teaching on web conferencing tools (e.g., Zoom).	75% of faculty used a combination of synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods. Many thoughtfully transitioned instructional practices and adopted new tools.
The hasty transition to remote learning created faculty backlash against online learning.	A minority of faculty, only 17%, said that their perception of online learning has shifted to be less favorable during COVID-19.

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Between May 11-20, 2020, *Tyton Partners*, in collaboration with *Every Learner Everywhere* and its partners, fielded a national survey of higher education faculty. The survey targeted a nationally representative sample of faculty at 2-year and 4-year institutions and has yielded the largest and most comprehensive view of the impact of the COVID-19 transition on faculty and their teaching to date. 4,798 faculty who transitioned a course to remote teaching this spring from over 1,500 institutions responded to the survey (1,102 at 2-year and 3,623 at 4-year institutions); further information on survey methodology and respondent demographics can be found in the Appendix. The survey explored the faculty perspective regarding the rapid transition of face-to-face or hybrid courses to fully remote delivery. Key areas of inquiry include the resources and supports used, challenges faced, lessons learned, and plans and concerns for the future. Results have been analyzed by institutional characteristics, faculty characteristics, and course characteristics. This report is being co-released with a companion report from Digital Promise about the student experience, *Suddenly Online: A National Survey of Undergraduates during the COVID-19 Pandemic*.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS

Faculty reports from the spring term point to a set of priorities for institutions as well as the suppliers and organizations that support them. The following six priority actions can be taken to support faculty as they work to prepare for high-quality digital learning for the fall and beyond:

### 1 PROVIDE FACULTY SUPPORT IN IMPLEMENTING ONLINE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Faculty struggled to adjust their instructional practice to teach online. Faculty teaching for the first time online were almost twice as likely to say they struggled to adjust their practice. Faculty satisfaction with student learning in their spring courses was directly correlated with the number of online teaching practices used. Importantly, this finding was replicated in the Digital Promise report, *Suddenly Online: A National Survey of Undergraduates during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, underscoring the importance of focusing near and longer-term professional development to support faculty as they work to incorporate these practices into fall teaching. These practices include checking in with students to ensure access and agency, combining synchronous and asynchronous course elements, incorporating real-world examples, assigning small group work, “chunking” content, and administering frequent quizzes to assess learning and adapt instruction.

### 2 SUPPORT FACULTY IN ORGANIZING COURSES TO INCLUDE ROUTINES THAT PROMOTE STUDENT AGENCY, COMMUNITY AND ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

The vast majority of faculty said that their biggest challenge was engaging students. In the spring term, faculty who had varied degrees of prior experience teaching online taught students with varied experience learning online, amidst a backdrop of significant personal stress and strain. One result was a very inconsistent learning experience for students. Institutions can prepare students with general resources on how to be successful learners online. Institutions can prepare faculty with professional development focused on designing courses with clear structure and routines and active learning practices to engage students in their learning.

### 3 FOCUS ON STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY STRUGGLING STUDENTS AND ENSURE SUFFICIENT INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS

In the spring term, faculty were concerned about ensuring that they had the tools to continue to identify and provide remediation for struggling students. With 50% of faculty noting that they adjusted learning outcomes and significantly modified grading approaches, the need for student learning assessment, adaptive and personalized learning pathways, and academic support services is expected to increase as these students progress into the fall term. For faculty in high-enrollment courses, basic use of learning analytics data to identify and intervene to support struggling students will be more important. Faculty expressed significant equity concerns, and institutions need to take into account different backgrounds, abilities, and individual experiences and explicitly work to provide opportunities for success that are not impacted by these differences. In addition, keeping in mind the notion that “teaching is a team sport,” students need access to appropriate support services via various modalities. Therefore, institutions need to audit their support services to ensure they are accessible to all students in various remote scenarios.

#### 4 FACILITATE THE DISCOVERY AND SELECTION OF HIGH-QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE SUPPLEMENTAL DIGITAL LEARNING TOOLS

As faculty and institutions prepare to be ready to teach in a range of online and hybrid settings, more than half seek to adopt supplemental tools to support their existing curriculum. At the same time, faculty are overwhelmed with the process for selecting high-quality content and need resources and guidance to make this transition. Resources to support faculty and institutions in making these selections are included in the Resources section of this report. Institutions need to tailor these guides to direct faculty to institutionally-adopted and supported tools to reduce cognitive load and variability of experience for faculty and students.

#### 5 EXPAND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR KEY ELEMENTS OF DIGITAL LEARNING INFRASTRUCTURE

The presence of existing institutional infrastructure and capacity made the transition easier for faculty. Infrastructure is defined by existing leadership, technology, support services (including instructional design, IT, faculty development, and centers for teaching and learning) that exist in the service of digital learning. In the near term, a targeted focus on ensuring that there are sufficient resources in place to support planning for teaching and learning is critical. In particular, institutions must employ creative techniques and new technologies for applied learning and courses that involve labs. In the medium and long term, a rapid and thoughtful assessment of the current state of digital learning and a plan for the future should be administrative priorities. Institutions must determine if their approach to digital learning is designed to support academic continuity at minimum or to enhance and extend the institution's distinctive academic mission.

#### 6 OFFER TARGETED AND FOCUSED SUPPORT FOR ADJUNCT FACULTY AND FACULTY TEACHING INTRODUCTORY AND STEM COURSES

These faculty play an important role in teaching high-enrollment introductory courses that have a disproportionate impact on student progression and success, especially for students of color. They report higher rates of concern about equity and remediation and face unique challenges in adapting instruction for large classes and thus require focused time and attention from institutional leadership.

As we collectively navigate through the summer and into the fall term, we continue to engage with faculty to understand the evolution of their experiences through the fall term, with a disproportionate focus on faculty teaching introductory courses (introductory faculty) given the important role they play in educating students in their first terms and influencing student success.

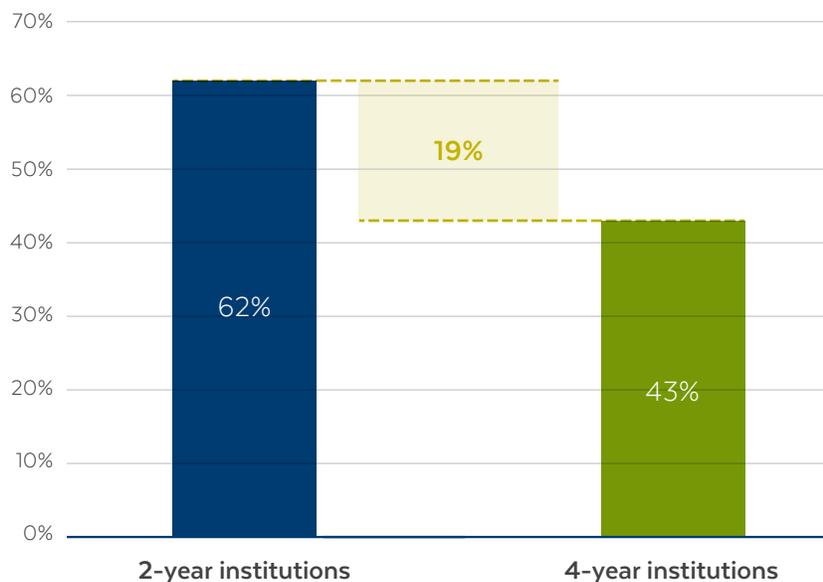
## THE SPRING TRANSITION

When the field of higher education looks back on the year 2020, it will recognize the herculean effort of faculty, administrators and staff to continue teaching and supporting students in response to a global pandemic.

### NINETY-ONE PERCENT OF FACULTY, MOST WITH NO PRIOR ONLINE TEACHING EXPERIENCE, TRANSITIONED THEIR SPRING COURSE(S) TO REMOTE DELIVERY

The vast majority of faculty (91%) reported that they transitioned their courses to remote delivery in the spring; the remainder were either already teaching fully online and kept teaching (7%) or reported that their class had been cancelled or suspended (2%). Overall, fewer than half of these faculty who transitioned a course reported that they had taught online before and thus were teaching in a remote delivery format for the first time. Faculty at 2-year institutions were more likely to report prior experience teaching online.

#### FACULTY WITH PRIOR EXPERIENCE TEACHING ONLINE, BY INSTITUTION TYPE



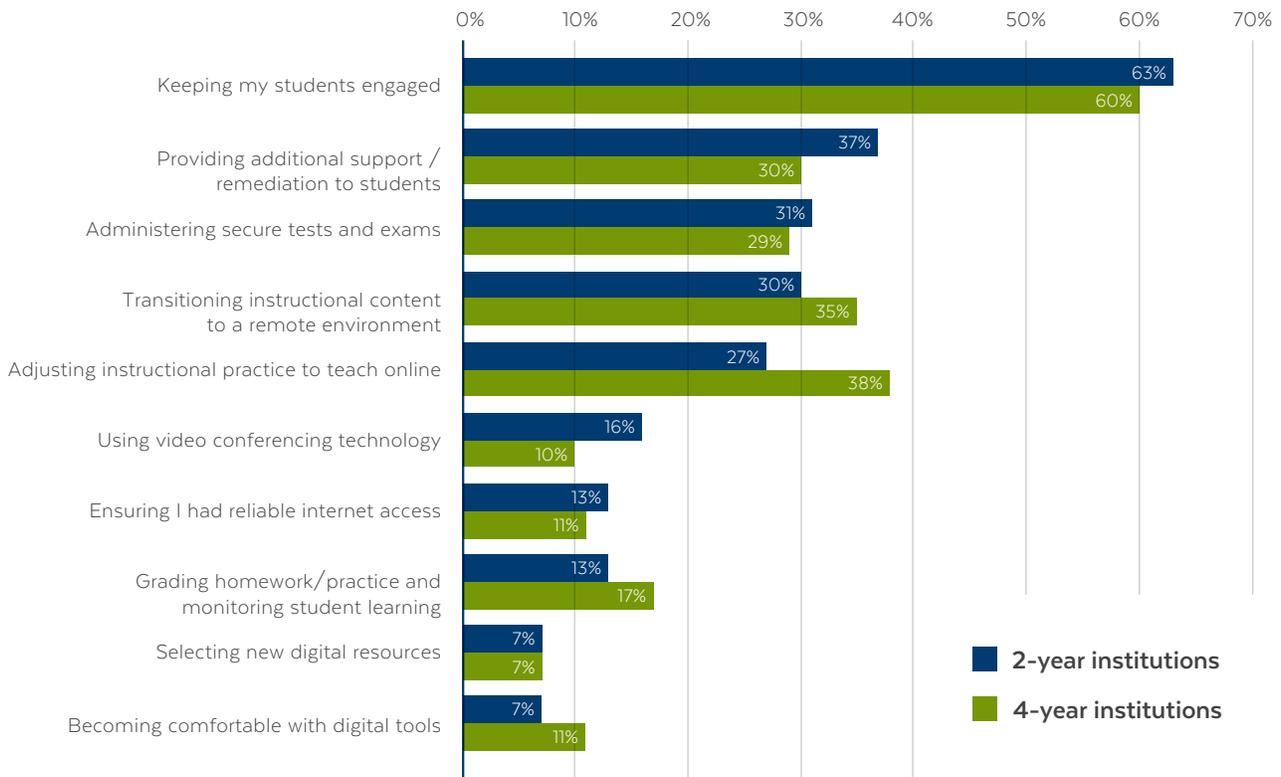
Survey question: "What was your experience with online learning prior to COVID-19? Please select all that apply."  
 2-year N = 1,102, 4-year N = 3,623

### THE MAJORITY OF FACULTY REPORTED ENGAGING AND MOTIVATING STUDENTS AS A CHALLENGE IN THE SPRING TERM

Across the board, the majority of faculty noted that keeping students engaged and motivated to learn in a remote environment was a major challenge. Secondary challenges were related to the delivery and assessment of instruction (adjusting practice to teach online, transitioning content to a remote environment, providing support and remediation to students, and administering tests and exams). Faculty experienced key differences in challenges based on discipline (STEM vs. non-

STEM) and course level (teaching introductory courses vs. upper level) that are highlighted in other sections of this report. Faculty who taught for the first time online were almost two times more likely to note that they were challenged to adopt their instructional practices to a remote environment, underscoring the importance of support for faculty teaching online for the first time.

**TOP FACULTY CHALLENGES DURING THE TRANSITION TO REMOTE**

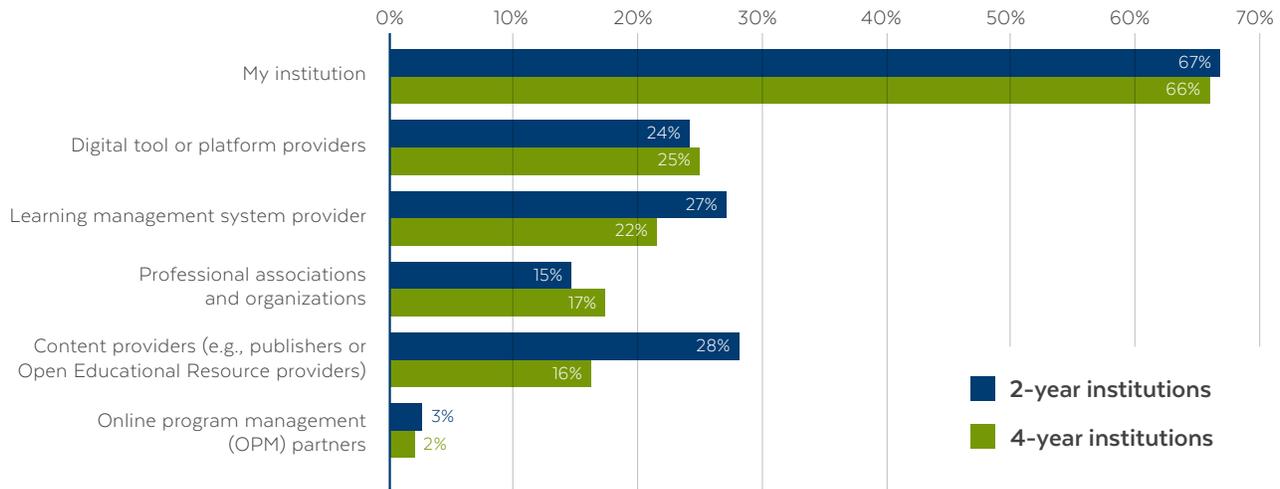


Survey question: "What was most challenging for your transition to teaching remotely? Please choose up to three."  
 2-year N = 1,102, 4-year N = 3,623

**INSTITUTIONS, SUPPLIERS, AND ACADEMIC ASSOCIATIONS WERE KEY SOURCES OF FACULTY SUPPORT**

Sixty-seven percent of faculty note that their institution was the most helpful source of support during the transition to remote. However, 55% of faculty also noted that a digital tool or platform, learning management system (LMS), and/or content provider was a helpful source of support, both in terms of providing free access or discounted services as well as guidance to support the transition. This underscores the important role that the supplier community played as trusted partners and resources to faculty: many instructors turned to one or multiple supplier categories as they sought to transition their courses and adopt appropriate tools.

**MOST HELPFUL RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS DURING THE TRANSITION**



Survey question: "Which of the following organizations or systems were most helpful to you as you transitioned your courses to remote? Please select all that apply." 2-year N = 1,102, 4-year N = 3,623

One-third of faculty say they adopted a free service as part of the transition, primarily from an existing partner or vendor, although half of those who adopted are undecided on whether they will continue to use that tool going forward in a paid scenario.

**FACULTY NOTED SERIOUS AND ONGOING CONCERNS ABOUT EQUITY AND ACCESS FOR THEIR STUDENTS**

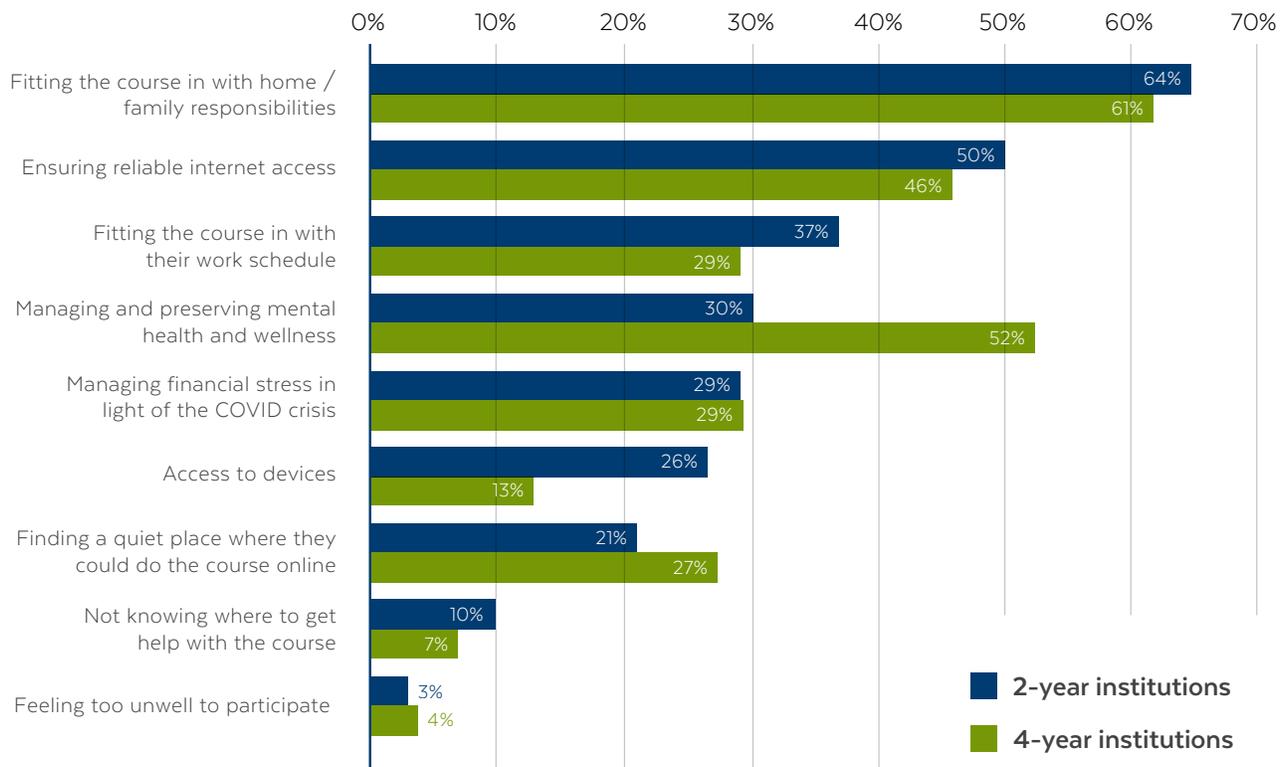
Not all populations could be equitably served in the transition to remote learning due to challenges that included technology access. Many faculty acknowledged these challenges for their students; one noted that **"many of my students are low-income (low equipment in the home, poor to no internet access), and many students tried to complete course requirements (such as watching [sic] podcasts, turning in workbook sheets, or composing English essays) using cellular phones."** These access issues, in addition to challenges with family and work responsibilities and financial and health concerns brought on by the pandemic, compromised student learning.



*"It'd be hard to overstate how important equity is at our rural community college. We do our very best to bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots. During normal times, we manage this reasonably well, but this pandemic and our collective response to it has clawed back all of our equity gains, and I fear that they'll only continue to erode."*

*- Introductory STEM Faculty at a 4-Year Public Institution*

FACULTY PERCEPTION OF TOP STUDENT CHALLENGES



Survey question: "What do you think has been most challenging for students during the transition to remote education? Please choose up to three." 2-year N =1,102, 4-year N = 3,623

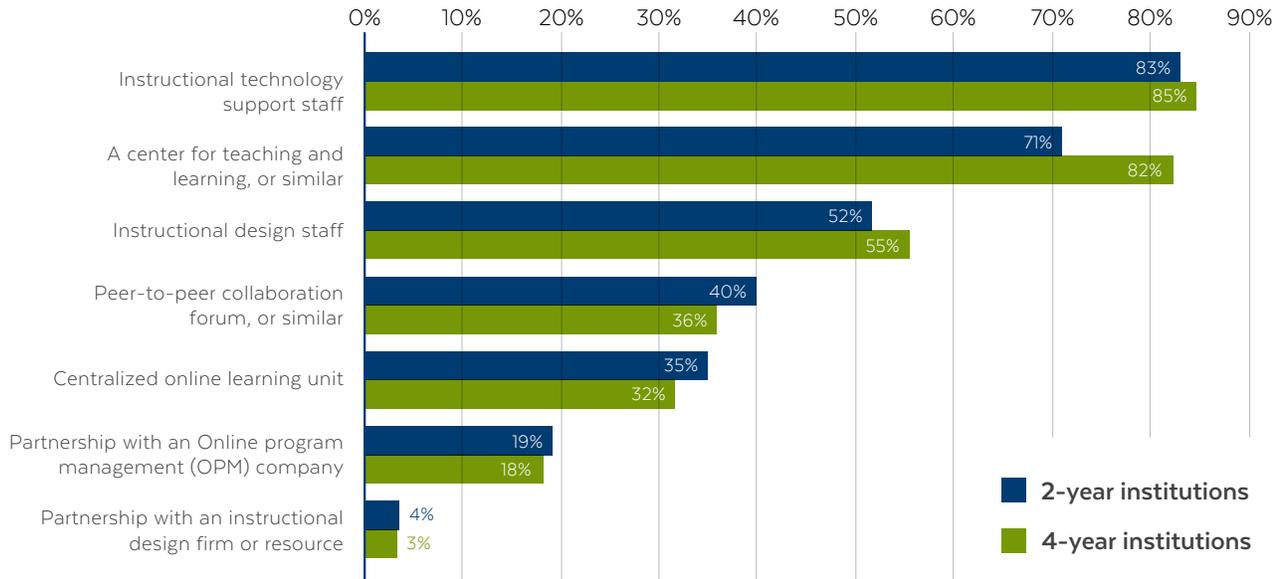


One faculty at a 4-year public institution noted the equity impact on their students as follows: ***"It'd be hard to overstate how important equity is at our rural community college. We do our very best to breach the gap between the haves and the have-nots. During normal times, we manage this reasonably well, but this pandemic and our collective response to it has clawed back all of our equity gains, and I fear that they'll only continue to erode."***

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORT SERVICES, WHEN AVAILABLE, VARIED IN QUALITY AND LED TO AN INCONSISTENT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

While the majority of faculty reported the presence of instructional technology support and a center for teaching and learning at their institutions, almost a quarter of respondents said that these services or functions do not exist at their institutions (or they are not aware of them). Faculty observed that students experienced inconsistent instructional and technological practices that impeded remote learning. One respondent noted, "My students have stated they've been most challenged by the inconsistency between courses"; another said that their students described a "wild variation in approach, tools, format, communication, and quality among their 5 different courses. It was overwhelming and very stressful."

KEY RESOURCES IN PLACE AT INSTITUTIONS



Survey question: "Does your institution have any of the following resources in place? Please select all that apply." 2-year N =1,102, 4-year N = 3,623



*"My students have stated they've been most challenged by the inconsistency between courses."*

*- Introductory Biology Faculty, 2-Year Institution*

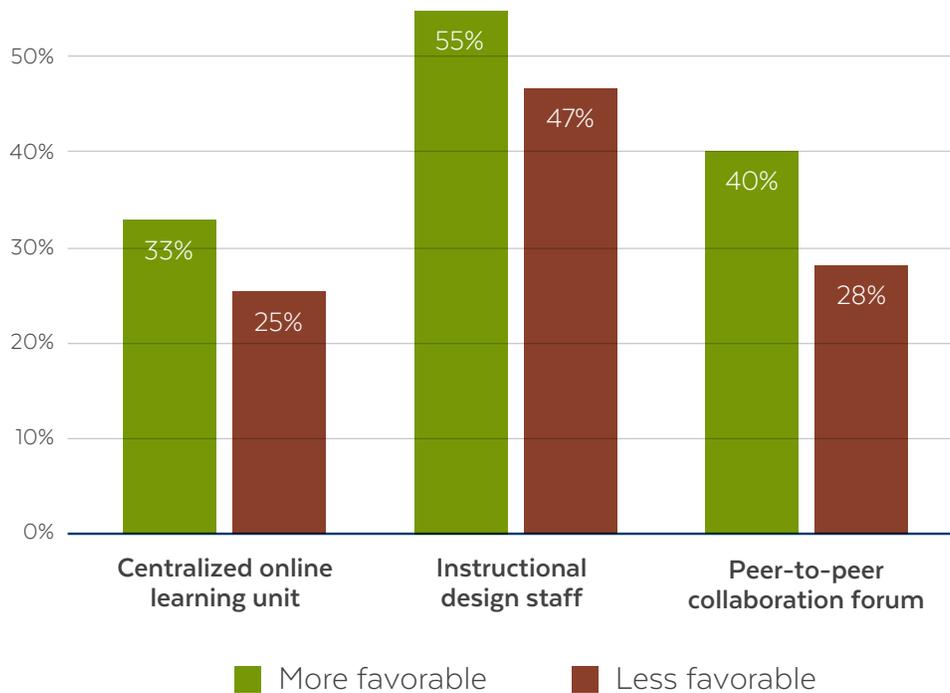
*"My students described a wild variation in approach, tools, format, communication, and quality among their five different courses. It was overwhelming and very stressful."*

*- Humanities Faculty, 4-Year Public Institution*

INSTITUTIONS WITH EXISTING ONLINE INFRASTRUCTURE WERE ABLE TO SUPPORT FACULTY MORE EFFECTIVELY

Faculty who reported that their institution had a centralized online unit, instructional design staff, or peer-to-peer collaboration resources were notably more likely to say that they came away with a more favorable view of online learning after the transition.

FACULTY REPORTING PRESENCE OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT BY SHIFT IN PERCEPTION OF ONLINE



Survey questions: "How has your perception about online learning shifted since the start of COVID-19?"; "Does your institution have any of the following resources in place? Please select all that apply." N = 4,778

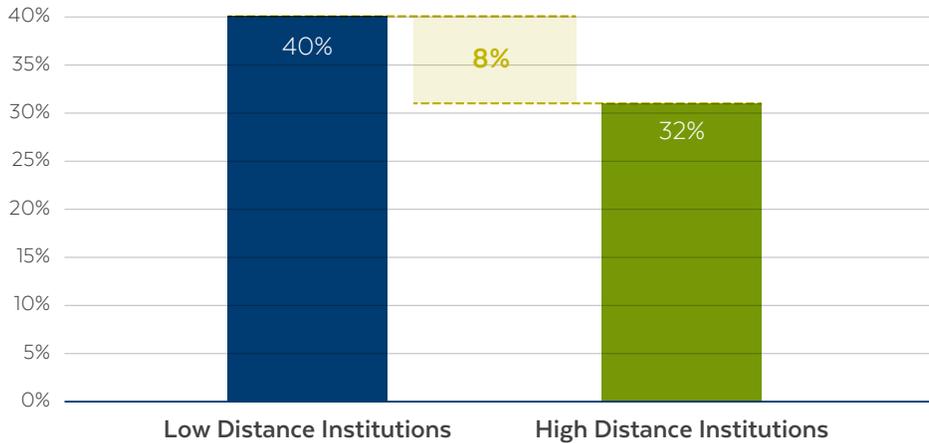


*"(I think the biggest factors that made the transition to remote learning work as well as it did were)...we have a great instructional design and technology team that stepped up their activities even more to meet the demand, and our faculty was committed to sharing what was working, what was not, and brainstorming about what is possible."*

*- Introductory STEM Faculty, 4-Year Private Institution*

In addition, the existence of some prior online infrastructure, as measured by the percentage of students studying online pre-COVID, was associated with fewer faculty who reported that they struggled to adjust their instructional practice. Fewer faculty reported they were challenged to adjust their practice, reflecting the potential benefit of existing support, prior faculty exposure to online teaching, and prior student exposure to online learning.

**FACULTY REPORTING ADJUSTING THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE WAS A CHALLENGE, BY INSTITUTION TYPE**



Survey question: "What was most challenging for your transition to teaching remotely? Please choose up to three." Low Distance (institutions with less than 25% of students taking one or more course online) N = 2,208, High Distance (institutions with more than 25% of students taking one or more courses online) N = 2,750



*"My institution is way behind in regard to online learning. Our [lack of] resources to support this type of learning is worrisome. We do not have the infrastructure in place to do online learning well. [Hybrid approaches] will require even more intentional resources than fully online. My worry is that the decision makers will encourage faculty to teach in an [online] environment without adequate resources."*

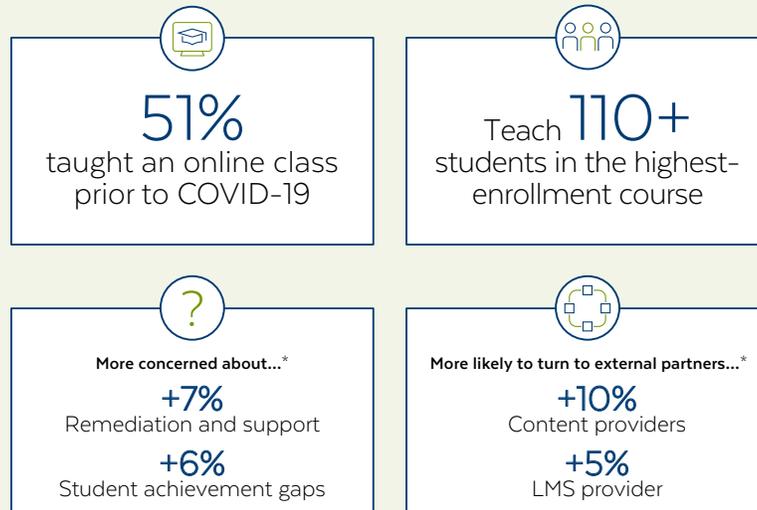
*- Communications Faculty, 4-Year Private Institution*

## FACULTY TEACHING INTRODUCTORY COURSES ARE CONCERNED ABOUT REMEDIATION AND EQUITY

Understanding the unique experience of faculty teaching introductory-level courses is important, given the critical role these faculty play in delivering courses that impact student retention and progression. High-enrollment introductory courses in particular have historically resulted in high rates of Ds, Fs, withdrawals, and incompletes, especially for low-income, first-generation, and historically underrepresented students, and the transition has the potential to disproportionately impact these students. While many of the challenges these faculty face are common to faculty overall, there are notable differences that should inform support strategies.

On a relative basis, introductory-level course faculty report the same instructional priorities as faculty overall, citing engagement as a top challenge. They report higher levels of concern about providing remediation and support for students and closing equity gaps. Faculty teaching introductory-level courses are more likely to be adjunct and to teach more and higher-enrollment courses, all factors that complicate and create challenges for teaching online at scale. However, they are also more likely to have some prior online teaching experience under their belts. In our sample, they are more likely to work at 2-year institutions, where fewer faculty report availability of centralized support services such as a center for teaching and learning.

### INTRODUCTORY FACULTY SNAPSHOT



\* In comparison to faculty who do not teach introductory courses



*“Without proctored tests, we have many students magically earning higher grades than before. I fear they will move on to the subsequent math course unprepared as the foundation will not truly be mastered.”*

*- Introductory Math Faculty, 4-Year Public Institution*

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*“Online classes can be useful for introductory classes if given proper time to plan pedagogical materials.”*

*- Introductory Psychology Faculty, Private 4-Year Institution*

With a significant course load and large courses, introductory faculty in particular need support in developing strategies to scale their approaches to teaching. However, in part given the reality that they typically work at institutions where support may be less available, they are more likely to say they have turned to and relied on content providers as key resources during the transition.

Given the importance of introductory-level course for student equity and success, we are following a targeted research panel of introductory faculty as they continue to adjust and teach through the fall. If you are interested in participating in our work, please contact us at [timeforclass@tytonpartners.com](mailto:timeforclass@tytonpartners.com)

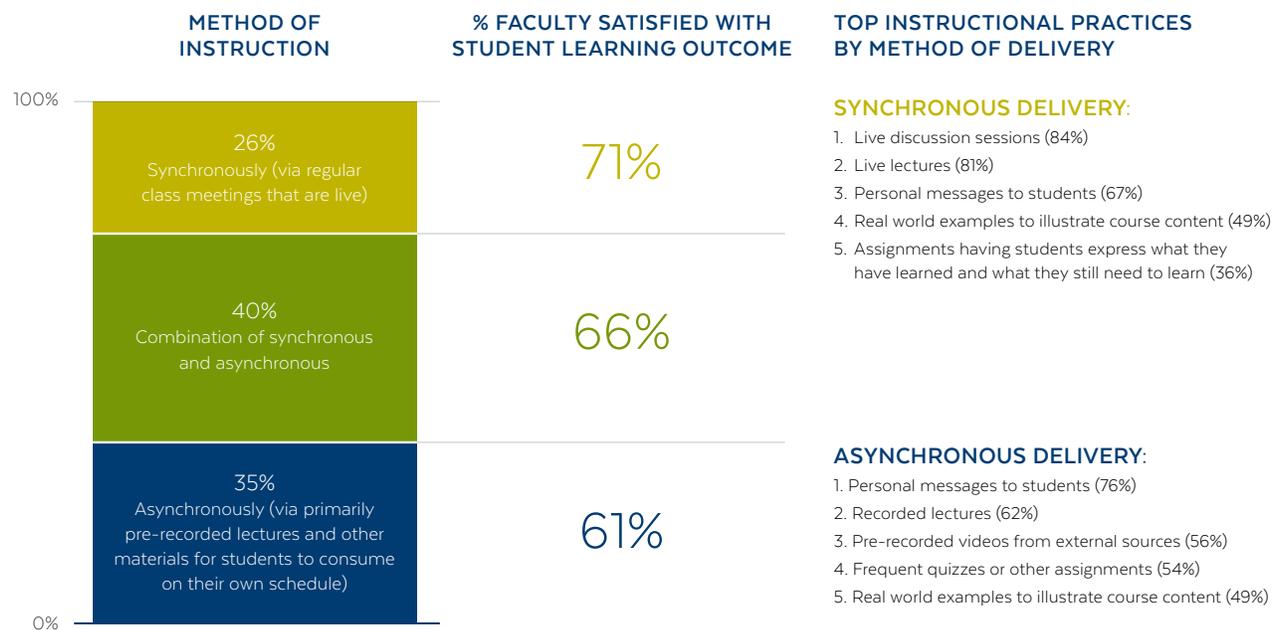
## CHANGES TO PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE

Contrary to the pundits and most of the observers of the transition to remote learning who look back on the transition to remote learning with an attitude of “let’s make sure we don’t do that again”, faculty are expressing a variety of sentiments and actions about how the transition to remote forced change in pedagogy and how some of these changes will endure in future courses.

### FACULTY MOST FREQUENTLY USED A MIX OF SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS INSTRUCTION; FACULTY WHO INCORPORATED SYNCHRONOUS INSTRUCTION WERE MORE SATISFIED WITH STUDENT LEARNING

The largest portion of faculty reported using some combination of synchronous and asynchronous delivery during the spring term. This percentage did not differ by institutional type but by course level: faculty teaching introductory courses used asynchronous instruction at higher rates (38% vs. 26%) than their upper-level teaching peers.

#### METHOD OF INSTRUCTION AFTER THE TRANSITION

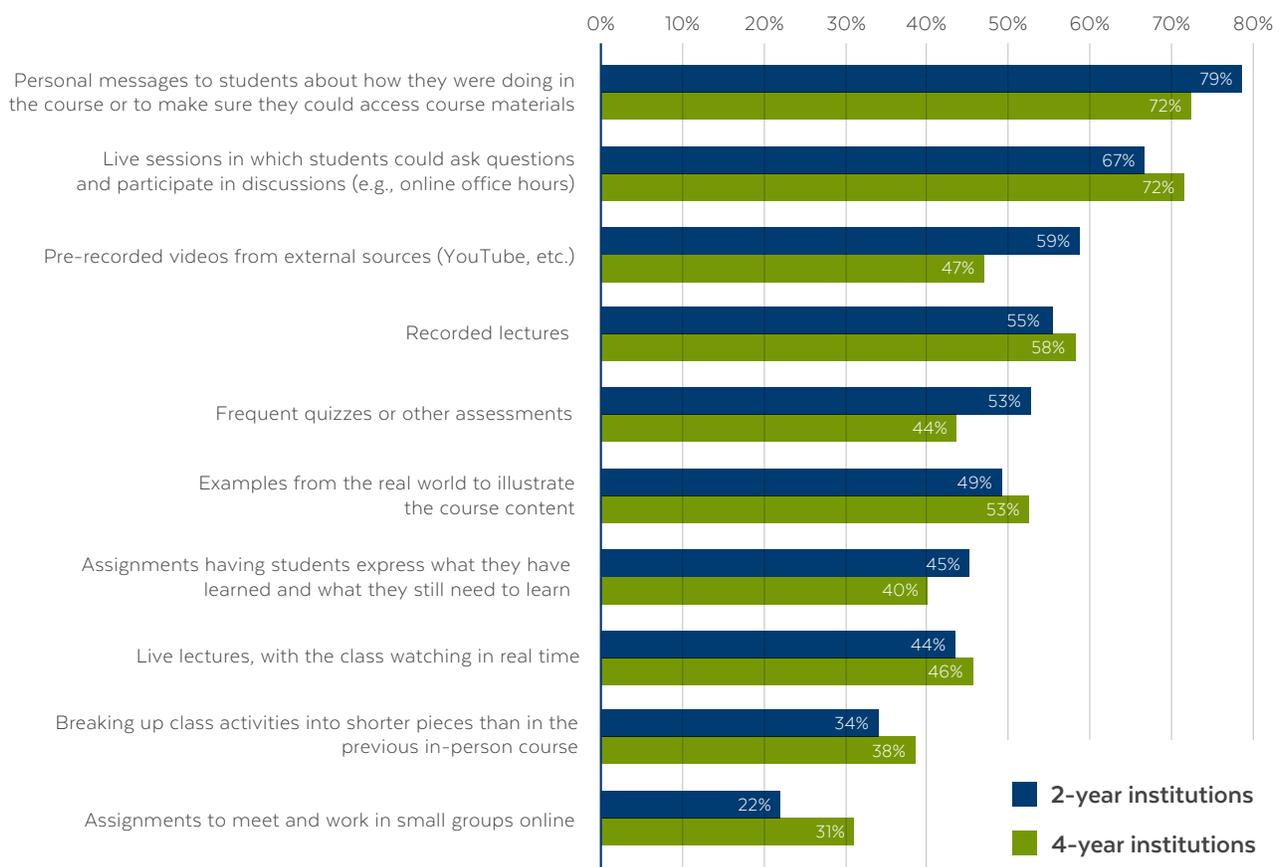


Survey questions: “Following the transition, which of the following best describes how you delivered instruction?” N = 4,689; “How satisfied were you with the way your class turned out across the following dimensions after the transition to remote learning?” Student learning outcome N = 1,057

**FACULTY ENGAGED IN THE USE OF A VARIETY OF ONLINE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES**

Large majorities of faculty at both 2-year and 4-year institutions reported that they checked in frequently with students through personal messages and hosted live discussion sessions. Faculty at 2-year institutions were slightly more likely to use pre-recorded videos, frequent quizzes and assessments, and personal messages to check in with students, whereas faculty at 4-year institutions were more likely to assign small group work. While not pictured, faculty teaching introductory courses used frequent quizzes at higher rates (51% vs. 33%). On the other hand, small-group assignments, breaking up content into smaller pieces, and the use of assignments to self-evaluate learning were less frequently used practices by faculty teaching introductory courses.

**INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES EMPLOYED BY FACULTY DURING REMOTE LEARNING**

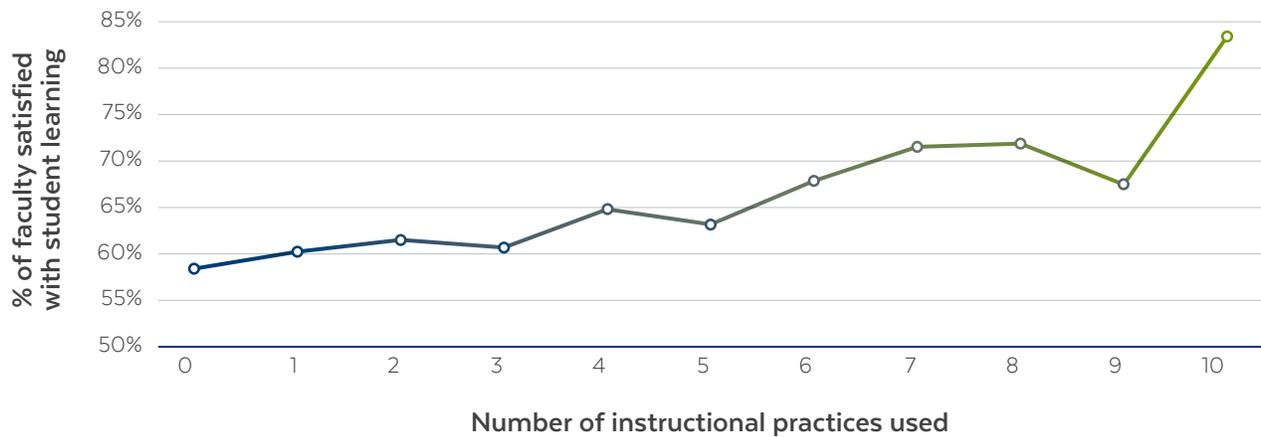


\*Survey question: "After you transitioned to remote learning, did your course include any of the following? Please select all that apply."  
 2-year N = 1,102, 4-year N = 3,623

### FACULTY WHO USED A BROADER RANGE OF INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES WERE MORE SATISFIED WITH STUDENT LEARNING

A clear connection exists between the use of a greater number of instructional practices and faculty-reported satisfaction with student learning. This finding was also replicated in *Suddenly Online: A National Survey of Undergraduates during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, suggesting that the use of a diversity of practices creates more positive learning outcomes.

#### INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES USED AND SATISFACTION WITH STUDENT LEARNING



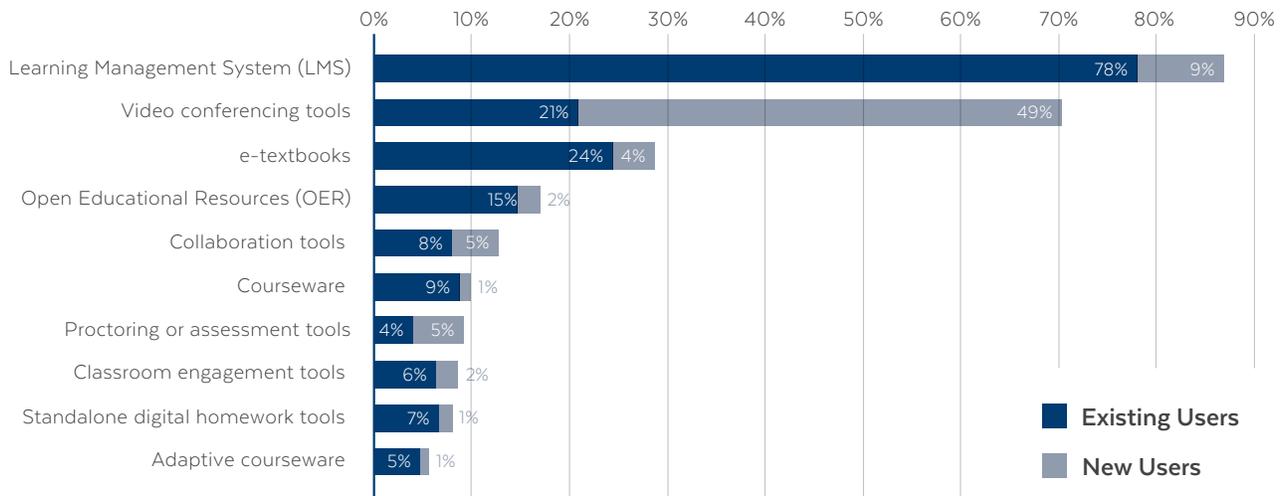
X-axis survey question: "After you transitioned to remote learning, did your course include any of the following? Please select all that apply."  
 Y-axis survey question: "How satisfied were you with the way your class turned out across the following dimensions after the transition to remote learning? [how well students were learning overall] N = 4,769

Notably, only 20% of faculty were in the group that used 7+ practices and was most satisfied with student learning. The key distinctive features of this group of faculty were their 1) prior experience with online teaching; and 2) higher levels of institutional support (including instructional technology support, access to centers for teaching and learning, instructional designers, peer-to-peer support networks, and centralized online units). This again underscores the critical importance of exposure to and professional development for high-quality online teaching.

**THE SHIFT TO REMOTE INTRODUCED FACULTY TO NEW DIGITAL TOOLS FOR THE FIRST TIME AND IS EXPECTED TO DRIVE CONTINUED ADOPTION IN KEY CATEGORIES**

While the LMS was the tool most ubiquitously used by faculty, nearly half of respondents reported first-time use of video conferencing. The scale at which video conferencing was adopted outpaces the rest of the categories. Faculty were most likely to report using their LMS, assessment and collaboration tools, and e-textbooks for the first time.

**USE OF TOOLS IN TRANSITION TO REMOTE LEARNING**



Survey questions: "Which of the following tools or resources did you use in your transition to remote learning? Please select all that apply." N = 4,726; "Which of the following tools or resources did you use for the first time in the Spring term? Please select all that apply." N = 3,092

Plans to continue using these tools vary, with first-time users noting that they are particularly likely to continue using their LMS, Open educational resources (OER), collaboration and engagement tools, and adaptive courseware moving forward.

**MANY FACULTY MEMBERS SAID THEY CAME AWAY WITH BROADER LESSONS THAT WILL INFORM THEIR TEACHING AND PEDAGOGY**

Faculty also reflected on insights from the spring term that will inform their instruction in the future, even in face-to-face settings. These lessons include the use of more frequent assessment and real-time feedback from students about their learning in order to adapt instruction; breaking content into smaller pieces to more readily assess and adjust learning; and the use of remote communication features, like chat functions, to enable quieter students to interact more confidently.

**FACULTY REFLECTIONS ON POSITIVE LEARNINGS FROM DIGITAL INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS**

**MODULARIZING LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

*“Flipped classroom and mastery-based is the way to go. Students really liked having my small chunks of video content and example problems they could watch/rewatch on their own time and pace.”*

**FREQUENT ASSESSMENT:**

*“Check in with students very frequently and individually during online instruction”*

*“Shorter and more frequent assessments helped with engagement.”*

**ADJUSTMENT OF ASSESSMENT APPROACHES:**

*“Pre-transition, I used primarily objective assessments in a face-to-face environment in which I could monitor academic integrity. Because of concerns regarding academic integrity, I became more creative in my assessment. I believe that students learned more, in some respects.”*

**USE OF NEW ENGAGEMENT TOOLS:**

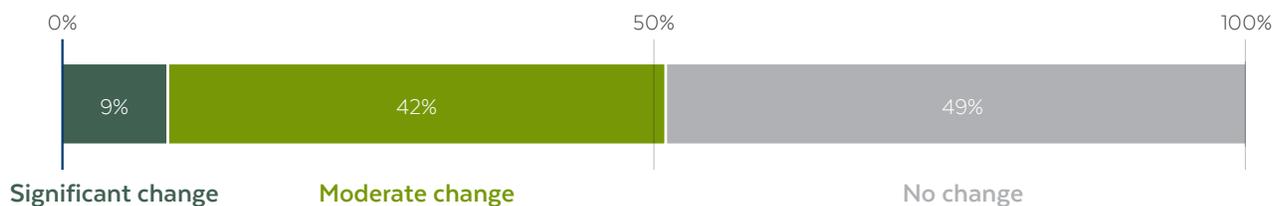
*“I heard more from some of the quieter students via online chat than I did in the classroom. I want to continue that for in-person classes.”*



**LEARNING OUTCOMES HAD TO BE MODIFIED IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THE TRANSITION TO REMOTE LEARNING**

Fifty-two percent of faculty reported that they needed to adjust the learning outcomes and objectives of their courses to accommodate a remote environment. At the introductory level, 10% reported a significant change and 42% reported a moderate change, with the highest rates of change at 4-year institutions. Course changes reported included the dropping of assignments and lowering of expectations about the quality and quantity of work students could complete. This has potentially significant implications for teaching and student support this fall and, as students progress into the fall term, additional prerequisite courses, remediation, and support may be needed.

**CHANGE TO LEARNING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES**

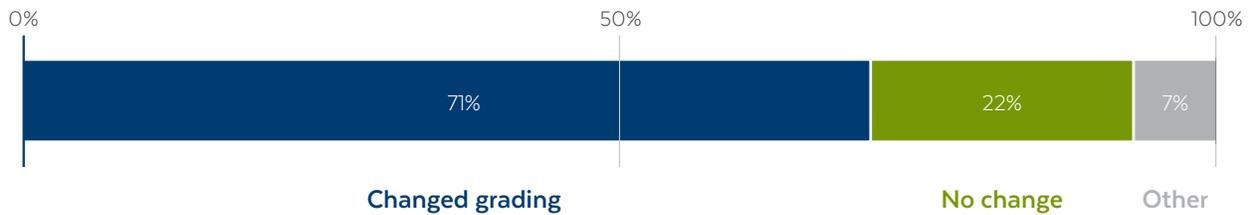


Survey question: “Did you change the learning outcomes and objectives of your course to accommodate a remote environment?”  
 2-year N = 1,101, 4-year N = 3,618

**AS A RESULT OF COURSE ADJUSTMENTS, THE POTENTIAL FOR LEARNING LOSS, SLOWER PROGRESSION, OR HIGHER DROP, FAIL, WITHDRAWAL, OR INCOMPLETE (DFWI) RATES IN SUBSEQUENT TERMS IS HIGH, WITH SIGNIFICANT EQUITY IMPLICATIONS**

Given adjustments to grading practice, grades from prior course terms will likely not be accurate signals of readiness. On average, 69% of faculty allowed students to choose pass or fail, 22% continued grading with no option for pass/fail, and 3% moved to pass/fail with no option for grades.

**CHANGE TO GRADING POLICIES**



As one faculty respondent said, “Without proctored tests, we have many students magically earning higher grades than before. I fear they will move on to the subsequent math course unprepared as the foundation will not truly be mastered.”

**REMEDATION AND SUPPORT NEED TO BE A FOCUS FOR FALL PLANNING**

Student support services are particularly important for students taking introductory courses. However, a majority of faculty teaching at the introductory level believe that tutoring and supplemental instructional services (with the exception of academic advising) were inadequate after the transition. Remediation efforts should therefore be audited to ensure that they are accessible for remote or hybrid scenarios in the fall.

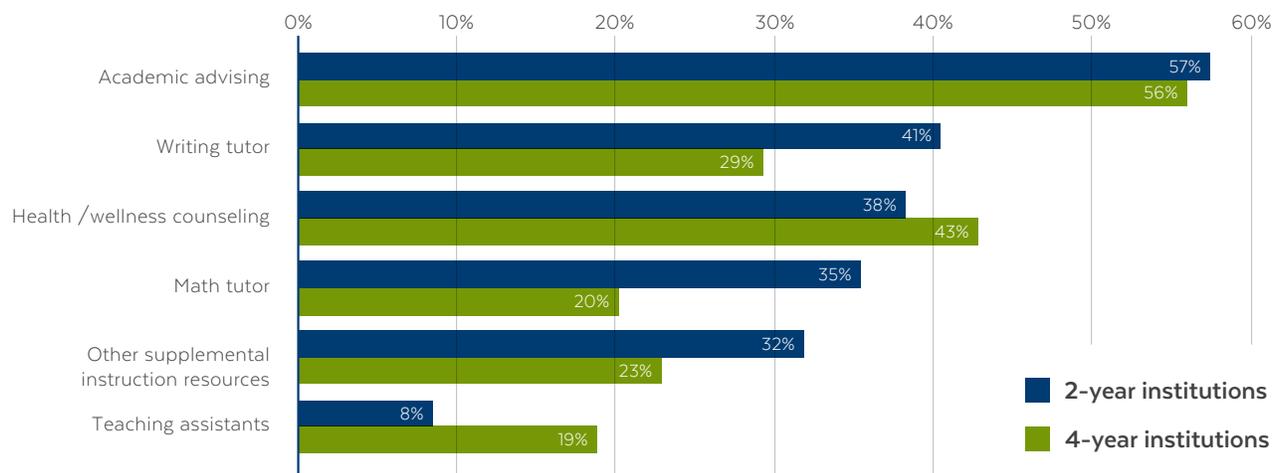


*“(My biggest concern moving forward is) equity. Students who don’t have access/support/space suffer greatly in an online environment. It’s hard to identify these students early enough in an online environment to get them the support they need.”*

*- Introductory English Faculty, 4-Year Public Institution*

ADEQUACY OF STUDENT SUPPORTS POST-TRANSITION

Faculty teaching introductory courses only



Survey question: "Which of the following institutional services offered adequate support to students post-transition? Select all that apply." 2-year N =1,102, 4-year N = 3,623

DESPITE CHALLENGES, MANY FACULTY CAME AWAY WITH MORE POSITIVE SENTIMENTS ABOUT DIGITAL LEARNING

When asked to evaluate their pre- and post-COVID perception of online learning as an effective instructional method, nearly half of faculty report an improved perception overall: 45% said their perception of online learning has become more favorable since the start of COVID-19, whereas only 17% said it had become more negative.

SHIFT IN PERCEPTION OF ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID-19



Survey question: "How has your perception about online learning shifted since the start of COVID-19?" N = 4,798

## ADJUNCT FACULTY NEED ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

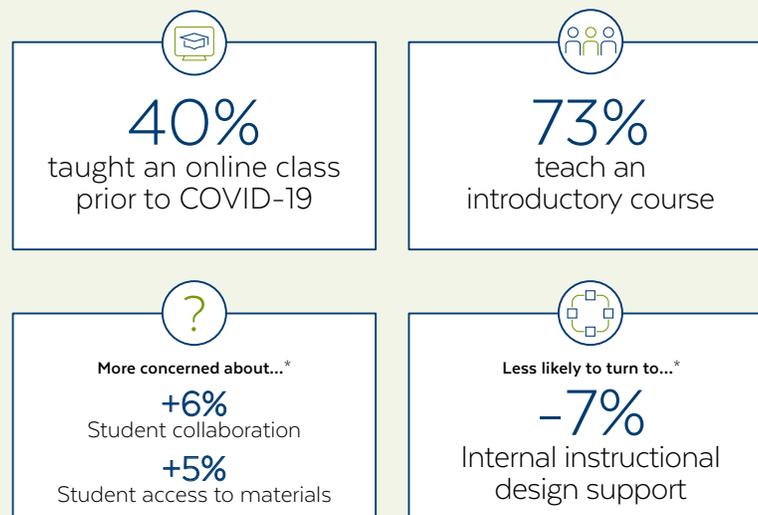
Adjunct faculty play an increasing role in teaching and learning across all institutional types, with just over 700,000, or 46%, of all postsecondary instructors estimated to be part-time, non-tenured faculty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Adjunct faculty have some unique characteristics that need to be considered to support their work. They are employed disproportionately at 4-year public institutions and at institutions that serve large numbers of low-income students and students of color. They teach introductory courses at higher rates than their non-adjunct peers, making them an important population of focus as we consider the experience of students in introductory courses.

Adjunct faculty are less likely to have past experience teaching online, meaning they are likely to need more support. However, they have less support—reporting, for example, lower availability of instructional design staff at their institutions compared to their peers (49% vs. 56%). Perhaps as a result, during the spring transition they were more likely to use synchronous teaching and employed fewer instructional practices.



Their accountability to the institutions that employ them is weak compared to other faculty: “I am an adjunct who barely gets paid as it is, and a lot of the time converting my class was unpaid,” said one respondent. Additionally, many adjuncts are concerned for their jobs; according to another, **“I am an adjunct, so I doubt I will have a job in the fall, which is extremely stressful.”** It is critically important to ensure that adjunct faculty, who play an important role in the delivery of instruction to students of color and low-income students, are supported in the preparation for new delivery modes this fall.

### ADJUNCT FACULTY SNAPSHOT



\* In comparison to non-adjunct faculty

## PLANNING FOR FALL

As of the writing of this first installment in this series on the impact of COVID 19 on faculty in higher education, institutions representing most of the undergraduate population have made announcements about returning to campus in the fall. With some notable exceptions of institutions planning to stay in a fully online modality, most institutions are taking actions to bring students back to campus. However, the majority of faculty are preparing for online or multi-modal form of instruction. In many ways, the challenge of the fall semester and coming academic year is greater than the spring semester.

### FACULTY, ANXIOUS ABOUT THE FALL, ARE GEARING UP TO TEACH IN ONLINE AND HYBRID FORMATS AGAIN

While many institutional leaders are announcing versions of an on-campus fall term, 90% of faculty say they are preparing for a reality that is not face-to-face. As they look toward another term that includes online instruction in some form, almost two-thirds of faculty are planning to supplement their core materials with digital tools to solve engagement, collaboration, and assessment challenges. Additionally, faculty report that they are seeking to build courses that can transition between different modalities. Faculty are generally anxious about the fall and are grasping for resources that can help them succeed.



*“It’s much harder to engage students online and to make them engage with each other. In the future, rather than giving them the option to work in groups online, I will need to make it mandatory and have it more structured.”*

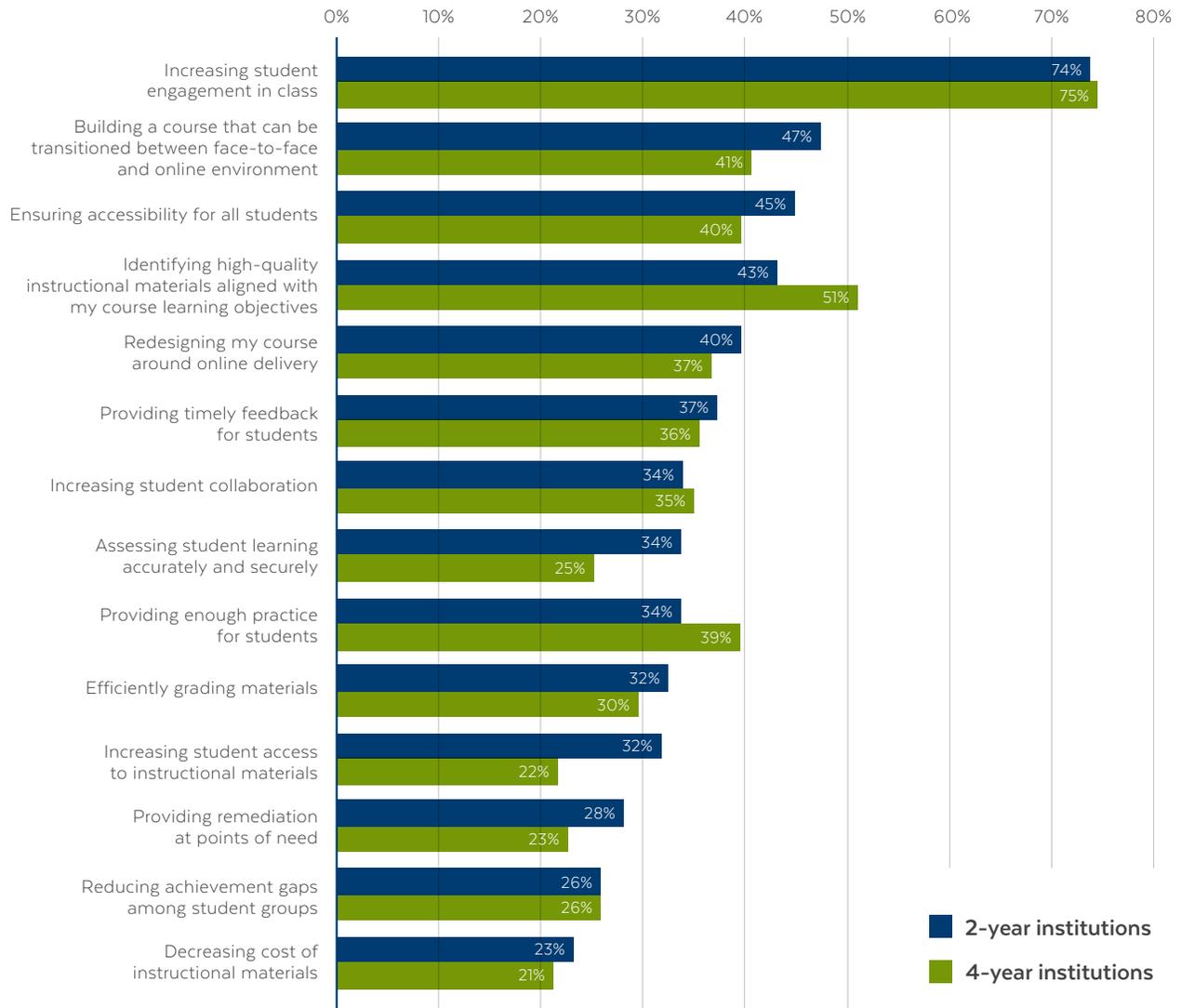
*- Introductory Chemistry Faculty, 2-year Institution*

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*“The transition to remote instruction revealed how significantly our students have access concerns. The inequality within our student body is tremendous, and in order for our students to learn effectively, they need to have access the appropriate tools.”*

*- English Faculty, 2-Year Institution*

**INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITIES FOR FALL 2020 TERM**

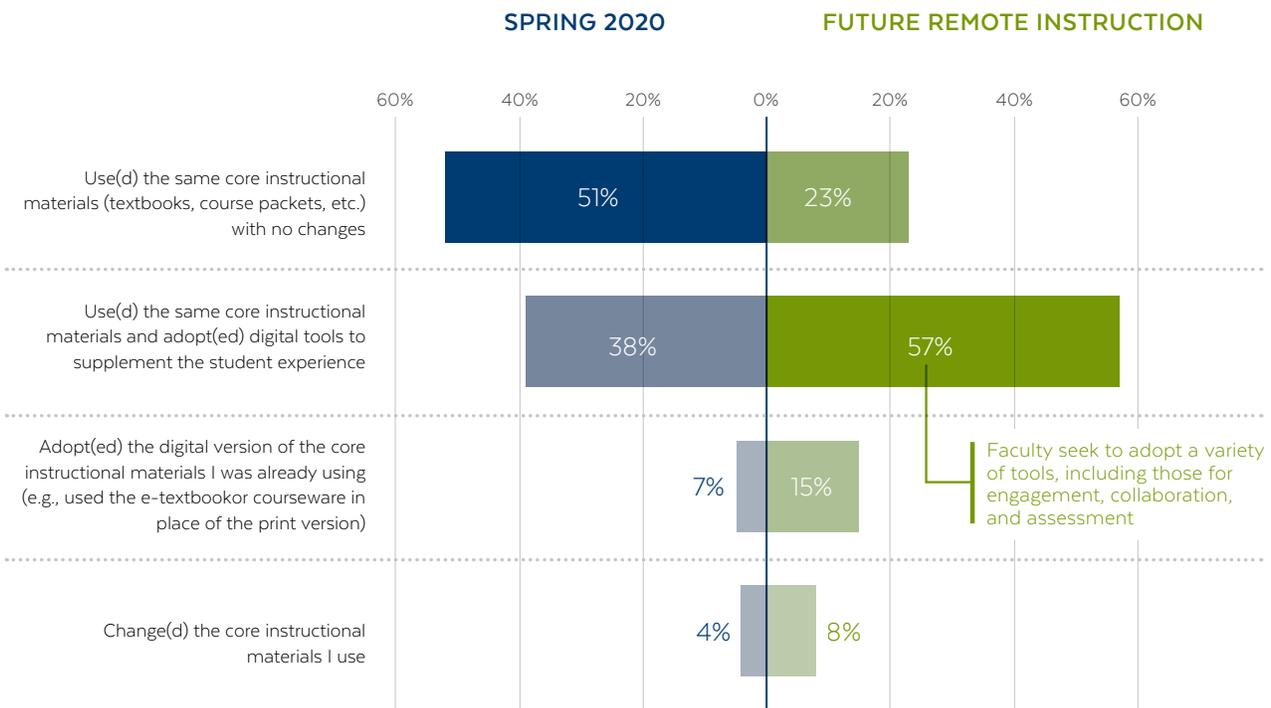


Survey question: "In planning for the fall term, what are your biggest instructional priorities? Please select all that apply."  
 2-year N = 1,102, 4-year N = 3,623

**ALTHOUGH MOST FACULTY USED THE SAME CORE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS TO TEACH THIS SPRING, A MAJORITY PLAN TO ADOPT DIGITAL TOOLS TO SUPPLEMENT THE EXPERIENCE THIS FALL**

As is to be expected, the rapid shift immediately prior to or at mid-term did not prompt a transition of core curriculum materials in the spring. The majority muscled through the term with the same materials, with over one-third adding supplemental tools. However, in the future, 57% of faculty plan to use digital tools to supplement the remote experience, primarily in areas that support engagement, collaboration, and assessment.

**ACTUAL AND PLANNED ADJUSTMENTS TO CORE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**



Survey questions: "What adjustments, if any, did you make to the instructional materials used in your course? Please select the answer closest to your experience." N = 4,438; "If you were to teach this course again in a remote environment, how do you plan to change the materials used?" N = 4,270



*"I am looking for creative ways to deliver content that provides for hands-on practice. I have been contacting vendors to obtain free versions or trial versions of some software."*

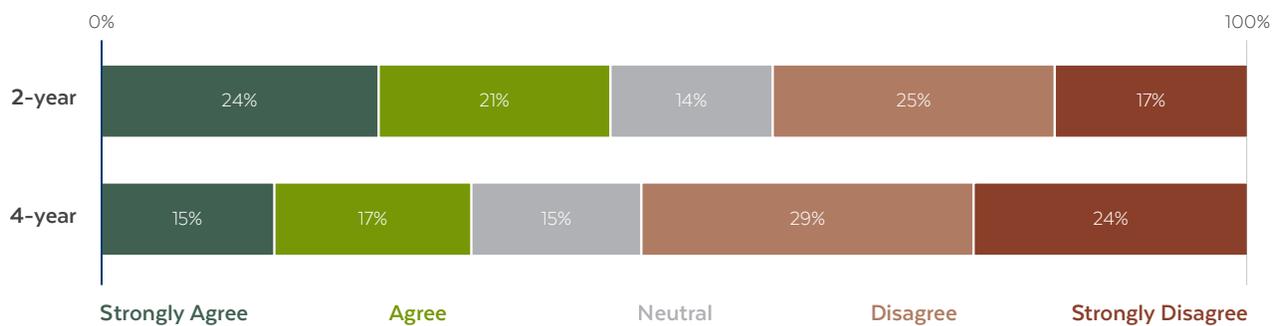
*- Education Introductory Faculty, 4-Year Public Institution*

**FACULTY ARE PREPARING FOR FALL AMIDST A BACKDROP OF CONCERN OVER THE FINANCIAL HEALTH OF THEIR INSTITUTIONS**

Faculty are uneasy about the economic outlook for higher education, and this concern only heightens their anxiety moving forward: 42% of faculty at 2-year and 53% of faculty at 4-year institutions do not have confidence in their schools' financial health. Adjunct faculty in particular are concerned about whether or not they will have a job in the fall; as one reflected, "My greatest concern is not having a job in the fall, or investing a lot of work into designing a course that I won't end up teaching."

**PERCEPTION OF INSTITUTIONS FINANCIAL HEALTH**

Agreement that "I have confidence in my institution's financial health"



Survey question: "As you consider the coming fall term, how would you characterize your agreement with the statement [I have confidence in the financial health of my institution]?" 2-year N = 984, 4-year N = 3,328



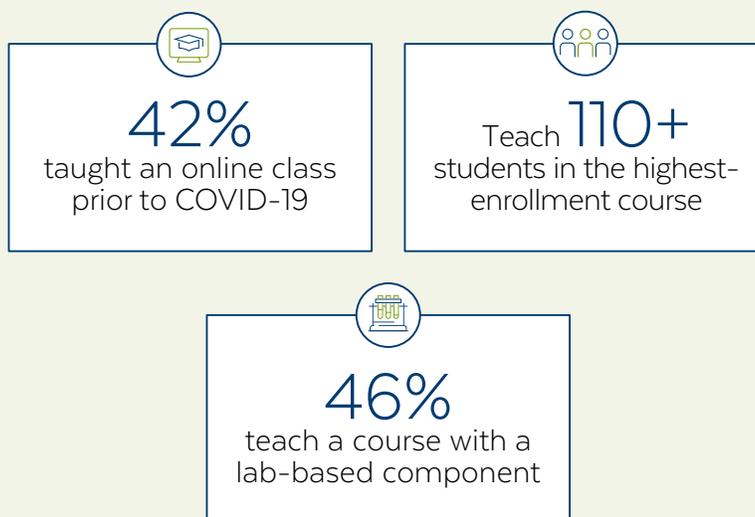
*"My greatest concern is not having a job in the fall, or investing a lot of work into designing a course that I won't end up teaching."*

*- Adjunct Faculty, 4-Year Private Institution*

## STEM FACULTY NEED TARGETED SUPPORT FOR LAB-BASED COURSES

Faculty teaching STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) courses also face unique needs that impact their experience. Relative to other faculty groups, STEM faculty teach introductory courses (70%), large courses with over 100 students (40%), and gateway classes (defined by those classes that are required for completion prior to progressing in a major) (70%). Additionally, they are less likely to report prior experience teaching online (42%).

### FACULTY TEACHING STEM COURSES SNAPSHOT



In the transition to remote learning, STEM faculty were most likely to report that the secure assessment of learning was a challenge (49% vs. 13%) and to see this as a continuing challenge in the future. They were more likely to turn to content providers for support during the transition and to report adoption of courseware, e-text, and proctoring tools in order to meet their needs related to ongoing and formative assessment.

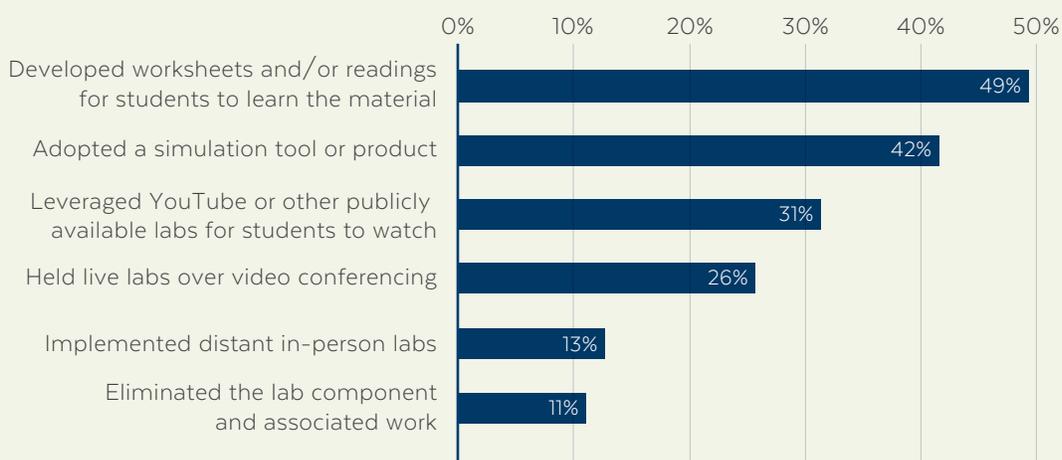


*“Students lack of actual experience with the manipulations of a chemistry lab will impede their futures, both within our curriculum and in their careers after graduation.”*

*- Introductory Chemistry Faculty, 4-Year Public Institution*

STEM faculty often teach courses with a lab component (46%), and transitioning these courses has presented unique challenges. While faculty have engaged in a variety of methods to transition labs virtually, the vast majority agree that there is no adequate substitute for hands-on experience in a lab environment. One faculty respondent shared a concern reflective of most, that “the inability to give hands-on learning in laboratory techniques, especially as my fall course is a required course for many upper-level majors courses [is my biggest concern]. Faculty in upper-level courses presume students have been introduced to a variety of techniques and data manipulation.”

### ADJUSTMENTS MADE TO LAB COURSE BY STEM FACULTY



Survey question: “How have you adjusted your lab course in a remote environment? Please select all that apply.”  
STEM N = 702

In response to the need to move quickly to address these lab-based challenges, Every Learner Everywhere has developed a toolkit for delivering lab-based instruction in a digital environment that can be accessed [here](#) and is listed in the Resources section of this report..



*“the inability to give hands-on learning in laboratory techniques, especially as my fall course is a required course for many upper-level majors courses [is my biggest concern]. Faculty in upper-level courses presume students have been introduced to a variety of techniques and data manipulation.”*

*– Introductory Chemistry Faculty, 4-Year Public Institution*

## OUR WORK AHEAD

Faculty and institutional leaders are working to ensure that high-quality teaching and learning can continue this fall using a variety of hybrid delivery modes to address multiple potential pandemic scenarios. While much has been made in the education press about the confusion between online and remote learning, we view the primary conflict as a debate about outcomes, with one camp focused on the quality of the learning experience and another camp focused on course and degree completion. The urgent transformations of the spring 2020 term now transition to planning for a future with more integration of online and face-to-face learning. This prompts faculty and institutions to explore and adopt the best components of these modalities, with a focus on quality and equity. One delivery mode emerging in discussion with some frequency is a high-flexibility model in which faculty simultaneously deliver content both online and in person with the goal of giving students agency into when and where they learn.

The emergence of highly flexible delivery models in combination with the spring 2020 experience points to the importance of scaling professional development to enable faculty to teach online, providing students with support for learning online, and providing support for the selection and adoption of effective tools, and developing longer-term plans for building an efficient and effective digital learning infrastructure. All of these actions must take place within the context of equity and ensure that those students who are most at risk in this transition are being supported. This means that both course design and student support services must offer students the same learning opportunities regardless of modality, location, and background. This also means to need to include explicit equity actions to eliminate bias and ensure that all students have the support they need to achieve success regardless of individual or experiential differences. Please refer to *Suddenly Online: A National Survey of Undergraduates during the COVID-19 Pandemic* by Digital Promise for key student learnings and priority strategies.

While the strategies offered in the Executive Summary at the start of this document offer near-term areas of focus, our work will continue to assess how faculty and institutions are navigating this challenge and identify key priority areas for institutions, faculty, and the association and supplier communities that support them. Throughout July 2020, we will be engaging in a set of focus groups and qualitative case studies with faculty to further understand and elevate faculty stories.

The second report in this series will be released at the end of the summer and will include an updated perspective on how planning and implementation actually went as the start of the term approaches. We will explore how decisions are being made about practice tools and delivery models, and address key threats and needs, perceptions of evolving student challenges, and changing attitudes about online instruction. We will also spotlight introductory faculty and the experiences of their students, with a focus on understanding how they are planning to address equity gaps.

The third report will be released in late fall, after the term is underway, and will focus on exploring how the year is proceeding. Key areas of focus will include an assessment of the practices in use, planned adjustments, student and faculty challenges, and changing attitudes about online instruction. Again, we will spotlight introductory faculty and the experiences of their students, with a focus on understanding how they are planning to address equity gaps.

If you have questions about this work or want to share your stories, please contact us at [timeforclass@tytonpartners.com](mailto:timeforclass@tytonpartners.com).

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

To help you navigate your transition, Every Learner Everywhere continues to maintain a growing set of resources that can help transition and build high-quality online teaching experiences; these can be accessed at [www.everylearnereverywhere.org](http://www.everylearnereverywhere.org)



### **DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTION ONLINE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19: FACULTY PLAYBOOK**

Issued in partnership with the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), this is a faculty-focused playbook intended to improve course design, teaching, and learning in online environments. With special attention to the needs of instructors teaching online for the first time, the guide offers strategies for getting started and continuous improvement.



### **REDESIGNING YOUR COURSE**

A set of resources for transitioning your course to high-quality digital instruction that incorporates principles of universal design to better engage students.



### **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

A set of resources and best practices to engage students in active learning in your online course.



### **LAB-BASED COURSE TOOLKIT**

A set of tools and resources designed to help you provide a high-quality lab-based experience in a digital environment.



### **ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING**

A set of applied tools and best practices for approaching grading and assessment online and during transitions.

# APPENDIX

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### OVERVIEW OF FACULTY SURVEY RESPONDENTS



## METHODOLOGY

The survey questionnaire was pretested May 8-10, 2020, and field work was conducted May 11-20. Invitations were sent to over 185,000 faculty, deans, and department chairs at 2-year and 4-year institutions. The survey was primarily designed to include perspectives from faculty who taught a face-to-face or hybrid course in the spring term that was transitioned to remote delivery. Two email reminders were sent to achieve a nationally representative set of response, and \$10 gift cards were distributed as incentives to the first 50 respondents of the survey.

Data review was conducted to remove incomplete responses. The institutional composition after quality control was in line with national data distribution from the National Center for Education Statistics (2019), so no weighting was applied to the data. Given the impact of high-enrollment introductory courses on student progression and success, faculty teaching those courses were oversampled by design.

Based on the full response set, the 95% confidence interval is +/- 1.45% for questions asked of the full faculty sample. Questions that were addressed to a smaller subset because of skip logic have wider confidence intervals. Generally, subgroups with samples smaller than 30 responses were discounted.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report and its findings were made possible by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the foundation.

This work would also not be possible without the partnership and input of the Association of Public Land-grant Universities (APLU), Achieving the Dream (ATD), the Association of Chief Academic Officers (ACAO), and Every Learner Everywhere (ELE). We also thank Bay View Analytics, New America, the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) for being reviewers and collaborators. Thank you to the team at Can of Creative for being thoughtful and creative in the design of this report.

Most importantly, thank you to the faculty who generously shared and continue to share their experiences and insights to shape the future of teaching and learning. We are grateful for your ongoing commitment to teaching and to your students.

## ABOUT TYTON PARTNERS

Tyton Partners is the leading provider of advisory services to the education market, with a unique dual practice offering in investment banking and strategy consulting services. In the higher education ecosystem, we work with a wide range of colleges and universities to tackle their biggest strategic challenges and develop and execute on plans that enable them to grow, evolve, and thrive. Tyton Partners helps clients drive teaching and learning innovation, scale online operations, diversify and grow revenue, improve student success, better align with workforce outcomes, and realize transformative public/private partnerships, mergers, and affiliations. For more information, visit [tytonpartners.com](https://tytonpartners.com).

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