

Delivering the WAW: Instructional Mode & UCF's Writing Studies Curriculum

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Instructor Reactions

Changing Student Perceptions

Student Reactions

...to Course Planning

Moving Face-to-Face Components Online

- “My biggest hurdle right now is that I want to make sure that all of the content is consistent in Webcourses so that, you know, students are getting information, that everything is very consistent.”
- “The word that occurs to me right away is dynamic. Dynamic, interested, invested. So, the online component of the mixed mode course is an opportunity to game, you know. Not to make a game out of it. Not to lower standards. But it's an opportunity to do what happens when someone plays a game. Nobody has fun with Monopoly if we sit down and read all the rules to begin with. You know, we start playing, and then the rules make sense as we go.”
- “I think it's incorrect or missing an opportunity as a teacher to think, well what do I do in the classroom? How would take that and move it online? You know, that's actually missing a lot of opportunity for being dynamic. For having students contribute to their learning. For learning by exploring.”

Integrating Online Components in Face-to-Face

- “I really see the online component of the mixed mode as an opportunity to create, as an opportunity to explore. I do think it's going to be hard to discover the potential in that mode, and then not bring it back over into the face-to-face classes.”
- “The way I do my face-to-face has already changed from having taught early online courses. You know, and thinking about, about that and what's possible there. I've given my students... I've really changed a lot in the last two years about the types of activities we will do and how I portioned time for students.”
- “Mixed-mode might have an advantage. You know, that might be one of the problems going into this. How do you create a really great online assignment and then not also require this work from the other class, you know, that's supposed to be entirely face-to-face? Other than respecting the guidelines that, it's face-to-face. I mean otherwise students go online all the time for their homework.”

Implementing the Curriculum

- “I was just playing with my syllabus on-the-fly and changing things up and doing it. So, it helped me to really internalize what I was doing there, to be able to apply and see, well, how are students reacting to it? Which I think made the training much better.”
- I wanted a clear template to give myself an experience with so I could understand it better to then figure out why it works, what doesn't, and then how to make that my own. You know, we were encouraged to make it our own right from the start, but I don't think I work best that way. ... My weak analogy is that I love to cook. But if I get a new recipe, even if I suspect something is wrong or I can make it better, I'm going to follow it the first time. Because I just want to know what does the textbook look like?”

...to Student Interactions

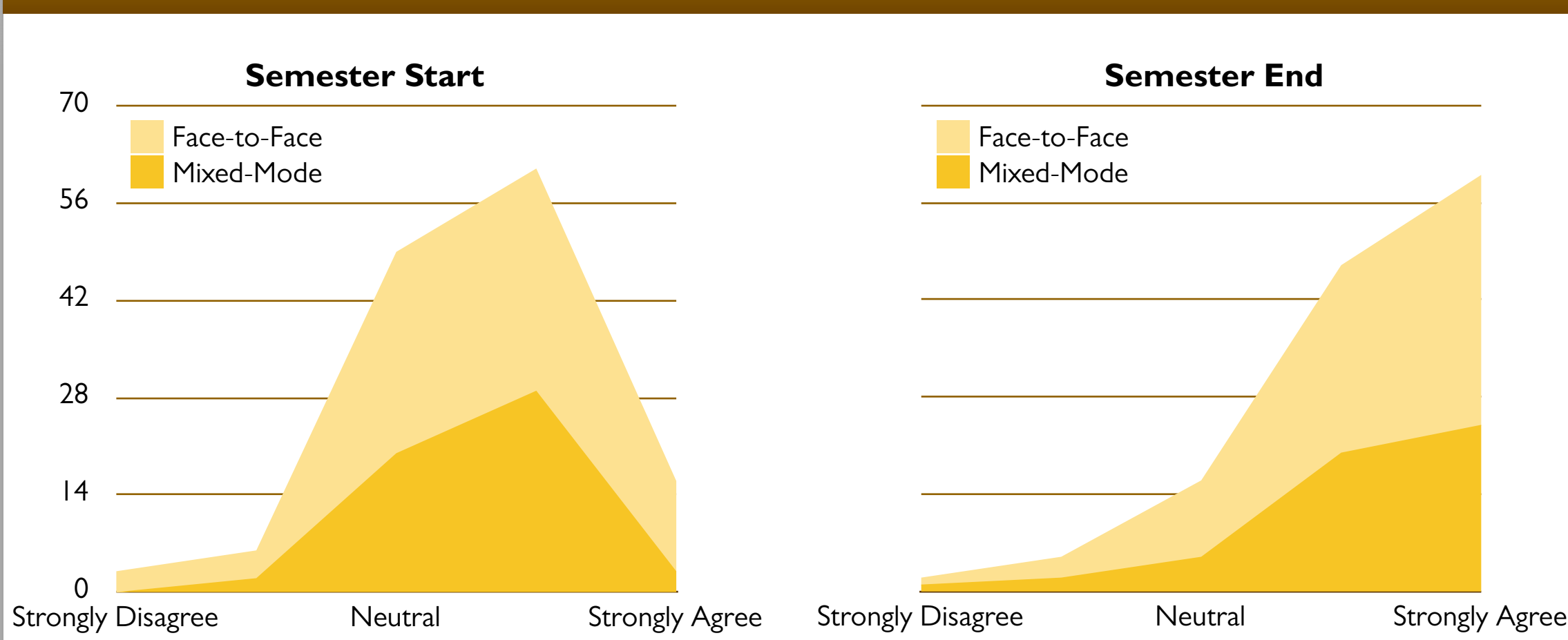
Understanding Students

- “You can establish that respectability from having that professional look of the course on the online space. Maybe it's not establishing the same kind of rapport. It's like building relationships and the students' trust, you know, as they go forward.”

Student Involvement

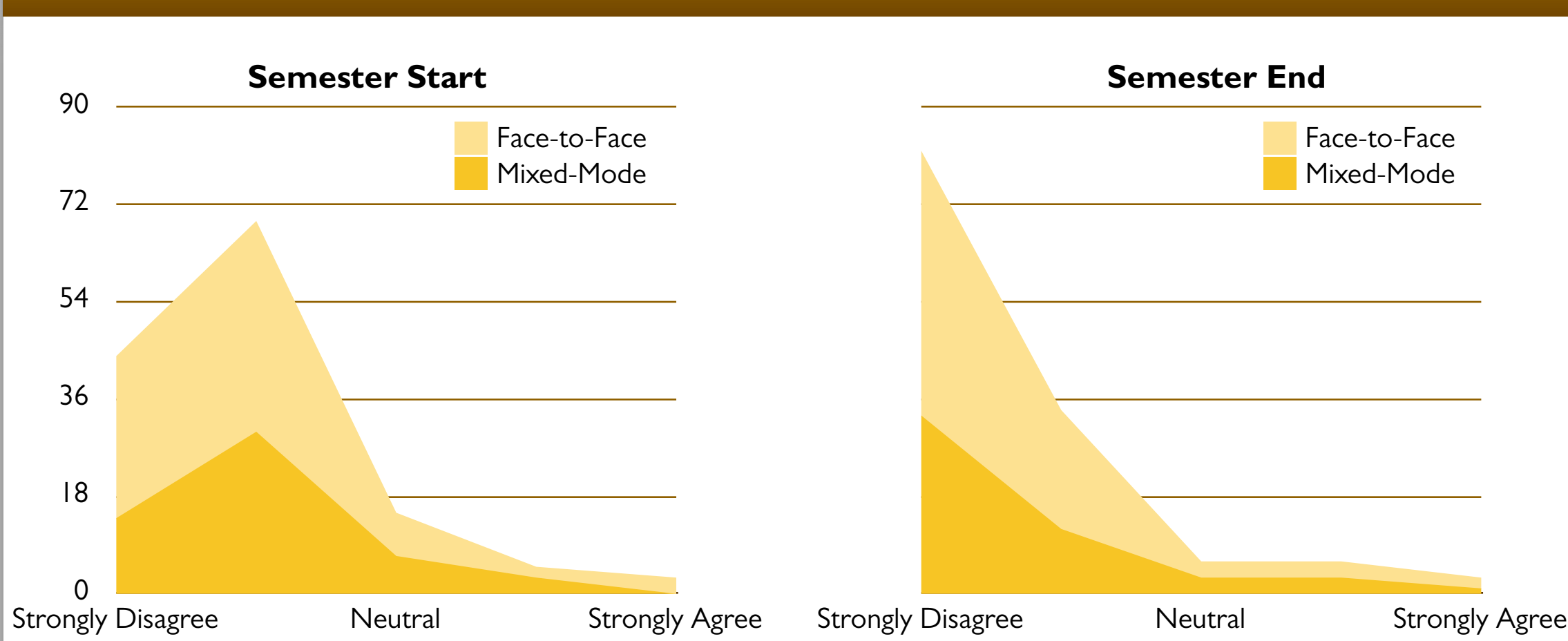
- “I'm a little concerned about, you know, what kind of students are going to be coming in? Is there going to be this perception from students that, you know, 'oh, this is going to be, like, easy.' Or it's going to be less work because there's less face-to-face content. I'm concerned because I still want to get, like, that 110% effort out of students. I want to see their very best come through. Am I going to be able to do that as well?”

“Writing involves collaboration.”



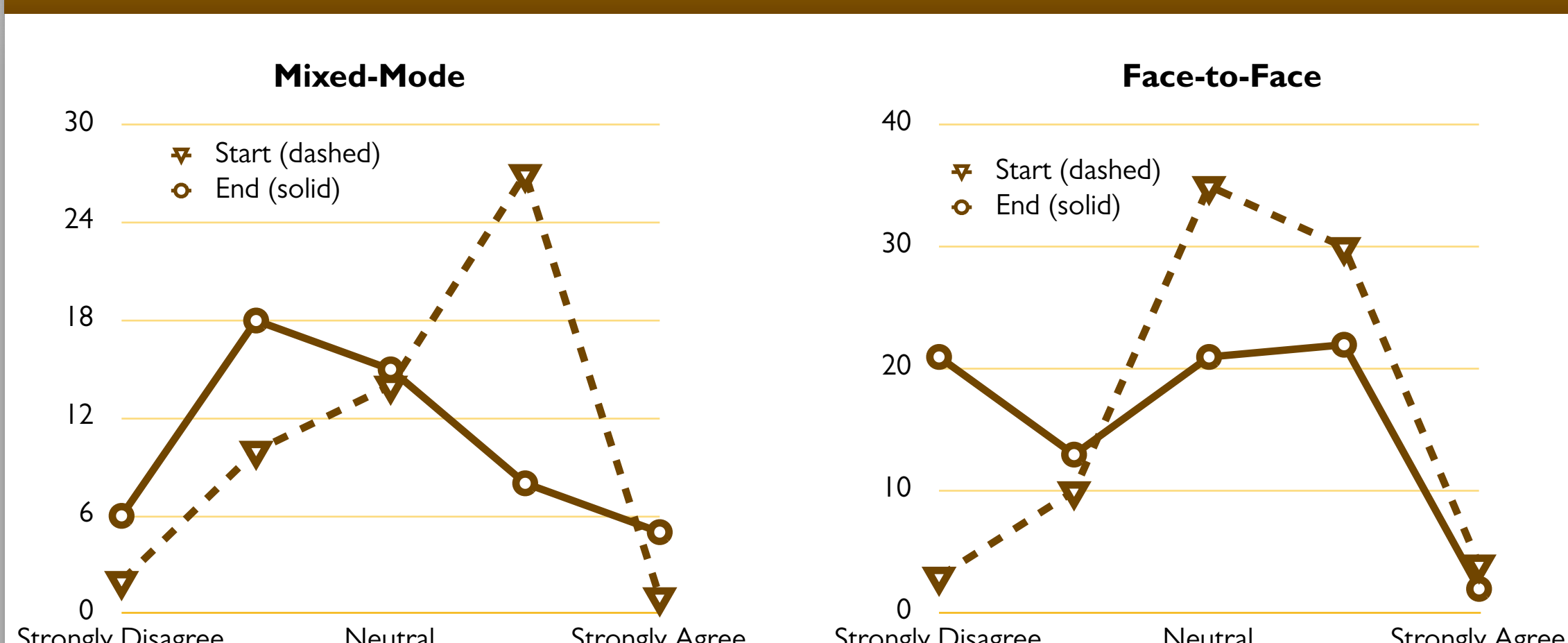
Most of the surveyed students in nine sections of ENC 1101 started class with the slight belief that writing is collaborative. By the end of the semester, their opinions had strengthened. Regardless of delivery mode, most students leave 1101 agreeing that writing is a collaborative process.

“My first draft is usually enough.”



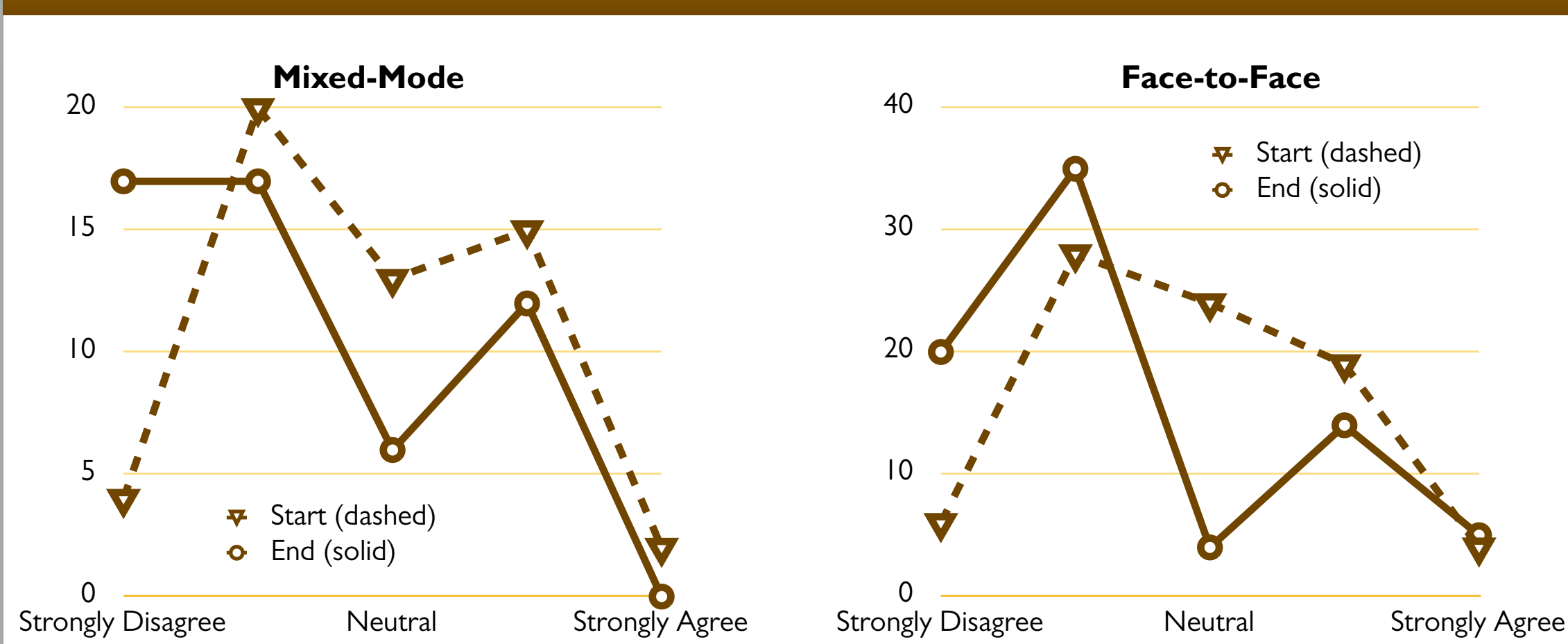
Most of the students in ENC 1101 initially said they disagreed that their first draft was enough, suggesting that they see the need for revision in their writing. This opinion, too, was stronger at the end of the semester. In both delivery modes, a large majority of students report that writing requires more than one draft to be successful.

“Rules determine whether writing is good or has errors.”



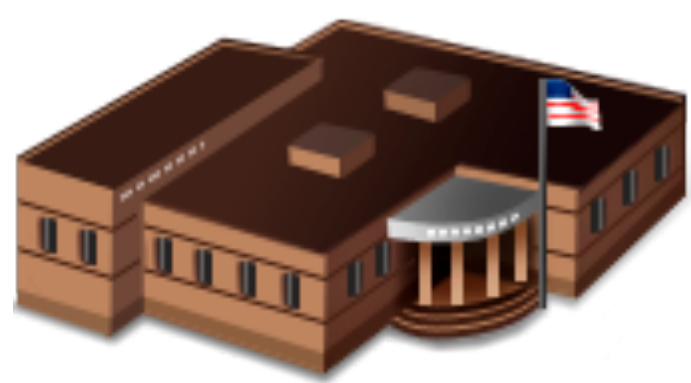
Students enrolled in mixed-mode sections of ENC 1101 reported expected views: namely, that error is determined by a set of rules that can be memorized. By the end of the semester, most of these students reported the disagreement we desire. However, more students strongly agreed with the statement at the end of the semester than at the beginning. No reason for this anomaly has been found. Many students in face-to-face sections began with neutral views on the matter, but the classes reported a substantial shift toward strong disagreement by the end of the term.

“Previous courses taught about rhetoric and writing purposes.”



When asked about their preparation from previous courses, students in mixed-mode enc 1101 sections held moderate views. By the end of the semester, a significant number of these students revised their view of previous courses, saying they strongly disagreed that they were prepared for rhetoric. Students in face-to-face sections developed more noticeably polarized opinions, though they report slightly more positive responses.

Recommendations for Best Practices



For Institutions

- Provide students guidance on instructional modes: hybrid courses are rare before students enter higher ed.
- Make delivery mode more visible in registration screens. Students naturally look only at meeting time and teacher name.
- Train instructors to use creative implementations of online technologies to do new things, rather than recreating existing setups.
- Give instructors credit/time for an additional prep for each delivery mode, especially for their first semester designing the course.
- Keep class sizes the same, especially for writing-intensive courses.



For Instructors

- Use hybrid courses as opportunity to try new approaches to teaching class and engaging students with the material and online community.
- Avoid duplicating in-person content or approaches online.
- Provide routine, predictable deadlines, preferably built around physical meeting dates.
- Be consistently available through at least one digital medium; publicize the best contact method and expected turn-around time.
- Expect submissions and participation mostly during the last two hours of any deadline; consider timing of student responses/replies.



For Students

- Consider delivery mode when choosing classes, not just meeting dates/times and teacher reputation.
- Use past experiences with online classes and personal strengths in different subjects as factors when deciding on delivery mode.
- Participate in class, including the online components, where simply “showing up” doesn't often count.
- Pay attention to deadlines, particularly if others need time to reply to discussions/submissions. Prepare in advance, especially with readings.
- Take advantage of office hours, especially if confused or uncentered.

...to Course Expectations

Predictability

- “One of the things that I have found that he has done that I feel works well for an online class is that he sends out a direction sheet. So, you know, on Wednesday, he will email us, here's Wednesday's homework. Here's where it goes. 'Be prepared for this on Friday, which will all be online.' So it kind of gives you kind of like a schedule for the week. We are pretty routine, but just to clarify that it's very clear this is due online. This is due in class.”

Writing Content and Expectations

- “In this particular class, and I mean this in a positive way, I think it's based on the professor. I have a little more freedom to say more personal things in my essays. And we've only written one and then some class, some in class writing and then analysis for readings. We've only done one main essay, and I really felt like I was able to use the, I mean, even use the word / in a paper without fear.”
- “To have someone where our grade is with him, tell us that it is okay, versus in high school having someone say, any time you do something do it exactly this way from now on because I'm in charge. You know that sort of thing. You transfer here, and, you know, you're used to someone else telling you, I know it sounds childish, but telling you it's okay to write [in our own way or style].”
- “But writing can be anything you wanted to be as long as it had key principles of analysis and evaluation. As long as you're doing the steps of being a good academic writer, as long as you have the basics, then you could rewrite basically you knew what you're going to write.”

...to Course Enrollment

Contact: With LMS and Instructors

- “If you go to lecture and your quizzes and tests are online quizzes, that's fine with me. ... Where Webcourses is only used as kind of a Turnitin.com, that's fine. But where you kind of have to learn through Webcourses, it's not that. It doesn't accomplish that.”
- “If you can't relate to us, that makes learning so much harder. But if we can find common ground, it's so much easier to relate to things.”

Timeliness

- “[Having an online component] is convenient now. At first it was overwhelming because I had to tell myself when to do it, but it's convenient now. Because I can work on it whenever.” / “I have to agree there. One, it is something you have to tell yourself when to do it, because there's no set structure on when to show up or when design and and do this work. There's just new dates. And I have to work with those. So it gives a lot more freedom and choices when you can do things, but you have to convince yourself that, you know, this needs to get done in order for it to actually take place.”
- “Go face-to-face because with all the extracurriculars, friends that pop up, it's easier to say, well I don't have to do this today because it's due on this day, so it can be pushed behind or pushed around easily. Much more easily. And but with the face-to-face class, you know it at this time, and if you miss it, you might be missing some important information.”

Flexibility

- “If you're coming from high school, then you probably haven't done an online class, so it can be hard to adjust to, but I really think it's a good adjustment. Because it [is] very structured, in the classroom, here's your fifty minutes, here's what we have to get done. Online, it gives you that freedom. I think it's a good adjustment to college itself. And for a class that I think does take a lot of time to think outside the classroom, ... you have that open availability at the end of the week to take your time.”
- “I like meeting twice a week, but I also like the flexibility at the end of the week. Because usually it's a longer assignment, so I guess it gives me more time to do it on my time. ... So I don't feel rushed. So I really like it. I think it's benefited me more having that then to be in class, like, here's fifty minutes you can get all this done. So I like it a lot. ... It's given me more time to be creative, I guess. To really think about an assignment.”