Dual mode delivery in introductory statistics: Design and evaluation
Tommy Soesmanto and Suzanne Bonner
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Tommy Soesmanto and Suzanne Bonner
Griffith Business School, Griffith University, Australia

Abstract

In recent years, the Australian tertiary education sector embraced the gradual adaption of the dual mode system in course delivery in universities and higher degree education providers. In such systems, students have the option, as well as the flexibility, to undertake the same course in a face-to-face environment and/or an online environment. This paper presents an evaluation of the dual mode design of a first year business statistics course delivered at Griffith University. In this paper, we discuss the various aspects of the dual mode design in the course, emphasizing the use of consistent teaching strategies for the face-to-face and online student cohorts. Moreover, we present a comparative analysis of learning satisfaction and academic performance of the two cohorts within the dual mode system. Utilizing t-tests, non-parametric tests and propensity score matching estimators we provide new insights into dual mode course design. Our results suggest no significant difference in student experiences and outcomes. Discussion and analysis presented in this paper is useful as feedback for further improvement in teaching strategies in the delivery of dual mode courses.

Key words: Dual mode, Learning satisfaction, Academic performance

JEL codes: A22, C13
1. Introduction

Since its popularization in 1993, the internet has transformed many facets of human life. In particular, our ability to deliver education services to students has been revolutionized. Distance education was made possible, increasing ease and convenience for education to be accessed by anyone, from anywhere (Paulsen et al., 1998; Browning, 1999). Distance online education has emerged as a viable alternative to traditional face-to-face (F2F) classroom instruction, and has seen a significant worldwide increase in student enrolment over the past twenty years. For example, a report by the United States (U.S.) Department of Education in 2008 indicated that online student enrolment experienced growth of approximately 13%, compared to a 1.2% increase in overall higher education enrolments (Allen and Seaman, 2008).

Over the past decade, Australian universities and other higher education providers have gradually adapted the use of the dual mode systems in their course delivery. In the dual mode system, education providers deliver their courses concurrently for on-campus F2F students and off-campus online students. Moreover, the dual mode delivery structure provides students additional flexibility to switch between the F2F mode and the online mode in undertaking their studies. The same admission requirements and assessment criteria are applied to both cohorts of students. However, the teaching methods may not be the same resulting in differences in satisfaction or academic performance.

The adoption of the dual mode system has particularly raised some concerns amongst instructors. Online learning within the dual mode system is argued to lead to fairly superficial communications between students and instructors. Consequently, this may impact negatively upon the learning strategies used by the online student cohort (Ke and Xie 2009). In light of this, pedagogical emphasis in recent years has shifted towards the design of dual mode courses which aims to provide an equitable learning experience for both the F2F and online student cohorts. We hypothesize that when applying consistent teaching methods and strategies to both cohorts, we should not observe a significant difference in the student academic performance across the two groups, after controlling for selection bias.

Studies comparing differences in student satisfaction and/or performance in F2F to online modes for statistics courses have been relatively limited in numbers and country coverage. Mathieson (2010) presented a useful review capturing the available studies published between 1990 and 2010. Following Mathieson, we conducted a further search to find the relevant studies from 2011 onwards. Our combined search results found 14 available studies in total. A majority of these studies were conducted in U.S, with the exception of two conducted in Israel (Yablon and Katz, 2001; Katz and Yablon, 2003), and one conducted in Thailand (Suanpang and Petocz, 2006). No studies were found on Australian students. Table 1 reports the summary of these 14 studies. Of the outlined studies, only four studies report comparison in both the learning satisfaction and the academic performance parameters (Schutte, 1998; Yablon and Katz, 2001; Katz and Yablon, 2003; Summers et al., 2005).
Table 1: Summary of Studies in Statistics Courses – Satisfaction and Performance (Online vs F2F)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Learning Satisfaction</th>
<th>Academic Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jones (1999)</td>
<td>Not Assessed</td>
<td>No Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunnarsson (2001)</td>
<td>Not Assessed</td>
<td>No Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hulburt (2001)</td>
<td>Not Assessed</td>
<td>No Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutton and Dutton (2005)</td>
<td>Not Assessed</td>
<td>Online Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suanpang &amp; Petocz (2006)</td>
<td>Not Assessed</td>
<td>Online Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evans et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Not Assessed</td>
<td>No Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu and Lemonde (2012)</td>
<td>Not Assessed</td>
<td>No Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schutte (1998)</td>
<td>Online Higher</td>
<td>Online Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yablon and Katz (2001)</td>
<td>Online Higher</td>
<td>No Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katz and Yablon (2003)</td>
<td>Online Higher</td>
<td>Online Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summers et al. (2005)</td>
<td>F2F Higher</td>
<td>No Difference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our research adds to the aforementioned literature on student satisfaction and performance in dual mode statistics courses. We provide a comparative analysis on the learning satisfaction and academic outcomes amongst students undertaking our statistics course, F2F against online, within the dual mode delivery structure. Our analysis will add to the ambivalent literature on student outcomes, and build upon the limited literature on learning satisfaction by testing for differences in student performance and satisfaction. We also contribute to the literature through the use of propensity score matching to evaluate the differences in academic performance. This method aims to address the self-selection bias surrounding the choice of online or F2F course enrolment, which has not been considered in past empirical analyses on academic performance. Our results suggest that when consistent teaching strategies are applied to both cohorts of students, no significant differences are observed in the learning experience and academic performance across the two groups of students.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. A detailed discussion of the dual mode system of our introductory statistics course including course content, assessment design and delivery strategy is discussed in Section 2. Section 3 presents the results for student learning satisfaction and academic performance of the F2F and online students. Section 4 summarizes our results and discusses the pedagogical implications of our findings.

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1 Lu and Lemonde (2012) found that online teaching is as effective as a traditional F2F approach in producing comparable student test performance, but only if the student is academically higher performing.

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2. Course and Delivery

The course we discuss is a first year business statistics course offered at Griffith University for the Bachelor of Commerce and Business programs. Focusing on problem recognition and application to real world settings, the course covers two key areas of business statistics; descriptive and inferential methods. The primary objective of this course, along with many other introductory statistics courses, is the development of statistical literacy (Rumsey, 2002). By undertaking this module within their undergraduate curriculum, students develop the tools to effectively synthesize, analyze and interpret data to make informed decisions in practice.

2.1 Course Duration and Content

Business statistics has been taught at Griffith University for approximately 30 years. The course is delivered to students in F2F delivery mode at the two main campuses of the university, the Nathan campus and the Gold Coast campus, in Semester 1 and Semester 2 following a 13 week structure. The dual mode adaptation was first offered over the non-compulsory Summer Semester 2014/2015 which consists of a 10 week period between November and February. Students who chose to undertake their studies on-campus as a F2F student conducted their studies at the smaller campus of the university, the Logan campus. The Summer Semester attracts approximately a combined enrolment of 90-120 students in total in both the F2F and online cohorts. Whilst flexibility is offered for students to switch between the F2F and online learning environment, we note that the majority of students remained in their enrolled mode of either F2F or online.

2.2 Course Delivery

Contact with students includes weekly two hour lectures for the F2F students. The lectures emphasize various key statistical concepts and theories in the first hour, followed by relevant applications and worked examples. There are two key pedagogical reasons for the use of this lecture structure in our statistics course. Firstly, the presentation of concepts prior to their application provides a balance between theory and application which is desirable for development of analytical, quantitative statistical skills and computer literacy (Moore, 1997). Secondly, to achieve statistical literacy, the use of worked examples assists potential users of statistical information in the workplace (Gordon and Nicholas, 2009). These weekly F2F lectures are recorded. Recordings are made available for online students within few hours after the F2F lecture concludes. This approach is used to ensure that the content taught and the speed of delivery for the two cohorts of students is consistent.

Complementary to the lectures, workshop sessions run each week for both the F2F and online students. The F2F workshops follow a standard one hour format where students complete exercises from the relevant textbook with assistance of the instructor. As campus attendance is not possible for online students, we conduct a live one hour online workshop session. The online workshops utilize the Blackboard Collaborate application to interact with the online students, providing a collaborative learning space. Blackboard Collaborate is a virtual classroom tool designed for conducting online virtual classes. The Collaborate sessions are...

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2 Content covered in weeks 1 - 3 include graphical and descriptive statistics. Weeks 4 and 5 cover discrete and continuous probability distributions. Weeks 6 - 9 cover inferential statistics including confidence intervals, hypothesis testing, correlation and regression. The program is concluded in week 10 with the application of index numbers.

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recorded for those online students who miss their workshop, but can also be viewed by the F2F students at a later date. The online workshops cover the exact same exercises as the F2F workshops.

Through the use of a synchronous learning environment such as Blackboard Collaborate, the F2F classroom can be simulated and replicated to a significant extent for online students (McBrien et al., 2009). Blackboard Collaborate allows the instructor to share a content frame (including Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint), an interactive whiteboard where the instructor and students can write or draw, text chat to interact using words and emoticons, and audio chat to talk via a microphone. The use of the content frame and whiteboard is important to achieve consistency in teaching between the F2F and online cohorts. Furthermore, visual illustration using statistical tools or graphical methods are important to engage students in their cognitive learning space (Mayer and Gallini, 1990). The instructor projects their image via the use of a web camera to close the geographical gap and promote student engagement through enhanced interaction (Fullwood and Doherty-Sneddon, 2006). A snapshot of a Blackboard Collaborate session can be seen in Appendix A.

Along with the weekly F2F or online workshop sessions, there are four computer lab sessions where students learn to use Microsoft Excel to perform basic statistical analysis. Evidence within education research tells us that active “hands on” tasks such as computer labs improves the learning process through the engagement of student’s attention and memory (Basturk, 2005). Specifically, the computer labs encourage students to examine and visualize data to promote conceptual understanding rather than rely on mechanical or automated calculations (Moore, 1997). The computer labs are conducted for both on-campus and online students using Microsoft Excel. A flow chart of the dual mode delivery design of our business statistics course is provided in Figure 1.

2.3 Assessment Structure

To promote consistency and fairness between the two cohorts, the F2F and online students complete the same assessment tasks. There are three components to the assessment; online quizzes (20%), computing assignment (20%) and final examination (60%). The design of the assessment structure aims to provide feedback on students’ learning throughout the semester, as well as providing a diverse range of assessment formats. This reflects the need for alternative approaches to student assessment to provide a broad evaluation regarding the ability and capacity of students’ critical thinking, communication, and reasoning skills (Gal and Garfield, 1997).

The online quizzes provide students with the ability to utilize feedback and improve their learning throughout the semester, as well as a tool for the instructor to monitor students’ perceptions on the progressive learning activities (Garfield, 1994). The second assessment item is a computing assignment. In this assessment, students are graded on their ability to utilize Microsoft Excel to synthesize, analyze and interpret data. Specifically, students should exhibit problem recognition and problem solving to summarize insight into the data in a meaningful manner. The use of a computing assignment encourages students to use a deeper approach to learning (Thomas and Bain, 1982; Scouller, 1998). Lastly, to evaluate successful achievement of the learning outcomes, the final assessment is a closed book, invigilated examination worth 60% of the final grade. On-campus attendance is required for both F2F and online students. Students are given three hours to complete the examination. Students are evaluated on problem recognition, selection of appropriate statistical methods and interpretation of results.
Figure 1: Dual Mode Course Structure

Lecture
- Conducted on campus – F2F students in attendance.
- Recorded for online students – available on the same day.
- Utilizes PowerPoint and Visualizer.

Online

Face-to-Face
- Conducted on campus – F2F students in attendance.
- Recorded for online students – available on the same day.
- Utilizes PowerPoint and Visualizer.

Workshop
- Set weekly workshop questions.
- Practical workshop involving statistical problem solving.
- Instructor helps students work through questions.
- Same set of weekly workshop questions.
- Practical workshop involving statistical problem solving.
- Conducted using Blackboard Collaborate.
- Students can see instructor via web camera.
- Recorded for students who may be unable to attend.

Computing Lab
- Four computing labs conducted across the semester.
- Applications using Microsoft Excel.
- Instructor helps students work through exercises.
- Four computing labs conducted across the semester after the online workshops.
- Applications using Microsoft Excel.
- Instructor helps students work through exercises.
3. Analysis and Results

In this section, we present the results of the comparative analysis of learning satisfaction and academic performance of our F2F and online students. We hypothesize that the delivery strategy used in the course would provide an equitable learning experience for both F2F and online students. Furthermore, the combination of the consistent teaching methods and application of the same assessment structure should also translate to no significant differences in academic performance across the two cohorts after controlling for selection bias.

3.1 Data

The data utilized for the analysis comes from two sources. First, to analyze the difference in learning satisfaction we use data obtained from the student evaluation of course (SEC) and the student evaluation of teaching (SET) survey from Summer Semester 2014 to Summer Semester 2015/2016. The same experienced instructor delivered the course to both semesters to both cohorts of students. The SEC and SET surveys are completed by students towards the end of the teaching period, prior to the final assessment. The surveys are anonymous, and their timing is structured such that the impact of perceived performance is minimized. All enrolled students were invited to complete the surveys. The response rates across all courses in the university are typically less than 50% (see Nulty, 2007 for a discussion of this issue).

Second, for our analysis of academic performance, we collected student results for all assessment items along with age, gender, year level of study and degree program information for students enrolled in the dual mode course. We drop any observations for which the student did not complete at least one assessment item or their demographic information was not obtained. Specifically, it is important to determine if there are significant differences in the composition of students enrolled in the F2F and online versions of the course. Upon investigation we found that, approximately 65% of the students enrolled F2F are female compared to 40% for the online cohort. The average age for F2F students is 25 years old whereas the average age for online students is 24.5 years old. In both cohorts, more than 50% of students are enrolled in a commerce or business degree. Overall the composition of students in the F2F and online courses is fairly similar and will provide a suitable basis for comparison between the cohorts.

3.2 Learning Satisfaction

We begin by analyzing the difference in the student learning satisfaction. Students were asked a series of questions in the SEC and SET surveys. These questions are outlined in Tables 2 and 3 for the SEC and SET, respectively. Students gave a rating between 1 and 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. We pooled the data for both cohorts and conduct t-tests comparing differences in means, assuming unequal variances. To assess the robustness of the t-tests results, we also conduct a Wilcoxon rank sum non-parametric test.

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3 Summer semester 2016/2017 was excluded from the analysis due to a change in instructor. To ensure consistency in the analysis, it is appropriate that one instructor runs both the F2F and online modes across the full duration of the study.

4 The number of observations for the SECs and SETs voluntary learning satisfaction surveys will therefore be less than for the academic performance.
The Wilcoxon rank sum test is useful to address situations where normality requirements necessary to perform t-tests are not satisfied. The rank sum test is also appropriate as data obtained for this analysis are essentially ordinal in nature. Tables 2 and 3 report the findings of the comparative analysis in terms of student satisfaction of the course and the teaching, respectively.

### Table 2: Student Evaluation of Course (SEC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>F2F Mean</th>
<th>F2F Std Dev</th>
<th>F2F n</th>
<th>Online Mean</th>
<th>Online Std Dev</th>
<th>Online n</th>
<th>t-test value</th>
<th>z-test value (Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The course was well organized.</td>
<td>4.737</td>
<td>0.446</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4.483</td>
<td>0.986</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.290</td>
<td>0.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The assessment was clear and fair.</td>
<td>4.500</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4.517</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-0.107</td>
<td>-0.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I received helpful feedback on my assessment.</td>
<td>4.158</td>
<td>0.886</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4.069</td>
<td>1.067</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.363</td>
<td>0.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This course engaged me in learning.</td>
<td>4.368</td>
<td>0.714</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4.276</td>
<td>0.922</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The teaching (instructors, tutors, online, etc.) on this course was effective in helping me to learn.</td>
<td>4.763</td>
<td>0.431</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4.448</td>
<td>0.910</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.722**</td>
<td>0.981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Overall I am satisfied with the quality of this course.</td>
<td>4.605</td>
<td>0.547</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4.379</td>
<td>0.942</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.152</td>
<td>0.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The blend of F2F and online teaching was effective for my learning in this course.</td>
<td>4.739</td>
<td>0.541</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.095</td>
<td>1.179</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.292**</td>
<td>1.727**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The recorded lectures that I could download assisted my learning.</td>
<td>4.652</td>
<td>0.714</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.619</td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. This course effectively used online assessment (e.g.: quiz) to help me to learn.</td>
<td>4.783</td>
<td>0.518</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.667</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.512</td>
<td>-0.094</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * Statistically significant at the .10 level; **at the .05 level; ***at the .01 level.

Two Tail Test - Ho: No difference amongst the two groups; Ha: There is difference amongst the two groups, t critical = 2.02 at 5% significance level; z critical (Wilcoxon test) = 1.96 at 5% significance level.

One Tail Test - Ho: No difference amongst the two groups; Ha: F2F students have a better course experience, t critical = 1.69 at 5% significance level; z critical (Wilcoxon test) = 1.65 at 5% significance level.

With the exception of question 7 in Table 2, both the t-test and the Wilcoxon rank sum test show no significant difference amongst F2F and online students in their course satisfaction across the various aspects of the course. The difference we observe in question 7 suggests satisfaction that is substantially higher in magnitude amongst the F2F students with regard to the blend of the F2F and online teaching to enhance learning. We attribute this to the ability for F2F students to access recordings of the online workshops through Blackboard Collaborate, allowing for additional instructor lead revision of content at their convenience. Such resources would not be available if the students were to undertake the course in a pure
F2F on-campus environment. Additionally, Table 3 suggests both F2F and online students were equally satisfied with the instructor in all aspects of the teaching.

Table 3: Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>F2F Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Online Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>t-test value</th>
<th>z-test value (Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. This staff member presented material in a clearly organized way.</td>
<td>4.778</td>
<td>0.422</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.593</td>
<td>0.931</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.963</td>
<td>0.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. This staff member presented material in an interesting way.</td>
<td>4.778</td>
<td>0.422</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.519</td>
<td>0.975</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.293</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This staff member treated students with respect.</td>
<td>4.778</td>
<td>0.422</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.778</td>
<td>0.424</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This staff member showed a good knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
<td>4.889</td>
<td>0.398</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.852</td>
<td>0.362</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.385</td>
<td>0.410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Overall I am satisfied with the teaching of this staff member.</td>
<td>4.806</td>
<td>0.401</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.692</td>
<td>0.618</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.818</td>
<td>0.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The staff member was effective in using innovative methods for design and delivery of the course materials.</td>
<td>4.762</td>
<td>0.539</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.571</td>
<td>0.978</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.781</td>
<td>0.314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The staff member communicated his/her enthusiasm for the subject.</td>
<td>4.952</td>
<td>0.218</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.857</td>
<td>0.359</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.040</td>
<td>0.528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. This staff member stimulated our interest and kept students engaged in learning.</td>
<td>4.667</td>
<td>0.658</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.714</td>
<td>0.644</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.407</td>
<td>-0.239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * Statistically significant at the .10 level; **at the .05 level; ***at the .01 level.

Two Tail Test - Ho: No difference amongst the two groups; Ha: There is difference amongst the two groups, t critical = 2.02 at 5% significance level; z critical (Wilcoxon test) = 1.96 at 5% significance level.

One Tail Test - Ho: No difference amongst the two groups; Ha: F2F students have a better teaching experience, t critical = 1.69 at 5% significance level; z critical (Wilcoxon test) = 1.65 at 5% significance level.

3.3 Academic Performance

Our analysis begins by testing for differences in academic performance. Table 4 reports the t-test of mean differences, assuming unequal variances for each assessment item individually and the total score of the students. The results show that F2F students achieve marginally higher average results than online students. However, the difference in the average results for each assessment item is not significant at a 5% level.

Although we found no significant effect when testing the differences in means, the choice to undertake studies online may be driven by the students’ underlying demographic characteristics. This may contribute some degree of bias to the results reported in Table 4 as those students enrolling in online courses may be fundamentally different from those.
selecting F2F courses. The application of propensity score matching (PSM) will allow us to adjust for selection bias caused by students self-selecting into online studies, further validating the results. To ensure the results we obtained were not coincidental, we estimate the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT), where we assume that those undergoing online studies are the ‘treated’ group. By estimating the ATT we can compare the results of those who participated in the online course versus those students enrolled in the traditional F2F mode. The ATT reports the difference in academic performance for an online student by creating a counterfactual assuming they were to have enrolled as a F2F student. This effectively draws out the impact of studying online for those students who opt to enrol online.

Table 4: t-tests for Academic Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F2F</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Dev</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Dev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online Quizzes</strong></td>
<td>15.786</td>
<td>3.459</td>
<td>15.121</td>
<td>3.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computing</strong></td>
<td>16.133</td>
<td>3.923</td>
<td>15.130</td>
<td>4.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment</strong></td>
<td>36.007</td>
<td>13.254</td>
<td>35.234</td>
<td>13.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
<td>67.926</td>
<td>17.463</td>
<td>65.485</td>
<td>19.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semester Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * Statistically significant at the .10 level; ** at the .05 level; *** at the .01 level.
Two Tail Test - Ho: No difference amongst the two groups; Ha: There is difference amongst the two groups, t critical = 1.97 at a 5% significance level.
One Tail Test - Ho: No difference amongst the two groups; Ha: F2F students perform higher than online students, t critical = 1.65 at a 5% significance level.

Table 5: Estimations of Academic Performance, OLS vs PSM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online Quizzes</strong></td>
<td>-0.992</td>
<td>-1.220</td>
<td>-0.721</td>
<td>-0.420</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>-0.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.609)</td>
<td>(0.979)</td>
<td>(0.812)</td>
<td>(1.158)</td>
<td>(1.457)</td>
<td>(1.514)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computing Assignment</strong></td>
<td>-0.612</td>
<td>-0.633</td>
<td>-0.498</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.671)</td>
<td>(1.033)</td>
<td>(0.909)</td>
<td>(0.996)</td>
<td>(2.083)</td>
<td>(1.282)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
<td>-0.936</td>
<td>-5.834</td>
<td>2.302</td>
<td>2.400</td>
<td>-3.793</td>
<td>5.615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.219)</td>
<td>(3.270)</td>
<td>(2.960)</td>
<td>(3.398)</td>
<td>(5.511)</td>
<td>(3.641)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semester Total</strong></td>
<td>0.884</td>
<td>-3.498</td>
<td>3.561</td>
<td>6.492</td>
<td>7.310</td>
<td>10.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.860)</td>
<td>(2.598)</td>
<td>(2.551)</td>
<td>(4.196)</td>
<td>(7.194)</td>
<td>(5.116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. Obs.</strong></td>
<td>171</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Each coefficient is a separate estimation of the effect of studying online. Students are matched on age, age squared, gender, and bachelor type and year level of study for the ‘online quizzes’, ‘assignment’ and ‘final exam’. ‘Total’ also utilizes the online quizzes and assignment as a matching covariate. The ATT was estimated using Stata14 and the ‘psmatch2’ command. Nearest neighbour match with replacement was used.
Table 5 reports the results for ordinary least squares (OLS) and ATT for each assessment item. We specify three models; the pooled data and two separate year specifications. The table reports the coefficient for studying online for the various assessment items. The results for ATT suggest the online student cohort were neither better off nor worse off than if they were enrolled F2F. Overall, Table 5 confirms that we find no significant difference between the academic performances of students. We find no difference across any of the assessment items in the course when taking into account the available demographic factors that may drive a student’s enrolment choice. We attribute this to the course design outlined in Section 2 which focuses on the replication of the F2F classroom in the virtual space.

5. Conclusions

The adoption of dual mode systems enables education providers to deliver their courses concurrently for on-campus F2F students and off-campus online students. Pedagogical emphasis has shifted towards designing dual mode courses with consistent teaching strategies for both student cohorts. We evaluated the design of our recent delivery of dual mode introductory statistics course. Our delivery, incorporating an optimal utilization of the Blackboard Collaborate platform, was found effective in providing both our F2F and online students with an equivalent learning experience.

We hypothesized that the equivalent learning experience and the use of the same assessment items would translate into no significant difference in the academic performance across the two student cohorts. Firstly, we incorporated the use of the PSM estimators to address the issue of selection bias in enrolment choice when evaluating the hypothesis. Secondly, our results showed that there were no significant differences in the academic performance amongst the two groups.

Overall we found no significant difference in student experiences and outcomes, achieved through consistent course delivery and teaching strategies. This provides new insights to the body of literature and contributes to the pedagogical development of dual mode courses. This year the Griffith Business School introduced a further refinement of its dual mode courses. This included the use of high quality mini studio recordings to further achieve equitable learning experience for our F2F and online students. A further research evaluating this innovation would be useful.
References:


**Appendix A**

Figure: An example of online workshops using Blackboard Collaborate