

Article

EFL Students' Attitudes Towards the Effectiveness of Emergency Remote Teaching Programs

Andrew A. J. Zitzmann, Malcolm R. Swanson

< Abstract >

With the sudden implementation of Emergency Remote Teaching as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and students found themselves in unfamiliar territory. Having little in the way of experience, ability, or support, both groups have had to adjust to the unfamiliar situation of taking classes in an online environment. This paper examines the effects of that change, with particular emphasis on the attitudes of EFL students to how effective they felt this form of learning has been.

Keywords: Emergency Remote Teaching, online learning, synchronous, asynchronous, program effectiveness

The Onset of Emergency Remote Teaching

In 1966, Robert F. Kennedy famously stated, *“There is a Chinese curse which says ‘May he live in interesting times.’ Like it or not, we live in interesting times.”* While the circumstances of that period differ greatly to where we now find ourselves, the last 18 months have indeed been “interesting times.”

In the spring semester of 2020, under the threat of an accelerating COVID-19 pandemic and with little or no warning, teachers worldwide found themselves unexpectedly having to implement Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) programs in their schools, often with little in the way of experience, ability, or support. While educators with a background in implementing online courses found the transition relatively painless, for the vast majority, this was new ground. For them, this sudden transition was not only fragmented and error ridden, it was also extremely stressful.

For the purposes of this paper, this distinction

between well-planned and implemented online courses and the ERT programs we have seen in schools recently is important. As Hodges, et al (2020) state, “Well-planned online learning experiences are meaningfully different from courses offered online in response to a crisis or disaster.” Online courses that are already integrated into curricula have the benefit of years of preparation and experience, along with ongoing review and evaluation. They also have detailed lesson plans, as well as a range of teaching materials (such as audio and video content) and the courses have full tech support (Bao, 2020). Students taking those courses have the benefit of a careful orientation, ongoing monitoring, and an opportunity to offer feedback which developers can use to further improve the courses. In contrast, ERT courses are generally a transference of an existing course into any available online delivery system, and the teaching that takes place is kept as similar to face-to-face programs as possible.

Just as much as the shift to ERT caught teachers

and administrators off guard, most students also found themselves in learning situations they were not prepared for. The whole social dynamic of the classroom was replaced with a medium that had them either working in individual "cells" using video conferencing software such as Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams, or working independently and alone in programs where they accessed material on demand. Gone was the normal ebb and flow of communication in the classroom with its natural interactions between both teachers and students. Instead, students found themselves under a virtual spotlight created by their webcams, and their reactions to this varied widely, from full acceptance to shutting themselves off. For those classes that were run asynchronously, students found themselves adrift without the support or transparency available from the course teachers or their peers within a normal classroom.

It is these ERT programs that this paper will use as reference while we explore the reactions of EFL students to their classes. Through the use of surveys and informal interviews, we will look at how effective the students believe this form of learning is. This is important as we see the whole system of education, particularly in the tertiary sector in Japan, undergoing review as we adjust to the "new normal." Where, in the past, schools were unwilling to consider moving courses online, either synchronously or asynchronously, new possibilities are opening. Teachers are becoming more adept at running such courses, and students have shown that they are both willing and able to participate fully in such classes. This is particularly true when they have also been provided with online education skills training, as recommended by numerous studies (Dashestani, 2014). Indeed, as we will show, there are significant numbers of students who would actually prefer certain classes and courses to be online. Therefore, colleges nationwide will need to review their programs with this in mind, and a large part of the future success of such planned implementations will be the attitudes of students as to whether they believe this form of education is effective or not.

Current Research

Despite the relative newness of ERT as a research field, with the pandemic being just 18 months old, there is already a burgeoning body of studies being released. While much research deals with the effectiveness of the teaching and learning that is taking place, the area of student attitudes to ERT has yet to receive much attention. There is, however, a large body of research available on the efficacy of e-learning approaches, and while this can be useful as a reference, the differences between well-planned and robust existing programs and the frantic implementation of ERT must be kept in mind.

Yuan (2021), in an intensive study of 96 university students in Malaysia, focused on student satisfaction. Through the use of surveys and interviews, she found that the elements of "learning materials, assessments, communication, as well as technological tools and technical support" all played a part in determining a student's satisfaction with their ERT experience, and the subsequent positive outcomes of such programs. Likewise, Esterhuysen et al. (2016), in a study of e-learning for corporate training, stressed the importance of student satisfaction for the success of online learning.

In a Chinese university case study, He and Xiao (2020) explored the effectiveness of online classes under ERT with a survey of teachers' and students' perceptions. They found that student satisfaction of the teaching they received was barely above 50%. On the other hand, 65% of the students said they were satisfied with their online classes, which were almost exclusively of the synchronous type. The single biggest issue for the students was internet connectivity, which was marred by network congestion and disconnections. Pedagogically, the teaching methodologies used by some teachers, especially regarding lack of skill with online tools, was challenging for the students. To a lesser extent, the low level of interaction between students and teachers was also an issue.

Carter and Patton (2021) examined the creation

and maintenance of group cohesion in ERT classes, noting cohesion "...is not so much created through curriculum design as it is in allowing extensive opportunities for interaction among students and in presenting an empathetic presence as course instructor." As we will discuss later in this paper, the social aspects of the classes have a measurable effect on how positively students view their classes, for which robust interaction plays an important part.

In surveys and interviews with over a thousand university students, Lafleur et al. (2021) also examined student satisfaction, finding that students in higher grades tended to be more positive about ERT than their younger counterparts. Reasons for this included a lack of opportunities to meet and form relationships with their classmates. This is in line with our own findings, and we discuss possible reasons for this later in this paper.

All-in-all, current research into student attitudes to ERT points to this lack of social opportunities as a major source of dissatisfaction among students. With this in mind, the authors moved ahead with a survey of the students we teach in order to gain a greater understanding of how effective the students find the ERT courses they are enrolled in. Following are the results of that survey.

Student Survey

Methodology

At the end of the first semester in 2021, the authors created and circulated an anonymous survey for students in classes that both writers taught. In all, 150 students from three separate universities (a private women's university and two public coeducational universities in Western Japan) responded to the survey. Of these, 120 listed themselves as English majors and 30 stated they were studying English, though in non-English major departments. The age breakdown is shown in Table 1, and as can be seen, the vast majority were in Year 1 and 2 courses. This is significant because these students have never experienced university study in a non-COVID environment, so

Table 1
Year Groups of Survey Respondents

Year1	Year2	Year3	Year4
88 (58.7%)	32 (21.3%)	18 (12%)	12 (8%)

this will have impacted their responses.

In the semester in which the survey took place, 88% of the students ($n=132$) had been studying in a hybrid environment of both online and face-to-face classes. Only 12% ($n=18$) had been taking completely face-to-face classes. No students in the survey had all of their classes completely online.

Results

Satisfaction and Preferences

Our first questions asked about their satisfaction levels in both online and face-to-face classes. The results are shown in Figures 1 and 2 in Likert format, with "1" indicating strong disagreement with the statement of satisfaction with the class style and "5" showing strong agreement. As can be seen, the satisfaction levels for face-to-face classes (average response: 3.86) are markedly higher than for online classes (average response: 3.44). In fact, 70.7% of respondents responded positively about their face-to-face classes, compared to 50.7% for online classes, with 32% of those students saying their online classes were "so-so."

However, when we look at the responses by grade years there is quite a disparity in their level of satisfaction. First year (61%) and fourth year (66%) students were much more satisfied with online classes compared with their second (25%) and third (33%) year counterparts. This disparity may be explained by the fact that for first year students they did not have any previous university online class experience with which to make their judgement. For fourth year students the type of classes that they are enrolled in in their final year tend to lend themselves well to an online format.

Although the rate of satisfaction with face-to-

face classes was noted to be generally higher than online classes, there was a significantly lower rate of satisfaction with second year students who only gave a 53% satisfaction rate. Second year students overall rated their satisfaction much lower than any

other year group. Does this have to do with their second year courses in general or with an overall lack of satisfaction with their university experience, which has been completely under ERT?

Figure 1
Satisfaction with Online Classes

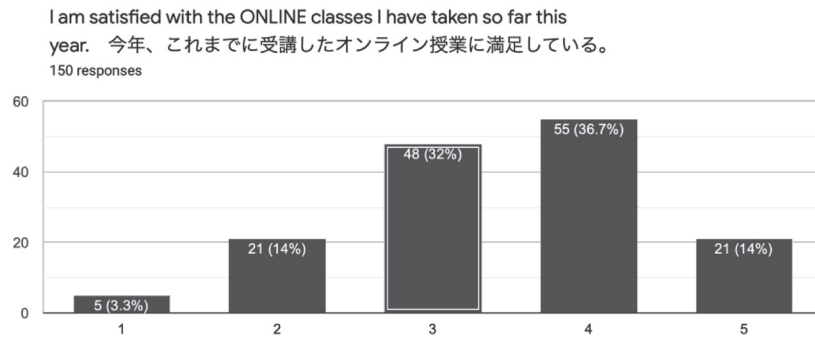


Table 2
Satisfaction with Online Classes by Year Group (%)

Year1		Year2		Year3		Year4	
D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S
12.5	61.4	37.5	25.0	5.6	33.3	16.7	66.7

Note. D = Dissatisfied, S = Satisfied. Figures for neutral response not included.

Figure 2
Satisfaction with Face-to-Face Classes

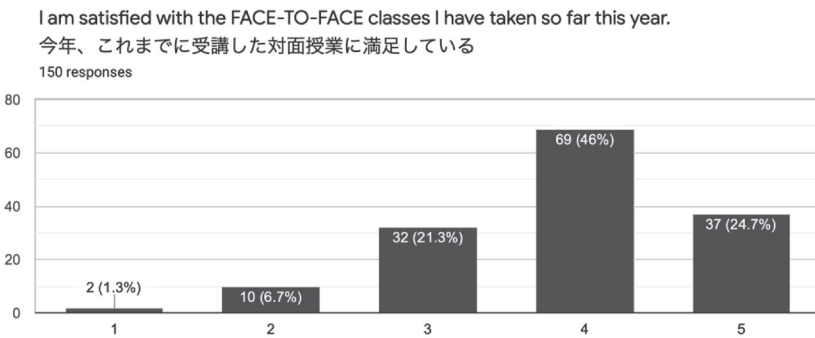


Table 3
Satisfaction with Face-to-Face Classes by Year Group (%)

Year1		Year2		Year3		Year4	
D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S
4.5	76.1	15.6	53.1	11.1	66.7	8.3	83.3

Note. D = Dissatisfied, S = Satisfied. Figures for neutral response not included.

Interestingly, when asked about what type of classes they would prefer in the future, the students' responses were a little more mixed, as shown in Figure 3. This might have been because of a weakness in the question they were asked as we had not specified whether "future" meant during or after the current COVID-19 epidemic. Nevertheless, about half of the respondents showed a preference

for face-to-face classes, while over 20% expressed no preference. Conversely, around 30% stated they preferred online classes, the possible reasons for which can be seen in Table 4. Similar results were presented in the university-wide Tohoku University survey report 「全学オンライン授業 アンケート」の結果概要, which would suggest that these could be fairly representative of Japanese students.

Figure 3
Preferences for Future Classes

How would you like your classes to be conducted in the future? 今後、どのように授業を進めていきたいですか?
150 responses

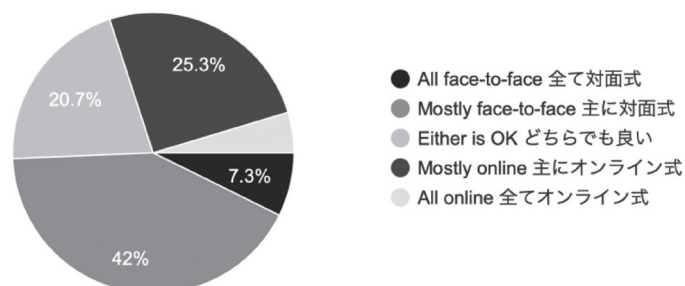


Table 4
Preferences for Specific Class Types

	Communication Classes	Seminar (small) Classes	Lecture (large) Classes	Skills Classes
Asynchronous On-Demand Format	2% (3)	9.3% (14)	74.7% (112)	36.7% (55)
Synchronous Real-Time Format	18% (27)	19.3% (29)	16% (24)	24.7% (37)
Face-to-Face Format	80% (120)	71.3% (107)	9.3% (14)	38.7% (58)

The responses in Table 4 give a clearer picture of what formats the students prefer for different class types. Not surprisingly, as most of them are English majors, for communication-type classes there is a strong preference for face-to-face classes. These classes include the basic first-year conversation-type classes, and in later years, discussion, task-based, and project-based classes. Likewise, in smaller seminar-style classes, they showed a strong preference for face-to-face classes. Later in this paper we will discuss our experiences in online ERT classes which will give further background to what we believe are the reasons for this.

Preferences changed sharply when we asked what style of learning they would prefer for large lecture-style classes, with most students opting for an asynchronous-style format. Given that these lectures are generally held using a passive style of learning, this is not surprising. When we talked to our students about this later, they cited such reasons as being able to study when and where they chose, being able to review content, and having more time to assimilate what they have been lectured on. It is, however, interesting to note that when broken down by year group (Table 5) the synchronous online lecture style classes are more popular with higher year groups. This may have to do with the students wanting to have the

opportunity to interact with the teacher, which the asynchronous format does not allow. The preference for face-to-face format also decreases as the year group increases. Third- and fourth-year students have significantly fewer classes and so they prefer not having to commute to school to attend the one lecture class of the day. First year students, on the other hand, may be more interested in face-to-face classes as they have not yet experienced such classes at university, which the Tohoku University survey 「全学オンライン授業アンケート」の結果概要 also claimed.

When we look at skills courses—such as grammar, composition, presentation, or media classes—their responses are much more of a mixed bag. Although these classes are generally very active in nature, they also incorporate a lot of self-study and flipped learning, with grades generally being determined by ongoing performance. These responses probably reflect the different learning styles of the students, with some relishing the chance to engage the content on their own, and others needing a more social approach full of discussion, collaboration, and brainstorming. In light of this, there would seem to be a strong argument for continuing these types of classes in a hybrid format, even when the COVID-19 ERT situation passes.

Table 5
Preferences for the Format of Lecture-Type Classes by Student Year Group (%)

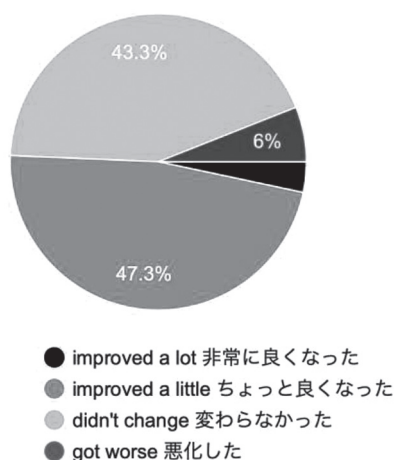
	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
On-Demand Format	77.3	81.3	61.1	58.3
Real-Time Format	10.2	12.5	33.3	41.7
Face-to-Face Format	12.5	6.3	5.6	0

Self-Analysis of Progress

The next section of the survey asked the question, "How do you feel about your progress in learning English skills since learning online began?", and respondents were asked to evaluate how they perceived their progress across the four main skill areas of speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

Figure 4
Progress in Speaking Skills

My English SPEAKING skills...
私の英語スピーキング力...
150 responses



As can be seen, an almost equal number of respondents said their English-speaking skills hadn't changed or had only improved a little. Nine students believed their skills had gone downhill, and just five actually felt they had improved a lot.

Reasons given for poor speaking ability while online included (translated from the original Japanese by the writers):

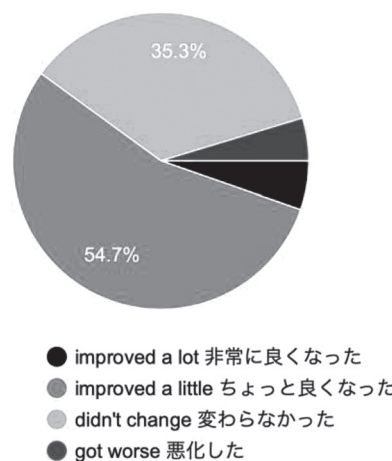
- *Because the amount of study has decreased since high school.*
- *I have not been able to express my opinions at all.*
- *The opportunities to use English have actually decreased.*
- *When I speak in class, I tend to speak in Japanese because my classmates are Japanese.*
- *Because I don't think in real time anymore, so I don't feel that I have improved.*
- *Because I have less opportunity to speak English compared to before when we did face-to-face classes.*

- *Because, in a face-to-face class, I can talk while watching the other person's expressions.*

These responses would suggest that, while studying online, the social interactive opportunities that would naturally occur in face-to-face classes are more unlikely to occur. In the experiences of the writers, this is indeed so, and we will discuss this more later in this paper.

Figure 5
Progress in Listening Skills

My English LISTENING skills...
私の英語リスニング力...
150 responses



Although these responses were quite similar to those for speaking, we can see that the number of respondents who believed they had improved has risen. Even so, there were a large number of ERT-specific negative comments offered, including:

- *Because the sound quality was bad or it was choppy.*
- *I have less time to spend on listening (at home, etc.) because of more homework.*
- *Because I still can't solve listening problems.*
- *I can't understand what the teacher tells me as much as before.*
- *Because the atmosphere of the class is not so good.*
- *I couldn't hear the teacher's voice clearly.*

Conversely, there were a good number of positive comments as well, such as:

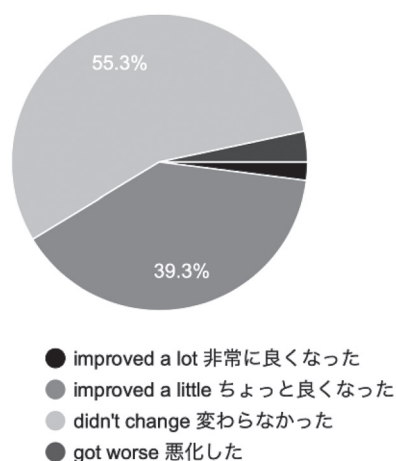
- *It was easier to listen to English online because it was easier to adjust the volume.*

- I think I'm getting used to English now that I have more opportunities to interact with native English-speaking teachers.
- Because I got into the habit of listening to English carefully. There are things I have to understand in one go.
- Because I made fewer mistakes in listening to words.
- I'm always listening to native speakers.
- I listen to English more and more every day, and I am able to understand simple English.
- Because I listen to English every time in class at double speed.

On the surface, online classes would seem to be an excellent environment for developing listening skills because of the increased focus on the speaker by other students, and the positive comments sampled above would seem to bear this out. However, and particularly for the weaker students, this experience was often marred by the technical difficulties such as those listed above which affected their ability to understand and participate.

Figure 6
Progress in Writing Skills

My English WRITING skills...
私の英語ライティング力...
150 responses



Writing is the area one might assume students would excel in during online classes. They have more time to focus on what they are doing, and it is easier to access resources and teacher feedback and advice. However, more than half the students believed their writing skills had not improved.

Among the reasons they gave were:

- I think the number of times has decreased from when I was a high school student.
- I think when I was a high school student, I had more chances to write sentences.
- It still takes me a while to put my thoughts into writing.
- I have more opportunities to write, but the grammar is ambiguous.
- I don't have many opportunities to write because I don't practice writing in English.
- I didn't make any particular effort.
- I had no chance to write. Because I started to rely on my computer.

Many students stated that they didn't have the same opportunities to write as before and cited this as the main reason for a lack of progress. For others, it was an attitudinal problem, and a number talked about not making any real effort. For the students who did see improvement, they wrote:

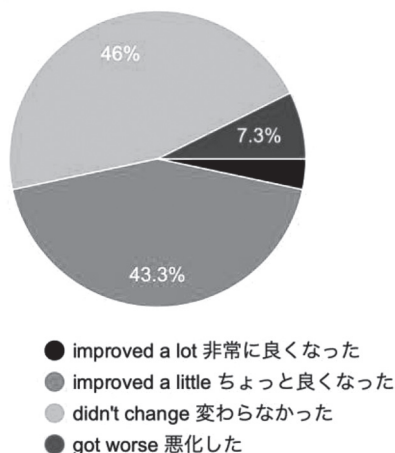
- Because I had a lot of homeworks of online lessons.
- Because the number of classes to write English has increased
- Because of my graduation thesis, I have more opportunities to think and write long sentences.
- Because the number of grammar classes has increased.
- Because I don't think there is any difference in learning writing skills whether it's face-to-face or online.
- Because I've been writing more sentences in English on my assignments.
- I didn't know much about how to write, but now that I'm learning, my understanding is getting better.
- My English teacher corrects my English compositions.
- Thanks to the English practice, I have become better at writing English.

Figure 7
Progress in Reading Skills

My English READING skills...

私の英語リーディング力...

150 responses



In reading, we see a reasonably similar response to how they assessed their speaking skills with a fairly even split between improvement and non-improvement. On one side, this could be viewed as a surprising result because online study might be viewed as a great environment for working on reading activities. However, as we show later, almost all students found that teachers were requiring more homework from them, so the time for self-organised recreational reading probably decreased. For those who felt their reading improved, the reasons given included:

- I have many chances to read English sentences.
- Because I had more opportunities to solve problems using the English textbook.
- I have never thought that I'm good at using

English. However, because of my teacher, I fell in love with the subject a little.

- I read a lot of books in XReading.
- The opportunity to read English books in the reading class helped me improve my skills.

Many students who sensed their reading skills had not improved commented they had fewer opportunities to read. This is surprising because in addition to reading in regular classes, they had taken extensive reading classes which focus on large amounts of reading material. For 2020, they were able to use the xReading service, an online source of graded readers with attached quizzes. Among the reasons they gave for poor progress were:

- Because nothing has changed.
- The number of times decreased from when I was a high school student.
- Because I have fewer chances to read English books.
- Because my TOEIC reading score has not improved.
- I don't think my skills have improved since I worked on preparing for entrance exams when I was in high school.
- I don't read English as much as I used to (I don't look at textbooks anymore because I've been looking at materials online).
- Online, I can read at my own pace, but I can't read as fast.

When looked at as a whole, their perceived progress in the four skills areas can be summarized as in Table 6.

Table 6
Summary of Perceived Progress Across the Four Skills by Percentage (n = 150)

	Got worse	Didn't change	Improved a little	Improved a lot
Speaking	6.0	43.3	47.3	3.3
Listening	4.7	35.3	54.7	5.3
Writing	3.3	55.3	39.3	2.0
Reading	7.3	6.0	43.3	3.3
Average	5.32	44.97	46.15	3.47

As before, when we look at the average percentages, we see a fairly even split between those who felt they hadn't improved against those who felt they had. What is important to understand here, however, is that these results indicate student perceptions of their progress as against actual data. These data include student grades, completed classwork, and teacher observations. From the experiences of the two writers, plus feedback and comments received from other teachers, we found that levels of work actually improved while classes were held online; scores in tests were higher, homework was more likely to be completed on time, and attendance in classes improved significantly. This begs the question of which should be considered more when evaluating the effectiveness of online classes—actual data or the students' perceptions.

Aspects of Online Learning

The final part of the survey looked at ten aspects of online learning and whether the students agreed with them or not. Students rated their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale. The ten aspects covered views on personal study, technical, and course related aspects (see Table 7).

The almost unanimous agreement with the first statement that students can study at their own pace at first seems to be an appealing aspect of online learning. In this regard, Bao (2020) noted that students often lack self-discipline which would actually affect the effectiveness of online learning. She goes on to suggest dividing the in-class teaching into shorter units of 20-25 minutes to help keep things clear for the students. From our experience this is a noteworthy suggestion.

The second statement refers to communication between the students and shows quite strongly that it is not easy to do. More than 60% of the students disagreed with the statement. Looking at the results by year group shows that disagreement is particularly strong with second year students at 71.9%. Fourth year students, on the other hand, only had 50% disagreement. They also had the

highest agreement with 41.6%, compared to the second-year students' low agreement rate of 18.8%.

The statement “It is easy to understand what to do” was supported positively by about 45% of the respondents. However, in a related study on Albanian students, it was found only about 14% responded positively to the statement that “the learning process is more effortless to understand in online class” (Xhelili et al., 2021). In their research, they found that students with technology-based backgrounds and experience had a much better online learning experience. Japanese students' easy access to technology may have something to do with their positive response to this statement.

Asking for help is a critical aspect of learning, yet 55.4% of students felt that it was not easy to do with online learning. Although the statement presented in the survey did not clarify whom to ask for help, the responses mirror the earlier responses regarding talking with other students. Whether they are asking for help from other students or from teachers, it seems quite clear that it is not easy to do. This appears to be true across all year groups, except, again, for fourth year students.

On the issue of homework, it is very clear that the students—68% of them—feel that there is more homework with online learning. There were many instances in which this was noticeable to us as teachers, too. Progress wasn't being made at the same rate as in the classroom, so teachers felt it was necessary to increase the homework to keep up with the curriculum.

Only about 15% of the students disagreed that reviewing material from online classes was easy to do. With on-demand classes, the materials can be accessed by the students numerous times for better understanding. Utilising technology, such as taking screenshots or recordings, also helps students to have material that they can review after a synchronous session has ended. This ability to review is a significant advantage of online learning if the student is made aware of these features and their educational benefits.

Interacting with other students is an important part of communication classes and other social

interactions. Before we do that, however, we need to meet them. Unfortunately, only about a quarter of students like meeting other students via video, which can have a negative impact on course related activities.

With regard to sharing information with others, students feel ambivalent about how easy it is to do. This may be connected to their digital skills and training provided for such action, or it may have to do with their (lack of a) relationship with other students. The responses may have been different if the statement had clearly identified the recipient of the sharing, as some may have interpreted this with submissions to the teachers, while others with sending material to other students.

With various class formats taught by different

teachers who have different teaching styles and online teaching expertise, it is no wonder that the response to online activities being interesting was very mixed. Hebebe et al. (2020) also had a variety of reactions in response to student opinions of teaching activities. Statements regarding activity interest directly connected to the different formats may have provided more valuable information.

Only a handful of respondents felt that studying from home was not a desirable aspect of online learning. Though over 90% of the students saw this as a positive aspect of online learning, home environments and access to the internet could have been a contributing factor to the negative responses.

Table 7
Aspects of Online Learning

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
I can study at my own pace	0,7 (1)	4 (6)	2 (3)	30 (45)	63,3 (95)
I can talk easily with other students	24 (36)	36,7 (55)	13,3 (20)	18 (27)	8 (12)
It is easy to understand what to do	7,3 (11)	30,7 (46)	17,3 (26)	32,7 (49)	12 (18)
I can easily ask for help	16,7 (25)	38,7 (58)	16 (24)	18,7 (28)	10 (15)
There is less homework	29,3 (44)	38,7 (58)	17,3 (26)	11,3 (17)	3,3 (5)
It is easy to review the material	2,7 (4)	12 (18)	22,7 (34)	34,7 (52)	28 (42)
I like meeting others on video	15,3 (23)	32 (48)	26 (39)	16 (24)	10,7 (16)
It is easy to share information with others	14,7 (22)	28 (42)	17,3 (26)	26 (39)	14 (21)
Online activities are interesting	8 (12)	24 (36)	30 (45)	20,7 (31)	17,3 (26)
I can study from home	2 (3)	2,7 (4)	4,7 (7)	29,3 (44)	61,3 (92)

ERT Classes from a Teaching Perspective

Even in regular times every class is different. Of course, there are the differences caused by different curricula and goals, and by the very teaching styles of the teachers themselves. However, there are also those differences caused by the students and their social interactions, and it is these differences and experiences which provide a framework within which to understand the attitudes of the students and their beliefs about the effectiveness of their ERT classes. What follows are the experiences of the two writers with the students they teach in both face-to-face and online environments.

Writer 1

I had used a blended learning format, which uses elements of face-to-face instruction together with independent online learning (Swanson & Zitzmann, 2011), for several years with a variety of communication and writing courses prior to this sudden complete shift to online classes. Although I had had experience with online materials and was not digitally illiterate, it was still a stressful transition period. Using aural and visual cues have always assisted me greatly in the classroom to get a “feel” for student comprehension and how the class was proceeding. However, the online environment removed these cues from me, and I needed to find new ways to determine if the students were understanding the material and class activities.

I found myself spending a lot of time dealing with technical issues in the early stages of the transition. This hampered efforts to have classes run as smoothly as in the classroom. Bao (2020) noted that the challenges students experienced were not “from technical operational obstacles”. Though this may be true in the long term, students did experience technical problems in the initial transition stage. Learning how to help students resolve such issues was a challenge for me, especially as the time spent on these issues took away valuable teaching time. Fortunately, in many instances more technically adept students managed

to help those less technically adept students to overcome those hurdles.

As with everything, though, we learn to adapt to a new situation. As the students were able to demonstrate, when we have problems, we find solutions. Students who experienced technical issues with the audio were able to listen to the class activities through phone connections with other students. What was difficult becomes easier. I learned how the online environment could help me and my students achieve our goals. New opportunities to enhance my teaching and the classroom environment were discovered. And it seems that the students, too, discovered new ways to experience university life.

Writer 2

In my case, I oversee a mixture of skills courses and communication courses. I teach English Media to both Year 1 and Year 2 students, and English Presentation Skills to Year 2 students. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, both of these courses were already largely online, so the transition to online only was not so impactful on the students. Both courses were task-based courses that we delivered from our online Moodle installation. The students were already adept at finding course material, reviewing and learning it themselves, and creating material and uploading it for evaluation and feedback. Moving these courses to being totally online had both benefits and drawbacks. On the positive side, as a teacher I could focus on what each student did and set time slots where we could discuss the students' needs more. To a degree, this had been happening anyway, but in a normal classroom setting, there were always distractions from other students that impaired the process. There were some drawbacks, however, for example, it was more difficult to maintain an informal overview of what each student was doing when this could be accomplished in a regular classroom just by wandering around and informally observing student progress. More importantly, the sudden loss of student interaction meant there was less

in the way of peer assisted learning taking place as students found it more difficult to seek or give advice.

For my communication classes, such as English Communication, English Discussion, and English Project, this lack of social interaction has had the biggest impact. Classes that had been full of life in the classroom suddenly became quiet and listless when online. New ways had to be found to increase participation through the use of games, interactive activities, and breakout rooms. This wasn't the case in every class, however. Classes which had a strong social structure as a full class actually functioned well when online. Students were confident enough in their peers to be able to respond and participate positively and vocally. These classes were most notable because during Zoom sessions, almost everyone would have video cameras on, and during breakout times, there was always a vibrant discourse. By contrast, classes which had a group-based social structure (with students more socially comfortable when working with their close circle of friends) were often reluctant to fully engage when classes were online. During full class sessions on Zoom, cameras would almost always be off, and it was very difficult to instigate any form of interaction or responsiveness to activities. I am certain for these students, they felt very strongly that their online communication classes were not nearly as effective as those that were held face-to-face.

Discussion and Conclusion

From the results of the survey, our own observations, and from discussions with other teachers, the general consensus seems clear—namely, that students generally feel that ERT courses are not as effective as classes that are held face-to-face. This is particularly so for classes that involve much social interaction, such as any of the communication courses or the smaller seminar classes. On top of this, they feel that their progress is poor in these conditions, with the vast majority feeling that they have shown

little or no improvement in English ability across the four base-skill areas (see Figures 4 to 7) under ERT. This perception is, in many cases, no more than that—an assessment of their courses from a viewpoint biased by dissatisfaction and frustration with having to study online. In reality, as we have found, student progress in many areas is sound. Work that has been submitted is of a higher-than-normal standard, and grades also show a clear improvement—proof positive that learning is indeed taking place.

Learner frustrations with the more socially based communication classes do, however, need to be addressed. One of the key goals for English majors enrolled in these departments is to improve their communication skills, which, while not impossible, is markedly more difficult in an online environment. Natural interaction in many situations is almost impossible, and access to teacher feedback and support is likely to be difficult. As we have found, though, a lot of this is dependent on the social dynamic within the class, and experiences vary greatly from class to class.

How can these issues be addressed? One thing that has come out of ERT is that increased use of online instruction is almost certainly here to stay. As the students themselves have pointed out, some class types are better suited to online delivery—in particular, lecture-style classes and some skills courses. Offering these classes online and asynchronously has many advantages for both the students and the school. Teachers can prepare courses beforehand and modify them as needs arise. Students have more freedom over when and how they participate and can use the material for subsequent review purposes. For schools, this allows more flexibility in staffing and timetabling.

With all this in mind, we suggest the following:

1. That schools encourage the structured and effective development of selected online courses to run in conjunction with regular face-to-face courses. These need to be backed up by investment in infrastructure, robust teacher training, and acceptance of their academic

value by the institution.

2. That access to online courses, particularly those with resources of asynchronous material, be made available to the community as a whole. This not only promotes the university, but also offers academic opportunities to those who might not have opportunities to study. This fits well with Sustainable Development Goal #4: Quality Education.
3. That clear guidelines be put in place for how students should participate in online classes. These should be explained in an orientation before courses start and include training activities which would cover proper etiquette for different types of classes, along with the reasoning behind them. Students are often unaware that their own behavior has a strong effect on the class dynamic, and what they do can hinder the progress of other students.

There is no doubt that the pandemic has affected all our lives in deep and traumatic ways, but there are positives to be taken out of it as well. The sudden shift to ERT has offered teachers who would never have considered it before a chance to broaden their skills. It has shown schools that courses delivered online can be just as viable as face-to-face instruction, and that a more flexible approach is merited. Finally, as we have shown in this paper, it has placed students in a position where they have had to study in new ways. For many of them, this has been a frustrating and trying experience, but they have gained skills which will allow them to make the most of online instruction in their classes from now on, plus incorporate marketable skills into their future employment opportunities.

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Appendix A

Student Survey: Your Attitudes Towards Online Learning

Student Survey: Your Attitudes Towards Online Learning

[Available online: <https://forms.gle/sD6A7P1Lai1UuTz8>]

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, almost all university students have experienced studying online. This questionnaire is part of our (Malcolm Swanson and Andrew Zitzmann) research project "EFL Students' Attitudes Towards the Effectiveness of Emergency Remote Teaching Programs." We would like to hear about your attitudes to online learning. All your responses are confidential. By answering these questions, you agree to our use of your answers in our report. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

COVID-19 のパンデミックが始まって以来、ほとんどの大学生がオンライン学習を経験しています。この度は、私ども (Malcolm Swanson and Andrew Zitzmann) の研究 (Japanese EFL student attitudes towards online learning) につきまして参加をご検討いただけますことに心より感謝申し上げます。皆さんのオンライン学習に対する意識をお聞きしたいと思います。全ての解答は機密です。十分にご理解をいただきました上で、ご同意頂けるかどうか、あなたの自由意思でご決定ください。

Q1. What is your current status? 現在の状況はどうですか?

- All my classes are face-to-face (私の授業は全て対面式です)
- All my classes are online (私の授業は全てオンライン式です)
- I have both face-to-face AND online classes (対面式とオンライン式の両方のクラスです)

Q2. I am satisfied with the ONLINE classes I have taken so far this year. 今年、これまでに受講したオンライン授業に満足している。

- 1 = Strongly disagree (-) 非常にそう思わない
- 5 = Strongly agree (+) 非常にそう思う

Q3. I am satisfied with the FACE-TO-FACE classes I have taken so far this year. 今年、これまでに受講した対面授業に満足している。

- 1 = Strongly disagree (-) 非常にそう思わない
- 5 = Strongly agree (+) 非常にそう思う

Q4. How would you like your classes to be conducted in the future? 今後、どのように授業を進めていきたいですか?

- All face-to-face 全て対面式
- Mostly face-to-face 主に対面式
- Either is OK どちらでも良い
- Mostly online 主にオンライン式
- All online 全てオンライン式

Q5. What style would you prefer for these types of classes?

このような授業の場合、どのようなスタイルが良いでしょうか？

1. On-demand オンデマンド
2. Real time online リアルタイムオンライン
3. Face-to-face 対面式

- Communication classes コミュニケーション授業
- Seminar (small) classes ゼミ式 (少人数) 授業
- Lecture (large) classes 講義 (大人数) 授業
- Skills classes (ex. writing, TOEIC) スキル授業 (例 TOEIC, 作文)
- Communication classes コミュニケーション授業
- Seminar (small) classes ゼミ式 (少人数) 授業
- Lecture (large) classes 講義 (大人数) 授業
- Skills classes (ex. writing, TOEIC) スキル授業 (例 TOEIC, 作文)

My Progress

How do you feel about your progress in learning English skills since learning online began?

オンライン学習が始まってからの英語スキルの習得状況について、どのように感じていますか？

Q6. My English-SPEAKING skills... 私の英語スピーキング力 ...

- improved a lot 非常に良くなった
- didn't change 変わらなかった
- improved a little ちょっと良くなった
- got worse 悪化した

Q7. Why do you think so? なぜそう思うのか？

Q8. My English-LISTENING skills... 私の英語リスニング力 ...

- improved a lot 非常に良くなった
- didn't change 変わらなかった
- improved a little ちょっと良くなった
- got worse 悪化した

Q9. Why do you think so? なぜそう思うのか？

Q10. My English-WRITING skills... 私の英語ライティング力 ...

- improved a lot 非常に良くなった
- didn't change 変わらなかった
- improved a little ちょっと良くなった
- got worse 悪化した

Q11. Why do you think so? なぜそう思うのか？

Q12. My English-READING skills... 私の英語リーディング力 ...

- improved a lot 非常に良くなった
- didn't change 変わらなかった
- improved a little ちょっと良くなった
- got worse 悪化した

Q13. Why do you think so? なぜそう思うのか？

Q14. Do you agree with the following aspects of online learning? オンライン学習の以下の点に賛成ですか?

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Strongly Agree 非常に思う | 4. Disagree 思わない |
| 2. Agree 思う | 5. Strongly Disagree 非常に思わない |
| 3. No opinion 意見なし | |

- I can study at my own pace 自分のペースで勉強できる
- I can talk easily with other students 他の学生と気軽に話ができる
- It is easy to understand what to do 何をすればいいのかわかりやすい
- I can easily ask for help 気軽に相談できる
- There is less homework 宿題の量が少ない
- It is easy to review the material 教材の復習がしやすい
- I like meeting others on video ビデオで他の人と会うのが好き
- It is easy to share information with others 他の人と情報を共有することが容易で
- Online activities are interesting オンライン活動が面白い
- I can study from home 家で勉強できる

About You 自分について

Q15. What year are you in? 何年生ですか?

- 1年生
- 2年生
- 3年生
- 4年生

Q16. Are you an English major? 英語を専攻していますか?

- Yes
- No

緊急の遠隔授業プログラムの効果に対する EFL 学生の意識

アンデリユー・ジッツマン、マルコム・スワンソン

<要 旨>

新型コロナウイルス感染症によるパンデミックのため遠隔授業が突然導入され、各大学では慣れない授業形態に対応することを強いられた。経験もスキルも支援も乏しい中、教員も学生もオンライン環境で授業を実施または受講する環境に適応しなくてはならなかった。本稿ではこの変化がもたらした影響について考察する。特に日本の英語学習者達が遠隔授業をどれほど効果的であると感じたか、その向き合い方に注目する。

キーワード：緊急の遠隔授業、オンライン学習、同期型、非同期型、プログラムの有効性