TEACHING REPORT

Student Communication Motives and Perceived Effectiveness of the Course between Online and Hybrid Classes

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Abstract

This research attempted to explore differences in how students perceive effectiveness and communication motives between two online classroom settings: online classroom and hybrid classroom. The participants (N = 289; 169 females, 105 males, and 15 others) were recruited from communication courses covering 11 sections of 5 subject areas at a comprehensive state university. The result showed there was no significant differences on course effectiveness between online and hybrid classes. We found that students in hybrid classes (M = 3.94, SD = 1.12) were more likely to communicate with instructors for relational motives than ones in online classes (M = 3.37, SD = 1.21). Also, respondents in the hybrid classes (M = 4.01, SD = 1.21) engaged more in excuse-making motives than ones in online classes (M = 3.70, SD = 1.31). While respondents in hybrid classes regularly meet instructors in person, they easily recognize that instructors are available around them. However, on the other hand, some students in online classes are unable to find the instructor accessible virtually. We proposed instructors in online classes could spend more effort on acknowledging they are available virtually, employing virtual meeting spaces, online drop-in sessions, or timely and frequent announcements/reminders.

Keywords:

hybrid class, online class, communication motives, course effectiveness

Introduction

The number of universities offering online classes are rapidly increasing (Gimpel, 2022; Xu & Xu, 2019). Higher education utilizes a number of strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners in the 21st century including online courses, distance, and hybrid education. Due to flexibility and convenience (Gimpel, 2022; Jaggars, 2014; Vikas & Mathur, 2022), 43.1% of undergraduate students took at least one online class in 2015-16 academic year in the United States and 10.8% of them entirely online programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Higher education institutions have shifted towards policy and practices which view online courses, programs, and support technology as requisite resources towards flexible, affordable and accessible education (Mohandas et al., 2023; Vikas & Mathur, 2022). While educators are willing to develop and implement different class modalities to meet students where they are in 21st century contexts, research shows that communication is a key component of effective learning in online environments (Gimpel, 2022; Xu & Xu, 2019). Furthermore, COVID-19 has irrevocably transformed how learners learn in 2020 and beyond (Gimpel, 2022; Mohandas et al., 2023). The pervasiveness of technology and interconnectivity with knowledge construction drive the importance of understanding perceived communicative efficacy and motivations in different online learning formats. Thus, this research attempts to explore differences in how students perceive effectiveness and communication motives between two classroom settings: hybrid classroom and online classroom.

Student Communication Motives *continued*

A few research gaps exist in the current literature on communication motives. Much research to date focuses on communication motives in traditional classroom environments, such as the perceived instructor power use (Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011), instructor's interpersonal attraction (Weiss & Houser, 2007), and instructor self-disclosure (Cayanus et al., 2009). Little research extends and compares insight about differences in students' communication motives comparing hybrid classroom and online learning formats. Also, several studies comparatively analyze online and traditional classes in effectiveness, students' perception, instructor perception (Sims & Baker, 2021), as well as instructional design (Gimpel, 2022). While such studies offer salient information in improving learning environment, there are not enough scholarly efforts to address the differences between online and hybrid learning in post-COVID educative settings.

Literature Review

We start by reviewing relevant literature about what impacts the student experience across online and hybrid class modalities. We also explore students' perceived effectiveness, and communication motives. The method section then addresses the characteristics of participants, the process of selecting the participants for the survey, measurements, and data analysis. Next, the results section breaks down the findings from the survey with proposed research questions. Finally, the discussion section addresses the implication and the importance of findings, the limitations of the study, and future research that could add to this topic.

Factors Shaping the Student Experience

Astin (1984) and Tinto (1993) identify noncognitive factors shaping the student experience and communication in digital and face-to-face learning environments: 1) background (high school grades, first-generation college student/parents, and personality); 2) institutional variables (academic support resources, institutional type, facilities); and 3) individual circumstances (i.e., debt-to-income ratio, familial roles and responsibilities, or health related issues) (Koch & Gardner, 2014). Burkholder and Holland (2014) discuss complexities of student success in terms of internal and external influences looking at how "individual background variables, institutional factors, and situational factors influence student academic and institutional commitment [&] are critical to academic and social adjustment and college completion" (p. 33). Ultimately, research concerned with student success, and the student experience in general, point to the fact that there are many considerations to account for when thinking about communication efficacy and motives as these are integral parts of academic and social adjustment. Social and academic development are formative elements of communication motives and influence students' perceptions of communication efficacy in both hybrid and online learning formats (Gimpel, 2022; Kock & Gardner, 2014).

Educational research has recently looked further into students' perceived efficacy and motives for communication in terms of academic and social adjustment (Gimpel, 2022). In internally focused approaches, attention is placed on awareness, agency and uniquely explicating how social capital and social influences shape attitudes, perceptions, and motives towards communication and learning even before stepping into the classroom (Tinto, 1993). Higher education research concerned with communication motives and perceptions of efficacy in student success traditionally showcase curricular, co-curricular, and orientation programming, which points to a positive correlation between participation, adjustment, and ultimately progression towards graduation (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Two Instructional Formats in Online Classroom

As communication technology has advanced, many higher education institutions around the world now utilize a variety of communication technologies to prime and promote student learning and success. Primary goals include: to establish online classroom community, to promote social and cultural capital, and to scaffold active collaborative learning to build knowledge bases in digital learning environments (Mohandas et al., 2023). This promotes peer and problem-based learning whenever possible to optimize student interactions and enhance opportunities for real-time and/or real-world communication where learning is applied (Flock et al., 2021). Class modality is usually determined by the number, frequency, and responsibility of face-to-face participation. While online classes do not meet in person, hybrid classes provide lectures, reading

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assignments, and class activities both in person and virtual classroom. Further, online instructors provide a virtual space giving access to organized information and resources that students can use in order to improve their understanding of a given subject (Gimpel, 2022; Holtham & Courtney, 2005; Mohandas et al., 2023). Online courses are completed through synchronous and asynchronous communication technologies, employing real time video conferencing like Zoom, and Microsoft Teams, real time chat rooms, recorded lecture videos, audio/visual presentations, collaborative writing spaces, email, discussion boards, social media, peer work, and so on (Bettivia & Davis, 2023; Mohandas et al., 2023). Students get timely access to digitally medicated class materials, to-dos, assigned readings, grades, and assignments in divided weekly modules that are typically prepared prior to the start of the semester.

Fully asynchronous instruction is recommended to enhance and optimize student flexibility. Some instructors perceive that online classes are less effective than traditional classes because online classes hardly provide students with necessary oral communication skills, team-building skills, and interpersonal skills (Aly, 2013; Grossman & Johnson, 2015; Mohandas et al., 2023). Therefore, previous research proposed that online instructors must create interactive environments by intentionally building in opportunities for learners, through their coursework, and with other peers in class and their instructor, in order for students to have a sense of community and/or connectedness between classmates (Flock et al., 2021; Park & Koo, 2022). Flock et al., (2021) found that communication between students typically involves timely appropriately relevant feedback, assessment, and guidance in online instructional settings. Each of these speak to the important factors in establishing shared understanding of subject and co-creating new perspective transformations (Flock et al., 2021; Mohandas et al., 2023).

A hybrid classroom is a form of blended classrooms in which a varying proportion of scheduled class takes place online. Depending on instructional needs and learning environment, instructors adjust the proportion of face-to-face and online sessions. In addition to instruction in class, instructors prepare video lectures, readings, assignments, for students to work online so that students can complete assigned tasks and activities outside of classroom (Gimpel, 2022; Kintu et al., 2017: Mohandas et al., 2023). Students take advantage of both in-class instruction and various online course material. Face-to-face sessions are designed to meet students physically and encourage students to express opinions, observations, share experiences, and ask questions in a traditional class format. The instructor might use class materials and handouts to solicit discussions and students should use this time to clarify their understanding of concepts encountered in course materials (Gimpel, 2022). Instructors regularly upload readings, assignments, class exercises, group activities, and dates by which assignments must be posted online. To be in attendance each online session, students must complete and submit assignments, class exercises, and/or group activity reports by the due date/time in remote locations.

Perceived Course Effectiveness

Previous research examined the effectiveness of various courses in different contexts (Martin et al., 2015; Spencer & Temple, 2021). Perceived effectiveness in this study refers to students' evaluation about how they meet the course objectives, in-class instruction, in-class activities, class materials, or the textbook (Martin et al.,2015). Previous studies on effectiveness between online and traditional classes produced mixed findings. Even though students believed that the online activities and assignments promoted their learning in online classes, they are less likely to complete the course successfully in online classes compared to traditional classes (Gimpel, 2022; Spencer & Temple, 2021). This could be related to multiple factors with respect to the classroom community, competency in the subject, and sense of accountability that differs between face-to-face, hybrid and online learning environments.

As learners become more experienced with communication technology and the Internet, student responses indicate more favorable perception of the online learning activities and assignments (Gimpel, 2022; Muilenburg & Berge, 2005; Seok et al., 2010). This speaks to noncognitive factors like uncertainty or a lack of social or cultural capital when it comes to barriers towards online learners. These are not experienced across all learners in the same way. For example, nontraditional

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students are more successful in online classes compared to traditional classes because they are more mature, experienced, and motivated by intrinsic goals (Spencer & Temple, 2021). However, both students (Muilenburg & Berge, 2005) and instructors (Seok et al., 2010) perceived the online classes as less effective for creating interactive communication between students and faculty and for collaboration between peer learning. However, Sims & Baker (2021) found instructors believed that there are no significant differences on the quality of their classes when they converted the face-to-face class into online class. Seok et al. (2010) found that instructors have higher perception toward online course effectiveness than students. Generally, instructors' technology skills and teaching experiences are positively related to higher perceived effectiveness of online courses (Seok et al., 2010). Therefore, our first research question is to explore the perceived effectiveness of two class modalities.

RQ1: To what extent do students' perceived course effectiveness vary across two types of classrooms, including online and hybrid modalities.

Student Motives for Communicating with an Instructor

Rubin et al., (1988) found six primary interpersonal communication motives, including affection, escape, relaxation, and control. Considerable research examined the communication motives or the reason why people communicate with others in various contexts, including romantic relationships, friendships, etc. In classroom settings, Martin et al. (1999) indicated that student motives for communicating with an instructor are to establish interpersonal relationship with an instructor (relational), to obtain course/content information, to ask questions/comments in class (functional), to explain why something is lacking (excuse-making), to express interests and understanding in course contents (participatory), and to give a favorable impression (sycophancy).

For example, when an instructor was perceived as being competent, students were more like to communicate with an instructor about relational, functional, and participatory motives (Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011). Also, students who show higher academic concerns are likely to have relational, functional, excuse-making, participatory, and sycophantic motives for communicating with their instructors (Mansson, 2014). In cross-cultural analysis using an engineering class, Mansson and Lee (2014) found that students from collectivistic cultures are more likely to communicate with their instructors for relational purposes, while members of individualistic cultures communicate for participatory purposes.

Furthermore, research has shown that student motives for communicating with instructors are related to students' communication apprehension (Martin et al., 2002), instructor communication style (Myers et al., 2000; Vikas & Mathur, 2022), interpersonal attraction toward instructor (Weiss & Houser, 2007) and the course of a semester (Myers, 2017). Martin et al. (2002) found students who are not anxious about their oral communication reported communicating more with their instructors for relational, functional, and participation motives. There were no differences between low and high apprehensive on the motives of excuse making and sycophancy. According to Myers et al. (2000), when an instructor has friendly communication styles, students are communicating with them for functional reasons. Instructors with attentive and contentious styles make students use more excuse making and sycophantic motives (Gimpel, 2022; Myers et al., 2000; Vikas & Mathur, 2022). As instructors encourage students to express opinions, observations, share experiences, and ask questions in hybrid classroom, students engage in simultaneous, contentious, and attentive discussions.

Additionally, Myers et al., (2000) showed that instructor with friendly, impression leaving, and contentious communication styles facilitated students to communicate with them for relational motives. Similarly, Weiss and Houser (2007) found that the physical attraction toward instructor makes students communicate with their instructor for relational motives. Online classes offer the potential to provide very little information about physical appearances of the instructor where particular knowledge and information are obviously presented to the students in audio/visual/textual modes (Gimpel, 2022; Vikas & Mathur, 2022). While students for functional motives sought information through direct interaction with instructors to clarify the requirement for assignment and examinations, students who communicate for the

sycophantic, relational, and participatory motives use the indirect information seeking strategies (Weiss & Houser, 2007). Therefore, we explored students' communication motives between hybrid and online classrooms.

RQ2: To what extent do students' communication motives with their instructors vary across two types of classrooms, including hybrid and online modalities.

Methods

Participants

This research was determined to meet the criteria for Exemption (45 CFR 46. 104) by our Institutional Review Board. The participants (N = 289; 169 females, 105 males, and 15 others) were recruited from communication courses covering 11 sections of 5 subject areas at a comprehensive state university. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 35, with a mean of 21.25 years old (SD = 1.23). Participants by class year consisted of 5 first-year undergraduates, 45 second-year undergraduates, 137 third-year undergraduates, and 73 fourth-year undergraduates. 229 respondents (79.2%) had previous experience with online and/or hybrid courses. 70.9% respondents are considering enrolling online courses next semester. 255 (88.2%) respondents are expecting a B or higher in current classes. 217 (75.1%) respondents were taking the current course required.

Measures

An online survey was conducted for two research questions proposed in the previous section. Because the purpose of this study was to identify the perceived course effectiveness and examine the extent to which communication motives with their instructors vary, the participants were instructed to complete all items in the questionnaire in reference to the class they were being asked. Participants filled out pre-questionnaires that included an informed consent form, questions about their classes, and demographic information.

Perceived Effectiveness: To measure how respondents meet the course objectives, Martin et al. (2015)'s seven items were employed: My ability to meet the course objectives was due to: the in-class instruction, the in-class activities, my own commitment to learning/studying the material, the textbook, the ease/difficulty of the material, previous experience with the material, and some other factor(s). Martin et al. (2015) used the terms, the in-class instruction and in-class activities, to measure perceive course effectiveness in traditional classroom environment. Currently, the advanced and diversified instructional technology enabled instructors in hybrid and online classes to efficiently use many e-learning tools, including note-taking app, calendars, tutorials, chatrooms, forums, video conferencing, and collaborative writing, to have students successfully engage in class instruction and activities (Bettivia & Davis, 2023; Gimpel, 2022). In this study, the items, the class instruction and the class activities, were modified to be inclusive and suitable for both online and hybrid class environments, instead of being limited to in-person instruction and the in-class activities. Likert-type scales were used to assess perceptions about the effectiveness of courses: 1 strongly disagree; 2 disagree; 3 neutral; 4 agree; 5 strongly agree.

The Students Communication Motives: Communication motives were measured with 32 total items derived from Rubin et al. (2009) Communication Research Measures. Martin et al., (1999) tailored these items for class communication and reflected relevant communication in this context. They modified and used a thirty-item instrument for communication motives to measure the respondents' reasons to communicate with their instructors, including relational, functional, excuse-making, participatory, and sycophantic reasons, in face-to-face classes. In this study, in which we considered a diversified communication environment, wording needed to be lightly adjusted for the context of the online and hybrid classes. Martin et al., (1999) just considered "talk" in their measurement as a primary communication channel; for example, "I talk to my instructor to appear involved in class." In addition to "talk," email is the most pervasive communication tool for interacting with instructors outside of the classroom; subsequently, the emotional states of students are influenced by the frequency and quality of email communication from their instructors (Ledbetter & Finn, 2018). In this study, all items included email as a communication channel; for example, "I talk or email to my instructor to appear involved in class." All items used a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (least likely) to 5 (most likely).

Student Communication Motives *continued*

Data Analysis

For this study, IBM SPSS was used for data analysis. The analysis began with an exploratory factor analysis with a varimax rotation because factor analyses discover the underlying structure of a complicated data sets and determines the key variables to explain the relationships between items. Previous studies showed significant components on perceived course effectiveness and communication motives scales (Goldman & Martin, 2014; Martin et al., 2015). The authors wanted to validate those components with current data. With key variables identified through factor analysis, one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to determine differences in perceived course effectiveness and communication motives between the two class modalities (online and hybrid).

Results

In responding to RQ1 that asked about students' perceived course effectiveness between hybrid and online modalities, a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to sort variables into distinctive patterns in the perceived course effectiveness items. Table 1 displayed three factors, consisting of six items, which collectively accounted for a reported variance of 62.59%. These factors indicated perceived course effectiveness, as demonstrated by their corresponding factor loadings. The first factor, labeled "classroom engagement," was the major factor, explaining 29.97% of variance. While they were engaged in class instruction and class activities, respondents achieved course objectives. The mean score for the 2 items' class engagement was 3.91 (SD = 1.22), with 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); Chronbach's alpha reliability coefficients was 0.89. The second factor, named "learning readiness," was composed of 2 items (M = 4.11, SD = 1.32); Chronbach's alpha reliability coefficients was 0.87. Respondents reported that their commitment to the course and their previous experiences were major aspects to make them successful in class. The third factor labelled "class materials" reported a variance of 15.33%; Chronbach's alpha reliability coefficients was 0.92. Respondents believed they were able to achieve course objectives because they easily master class materials and textbooks.

The ANOVA test indicated there was no significant differences in online and hybrid classes on perceived course effectiveness, including classroom engagement ($F(1,249) = .401$, $p < .670$), learning readiness ($F(1,249) = .019$, $p < .981$), and class materials ($F(1,249) = .063$, $p < .939$). The result showed there was no significant differences on course effectiveness between hybrid and online classes. We found students meet the course objectives, in-class instruction, in-class activities, class material/textbook across online and hybrid classes in similar ways.

Table 1

Rotated Component Matrix: Perceived Course Effectiveness

Items (6)	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
My ability to meet the course objectives was due to:			
Classroom Engagement	.862		
the class activities.	.841		
Learning Readiness			
my own commitment to learning/studying the material.		.615	
previous experience with the material.		.583	
Class Materials			
the ease/difficulty of the material.			.815
the textbook.			.680

Note. Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Student Communication Motives *continued*

Table 2

Total Variance Explained: Perceived Course Effectiveness

Course Effectiveness	Total	% of Variance	Initial Eigenvalue Cumulative %
Classroom Engagement	2.14	30.66	30.66
Learning Readiness	1.16	16.60	47.26
Class Materials	1.07	.15.33	62.59

Note. Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 3

Rotated Component Matrix: Communication Motives

Items (15)	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Participatory Motives				
I talk or email to my instructor to appear involved in class.	.721			
I talk or email to my instructor to demonstrate I understand the material.	.720			
I talk or email to my instructor because my instructor values class participation.	.690			
I talk or email to my instructor because my classmates value my contribution to class discussions.	.688			
Relational Motives				
I talk or email to my instructor so we can develop a friendship.		.796		
I talk or email to my instructor to learn more about the teacher personally.		.790		
I talk or email to my instructor because we share common interests.		.747		
I talk or email to my instructor because I find the instructor interesting.		.658		
Functional Motives				
I talk or email to my instructor to clarify the material.			.790	
I talk or email to my instructor to get more information on the requirements of the course.			.696	
I talk or email to my instructor to get assistance on assignments/exams.			.673	
I talk or email to my instructor to challenge a grade I received.			.733	
Excuse-making Motives				
I talk or email to my instructor to explain why my work is late.				.795
I talk or email to my instructor to explain why I do not have my work done.				.789
I talk or email to my instructor to explain my absences.				.656

Note. Extraction method: principal component analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

Student Communication Motives *continued*

Communication Motives

As shown in Table 3, a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to identify variables into underlying dimensions in the communication motives items. This analysis is set eigenvalues greater than 1. As only 16 items were sorted from 30 items, four communication motives were identified: Chronbach's alpha reliability coefficients relational (a = .88); functional (a = .86); participatory (a =. 89); excuse making (a = .88). Interestingly, sycophancy motives reported a variance explained of 4.32%. These items included "I talk or email to my instructor to pretend I'm interested in the course," "I talk or email to my instructor to get special permission/privileges not granted to all students," "I talk or email to my instructor to give the instructor the impression that I like him/her," etc. As shown in Table 4, the authors agreed that this was eliminated because it contributed a small reported variance.

The second research question asked if there are any differences in communication motives across the two class modalities. The ANOVA results indicated that significant effects were found for the relational motives, $F(1, 252) = 3.266$, $p < .04$, and the excuse-making motives, $F(1, 255) = 3.015$, $p < .05$. No significant effects were found for the functional motives, $F(1, 254) = .543$, $p < .58$, and the participatory motives, $F(1, 254) = 1.028$, $p < .35$. As shown in Table 5, when comparing means and standard deviations between online and hybrid classes, we found that students in hybrid classes ($M = 3.94$, SD = 1.12) were more likely to communicate with instructors for relational motives than ones in online classes ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.21$). Also, respondents in the hybrid classes ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.21$) engaged more in excuse-making motives than ones in online classes ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.31$). Across these two classroom modalities, students were likely to communicate with their instructors to obtain course information and to express interests and understanding in course contents in the same way. However, students in hybrid classroom were more willing to establish interpersonal relationships with an instructor and to make excuses than ones in online classroom.

Table 4

Total Variance Explained: Communication Motives

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalue	
		% of Variance	Cumulative %
Participatory Motives	10.62	36.65	36.65
Relational Motives	2.92	10.08	46.73
Functional Motives	1.96	6.77	53.50
Excuse-making Motives	1.26	4.29	57.79

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Communication motives

	Online Class		Hybrid Class	
Communication Motives	M	SD	M	SD
Participatory Motives	3.59	1.18	3.64	.98
Relational Motives	3.37	1.21	3.94	1.12
Functional Motives	3.32	1.11	3.21	1.09
Excuse-making Motives	3.70	1.31	4.01	1.12

Note. * p < .05.

Student Communication Motives *continued*

Discussion

So often we assume that students come to the classroom with a static perception of learning—what it means, what it looks like, and what can be gained. 21st century learners, however, have unique stories, identities, and concerns they bring with them to the classroom, which impact their sense of efficacy and shape their communication motives. The purpose of this study was to examine perceived course effectiveness and communication motives between two class modalities: online and hybrid classes. First, we found there was no significant differences on course effectiveness between hybrid and online courses. However, the current research recommended that instructors in online and hybrid classes need to be competent in using various communication tools in addition to technical competences, subject knowledges, and pedagogical skills. This is helpful towards building community and establishing rapport between instructor and learners and between the learners themselves (Flock et al., 2021). With advancement of instructional technologies and instructors' experiences and commitments, students perceived online classes similarly to hybrid courses. Usually, instructors in hybrid classes are able to use the same instructional technologies and management as online classes.

The results indicated that students in hybrid classes are more likely to communicate with instructors for relational motives than ones in online classes. This is perhaps because they will undoubtedly be back in the formal face-to face settings at some point. In online classroom, the class information, such as assignments, feedback, and the gradebook, are explicitly presented to be more context-free and with no expectation for real-time communication and in-person unpacking or exchange. Since students regarded online classes as being impersonal with lack of access to instructors (Gimpel, 2022; Muilenburg & Berge, 2005), respondents hesitated to communicate with their instructors for relational motives. However, during face-to-face sessions in hybrid classes, students are easily able to have more information about the class environment and values of the instructors with more reliance upon rich communication. Therefore, more relational motives could be developed through the contextual information of communication (e.g. tones of voice, gestures, appearances, facial expressions, etc.) in hybrid classes. Relational motives of communicating with their instructors are positively related with instructor accessibility (Gimpel, 2022; Myers & Claus, 2012) and engagement (Park & Koo, 2021). While respondents in hybrid classes regularly meet their instructor in-person, they easily recognize that the instructors are available around them. On the other hand, some students in online classes are unable to find the instructor accessible virtually (Vikas & Mathur, 2022). We proposed instructors in online classes could spend more effort on acknowledging they are available virtually, employing virtual meeting spaces, online drop-in sessions, or timely and frequent announcements/reminders.

Also, respondents in the hybrid classes are more engaged in excuse-making motives than ones in online classes. Online classrooms can be characterized as low context communication environments where most of information and directions are conveyed through an on online learning platform to avoid any miscommunication and confusion about the assignment and requirements. However, hybrid classrooms might have more room for negotiation, in which some information and instructions are verbally delivered in-person. Therefore, students in hybrid classrooms can more easily and physically approach to establish rapport with their instructors, and, in this richer communication environment, they can ask for favors and explain about the reason for late work, tardiness, or incompleteness, and lack of effort, in a more flexible way. This finding is supported by previous research which showed that students who perceive their classroom to be interactive and supportive are more likely to communicate with their instructors for excuse-making motives (Gimpel, 2022; Mohandas et al., 2023; Myers & Claus, 2012; Vikas & Mathur, 2022). The excuse-making motives to communicate with their instructors is positively related with course related practices (Myers & Claus, 2012; Vikas & Mathur, 2022). These results suggest that instructors in online classes should make an effective virtual space to communicate with students through various communication technologies to increase students feeling of presence. Additionally, instructors in hybrid classes should establish an offline portion in a more flexible, supportive, and interactive manner so that students can easily establish a positive rapport and a high context communication environment.

Student Communication Motives *continued*

The current research addressed the research gap by exploring students' communication motives for interacting with instructors across two course modalities. However, due to the limited sample size, the current research is only a small part of the larger picture on the perceived course effectiveness of two class modalities. Also, the data only pertained to college students enrolled in social science classes and this self-report survey method is highly limited in interpreting quantitative data taken together to draw "a big picture of the population" (Keyton, 2023, pg. 163). Any qualitative focus group and in-depth interview method might be considered to contextually examine the responses of individual students or a group of students. Future research could investigate the long-term effect of student success and assessment in online and hybrid classes. Research has noted that student success is complex and affected by several factors, such as disparities in access and completion due to income, wealth, race/ethnicity and gender, which are exacerbated by digital access and equity in the time of COVID-19 (Burkholder & Holland, 2014; Cameron et al., 2019; Whittman, 2018). 21st century education must achieve greater diversity, equity, and inclusion on college campuses and in college completion, not just from an organizational perspective, but also from a societal perspective. In the crises felt in 2020 and beyond, Fain (2020) reports initial data revealing lower-income students and those from minority groups may leave higher education, perhaps forever. Exploring differences in how students perceive effectiveness and communication motives between hybrid and online classroom settings perhaps may reveal new insights to better meet 21st century learners where they are.

Student Communication Motives *continued*

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