

Remote Teaching Practices Survey Report, Fall 2020

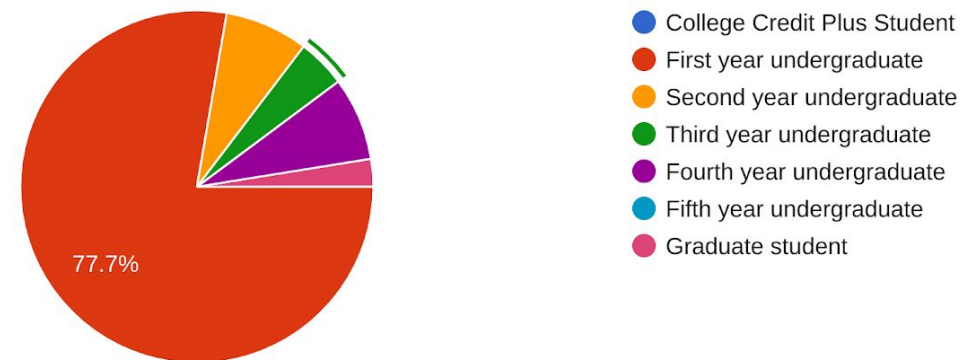
Summary

Immediately following Heidelberg's pivot to Remote Teaching in September-October 2020, the Owen Center for Teaching and Learning, in coordination with CNIT, surveyed Heidelberg students to gather information about our remote teaching practices. The survey was a shortened version of the Spring 2020 Remote Teaching Practices Survey, administered in May of 2020. The report based on the Spring 2020 survey results is available [here](#). The surveys collected information about instructional practices, learning experiences, and feedback from the perspectives of both faculty and students. The survey contained a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions. 157 students responded to the survey, or approximately 15% of the student population. First-year students are disproportionately represented, as AIM Hei faculty were asked to share their survey with their groups.

Student Responses by Class Year

What class year are you?

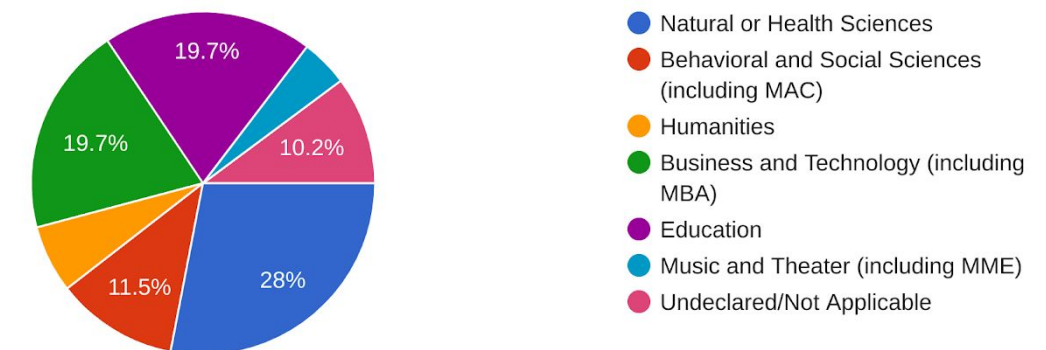
157 responses



Student Responses by Academic Area

What academic area is your major in?

157 responses



Overall, student responses were quite positive. They expressed widespread appreciation for the work faculty, and Heidelberg as a whole, are doing to try and make the best of a bad situation. Student perception of online learning was split - some students stated that they really enjoy online learning, while others expressed a strong desire for more in-person classes. Most of the negative comments were related to the general limitations COVID-19 presents for teaching and learning (implications of social distancing on course design and delivery, especially), and therefore cannot easily be solved. Students also provided generally constructive criticism about their experiences, some of which is addressed in the Takeaways section of this summary report.

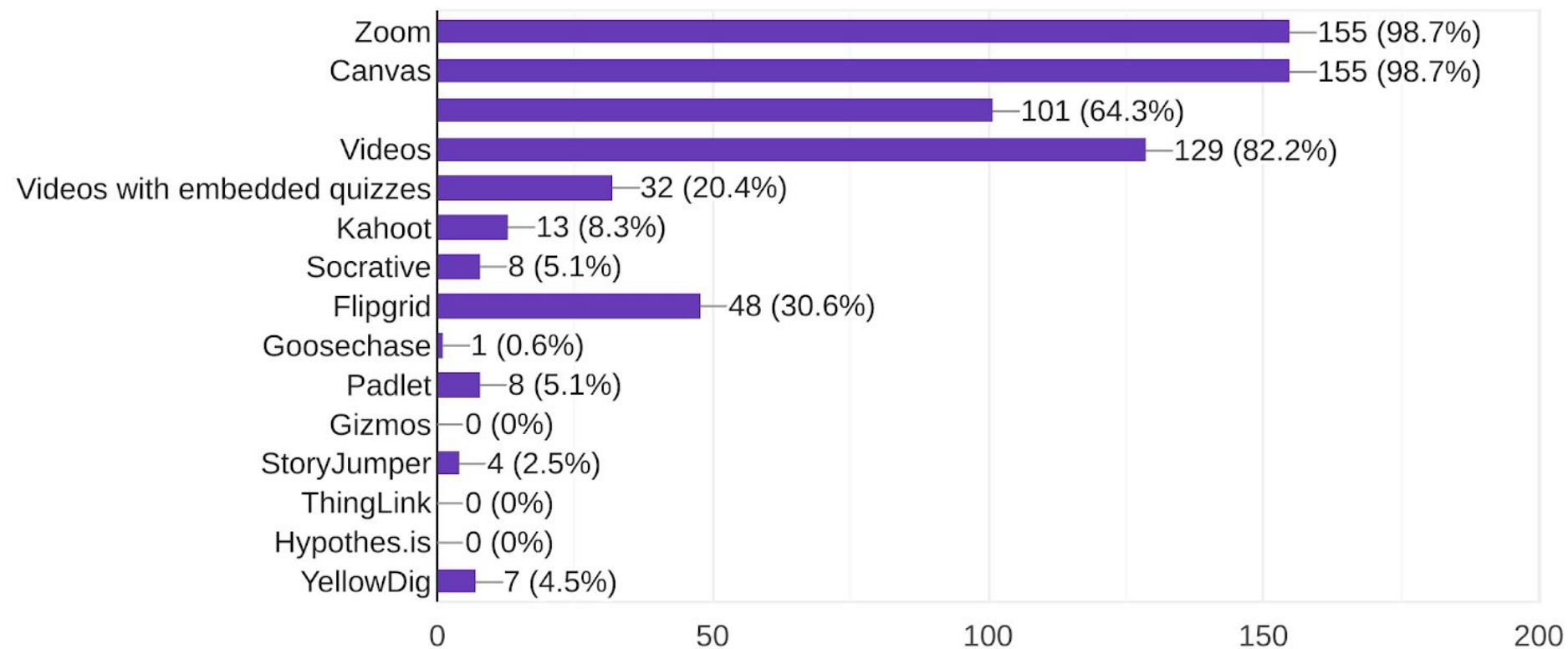
Faculty may view the complete survey data [here](#). However, six student responses to the question “Please tell us about some of the challenges of your Fall 2020 remote learning experiences” have been blacked out to protect the confidentiality of instructors and departments who were identified, not by name, but by course/discipline. Of those six responses, three are duplicate entries of the same response. Based on recommendations from FPC, the data from those 6 cells was deleted from the spreadsheet, and those cells were blacked out to signify the edits.

Faculty Use of Tech Tools

Students reported nearly universal faculty use of Canvas and Zoom, which represents a slight uptick in use from the Spring (94% in Spring vs. 98.7% in Fall). Students also reported a substantial increase in the use of videos by faculty (up from 58% in the Spring to 82% in the Fall) and a slight increase in the use of G Suite tools (up from 60% in the Spring to 64% in the fall). Students also reported a substantial increase in the use of Flipgrid (up from 8% to nearly 31%).

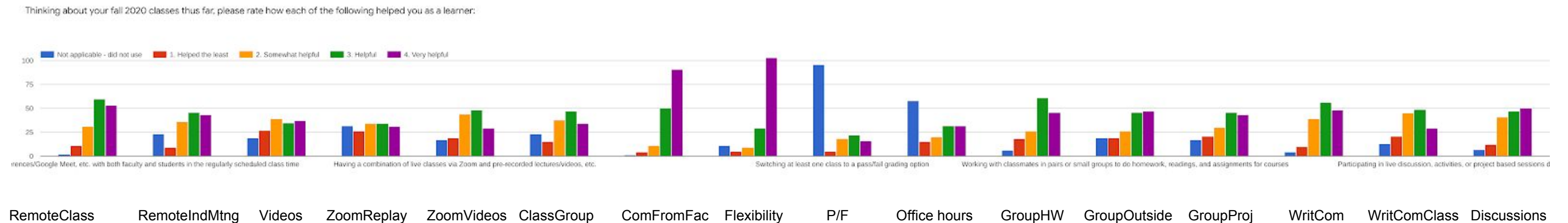
Thinking about your fall 2020 classes thus far, what technology tools did your faculty use in their teaching? Please check all that apply.

157 responses



Student Learning

Students were asked about which faculty instructional practices helped them learn course materials. The instructional practices that students **rated most highly** as helping them learn were: participating in live class sessions, receiving frequent communication from their faculty, and completing independent coursework. The instructional practice that was **rated most poorly** in helping students learn was watching replays of Zoom classes.



Student Experiences

Students were asked open ended questions about their positive and negative experiences with remote learning. In both their reports of positive experiences and negative experiences several recurring themes appear.

Positive Aspects of Their Remote Learning Experiences

- **Faculty.** The most frequently reported positive aspect of our students' experience with remote teaching was faculty/professors/teachers. Students specifically mentioned faculty communication with students, faculty empathy and understanding, and faculty flexibility as positive aspects of their remote learning experience.
- **Flexibility/Pacing of Remote Courses.** Several students reported appreciating the ability to self-pace some of their learning for remote courses, and enjoying online learning in general.
- **Teaching methods.** Different students reported positive experiences with different teaching methods. Synchronous discussions or group work, asynchronous lectures, video lectures, Zoom sessions, and online assignments were all mentioned as positive aspects of the student experience with remote teaching.
- **Online Submissions/Canvas.** Multiple students reported appreciating being able to access course materials on Canvas and being able to submit assignments on Canvas.

Negative Aspects of Their Remote Learning Experiences

- **Inconsistency in Canvas Organization and Use across the Faculty.** Multiple students reported that it was difficult/confusing to navigate Canvas because each professor uses the platform differently. Several students also indicated that some faculty aren't clearly indicating when assignments are due on Canvas, which adds to the students confusion or difficulty navigating the platform.
- **Zoom Fatigue.** Multiple students reported being on Zoom for so many classes is exhausting and/or that it is difficult to stay engaged or pay attention for a long Zoom lecture. Additionally, some students reported that long lectures on Zoom made it difficult to remain focused and engaged with class.
- **Transferable Academic Skills.** Multiple students reported struggling with time management, staying up-to-date with online course material, managing their stress, and staying motivated.

- **Technology Problems.** Some students reported trouble with their personal computers, but many reported issues with internet connectivity. Some student comments indicate that students are having connectivity issues both in the dorms/on campus and at home.
- **Mental Health.** Multiple students reported negative experiences related to mental health, including that the switch to and from remote learning was stressful, feelings of isolation during remote learning,

Takeaways

The survey results indicate that, overall, Heidelberg faculty have done an excellent job of supporting students and navigating the switch to and from remote teaching in the Fall 2020 semester. The survey also highlights more widespread and consistent use of technology tools that were taught as part of the LOTL course (Canvas, Videos, Zoom, and Flipgrid especially). Consistent use of tech tools, and limiting the diversity/variety of tools used helps our students navigate all of their different courses.

There are also several areas or opportunities for improvement that this survey revealed, and the CTL and CNIT will pursue:

1. **Clearer recommendations/guidelines for faculty on how to organize a Canvas page.** While we cannot (and will not) mandate how faculty should set up Canvas, the CTL can be clearer and more proactive in promoting consistency among our faculty in terms of how to effectively organize a Canvas page, how to use the gradebook, and how to make sure all deadlines are posted and visible, etc. The CTL will create and publish a template/shell in Canvas Commons for faculty to use (if they so choose).
2. **More resources/tutorials/academic support specific for online courses, online learners, and tech tools.** All existing academic support is offered in both face-to-face and remote formats, but the CTL can do a better job of creating resources and supports specific to online learners. Academic coaches can also create tutorials and hold workshop sessions teaching students how to use common tech tools such as Canvas, Google Workspace (formerly G Suite), Microsoft Office, etc.
3. **Provide targeted training for the tech tools faculty are using in classes and promote consistent tech tool adoption campus-wide.** Based on the data gathered from students, there are a limited number of tech tools used by a substantial number of faculty (Canvas, Zoom, Panopto/Studio, Google Workspace, Flipgrid, etc.). The CTL can provide targeted support for those tech tools and encourage the use of those tools more widely across campus.
4. **CNIT will continue to monitor internet usage and bandwidth needs.**