



International Association of  
**LAW SCHOOLS**

2020

## TRANSITIONING TO ONLINE LEGAL EDUCATION



THE STUDENT VOICE

July 2020

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## PREFACE

Undoubtedly, the COVID19 pandemic has utterly altered all aspects of life. This global crisis has significantly shifted our framework. Education moved from the classroom to the dining room table. The present situation and its ramifications are uncertain.

The pandemic only reinforces the understanding that we are globally connected. While traditional tensions have always existed, a belief and reliance on the rule of law has imperfectly maintained a level of stability which permitted the relative peace and prosperity for the past 75 years. This crisis has seriously exacerbated these tensions and created new ones. We as a community of law teachers, must redouble our efforts to inculcate in the next generation of law students the piety of the principles of a fair and just legal regime.

While most of us long to go back to the “way it was”. We are coming to the realization that this is a transformative event. There is no way back. We must focus on what lies ahead. This shift has challenged some basic assumptions on how we teach and how our students learn. World-wide, all formal education became remote. Schools had to go virtual; some succeeded, some struggled, and a few simply stopped.

Many of our members have come together to share as well as learn from this experience. As we experiment with new technologies and approaches, the lessons learned will strengthen existing approaches, create new opportunities as well as deal with significant challenges.

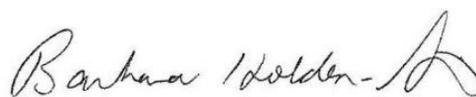
This report entitled, **Transitioning to Online Legal Education – The Student Voice** is a preliminary study to help set a baseline for evaluating and assessing this transformation from our students’ perspectives. Their expectations and experiences are an essential element in constructing new models for effective legal education.

The survey results demonstrate that the global legal education community has responded quickly to this unique crisis. Time studies show rapid improvement in students’ assessment of instructors’ competence and the quality of their education. However, significantly large percentages of students still consider that quality has worsened, and instructors need to “up their game”. Students citing personal and technical challenges growing from the transition also registered a higher degree of deterioration of educational quality. These correlations are helpful in identifying areas where intervention will aid in raising the overall satisfaction level of the educational experience for all our students.

It is our obligation as law school leaders, law teachers and students to help improve legal education by learning from each other. During these difficult times, the IALS’ role is to be a resource for our community.



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***The Voice of the Global Legal Education Community***

## THE REPORT

This survey is meant to serve as a reflection of our community on basic questions raised by this shift in educational modalities. It represents the views of students who responded to the survey. It is not meant to be the definitive exposition of the perspectives of all law students world-wide. It is, however, a sampling of responses from a wide and diverse global population of law students. It serves as an initial inquiry on which we will build our understanding and develop strategies to help shape the future of legal education.

Law students expressed their opinions about their educational expectations, experiences and challenges while transiting to an all virtual instruction. The questions focused on five areas, 1) student assessment of their instructors and the quality of their education, 2) personal challenges students encountered during the transition, 3) technical challenges during this time, 4) their preferences as to the modality of the educational process, and 5) class length as well as suggestions for incorporating online learning with classroom teaching.

## THE RESULTS

The survey is the result of almost 1,250 students from 35 different jurisdictions who expressed their expectations and experiences in assessing the transition to a virtual education during the time period of April – early June. Responses were compared across regions, and correlation analysis was employed to determine the relationship between student challenges and their assessment of educational quality.

All correlations were tested as to its margin of error as well as their correlative strength using the Pearson correlation coefficient both with 95% to 99% confidence levels. All are statistically significant results which suggest that further study and refining of the surveying process will help our community develop strategies for improving our students' educational outcomes.

These correlations will help inform and prioritize recommendations that schools and students may wish to consider as our community learns to adapt its teaching and learning approaches guided by these thoughtful students' assessments and suggestions.

The results showed some schools had a successful transition while others were more challenged. Some schools simply shut down. There were students who were in the middle of the semester/trimester, while others were preparing for finals. Given the disparities across jurisdictions and wide-ranging academic schedules, not all questions were applicable to all students. They answered accordingly.

## ASSESSMENT OF INSTRUCTORS AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

### INSTRUCTORS:

The students were asked to assess both their instructors resulting from the shift of classroom to remote teaching. 61% of students responded positively that their instructors were well prepared or improving. 39% negatively felt that their instructors needed work or were not prepared at all.

A time analysis of the responses over two time periods (April and May 1–June 5) showed a marked improvement of 58 points in positive assessments from 13% to 71%. Students recognized the efforts of their professors and responded positively to it. Negative assessments dropped 36 points from 73% to 37% between the two periods. While a decline in negativity over time is encouraging, still a large segment of our students (37%) registered dissatisfaction with the preparedness of their faculty.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE:

44% percent of students surveyed said that the quality of their education has worsened resulting from the change. An analysis of responses saw a steady increase in positive improving assessments over the time of the survey. It also showed a steady decline in worsening perceptions as both instructors and students became more adept with the new technologies and teaching style. However, even in the later period, 40% of students still indicated discontent with their educational experience.

## PERSONAL AND TECHNICAL CHALLENGES OF REMOTE EDUCATION

### PERSONAL:

Students were asked to list some of the more difficult personal challenges they experienced while adapting to the shift. What is the hardest part of a distance learning program? Concentration, Self-Motivation and Social Distraction were the top challenges listed.

Of those who selected Social Distraction as a hardship, students from two regions Africa (56%) and Europe (50%) expressed a higher percentage of worsening quality than the All Regions average of 44%. Across regions, African students correlated most closely with worsening quality, whereas the differential within the other regions may fall within the margin of error.

A more compelling correlation was found between the inability of students to effectively master remote learning (Ineffective Online Learning) and their perception of a worsening educational experience. Even though only 41% of students listed Ineffective Online Learning as a difficulty during the transition. However, of those who had this difficulty, 63% experienced a worsening of their educational experience. A 19-point increase over the 44% average.



### **TECHNICAL:**

Overall, most law students were able to adapt without a great deal of technical difficulties. While the percentage of students citing technical difficulties as an impediment were relatively low 26% – 34%, the impact upon those students who did greatly diminished their educational experience.

With an overall average of 44% of students signifying a worsening of educational experience, 51% of students who experienced training and support challenges said that their education suffered. 62% of those who stated they had insufficient training felt that their education worsened, along with 58% of those who said they lacked technical support. The challenges these particular students faced contributed to a greatly increased worsening of their education and had a greater impact on the overall assessment of educational quality as a whole.

### **PREFERENCES AS TO EDUCATIONAL MODALITY:**

Students expressed their preference for in-person classroom, online or a combination. 53% preferred the in-person classroom format. 13% preferred online, and 34% were open to a combination of the two. A time analysis of the responses saw an 18-point drop in preference for in-person (70%) in the April period to (52%) in the May – early June period. It also saw a rise in preference for online 3% - 13%, as well as an increase in those who would consider a combination of the two 23% to 34% during those same periods. Students appear to become increasingly more open to online approaches to their education.

### **OTHER OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:**

Students gave their perspectives and suggestions on how to improve the virtual education experience. They also missed their professors.

## CONCLUSIONS

While each region exhibited their own individual characteristics, those differences were not exceptionally wide. Many differences were within the margin of error. This confirmed a commonality of our students' expectations and experiences world-wide. It does suggest that our legal education community shares a great deal in common in modeling and shaping these perspectives for faculty and students.

The statistically significant correlations between personal and technical challenges and their impact on the quality of their education is striking. Personal challenges, either brought on or exacerbated by the shift, had a significant impact on a student's assessment of the quality of their education. In addition, the research has shown that strategies focused on even a relatively small group of students may yield greater overall improvement in quality for the entire student body.

The data also shows the interconnection between Social Distraction and the education quality issue. While it is more difficult to assist students with Concentration, it may be easier to give guidance for securing quiet physical study spaces for students to have more structure to their learning activities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Any recommendation this early in such a transformative occasion should be, and is, merely suggestive. These suggestions call for further investigation and substantiation.

1. Develop the mechanism for a continuing study and assessment of the use of online technologies and its effectiveness in educating our students.
2. Develop a strategy for methodological assistance to instructors and students making the transition.
3. Develop a strategy to identify and navigate students through challenges either developed or exacerbated by the transition.
4. Develop a strategy which leverages off existing technological infrastructure and resources to be scalable for the transition.

# TRANSITIONING TO ONLINE LEGAL EDUCATION THE STUDENT VOICE

## WHERE THEY CAME FROM

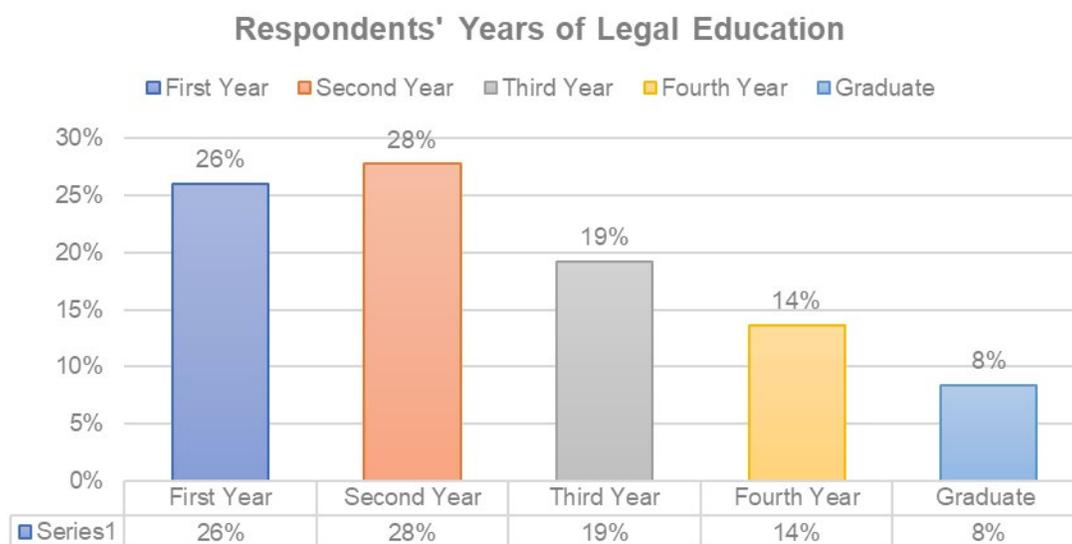
Almost 1,250 law students from all over the world expressed their opinions and suggestions in the IALS – Student Voice Survey. These were law students from 35 different jurisdictions:



Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tanzania, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America.

## YEARS OF LEGAL EDUCATION

The students were from the first year through graduate school. 54% were in their first or second year.

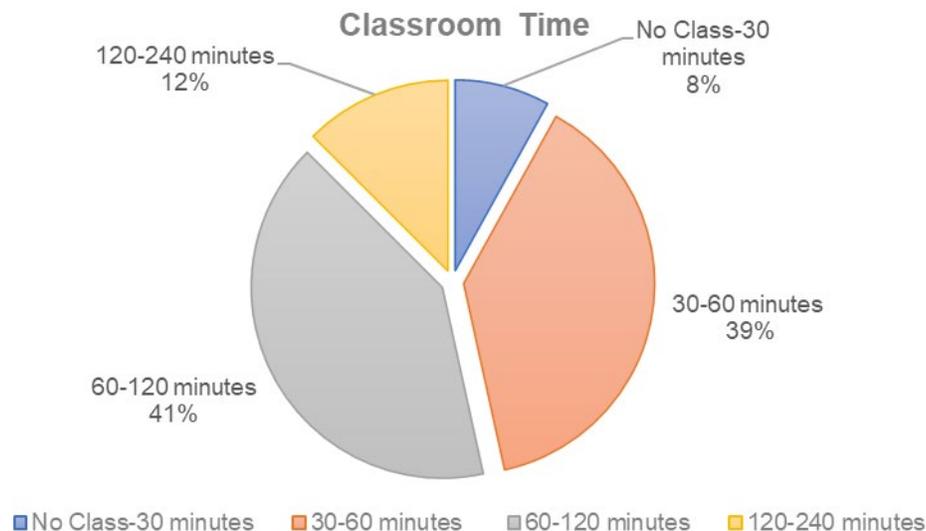


## HOW LONG IS YOUR ONLINE CLASS, LECTURE?

### OVERALL RESPONSE 90% 30 – 120 MINUTES

Most 3-credit college and university courses usually meet for three hours per week. The time spent in online varied with each professor. 90% of classes were between 30 minutes to 2 hours. While some schools had no classes, a significant number of classes consisted of notes or PowerPoint slides loaded to a website which students could download.

Virtual classroom activities were limited in certain jurisdictions because of the bandwidth capacity required by simultaneous online classes. Other formats included assigned reading and online engagement with the instructor for questions on the reading. Online class hours were needed to fulfill regulatory requirements. Sometimes, short PowerPoint presentation were given which synopsized some of the reading materials and the remaining time left open for questions or comments. Many professors felt they were forced to simplify their courses rather than be able to challenge the student with a more nuanced approach. The use of other pedagogical tools adapted to online (games, quizzes, etc.) were utilized. These approaches have been synchronous and/or asynchronous.



*“My professors mostly did not offer online lectures, just notes and/or PowerPoint presentations.”*  
– 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, Canada

*“Mostly around 45 minutes, but there are occasions where we only have 15 minutes”*  
– 1<sup>st</sup> year student, Indonesia

*“We don’t have online lectures, everything is self-study.”*  
– 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, Uganda

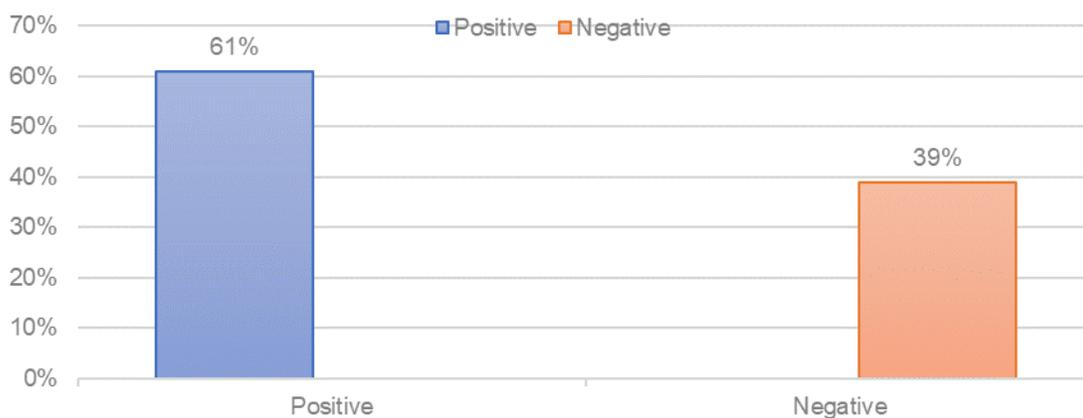
## HOW PREPARED WERE YOUR INSTRUCTORS?

### OVERALL RESPONSE 61% POSITIVE vs. 39% NEGATIVE

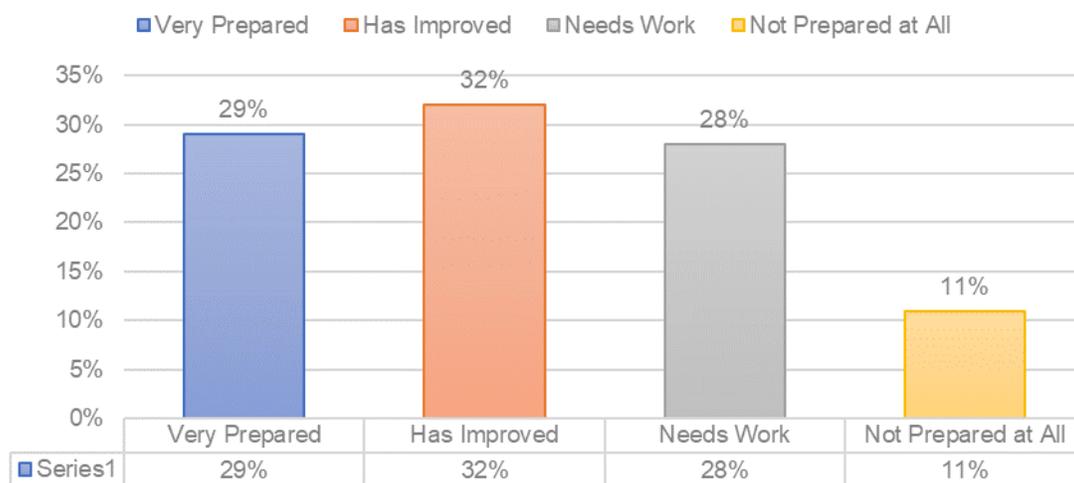
Students reported how prepared their instructors were to face this online teaching challenge in 4 categories – Very Prepared, Has Improved (Positive) vs. Needs Work and Not Prepared at All (Negative). A majority of students (61%) gave their instructors positive marks, while a significant minority (39%) were negative.

Students on a whole gave their instructors passing grades for adapting their teaching from the classroom format to an online environment. Most significantly their opinions changed from an initial very negative assessment to a more positive one both instructors and students had time to adapt to the new approach.

Student Assessment of Instructors' Preparedness



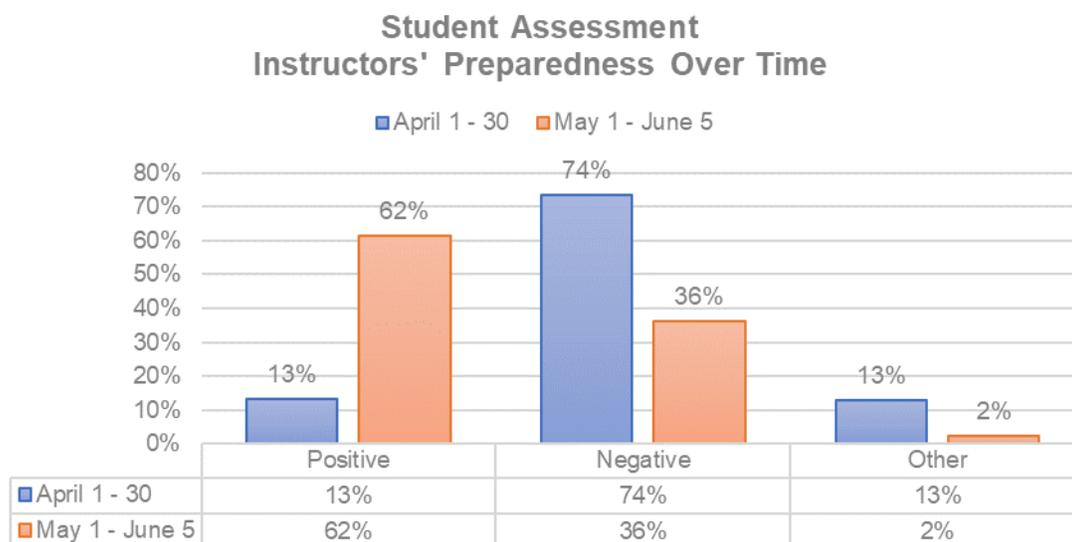
Instructors' Preparedness by Category of Assessment



## TIME ANALYSIS

### Student Assessment in Instructors Preparedness Over Time

This chart provides a time analysis of students' perspective of instructor assessment. It illustrates a steady shift from April through May and early June time periods as instructors and students began to adapt to the new environment and the situation began to stabilize. April saw only 13% positive responses of instructor preparedness. This rose significantly by 49 points in the May – June 5<sup>th</sup> period to 62%. Negative responses dropped 38 points from 74% to 36% for the later period. The Other category decreased as well. Many of the 13% who responded in the Other category in the April time frame detailed the inability of their schools to successfully make the change. Fewer students detailed such issues as that percentage fell to only 2% in May – June.



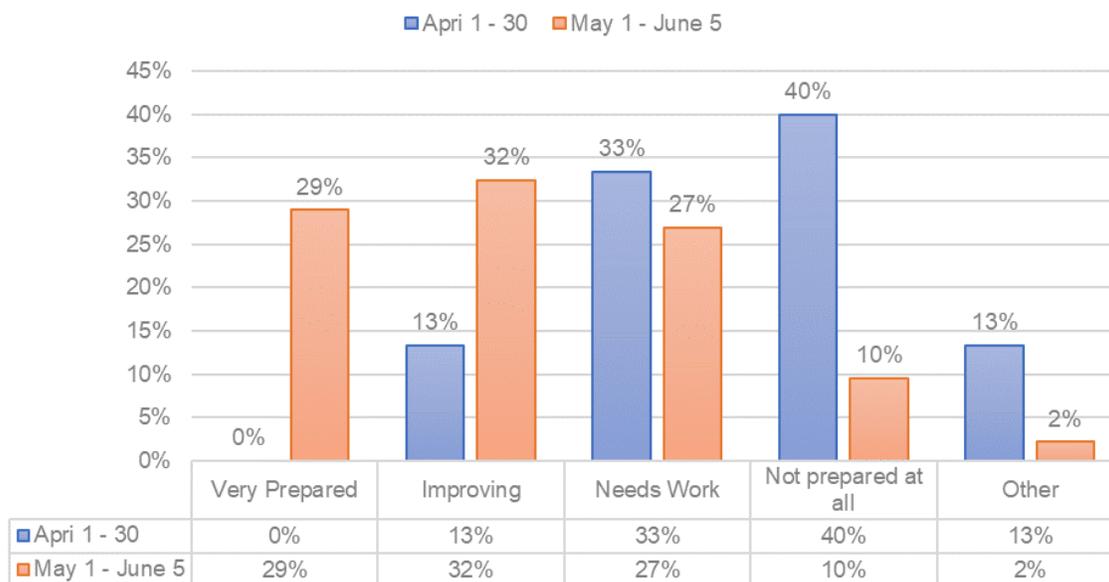
*“Some were well prepared as they already teach units online. Other units started shaky but improved quickly over semester.”*  
– 4<sup>th</sup> year student, Australia

*“Personally, I have found it challenging with regards to keeping track of all the dates and deadlines for all my modules, trying to keep up to date with the recommended study schedules for my modules and also having to teach myself a lot of new content which is often easier to understand in face-to-face lectures, however the lecturers have been incredible and I take my hat off to them for their support, their amazing effort to provide us with everything we need and their dedication in making themselves available to us.”*  
– 1<sup>st</sup> year student, South Africa

## Instructors' Preparedness by Category of Assessment

This chart shows in Specific Categories of significant improvement in Preparedness and Improvement and a dramatic drop in Not Prepared at All. Very Prepared rose 29 points from 0% to 29%. The Improving category increased by 19 points from 13% to 32%. Declines in negative responses was most significantly displayed by the drop of Not Prepared at All of 30 points from 40% in the April time period to 10% in the later time frame. Still 37% felt their instructors needed more work or were simply not prepared at all for this transition.

### Instructor Preparedness - Time Analysis



*“Preparedness differed greatly between instructors.”*  
 – 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, Canada

*“The country has not prepared for it.”*  
 – Graduate student, Nigeria

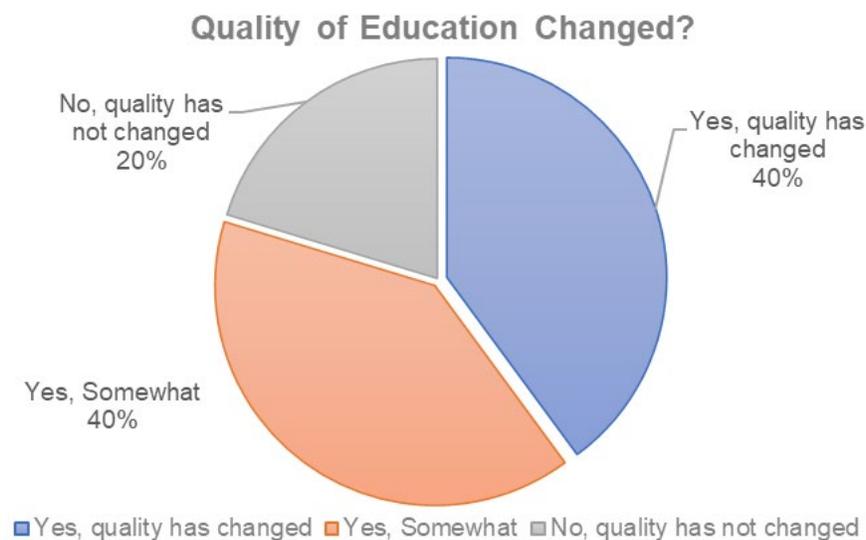
*“Some of the professors are fully prepared and need to develop and strength in the network to communicate the information, while others are not ready.”*  
 – Graduate student, Iraq

## HAS THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION CHANGED?

### OVERALL RESPONSE 80% CHANGED

The foundation of education has not changed during this pandemic. The professor teaches a group of students to help them develop knowledge and skills which they will use in their careers and become contributing members of society. However, the method has changed drastically due to social distancing measures. Now, professors are connecting with their students remotely through live videos and recordings. This transformation offers opportunities and challenges which both faculty and students are working through. Has this transformation fundamentally changed the quality of our students' education?

80% of students stated that the quality of their education has changed.



*“i have been overloaded with work, much more when we transited to virtual classes. Instructors should consider easing the pressure they put on students while students are still trying to accommodate themselves with virtual class. one more thing is that they should try to be more explicit when teaching as the materials provided does not contain as much information compared to the assessments.”*  
– 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, South Africa

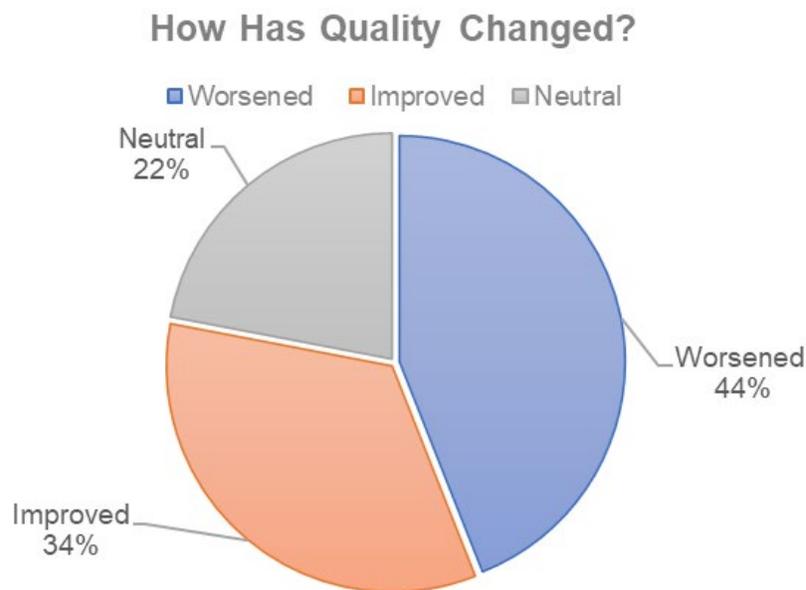
*“In some class, quality of education has improved.”*  
– 1<sup>st</sup> year student, Turkey

*“there is no virtual classroom.....University facilitated learning stopped.”*  
– 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, Uganda

## HOW HAS IT CHANGED?

### OVERALL RESPONSE 44% WORSENERD vs 34% IMPROVED vs 22% NEUTRAL

Students expressed their views on changes the quality of their education resulting from the transformation. 44% of students said that the quality of their education worsened. Significantly, 34% said it improved. With 22% being neutral.



*“Some aspects are better – eg. being able to access more content at home which makes it easier to study at times you wouldn’t normally. Other aspects not so good – I notice participation of some students on live sessions online has dropped, especially when lecturer doesn’t insist on webcam.”*

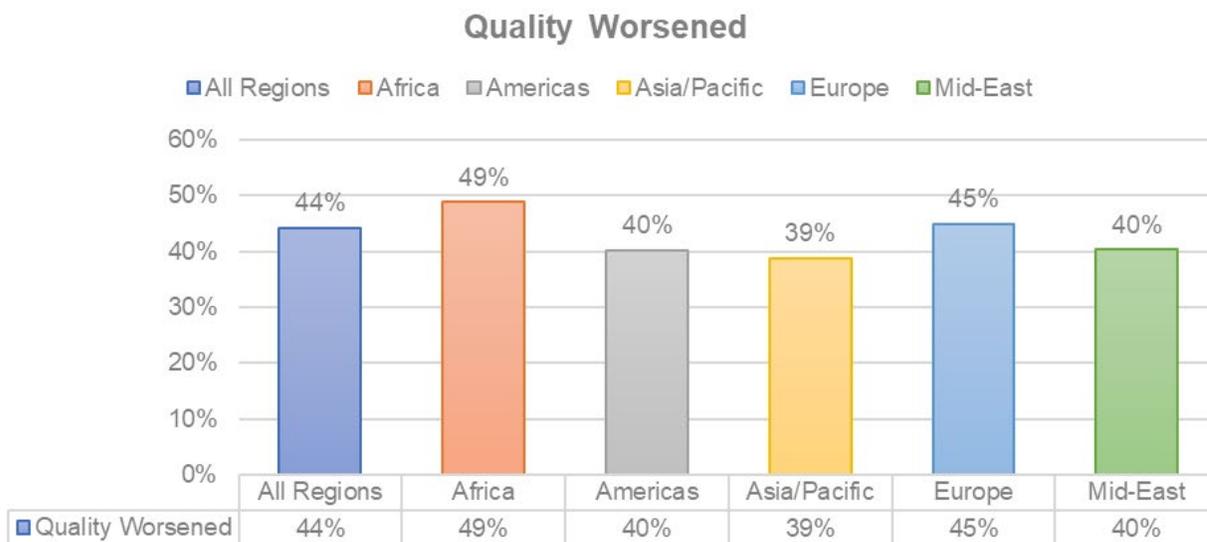
– 4<sup>th</sup> year student, Australia

*“We can’t interact with the teachers so it’s not as dynamic as before and we can’t ask questions when we have them directly.”*

– 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, Switzerland

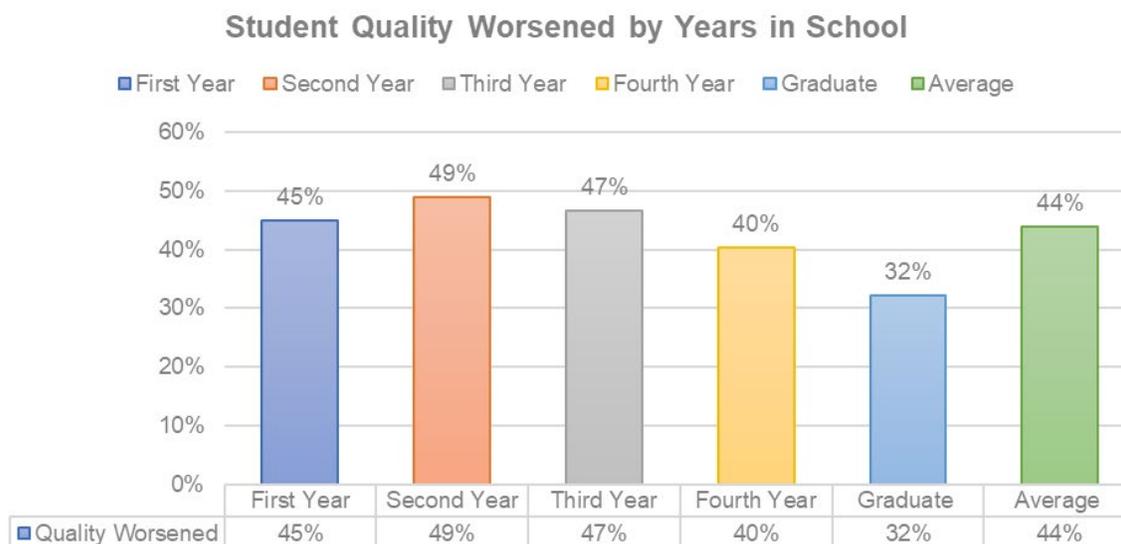
## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

This chart shows the percentage of students by region who felt that the quality of their education worsened because of the transition. The range was 39% - 49% with African students (49%) registering the highest level of decline and Asia-Pacific with the lowest (39%).



## Quality Assessment by Years in Law School

Students views of whether their educational experience improved or worsened also varied by the years of legal education. The chart below illustrates the growing displeasure of first- and second-year students which taper off by the third year but declines for the fourth year to graduate students. We should not take too much solace in these numbers as it shows a consistently high forty percent of students cited a worsening of the quality dropping only to 40% in their fourth and last year.

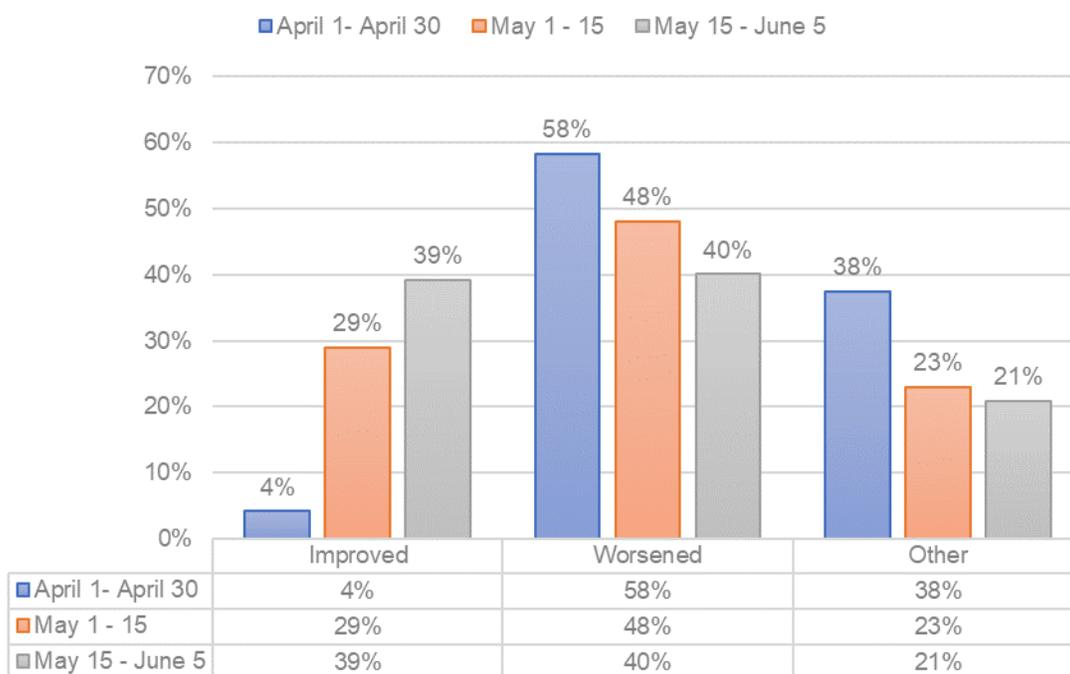


## TIME ANALYSIS

The chart below signals significant improvement over each two-week period as faculty and students became more adapted to the rapid pivot from the classroom to the dining room table. An analysis of responses over 3 time periods showed a steady improvement of students' opinions of their educational experience from 4% in the initial April 1 – 30 period to 29% for the May 1 – 15 to 39% for the May 16 – June 5 period. Meanwhile, the student's negative assessments declined from 58% to 48% to 40% over these same time periods.

More students felt comfortable to express an opinion about their educational experience by shifting from Neutral of 38% in April to 21% in the last period. The recent entries showed a progressively improving trend. While the numbers remain high, the trend is encouraging.

**Student Quality Assessment Over Time**



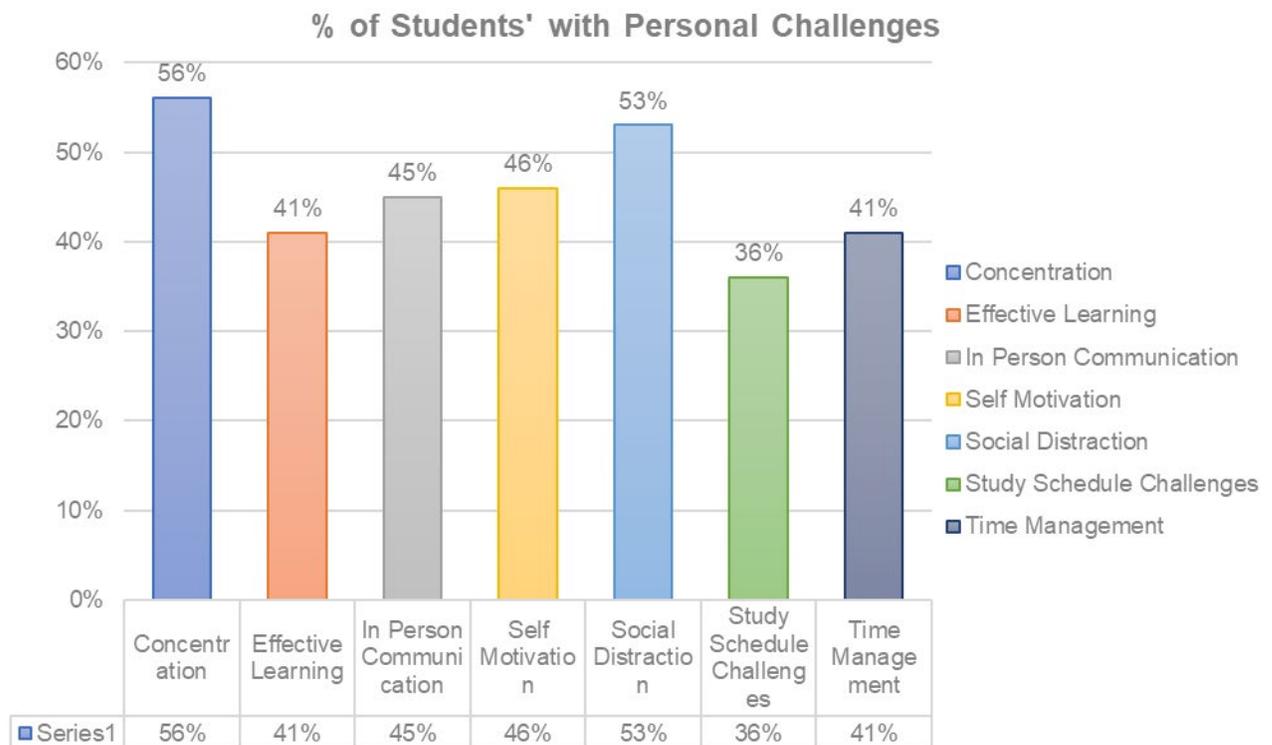
*“Everyone tried to cooperate with the students during this time, which is something that helped the student to accept this challenge and the new reality. This pandemic helped us to experiment with a new and effective method of distance education, and it does not recognize the distances nor the external conditions that hinder the student and the university.”*

*– 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, Saudi Arabia*

# WHAT IS THE HARDEST PART OF A DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM?

## Student Challenges

Students expressed their opinions choosing from 7 options as many as they felt relevant to the difficulties they experienced adapting to remote learning. The chart below illustrates the percentage of students who cited each specific challenge. The most frequently cited challenges revolved around three issues. They were Concentration (56%), followed by Social Distraction (53%) and Self-Motivation (46%). These were the hindrances they encountered with online education. It appears that the lack of a formal school and classroom structure has left many students adrift.



*“Concentrating during the class.”  
– 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, Canada*

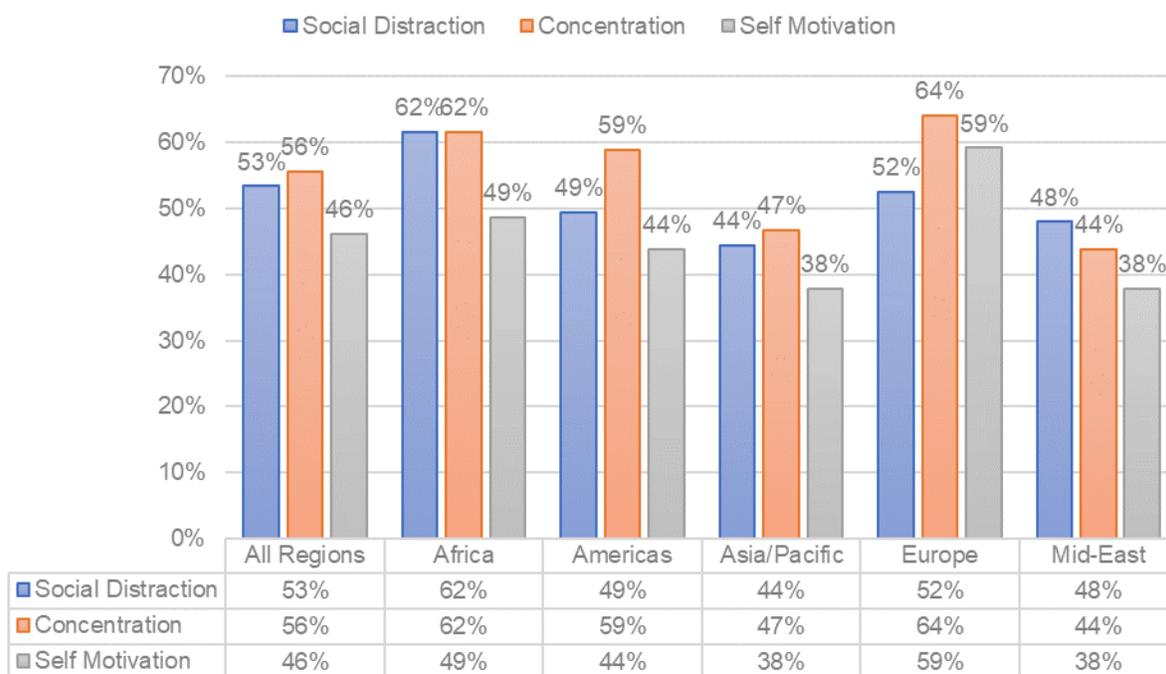
*“You see, at res, there is Wi-Fi. At res, you have peace of mind in your room. At res, you're not worried about the lights going off and being without electricity for a day or more. ....”  
– 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, South Africa*

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

This chart illustrates the percentage of students across each region listing the three personal challenges of going online. Students in the Africa region (62%) described their ability to Concentrate as one of their most difficult challenges with online education. The region also scored high on challenges of Self-Motivation 49%, Social Distraction 62%. This correlated with their European counterparts who expressed Concentration difficulties 64% and coupled with Self-Motivation 59% and Social Distraction 52%.

In contrast, the Asia-Pacific and Middle East students expressed fewer difficulties with Concentration, 47% and 44% respectively. This correlated to lower issues with Self-Motivation 38%-Asia-Pacific and 38%-Middle East, and Social Distraction of 44%-Asia-Pacific, 48%-Middle East.

Student Challenges by Region



*“I am in college of law, so studying online regarding the law topics is the worst experience in my life, nothing is understandable, yet we are able to pass but without understanding.”*  
 – 1<sup>st</sup> year student, United Arab Emirates

*“Due to many distractions around a student, it become less effective. It is not easy to sit in front of a virtual screen for hours.”*  
 – 1<sup>st</sup> year, Turkey

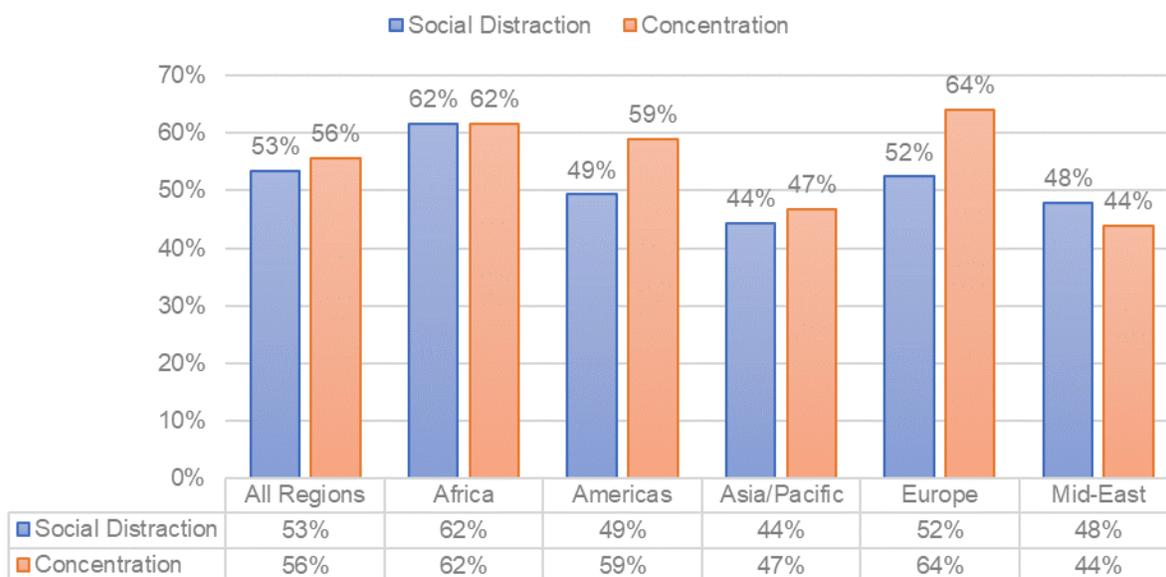
## CORRELATION BETWEEN PERSONAL CHALLENGES AND EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

### Social Distraction and Concentration

It is not surprising that Social Distraction correlated closely with Concentration issues. All regions exhibited relatively high percentage of students in these two areas. For students in two regions with the highest percentage for Social Distraction (Africa – 62% and European – 52%) they also had stated higher than average difficulties with Concentration (Africa – 62% and European – 64%).

In contrast, the two regions with the lowest Social Distraction scores (Asia-Pacific – 44% and Middle East – 48%) recorded below average percentages of students who experienced Concentration to be an issue (Asia-Pacific – 47% and Middle East – 44%). While the percentages are still high, the correlation supports the need for quiet study spaces without other social distractions for students who are not in a school environment.

### Social Distraction and Concentration by Region



\*Percentage (%) of students citing each challenge.

Margin of Error + -  
3.30%

Confidence Level  
95%

Pearson r  
0.2588

Confidence Level  
99%

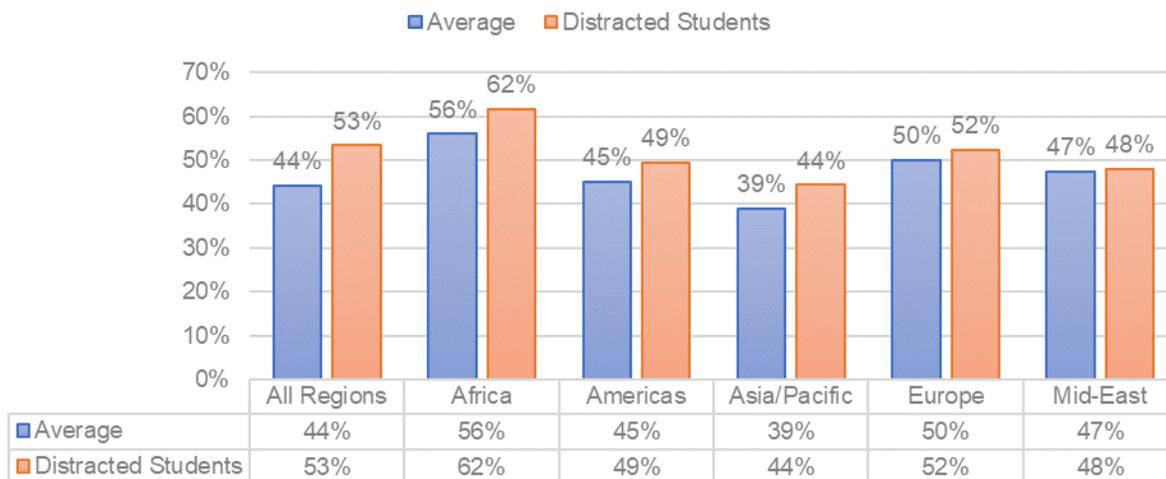
*“Telling my family members to be quiet.”  
– 1<sup>st</sup> year student, Turkey*

*“just people’s distractions at their homes coming across in the background noise, etc.,  
adjustments from people being stuck inside with their roommates/family.”  
– 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, United States of America*

## Social Distraction and Worsening Quality Assessment

The chart below illustrates the responses of all students who identified Social Distraction as a challenge and their percentages indicating that the quality of their education worsened. 51% of the distracted students indicated a worsening educational experience as opposed to the overall average of 44%. In addition, African (56%) and European (50%) distracted students also expressed a worsening educational experience above the 44% overall average.

### Social Distraction and Worsening Quality Assessment



\*Comparison of % of students citing Social Distraction and Worsening Quality with response averages

Margin of Error + -	Confidence Level	Pearson r	Confidence Level
3.32%	95%	0.1355	95%

*“This is difficult for people whose home lives do not include a home office. I also want to acknowledge that getting up and having a routine to prepare the brain, beginning the class with camaraderie or simply sharing space, all has a psychological impact and helps with concentrating being present in the classroom and with the content. I have always been a classroom learner.”*

– 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, Canada

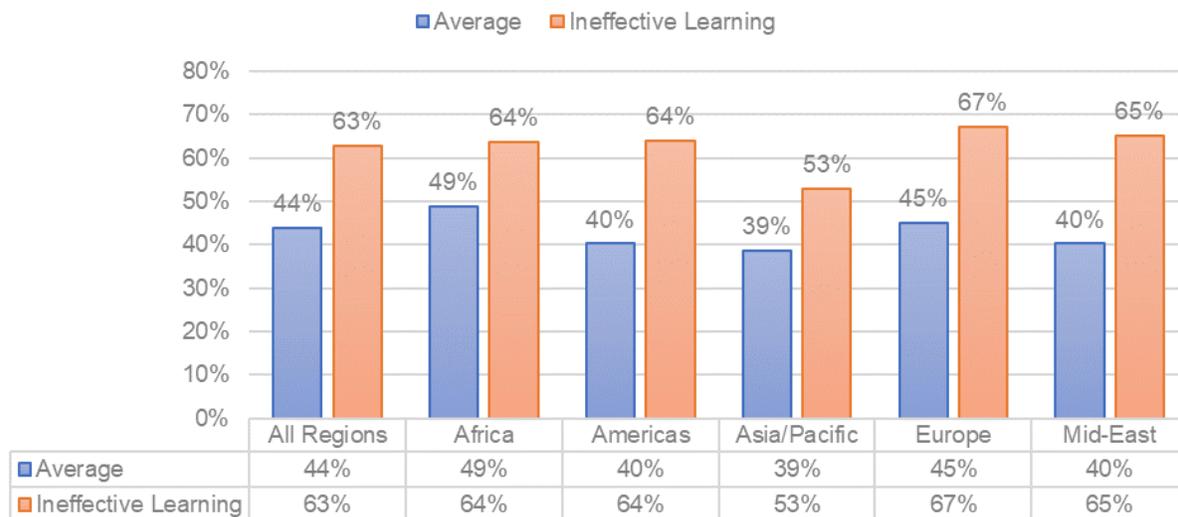
*“Concentration and home distraction due to some activities around unlike school premises where it is designed for study and no unnecessary distractions there in school”*

– 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, Nigeria

## Ineffective Online Learning and Worsening Quality Assessment

Students who had difficulty adapting to online learning responded at a much higher percentage of dissatisfaction with the quality of their education than the averages overall and with the averages in their region. Of those who claimed issues with the efficacy of online instruction, 63% also stated a worsening decline in their educational quality, as opposed to only 44% of the general population. The relatively high Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.3166 suggests a close relationship between these two variables. This correlation helps illuminate areas where resources may be marshalled to raise the overall assessment of quality by focusing on specific challenges some students have encountered.

### Ineffective Online Learning and Worsening Quality Assessment



\*Comparison of % of students citing Ineffective Online Learning and Worsening Quality with response averages.

Margin of Error +- 3.28%	Confidence Level 95%	Pearson r 0.3166	Confidence Level 99%
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*"I don't think the quality of the education worsened, but i think online learning is more challenging."*

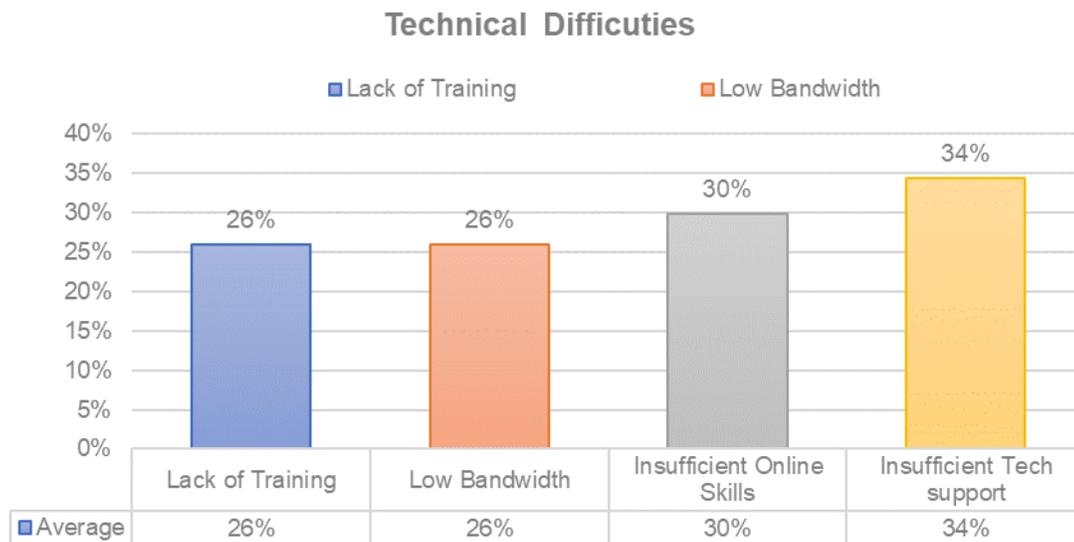
*– 1<sup>st</sup> year student, Australia*

*"Lack of understanding, lack of concentration, (online) classes wasn't interesting as being in class, there are no challenges between students which's needed, much more."*

*– 1<sup>st</sup> year student, United Arab Emirates*

## WHAT TECHNICAL CHALLENGES HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED?

While the percentage of students citing technical challenges were relatively low, 26% – 34%, the impact upon those students who did have these difficulties significantly diminished their educational experience. These students expressed a significantly higher percentage of worsening quality than the average across all regions as well as within their regions. This chart illustrates the percentage of students citing which type of technical challenges they encountered. The students were asked to select all technical difficulties that trouble them during the transition.



The most common technical difficulty across regions was Insufficient Technical Support and Insufficient Training. There is a frustration with faculty who were not well-versed in technology.

In addition, student comments included issues of frustration with their peers/professors not being technologically savvy, power outages, connectivity issues, lack of and/or limited devices to connect, and financial instability.

*“Lack of resources such as devices and power outages, poverty”*  
– 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, South Africa

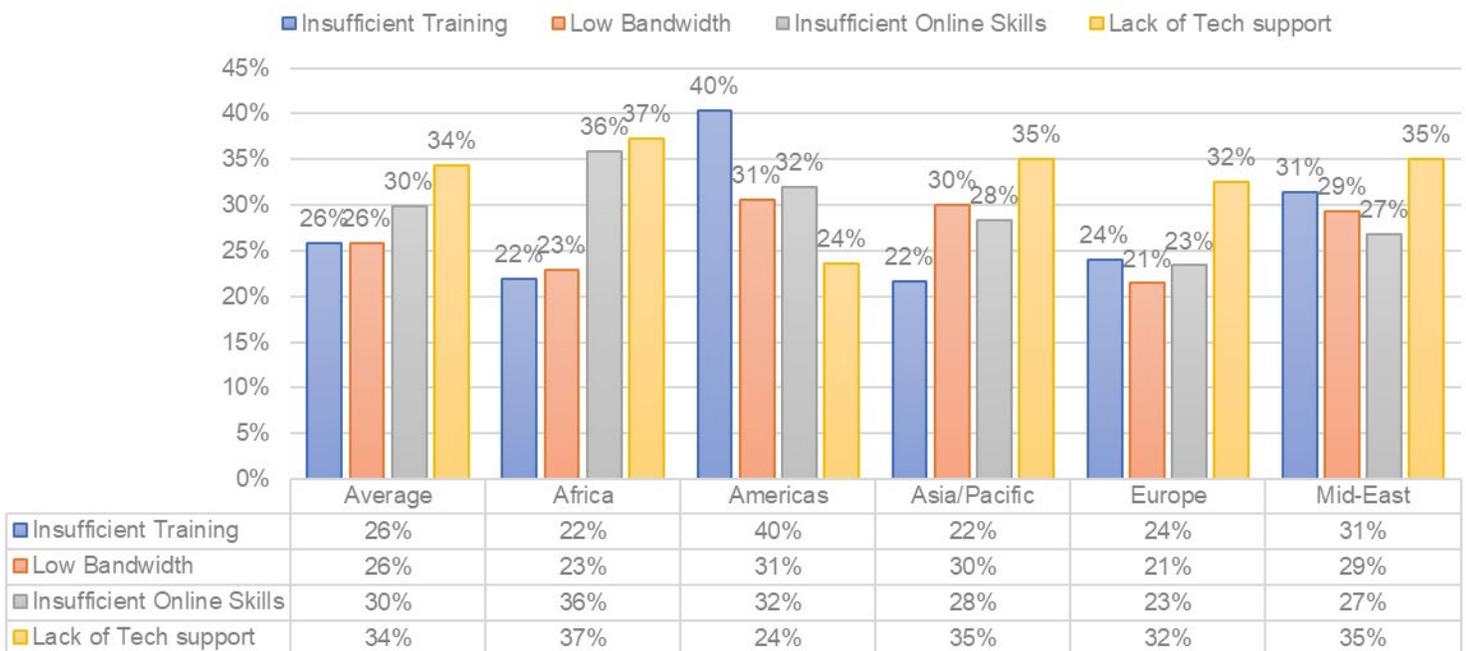
*“IT professional should be assigned to several lectures to monitor their status and development (...technical issues such as audio quality, screen share and multiple functions, etc.)”*  
– 1<sup>st</sup> year student, Costa Rica

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

The percentage of students experiencing certain types of technical difficulties with a few exceptions were not dissimilar across the regions. One note is that for Africa, the numbers are depressed as some institutions were unable to field a robust technological solution. However, for those who were experiencing technical difficulties, their outcomes were substantially more negative as reflected in a much higher percentage of them ascribing worsening educational experiences.

Bandwidth is an identifiable issue with an identifiable solution. However, whether schools, faculty or students can resolve this issue is dependent on resources as well as local infrastructure. The other three can be considered together as training and support of students for remote education.

### Technical Challenges by Region



*“Lecturers do not know how to use the technology themselves.”*  
 – 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, Australia

*“Slow Wi-Fi”*  
 – 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, Switzerland

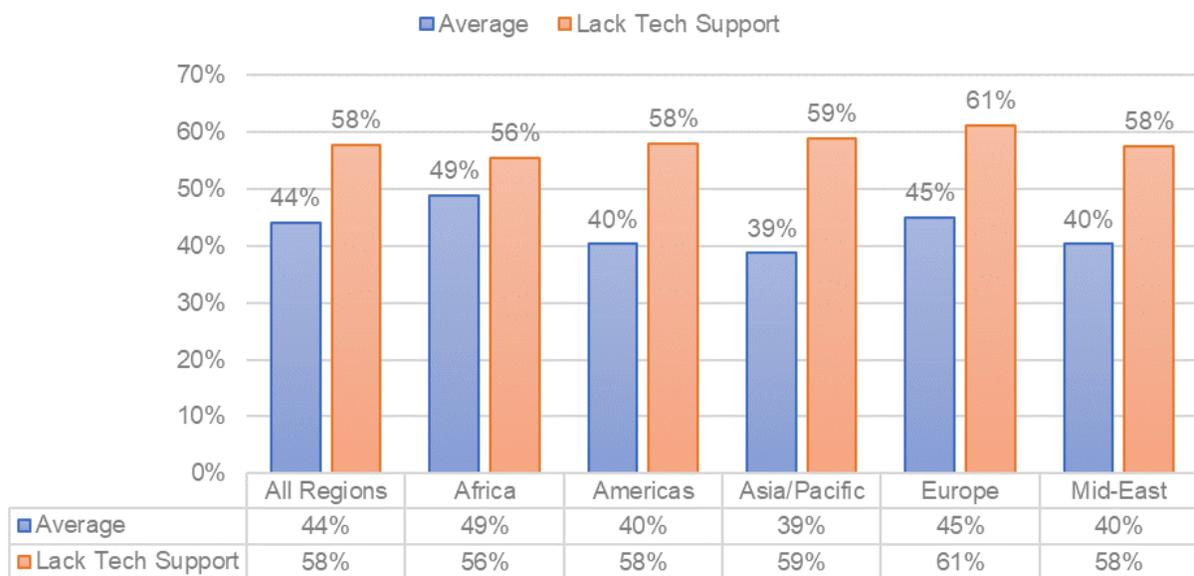
*“Internet issues”*  
 – 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, Qatar

## CORRELATION BETWEEN TECHNICAL CHALLENGES AND EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

### Lack of Technical Support and Worsening Quality Assessments

This chart illustrates the effect of the lack of technical support which ranked the highest among the difficulties encountered and a worsening of the quality of the educational experience for those students who have cited it as an issue. It shows that a much higher percentage of those students who lacked technical support also expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of their educational experience both for all regions as well as across each individual region.

#### Lack of Technical Support and Worsening Quality Assessment



\*Comparison of % of students citing Lack of Technical Support and Worsening Quality with response averages.

Margin of Error + -	Confidence Level	Pearson r	Confidence Level
3.20%	95%	0.1413	95%

*“Little time to prepare and I personally felt like the online learning wasn’t properly implemented, were expected to do tons of work with little time, and this affects the quality of the assessments because we cannot afford to fall behind.”*

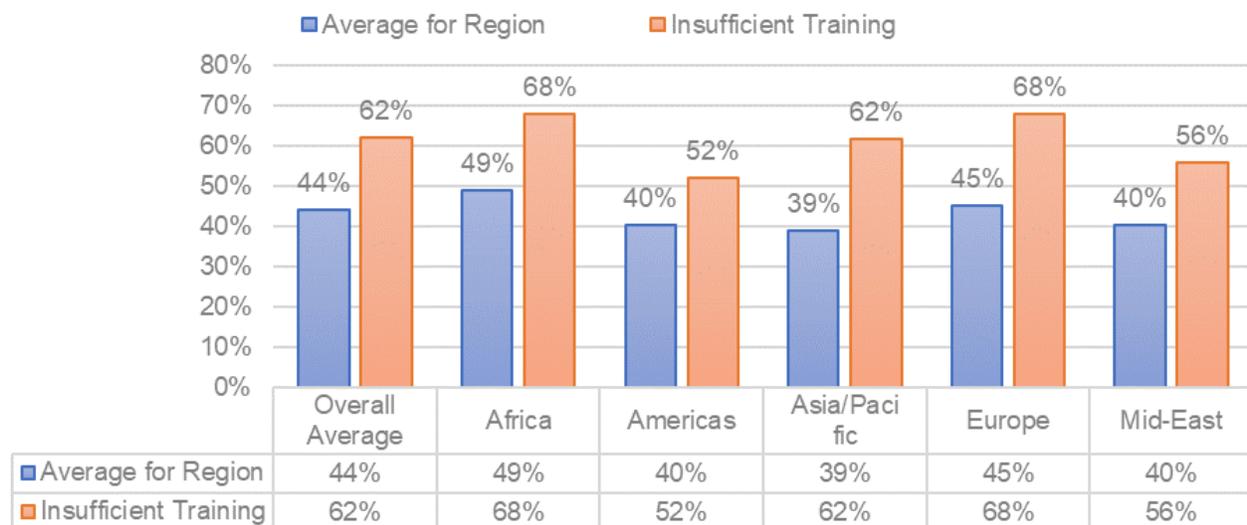
*– 4<sup>th</sup> year student, South Africa*

## Insufficient Training and Worsening Quality Assessments

While only a minority of students stating that Insufficient Training as a difficulty, it is important to note that of those students, the quality of their educational experience worsening was significantly higher than the overall average as well as the average for their regions. The chart below compares the overall average of respondents' as to the quality of their education worsening to those who claimed insufficient training and their assessment of a worsening experience. The result is a significantly higher percentage of students who claimed insufficient training and who also considered that their educational experience worsened.

Of the 26% which selected Insufficient Training, their education worsened in a much higher percentage than the average for All Regions. It was consistently high across all regions. From a high of 68% in Africa to a low of 52% for the Americas, their percentages were all substantially higher than study pool average of 44% and significantly higher across the regions.

### Insufficient Training and Worsening Education Quality



\*Comparison of % of students citing Insufficient Training and Worsening Quality with response averages.

Margin of Error +- 2.90%	Confidence Level 95%	Pearson r 0.2015	Confidence Level 99%
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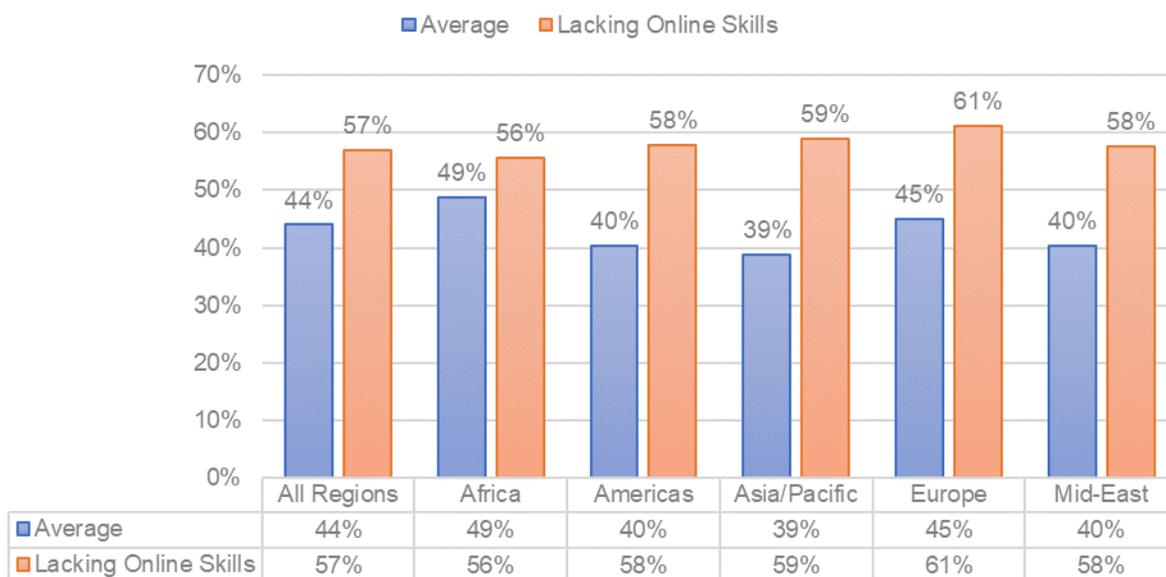
*“By learning how the existing technology actually works and using it correctly.”  
– 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, Australia*

*“By assigning an IT professional to several lectures that require immediate attention to be given  
in a proper way...”  
– 1<sup>st</sup> year student, Costa Rica*

## Insufficient Online Skills and Worsening Quality Assessments

Insufficiencies in Training result in Insufficient Online Skills. The chart below illustrates the impact of inadequate Online Skills and its effects on a student's assessment of her educational experience. Of the 30% which responded as having issues with Online Skills, their quality assessment of a worsening of their education was 51% as opposed to the All Region average of 44%. Once again, it was consistently higher across all regions.

### Lacking Online Skills and Worsening Quality Assessment



\*Comparison of % of students citing Lack of Online Skills and Worsening Quality with response averages.

Margin of Error + -	Confidence Level	Pearson r	Confidence Level
3.09%	95%	0.1646	99%

*“Using online classes to do activities that otherwise (i.e., in person) would not take place (e.g., presentations by other professors)”*  
– Graduate student, Chile

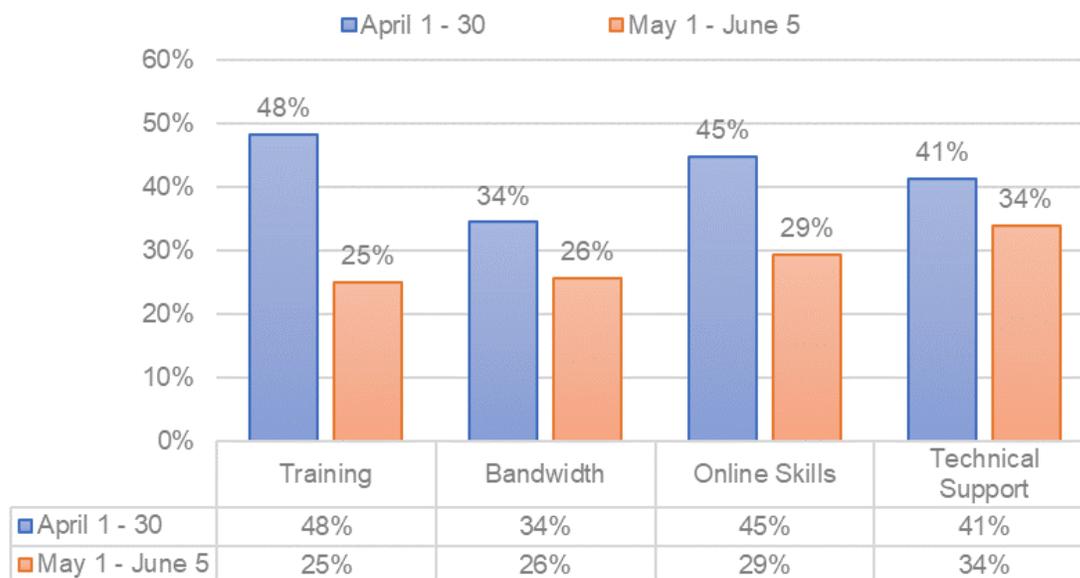
*“Make sure that before the commencement of online classes every student has access to all e-learning required materials this includes data, study materials and time management...”*  
– Final year Student, South Africa

## TIME ANALYSIS

A time sequence analysis shows that the situation is improving as the percentage of students citing online issues declined from the April period to the May – June period. All four categories reflected drops in number of student respondents who have cited it as a problem. This reflects the school's efforts in supporting its students.

Even though the percentages of students citing online difficulties are low and is declining, that minority exhibits a significant increased proportion of students who are not realizing the potential of their educational experience. As with the other cited challenges these responses disproportionately and negatively impact overall satisfaction rates.

### Decrease in Online Issues Over Time

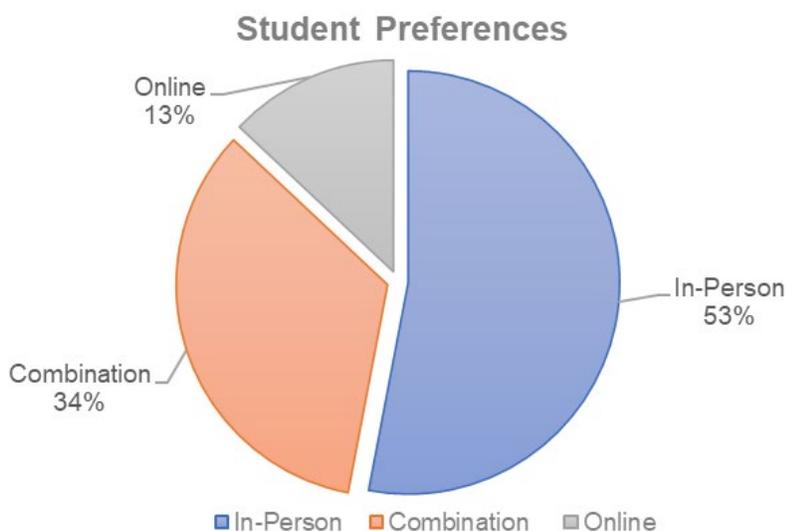


School faculty, staff and administrators should take note of the technical difficulties experienced by their students and develop strategies to assist them. Providing more assistance to this group will significantly improve the overall response to the quality of the educational experience of their students.

## WHICH DO YOU PREFER: IN-PERSON CLASSROOM TEACHING OR CLASSES DELIVERED ONLINE OR COMBINATION?

**OVERALL RESPONSE**  
**53% PREFERRED IN PERSON**  
**34% PREFERRED COMBINATION**

Students expressed their preferences as to in-person classroom teaching or classes delivered online, or a combination of the two. 54% said they preferred in-person, 13% preferred online and 33% said they would prefer a combination of the two. Some students suggested going online provided additional resources and tools that professors can apply to the traditional in-person class which would increase efficiency in teaching.



*“Posting all lectures online, offering online tutorials, opening online discussion forums with answers to common questions from students...”*  
 – 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, Canada

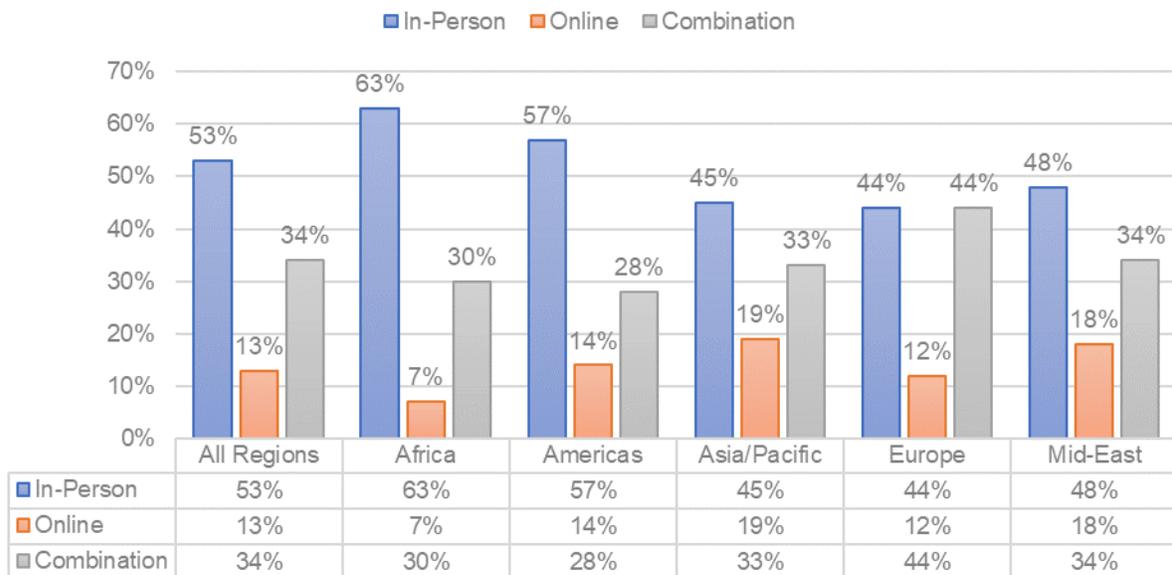
*“My problem is not so much the online learning. It is the online learning at home that poses great difficulty. We know the current global situation is near impossible, we are indeed in uncharted, but whatever learning plans are being made cannot continue to disadvantage the poor majority.”*  
 – 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, South Africa

*“By pre-recording lectures and requiring us to watch them before lessons.”*  
 – 1<sup>st</sup> year student, United States of America

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

The students in the African and Americas regions showed the most preference for in-person instruction. Not surprisingly, given some of the connectivity and resource issues encountered, African students were significantly wary of Online only: 7%. From the comments to the survey, African students listed many challenges to virtual education including lack of equipment and training, poor connectivity, social distraction which lead to increased numbers reporting problems with concentration. European students seem the most comfortable with a combination of in-person and online: 44%. Being exclusively online garnered the fewest votes with 7% – 19% with an average of only 13% across all student respondents.

Student Preferences by Region



*“100% prefer online. In person is slow and ridiculous.”*  
 – 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, Australia

*“Do a better job training the professors as to how to use technology.”*  
 – Graduate student, China

*“By publishing the lectures so that we can refer to them whenever we like.”*  
 – 2<sup>nd</sup> year, Egypt

## TIME ANALYSIS

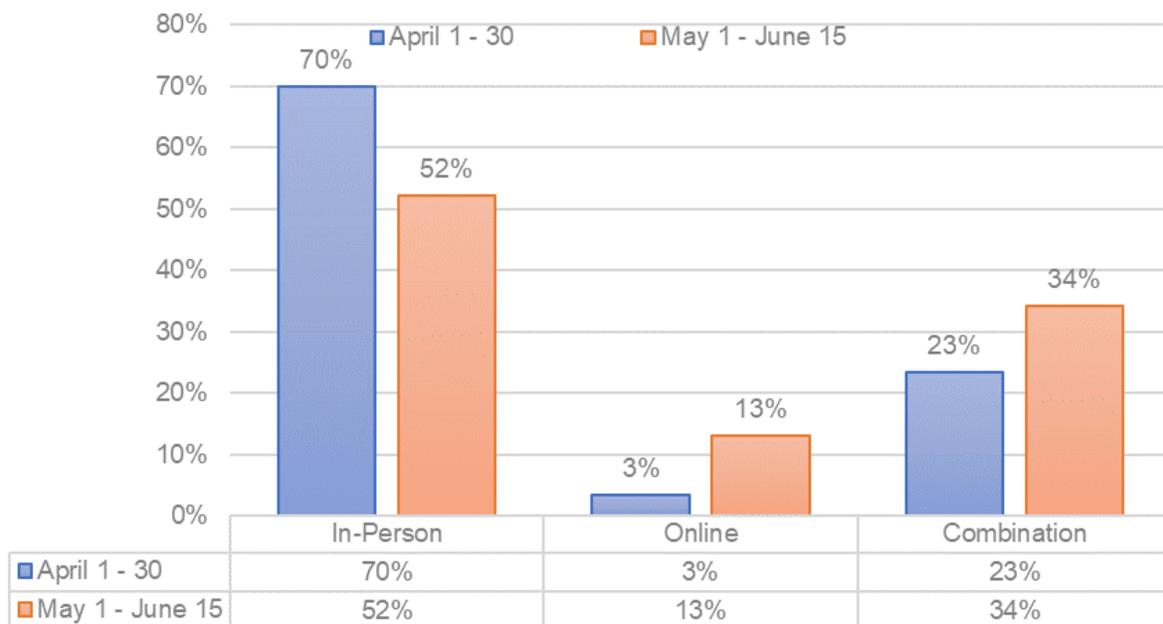
### *Time Analysis of Preference Selection: April 1 – 30, 2020 vs. May 1 – June 5, 2020*

Initially (April time period), student responded overwhelmingly (70%) wanting to go back to the in-person classroom experience when confronted with the shift to online with very few (3%) even considering a virtual learning experience while 23% thought a combination of the two would be preferable.

From May, as the situation became more stabilized, the student responses shifted to 52% wanting in-person classes, a dramatic increase in those electing exclusively online (13%), and a significant increase in those who were now more comfortable with a combination (34%).

These results suggest that students have become more adapted to the virtual education format but still preferred in-person classes while an increasing number looked upon a combination as a workable solution as we move forward.

### Preferences Over Time

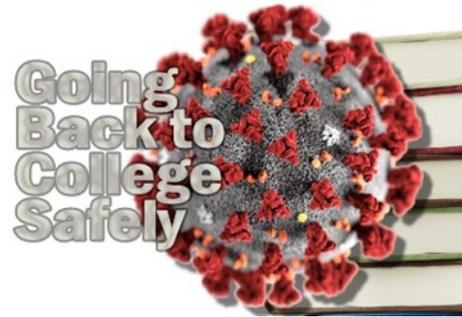


## ONCE CLASSES RETURN TO “NORMAL,” HOW CAN YOUR UNIVERSITY SUPPLEMENT CLASSES WITH ONLINE TECHNOLOGY?

Most common responses were that students want more access to recorded lectures and similar materials to be provided online in addition to the in-person class.

Here are some suggestions:

- Making in-person classes optional – record and make available for all students.
- Some subjects/lessons are even better online.
- Online Assignments, Materials and Resources.
- Recordings (pre), Live Streaming, narrated PowerPoint Presentation.
- Universities should provide students who need with laptops or other devices to connect.



*“Schedule only important classes. The rest can be done online. This saves a lot of time on both parties and I don’t have to miss class simply because I fell sick or had other engagements as the class can even be recorded. Also, this helps with future reference as a student can re watch the class and understand better.”*

*– 4<sup>th</sup> year student, Uganda*

*“Downloadable lecture recordings (rather than streaming).”*

*– 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, Australia*

*“Keeping online discussion forums between professors and students.”*

*– 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, Switzerland*

*“Record the classes and put them online.”*

*– 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, Poland*

*“Some subjects are suitable for online learning.”*

*– 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, United Arab Emirates*

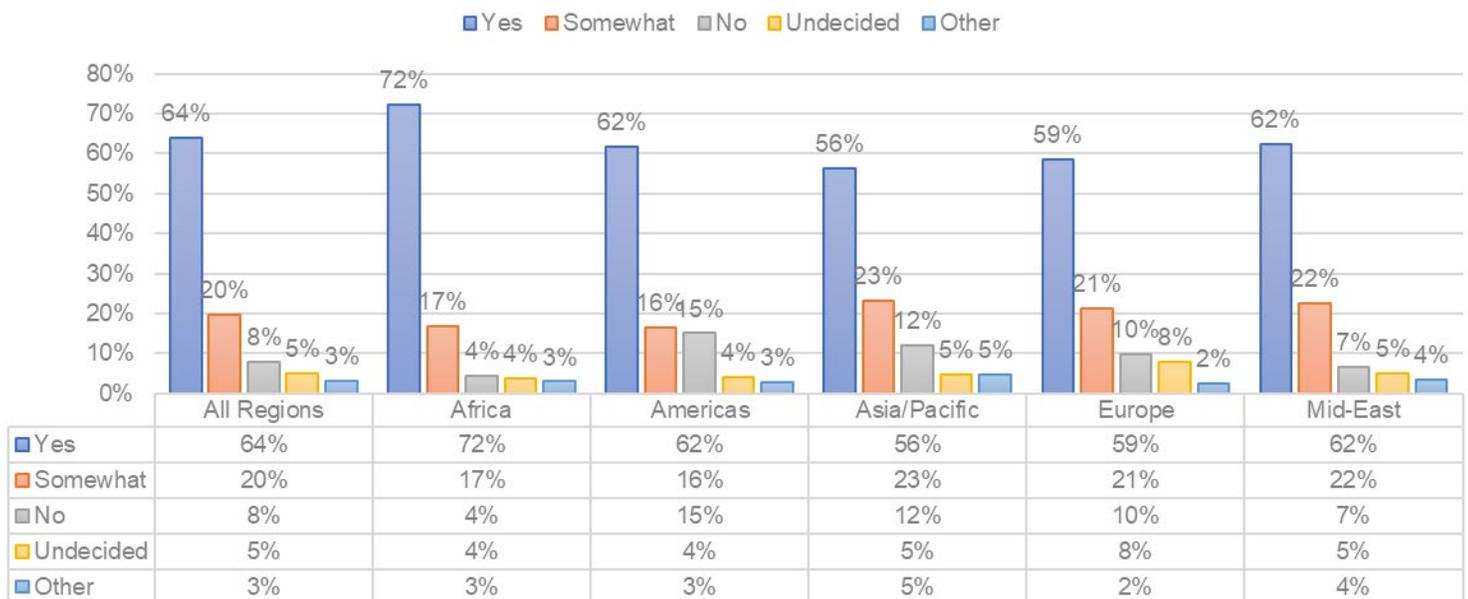
## DO YOU MISS SEEING YOUR PROFESSORS FACE-TO-FACE?

**84%** of students stated they missed seeing their professors face-to-face.

On average, the overwhelming percentage of students missed their professors. There were some regional variations with Africa totaling 89% compared to 78% of students from the Americas region holding similar views. Overall, these are positive numbers which emphasize the special bond between teachers and students which are under strain during this change from in-person classroom education to virtual.

### REGIONAL ANALYSIS

#### Missing Your Professors By Region



### SELECTED STUDENT COMMENTS

*"I do a lot."*

– 1<sup>st</sup> year student, United Kingdom

*"Some, definitely yes. Others, definitely no. Again, the issue comes down to quality of instructors--their level of care for students and dedication to pedagogical excellence. Online learning is just a stop-gap measure that at best mitigates bad teaching."*

– 3<sup>rd</sup> year student, Canada

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the all the law students who took the time to have their voice counted in this assessment of our community's transformation of our educational pedagogy. It is a watershed moment for education, and legal education in particular. Their assessments and suggestions are essential components to our community's development of strategies for integrating virtual with in- person teaching and learning processes.

An incredibly special thank you to the following IALS Members who contributed to this report through our many virtual meetings and emails. The report serves as a guide for our committees to further explore priority issues growing from this pivot from traditional classroom instruction to virtual. We will continue to measure the state of this transition and develop community-based strategies to keep improving legal education globally by learning from each other.

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