

# SELF-DIRECTED EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MODALITIES IN A POST-COVID WORLD

WHAT TYPE OF CLASS IS RIGHT FOR ME?

A Maryland Online Leadership Institute (MOLLI) Annual Team Project by  
Nadine Edwards, Prince George's Community College; Lois Entner, Harford Community College;  
Kristy Floyd, Chesapeake Community College; Brianna McGinnis, Carroll Community College;  
and Kendra Perry, Hagerstown Community College  
Guidance & mentoring provided by Fred Stemple, Garrett Community College  
with consultation from Dr. Michelle Kloss, Carroll Community College

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

June 27, 2022

## ORIGINAL PROBLEM STATEMENT & STATUS

- ✓ Develop common definitions of various class modalities (such as remote, online, hybrid, hyflex, etc.) – COMPLETED
- ✓ Develop a self-guided “placement” survey students can use to determine which modality may be best for them – COMPLETED
- ✓ Stretch Goal: Implement survey with advising support to intervene when students try to register for modalities that are not a good match. – WILL VARY BY INSTITUTION

## PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

- ✓ Class modalities proliferated during COVID-19 – each institution worked independently to solve local problems and may have invented terminology or applied it differently than others
- ✓ After COVID, faculty, staff, and students are confused about what modalities are in use
- ✓ Students (even before COVID) may not select courses that fit well with their academic & lifestyle needs

This project addresses all three issues in order to support student satisfaction and success.

## PROJECT SYNOPSIS

- ✓ Modality definitions and survey questions were gathered and compiled from each Maryland Online institution's website
- ✓ Updated modality definitions were formed. Best practice recommendations were made for institutions (see document: document MOLLI\_Modality\_Definitions.docx).
- ✓ A student-friendly course modality survey was created (see document: MOLLI\_Modality\_Survey.xlsx).



## STRENGTHS

- ✓ Institutions have a common definition for each course modality
- ✓ Students have a tool to focus their thinking on which modality best fits their needs
- ✓ Focus on student success

## LIMITATIONS & CHALLENGES

- ✓ On the student instrument, Likert scale wording and order is inconsistent among the statements
- ✓ Limitations for creating an automated survey accessible to each institution
- ✓ Not all modalities are offered each semester for each course; sometimes the student needs to take the modality offered

## PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ MOL Board will review and revise MOLLI\_Modality\_Definitions.docx, then vote on whether to recommend the modality definitions as a guiding document.
- ✓ Each Maryland Online institution will review the approved guiding document and adjust their definitions and practices locally as they see fit.
- ✓ MOL Board will review and revise MOLLI\_Modality\_Survey.xlsx, then vote on whether to recommend the instrument as a recommended best practice.
- ✓ Each Maryland Online institution will review the approved course modality survey and implement it in a format to suit their needs (integrate into website, LMS, etc.).
- ✓ We will share our proposed definitions and instrument with Quality Matters, the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (WCET), and the Canadian Distance Learning Research Association for the Digital Learning Definitions survey.
- ✓ The MOL Board will publish the approved documents on an open access platform such as M.O.S.T. Commons or similar.

All files available at <https://bit.ly/molli-modalities>

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## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Particularly in the wake of the sudden pivot to remote/online instruction during the COVID pandemic, institutions have defined course modalities in a number of unique ways.

Consistent definitions between sister institutions may help reduce confusion for students, faculty, and staff as well as facilitate smoother transfer of credits.

## METHODOLOGY

The team reviewed existing definitions of class modalities from all Maryland Online participating schools, analyzed similarities and differences, and attempted to harmonize the definitions.

Best practices for institutions and tips for success for students taking courses in each format are suggested.

## PROPOSED MODALITY DEFINITIONS

### FACE TO FACE

The course consists of meetings at a designated location on set days and times. Course requirements are completed both in person and outside of class time. Some online support may be provided for communications and assignments.

Possible synonyms: in person, in class

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### NOTE TO STUDENT

Class meetings may include real-time group discussions, lectures, and activities; therefore, attendance and participation at scheduled class meetings are critical. Students may need internet access to complete homework and communicate with the instructor.

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### NOTE TO INSTITUTION

The days, times, and location of all meetings should be clear in the course listing and syllabus.

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### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Attend class; communicate with the instructor ASAP if unable to
- Expect to spend 2-3 hours of out-of-class time on homework and class preparation per weekly hour of in-person contact time (for a course that lasts the whole term; for accelerated/compressed courses, this may increase). For example, a 3-credit course meets 3 hours per week, and students should expect to spend an additional 6-9 hours per week on this course outside of class time.
- Consider commute time including time to find a parking space and travel from there to classroom
- If multiple classes are on campus, consider travel time from other campus locations
- Bring all needed materials to class every time (backpacks or totes may be helpful)

## REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS

The course consists of virtual meetings on scheduled days and times each week via a platform such as the learning management system (LMS) or video conferencing platform.

Possible synonyms: synchronous remote, structured remote, emergency teaching (during early days of COVID pandemic)

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### NOTE TO STUDENT

Students must have internet access and a webcam. Class meetings may include real-time group discussions, lectures, and activities; therefore, attendance and participation are critical. Additional learning activities are completed asynchronously (unscheduled/remote) throughout the remainder of the week. Test proctoring may be required remotely or in person.

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### NOTE TO INSTITUTION

The meeting days, times, and platform/location (LMS or video conferencing platform) should be clear in the online course listing and syllabus.

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### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Attend class; communicate with the instructor as soon as able if you must miss a meeting
- Expect to spend 2-3 hours of out-of-class time on homework and class preparation per weekly hour of scheduled contact time (for a course that lasts the whole term; for accelerated/compressed courses, this may increase). For example, a 3-credit course meets 3 hours per week, and students should expect to spend an additional 6-9 hours per week on this course outside of class time.
- Find a dedicated quiet space where class participation will not be interrupted and you can converse out loud
- A headset with a microphone may be helpful for best sound quality and conversation

## ONLINE/REMOTE ASYNCHRONOUS

The course is entirely online and students are not required to log in or meet at scheduled times.

Possible synonyms: online, web based, flexible online, fully online

This type of class modality is the classical “online course.”

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### NOTE TO STUDENT

Students must have internet access. Although this format is flexible, it is not self paced. Assignment deadlines set by instructor must be met. Lecture information, course material, and assignments are provided online. Proctoring may be required for testing, either online or on campus. Webcam may be required, depending on proctoring and course assignments.

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## NOTE TO INSTITUTION

The platform (LMS or video conferencing platform) should be clear in the online course listing and syllabus, and registered students should receive clear instruction on where and how to log in via course listing and/or student email.

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## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Students should be prepared to spend at least as much time on an online course as with an on-campus course (3-4 hours per week for each course credit); however, with an asynchronous (unscheduled/remote) course, the time is often more flexible and learning can be done at their convenience.

To be successful in an online course, students must be independent learners who are motivated, have good time management, good computer skills, and access to the internet.

## HYBRID

The course consists of a combination of in-person meetings (face to face in a classroom) and online instruction. The online portion of the course may be held either as synchronous (scheduled remote) or asynchronous (unscheduled remote) instruction. A significant proportion of contact hours are accounted for by structured online activities.

Synonyms: blended online, mixed online

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## NOTE TO STUDENT

Students must have internet access. A webcam may be necessary for synchronous online instruction. Class meetings may include real-time group discussions, lectures, and activities; therefore, attendance and participation at scheduled class meetings are critical. Test proctoring may be required remotely or in person.

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## NOTE TO INSTITUTION

The days, times, and platform/location (LMS, video conferencing platform, or classroom) of all synchronous meetings (whether in person or online/remote) should be clear in the online course listing and syllabus.

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## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Attend all scheduled class meetings; communicate with the instructor as soon as able if you must miss
- Students should be prepared to spend 3-4 hours per week working on this course for each course credit; this time includes the synchronous (scheduled/remote) class sessions
- Have a quiet, designated area where you can sign in for synchronous (scheduled/remote) sessions and be able to converse out loud
- A headset with a microphone may be helpful for best sound quality and conversation

## BLENDED ONLINE

The course has no in-person meetings but combines synchronous (scheduled remote) and asynchronous (unscheduled remote) instruction.

Some institutions use this to refer to HYBRID

## MIXED ONLINE

See also: HYBRID or BLENDED ONLINE (used both ways at various institutions)

## FLEXIBLE ONLINE

See also: REMOTE ASYNCHRONOUS

## HYFLEX

The course consists of some students attending synchronous (scheduled) sessions remotely and some students attending in person at the same time. Participation in each modality may be up to the student or specified by the institution. Some institutions allow or require students to change their modality throughout the term, while others require students to complete the entire term in the initial modality.

Some institutions use the term “tri-modal” to include a third option of entirely unscheduled/asynchronous remote instruction within the same course section.

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### NOTE TO STUDENT

Remote students must have internet access. A webcam will be necessary for synchronous online instruction. Class meetings may include real-time group discussions, lectures, and activities; therefore, attendance and participation at scheduled class meetings are critical. Test proctoring may be required remotely or in person.

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### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Attend all scheduled class meetings; communicate with the instructor as soon as able if you must miss
- Expect to spend 2-3 hours of out-of-class time on homework and class preparation per weekly hour of scheduled contact time (for a course that lasts the whole term; for accelerated/compressed courses, this may increase). For example, a 3-credit course meets 3 hours per week, and students should expect to spend an additional 6-9 hours per week on this course outside of class time.

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### REMOTE STUDENTS

- Remote students should have a quiet, designated area where they can sign in for synchronous (scheduled remote) sessions and be able to converse out loud
- A headset with a microphone may be helpful for remote students to experience best sound quality and conversation

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### FACE TO FACE STUDENTS

- Consider commute time including time to find a parking space and travel from there to classroom
- If multiple classes are on campus, consider travel time from other campus locations
- Bring all needed materials to class every time (backpacks or totes may be helpful)

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### NOTE TO INSTITUTION

The days, times, and platform/location (LMS, video conferencing platform, or classroom) of all synchronous meetings (whether in person or online/remote) should be clear in the online course listing and syllabus.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR INSTITUTIONS

- Use a specific section designator for each modality. For example,
  - Face to face: MATH 115-01, MATH 115-02, etc.
  - Remote synchronous:
    - MATH 115-95, MATH 115-95A, MATH 115-95B, etc. OR
    - MATH 115-R01, MATH 115-R02, etc.
  - Remote asynchronous:
    - MATH 115-75, MATH 115-75A, MATH 115-75B, etc. OR
    - MATH 115-W01, MATH 115-W02, etc.
  - Hyflex:
    - MATH 115-55, MATH 115-55A, MATH 115-55B, etc. OR
    - MATH 115-F01, MATH 115-F02, etc.
  - Hybrid:
    - MATH 115-65, MATH 115-65A, MATH 115-65B, etc. OR
    - MATH 115-H01, MATH 115-H02, etc.
  - Mixed:
    - MATH 115-45, MATH 115-45A, MATH 115-45B, etc. OR
    - MATH 115-M01, MATH 115-M02, etc.
- Adopt terminology that is consistent with other institutions across the state. The terms “blended,” “mixed,” and “flexible” are used rarely and may be unclear. Although the term “online” is common, its meaning may be unclear and confusing.
- Specify clearly in the course schedule listing, in student-friendly language, what scheduling and modality expectations are associated with each section.
- Ensure that various areas on campus understand and are using consistent terminology.
- Require students to complete a self assessment before registering for classes.



## LOGIC GRIDS

### FOR INSTITUTIONS (WHAT TYPE OF CLASS ARE WE OFFERING?)

	ONLINE	MIX OF BOTH	FACE TO FACE
<b>SCHEDULED/ SYNCHRONOUS MEETINGS</b>	Remote Synchronous	Hybrid or Hyflex	Face to Face
<b>STUDENTS WORK INDEPENDENTLY AT THEIR OWN PACE</b>	Remote Asynchronous	N/A	N/A Correspondence

### FOR STUDENTS (WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN MY CLASS?)

	IN PERSON	ONLINE	SCHEDULED MEETINGS	WORK INDEPENDENTLY
<b>FACE TO FACE</b>	✓	?	✓	✓
<b>REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS</b>	✗	✓	✓	✓
<b>REMOTE ASYNCHRONOUS</b>	✗	✓	✗	✓
<b>HYBRID</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>BLENDED ONLINE</b>	✗	✓	✓	✓
<b>HYFLEX</b>	?	?	✓	✓

✓ = class will include this type of instruction

✗ = class will not include this type of instruction

? = class sometimes includes this type of instruction; confirm with your institution and/or instructor

## Student Modality Selector

**Information for Institutions:** This instrument is designed to help students assess in which modalities they learn best, looking at several different factors: Life factors, learning style, motivation, time management, technology equipment, and technology competency.

**Suggestions for use:** This instrument can be used "as is", statements can be added or subtracted depending on the needs of the institution, or the instrument can be made into a digital form, to be taken online. It is strongly recommended for students to consult with an advisor during or after completing the instrument so that they may be matched with appropriate course offerings or advised of potential challenges if they select a modality for which they had low scores.

**Technical note:** Changes made to existing statements and answer options on this sheet will automatically update on the student sheet. If any statements are added, they will need to be added to the student sheet manually.

	Face-to-Face A	Hybrid B	Remote Synchronous C	Online/Remote Asynchronous D
<b>Life Factors</b>				
I have a place where I am able to focus and complete classwork <b>away from campus</b> .	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a place where I am able to attend & participate in a live videoconference (both listening and speaking) <b>away from campus</b> .	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree
My personal and professional schedule is generally predictable.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have reliable transportation to and from campus.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have health concerns which prevent me from being in crowded areas.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Learning Style</b>				
I am comfortable learning through individual reading and study.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I do my best learning by doing hands-on activities (i.e. a lab experiment).	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am comfortable using writing as my primary mode of communication.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I usually need direct explanation by an instructor or interaction with peers to feel comfortable learning material.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Motivation</b>				
I usually get things done without having to be directed by others.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
If faced with a problem I couldn't solve, I would ask the instructor for help.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Time Management</b>				
Online classes are more difficult and time consuming than face-to-face classes.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I have time in my schedule to commute to campus when face-to-face classes are offered.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I get distracted easily while studying (texting, social media, etc.) and need a lot of time to accomplish my work.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Technology - Equipment</b>				
I have reliable access to an up-to-date computer (desktop or laptop) running a recent Windows or Mac operating system.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I have reliable access to high-speed internet in the location I plan to do classwork.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree

I have headphones or speakers and a microphone to use for videoconferencing.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree
I have a webcam that connects to and is compatible with the computer I plan to use.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree

### Technology - Competency

I look forward to learning new computer skills and quickly get comfortable with them.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable using standard word processing software, such as Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Apple Pages .	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable and proficient with the following routine computer tasks: using email & web browsers, saving files to different locations, downloading files and installing programs/updates, creating attachments, and troubleshooting basic computer problems.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable asking for technology support when I am not sure how to do something or my computer is not working properly.	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I know how to access technology help and support.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree



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## What Kind of Class is Right for Me?

**Section 1** Directions: Read each statement and choose the answer(s) that fit you the best. If more than one answer fits you, CIRCLE ALL OF THEM - you may circle more than one answer per statement.

Statement	A	B	C	D
I am comfortable learning through individual reading and study.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable using writing as my primary mode of communication.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I usually get things done without having to be directed by others.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I know how to access technology help and support.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a place where I am able to focus and complete classwork away from campus.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
If faced with a problem I couldn't solve, I would ask the instructor for help.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Online classes are more difficult and time consuming than face-to-face classes.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

Directions: Please note that the scale has changed! "Strongly Agree" now appears on the left. Read each statement and choose the answer(s) that fit you the best. If more than one answer fits you, CIRCLE ALL OF THEM - you may circle more than one answer per statement.

Statement	A	B	C	D
My personal and professional schedule is generally predictable.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have reliable transportation to and from campus.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly Disagree
I do my best learning by doing hands-on activities (i.e. a lab experiment).	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I usually need direct explanation by an instructor or interaction with peers to feel comfortable learning material.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have time in my schedule to commute to campus when face-to-face classes are offered.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I get distracted easily while studying (texting, social media, etc.) and need a lot of time to accomplish my work.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**Section 3** **Directions:** Please pay careful attention to the answers in this section. They may be out of order, or some answers may appear more than once. Read each statement and choose the answer(s) that fit you the best. If more than one answer fits you, or if it appears more than once, CIRCLE ALL OF THEM - you may circle more than one answer per statement.

Statement	A	B	C	D
I have a place where I am able to attend & participate in a live videoconference (both listening and speaking) away from campus.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree
I look forward to learning new computer skills and quickly get comfortable with them.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a webcam that connects to and is compatible with the computer I plan to use.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I have headphones or speakers and a microphone to use for videoconferencing.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree
I have health concerns which prevent me from being in crowded areas.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I have reliable access to an up-to-date computer (desktop or laptop) running a recent Windows or Mac operating system.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I have reliable access to high-speed internet in the location I plan to do classwork.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable using standard word processing software, such as Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Apple Pages .	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable and proficient with the following routine computer tasks: using email & web browsers, saving files to different locations, downloading files and installing programs/updates, creating attachments, and troubleshooting basic computer problems.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable asking for technology support when I am not sure how to do something or my computer is not working properly.	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree

**Scoring** **Directions:** Add up the number of answers circled in each column. The column where you have the most answers shows which type(s) of class may be the best fit for you.

Column Totals	Column A Total	Column B Total	Column C Total	Column D Total
Your Score				
Class Types	Face-to-Face	Hybrid	Remote Synchronous	Online/Remote Asynchronous

Special Class Type: Hyflex Depending on the hyflex options available for the class(es) you will take, select the course type(s) that best match your answers from Face-to-Face, Hybrid, or Remote Synchronous. For example, if your highest score is Face-to-Face, select a hyflex option that will allow you to be on campus in person as frequently as possible.

**It is highly recommended that you meet with an advisor to discuss your results and select classes that will help set you up to succeed.**

