Instruction in the New Educational Landscape: A Needs Assessment of University Teachers Competencies in Hybrid Modalities

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Abstract

This study employed a quantitative research design anchored on Oliver's Blended Framework for Instructions (2014) to examine college students' perceived needs regarding their teachers' instructional competencies across online and face-to-face modalities. Specifically, the investigation sought to determine students' expectations of their instructors' proficiency in key domains—namely instruction, professional responsibilities, technology integration, planning and preparation, curriculum development, and instructional design—and to identify whether significant differences existed when findings were categorized according to year level, gender, and socioeconomic status (SES).Results revealed that students consistently expect their teachers to demonstrate a high to excellent level of competence across all instructional domains, regardless of modality. Moreover, statistical analyses indicated no significant differences in students' expectations across demographic categories, suggesting that learners hold uniformly high standards for instructional quality irrespective of year level, gender, or SES. This uniformity implies that students view quality instruction as a non-negotiable requirement in both online and face-to-face settings.The findings underscore the considerable challenge this poses for higher education institutions, particularly in ensuring that teachers maintain exemplary competencies as essential conditions for effective learning. The study highlights the imperative for policymakers and academic leaders to strengthen qualification standards, professional development programs, and competency-based evaluations for faculty. Additionally, the absence of demographic differences in expectations suggests that students neither lower their standards nor adjust their needs when confronted with inadequacies in instructional competencies, instructional design, or the learning environment. Thus, addressing these needs becomes critical to sustaining equitable and high-quality learning experiences across instructional platforms.

Keywords: needs assessment, university teachers competencies, hybrid modalities

Introduction

The rapid evolution of educational technologies and shifting institutional priorities have compelled higher education systems worldwide to adopt alternative modes of teaching and learning. As reliance on traditional classrooms became increasingly constrained by structural and contextual changes, the continuity of instruction began to depend more heavily on online and remote modalities. Consequently, online learning emerged as a central strategy for sustaining academic engagement in contemporary

educational environments. Although many countries had incorporated online instruction well before these shifts, the accelerated large-scale integration of digital learning intensified attention to its strengths, limitations, and long-term implications.

A substantial body of research has documented the positive influence of online learning on student outcomes. Bernard et al. (2004) demonstrated that technology-mediated instruction can enhance efficiency and transform learning experiences. Despite this advantage, online instruction continues to face critical scrutiny. Faculty members frequently report that, although online environments offer flexibility, they do not always replicate the pedagogical richness of face-to-face classrooms (Osika et al. 2009). As institutions now recalibrate their instructional models to balance digital and in-person learning, many are shifting toward hybrid or multimodal frameworks that intentionally leverage the strengths of both approaches. In response, teachers have developed new levels of digital competence and adopted a range of information and communication technologies to support instructional delivery (König et al., 2020).

While research comparing online and face-to-face instruction is extensive, far fewer studies examine learners' expectations regarding teacher competencies across these modalities. Competencies that promote engagement, self-regulation, and learner autonomy remain particularly underexplored from the student perspective. Moreover, the question of whether online instruction adequately supports students' fundamental learning needs remains unresolved. These gaps underscore the need for further empirical investigation.The expansion of multimodal learning environments has raised critical questions about the competencies required of instructors and the expectations held by students. Understanding these expectations is essential, as teaching effectiveness—regardless of modality—is shaped not only by instructor expertise but also by students' perceptions of the learning environment. Although teachers routinely communicate expectations to their students, the reciprocal articulation of students' expectations is less common. Given the interdependent nature of teaching and learning, identifying competencies that students perceive as necessary is crucial for designing responsive and effective instructional practices.

The present study examines college students' expectations of teacher competencies in both online and face-to-face instruction. Specifically, it (a) assesses expected competency levels across the dimensions of instruction, professional responsibilities, technology, planning and preparation, curriculum, and instructional design; and (b) investigates whether expectations differ significantly by year level, gender, or socioeconomic status. By foregrounding student perspectives, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the competencies essential for effective teaching across learning modalities.

Literature Review

Technological advancements have expanded access to diverse learning environments, thereby increasing the need for teacher preparedness and ongoing professional development in digital pedagogy (Alshuaibi, 2020). Online and blended learning modalities offer greater flexibility, improved instructional strategies, and enhanced content awareness, making them valuable alternatives to traditional instruction (Tang et al., 2020; Gonzales et al., 2020). As a result, developing competencies in online instruction has become essential for facilitating meaningful learning experiences and supporting students' intellectual growth. However, existing research also identifies several challenges associated with virtual learning, including technological barriers, limited interaction, and difficulties in sustaining student engagement (Suryaman et al., 2020; Kapasia et al., 2020; Adarkwah, 2021). Students' perceptions of instructional quality are shaped by multiple factors, such as course design, instructor competence, opportunities for social interaction, and overall convenience (Artino, 2010; Drew & Mann, 2018). Effective online instructors therefore integrate content expertise, pedagogical skills, careful planning, technological proficiency, and strategies that promote engagement and collaboration (Bailie, 2011). Furthermore, professional development initiatives have been shown to enhance faculty satisfaction with course design, student engagement, and the use of digital tools, particularly among novice online instructors (Day et al., 2021). While studies indicate that synchronous learning can improve efficiency and time management, technical and procedural challenges continue to pose limitations (Khalil et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2020). Overall, successful online instruction depends on the integration of instructional, technological, and social competencies, as teachers' abilities in these areas directly influence student engagement, learning outcomes, and overall satisfaction (Palloff & Pratt, 2011).

Face-to-face learning environments support interactive engagement, reinforce understanding, foster positive attitudes, and reduce challenges associated with learner isolation. Comparative studies suggest that students in face-to-face courses benefit from richer social interaction, immediate feedback, and collaborative activities, even though overall academic achievement may be comparable to that of online learning (Mather & Sarkans, 2018). In addition to instructional modality, gender differences also influence learning preferences and behaviors. Research indicates that females often demonstrate greater persistence and self-regulation in online contexts, whereas males tend to exhibit stronger technical skills and adaptability (Richardson & Woodley, 2002). These differences highlight the need for instructional strategies that are responsive to diverse learner profiles. In summary, face-to-face instruction promotes active engagement, timely feedback, and social learning. Although online learning offers flexibility and convenience, in-person teaching provides distinct advantages that enhance understanding, motivation, and skill development.

Oliver's Blended Framework for Instruction

Oliver's Blended Framework for Instruction (2014) outlines six interrelated domains designed to evaluate both online and face-to-face pedagogical practices: (1) instruction, (2) professional responsibilities, (3) technology, (4) planning and preparation, (5) curriculum, and (6) instructional design. Each domain includes specific indicators and corresponding judgment values that collectively serve as a standardized guide for the effective and seamless implementation of blended learning environments. The first domain, instruction, focuses on the learning environment, facilitation, assessment, and current knowledge. Within this domain, teachers are expected to employ innovative, research-based instructional strategies and develop relevant skills that promote experiential and student-centered learning. Instruction also involves fostering learners' critical awareness of issues related to technology and society, with educators modeling responsible digital citizenship as a core instructional responsibility. In addition, assessment practices must align with course objectives and consider the timeliness of feedback, the use of varied evaluation methods, and responsiveness to individual learner needs.The second domain, professional responsibilities, encompasses professional conduct, current knowledge, reflection, and communication. This domain emphasizes adherence to institutional policies, ethical practice, and professional demeanor, as well as the importance of remaining informed about current trends in both online and face-to-face instruction. Reflective practice and the ability to adjust instructional strategies based on learner needs are also central components. Moreover, maintaining effective communication and productive relationships with stakeholders is essential. In digital learning contexts, this domain extends to addressing issues such as data privacy, digital security, and the prevention of cyberbullying to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment. Overall, professional responsibility involves upholding academic integrity, collaborating with colleagues, and engaging in continuous professional development.The third domain, technology, highlights indicators related to learners, learning environments, skills, and integration. Technological competence is critical in blended instructional settings, as it allows students to concentrate on learning rather than technical difficulties. A lack of technological proficiency on the part of the instructor can hinder the learning process; therefore, educators are expected to demonstrate the digital skills associated with 21st-century teaching and responsible digital citizenship.The fourth domain, planning and preparation, includes organization, content knowledge, personalization, and resource selection as key indicators. Effective planning, combined with differentiated instruction and the strategic use of technological resources and digital content, is identified as an essential competency for successful blended learning implementation.The fifth domain, curriculum, emphasizes diversity and accountability. Acknowledging the diverse needs of learners, this domain stresses the integration of multiple assessment methods and varied instructional strategies to achieve learning objectives. Employing diverse platforms, tools, and pedagogical approaches is essential for fostering meaningful student engagement. At the same time, accountability remains a central concern, as curricula must align with standards set by higher education authorities and instructional practices must remain consistent with defined curricular goals and outcomes.The sixth and final domain, instructional design, advocates a learner-centered approach that prioritizes active student involvement. Key indicators include consistency in instructional methods, opportunities

for interaction and collaboration, authentic learning activities, clarity of technical information, and adherence to established principles of instructional design.

Finally, Oliver's Blended Framework for Instruction identifies four levels of implementation—exemplary, excellent, expected, and emerging—which provide a structured means of assessing the quality and effectiveness of blended instructional practices and the extent to which instructional standards are met.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design anchored on Oliver's Blended Framework for Instructions (2014) to examine college students' perceived needs regarding their teachers' instructional competencies across online and face-to-face modalities among 210 university students in Western Mindanao State University, Philippines.

Data were collected using questionnaires designed to determine the level of instructional competence students seek from their teachers in online and face-to-face learning environments. The instruments were anchored on Oliver's (2014) Blended Framework for Instructional Competencies, which includes the domains of instruction, professional responsibilities, technology, planning and preparation, curriculum, and instructional design. Responses were rated using a four-point Likert scale: Exemplary (4), Excellent (3), Expected (2), and Emerging (1).

Content validity was established through expert evaluation by three specialists, whose feedback led to revisions that improved clarity and conciseness. Pilot testing was conducted with 30 students who shared similar characteristics with the target population. Reliability analysis indicated excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .975 for the face-to-face questionnaire and .968 for the online questionnaire; thus, all items were retained.

Prior to data collection, ethical clearance and institutional approvals were secured. Participation was voluntary, informed, anonymous, and confidential. Respondents provided informed consent and completed the questionnaires online via Google Forms, with the option to withdraw at any time without penalty. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Mean and standard deviation were used to determine levels of instructional competence, while independent samples t-tests and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) examined differences across year level, gender, and socio-economic status. Interpretation of results followed Oliver's (2014) adjectival rating scale.

Results and Discussion

Level of Competence in Online Instruction

Table 1 presents the level of instructional competence students seek from their teachers in an online learning context. Results indicate that students expect an Excellent level of competence across all domains: instruction (M = 2.54, SD = 0.68), professional responsibilities (M = 2.53, SD = 0.74), technology (M = 2.51, SD = 0.73), planning and preparation (M = 2.58, SD = 0.79), curriculum (M = 2.61, SD = 0.78), and instructional design (M = 2.66, SD = 0.83). The relatively small standard deviation values suggest homogeneity in students' expectations. These findings indicate that students expect teachers to exceed minimum performance standards in online instruction. In line with Oliver's (2014) Blended Framework, students perceive teachers as exemplar digital citizens who demonstrate professionalism, technological competence, instructional adaptability, and ethical responsibility. Teachers are also expected to ensure safe digital learning environments and protect students' privacy and well-being. These results support earlier studies emphasizing that effective online teaching requires strong pedagogical, technological, and professional competencies (Onyenma & Abraham, 2020; Salmon, 2003; Onike, 2007).

Level of Competence in Face-to-Face Instruction

As shown in Table 2, students similarly expect an Excellent level of competence in face-to-face instruction across all domains: instruction (M = 2.53, SD = 0.66), professional responsibilities (M = 2.55, SD = 0.74), technology (M = 2.56, SD = 0.81), planning and preparation (M = 2.58, SD = 0.75), curriculum (M = 2.55, SD = 0.77), and instructional design (M = 2.60, SD = 0.83). The small variability reflects consistent expectations among respondents. These results affirm Oliver's (2014) description of "Excellent" teaching, which includes effective lesson delivery, aligned assessment, timely feedback, ethical practice, and continuous professional growth. Students expect teachers to communicate clearly, facilitate learning, provide constructive feedback, and actively engage learners. Notably, students do not distinguish between online and face-to-face instruction in terms of technological expectations, underscoring the importance of digital competence across modalities.

Differences in Online Instructional Competence by Profile Variables (gender, year level, and socio-economic status)

Tables 3.0, 3.1 and 3.2 show no significant differences in students' expectations for online instructional competence when grouped by year level**,** gender**,** or socio-economic status ($p > .05$). These findings suggest that students' expectations of excellent online teaching are consistent regardless of demographic characteristics. This result contradicts earlier studies that reported variation in student expectations across academic levels or gender (Pinto & Anderson, 2013; Brines, 2017), but aligns with research indicating that gender does not significantly affect online learning satisfaction (Harvey et al., 2017).

Differences in Face-to-Face Instructional Competence by Profile Variables (gender, year level, and socio-economic status)

Tables 4.0, 4.1, and 4.2 likewise reveal no significant differences in students' expectations for face-to-face instructional competence when grouped by year level**,** gender**,** or socio-economic status ($p > .05$). This finding suggests that students, regardless of background, consistently expect teachers to demonstrate excellence across all instructional domains.Although previous studies have reported differences in learner perceptions based on demographic factors, the present results indicate a unified expectation for high-quality instruction. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, in particular, expressed the same level of expectation as their higher-income counterparts, highlighting the importance of equitable and high-standard teaching practices.

The findings indicate that students set a high standard for instructional quality**,** expecting teachers to consistently demonstrate excellence in both online and face-to-face modalities. Consequently, teacher competence must go beyond adequacy and consistently exceed established standards. It is recommended that higher education institutions prioritize continuous, outcomes-based professional development programs that focus on the six instructional competency domains: instruction, professional responsibilities, technology, planning and preparation, curriculum, and instructional design. Such initiatives should be designed to ensure that teachers not only meet institutional standards but also respond effectively to students' expectations of excellence. Teachers are further encouraged to maintain a consistently high level of instructional competence regardless of the teaching modality, whether online or face-to-face, as students' expectations remain uniform across learning platforms. In support of this, academic administrators should strengthen capacity-building efforts related to digital literacy, data privacy, cybersecurity, and the creation of safe and inclusive online learning environments. Additionally, regular curriculum review and instructional innovation should be institutionalized to address the evolving demands of contemporary education and the needs of digitally oriented learners.

Tables

Table 1.0

Level of competence in online instruction respondents seek from their teachers

N=210

Variables	SD	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Instruction	.68782	2.5454	Excellent
Professional responsibilities	.74023	2.5291	Excellent
Technology	.73998	2.5167	Excellent

Planning and preparation	.79376	2.5825	Excellent
Curriculum	.78320	2.6183	Excellent
Instructional design	.83834	2.6667	Excellent

1.0-1.74 Emerging;1.75-2.49 Expected;2.50-3.24 Excellent;3.25-4.00Exemplary

Table 2.0

Level of competence in face-to-face instruction respondents seek from their teachers

N=210

Variables	SD	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Instruction	.66309	2.530	Excellent
Professional responsibilities	.74571	2.558	Excellent
Technology	.81104	2.569	Excellent
Planning and preparation	.75971	2.582	Excellent
Curriculum	.77043	2.557	Excellent
Instructional design	.83992	2.601	Excellent

1.0-1.74 Emerging;1.75-2.49 Expected;2.50-3.24 Excellent;3.25-4.00Exemplary

Table 3.0

Difference: Level of competence that students seek from their teachers in online instruction based on year level

N=210; 1st Year=36; 2nd Year=73; 3rd Year=56; 4rth Year=45

Variables	Mean Square		F	P	Interpretation
	Bet. Groups	Within Groups			
Instruction	.033	.480	.068	.997.	Not Significant
Prof. responsibilities	.651	.546	1.191	.314	Not Significant
Technology	.744	.545	1.366	.254.	Not Significant

Planning & preparation	.729.	.629	1.159	.327	Not Significant
Curriculum	.209	.619	.337	.798	Not Significant
Instructional design	.623	.704	.885	.450	Not Significant

*Significant at Alpha =0.50**

Table 3.1

Difference: Level of competence that students seek from their teachers in online instruction based on gender

N=210; Male=47;Female=163

Variables	Gender	Mean Difference	Mean	t	p	Interpretation
Instruction	Male	2.5895	.05683	.498	.961	Not significant
	Female	2.5327				
Prof. responsibilities	Male	2.6336	.13459	1.099	.513	Not Significant
	Female	2.4990				
Technology	Male	2.4947	.02833	.231	.304	Not Significant
	Female	2.5230				
Planning & prep.	Male	2.4965	.11091	.843	.313	Not Significant
	Female	2.6074				
Curriculum	Male	2.5745	.05641	.434	.521	Not Significant
	Female	2.6309				
Instructional design	Male	2.7305	.08223	.592	.291	Not Significant
	Female	2.6483				

*Significant at Alpha =0.50**

Table 3.2

Difference: Level of competence that students seek from their teachers in online instruction based on socio-economic status

N=210; P=137; LI=40; LM=23; MC=23; UM=0; UI=0; R=4

Variables	Mean Square		F	P	Interpretation
	Bet.	Within			

	Groups	Groups			
Instruction	.262	.477	.549	.700	Not Significant
Prof. responsibilities	.078	.557	.139	.967	Not Significant
Technology	.247	.553	.447	.775	Not Significant
Planning & preparation	.049	.641	.077	.989	Not Significant
Curriculum	.238	.621	.384	.820	Not Significant
Instructional design.	.329	.710	.463	.763	Not Significant

*Significant at Alpha =0.50**

Table 4.0

Difference: Level of competence that students seek from their teachers in face-to-face instruction based on year level

N=210; 1st Year=36;2nd Year=73;3rd Year=56;4rth Year=45

Variables	Mean Square Bet. Groups	Within Groups	F	P	Interpretation
Instruction	.495	.439	1.127	.339	Not Significant
Prof. responsibilities	.123	.562	.219	.883	Not Significant
Technology	1.170	.650	1.799	.149	Not Significant
Planning & preparation	.061	.585	.104	.958	Not Significant
Curriculum	.406	.596	.681	.564	Not Significant
Instructional design.	.438	.709	.617	.605	Not Significant

*Significant at Alpha =0.50**

Table 4.1

Difference: Level of competence that students seek from their teachers in face-to-face instruction based on gender

N=210; Male=47;Female=163

Variables	Gender	Mean Difference	Mean	t	p	Interpretation
Instruction	Male Female	2.4102 2.5649.	.15471 1.508	1.413	.344	Not significant
Prof. responsibilities	Male Female	2.4326. 2.5951	.16247 1.314	1.318	.902	Not Significant
Technology	Male Female	2.4894 2.5930	.10369 .781	.771	.863.	Not Significant

Planning & prep.	Male	2.4220	.20685.	1.651	.719. Not Significant
	Female	2.6288	1.677		
Curriculum	Male	2.5064	.06540	.512	.722. Not Significant
	Female	2.5718	.524		
Instructional design	Male	2.4593	.19027	1.371	.753 Not Significant
	Female	2.6442.	1.428		

*Significant at Alpha =0.50**

Table 4.2

Difference: Level of competence that students seek from their teachers in face-to-face instruction based on socio-economic status

N=210; P=137; LI=40; LM=23; MC=23; UM=0; UI=0; R=4

Variables	Mean Square		F	P	Interpretation
	Bet. Groups	Within Groups			
Instruction	.542	.438	1.238	.296	Not Significant
Prof. responsibilities	.749	.552	1.357	.250	Not Significant
Technology	.260	.666	.391	.815	Not Significant
Planning & preparation	.840	.572	1.469	.213	Not Significant
Curriculum	.725	.591	1.226	.301.	Not Significant
Instructional design.	.987	.700	1.410	.232	Not Significant

*Significant at Alpha =0.50**

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