

Remote Class Attendance Considerations for School Psychology Programs

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Abstract

As many classes return to in-person format, students ask to attend class remotely when they are ill or out of town. While this appears to be a simple accommodation that suits the needs of instructors and students alike, it should be evaluated carefully before being applied across the whole school psychology program of study. This poster will include a list of the courses that allow remote attendance without compromising student learning in and outside of the classroom. There will also be student and faculty input about their views on why remote attendance should and should not be maintained when COVID-19 is less of a concern keeping everyone attending from home.

Introduction

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many undergraduate and graduate courses were forced to adapt to emergency remote teaching. Though in-person attendance has resumed across most campuses, the same technology that allowed emergency remote teaching is still available. Students are subsequently asking to attend class remotely.

Before the pandemic, there was already a precedent for remote attendance with HyFlex courses that blend online and face-to-face attendance at the students' discretion (Abdelmalak & Parra, 2016). One reason to adopt more flexible attendance policies are for students to balance demands from coursework, work, family, and other commitments. Some of the challenges of HyFlex course designs include students not attending by any modality and technical difficulties with web conferencing tools. It is also possible to blend online and in-person courses in a ways that is less flexible and students must attend in the prescribed format (e.g., synchronous, asynchronous, or in person) (Lightner & Lightner-Laws, 2016).

High school students who attended full days of classes remotely reported social, emotional, and academic well-being were lower than peers who continued to attend in person (Duckworth et al., 2021). More research is needed about the impact of occasional remote attendance on learning, satisfaction, and other important variables.

Considerations

Student Variables

- Distance from campus, illness, other reasons to request remote attendance
- Technology and environment to attend class
- Participation and motivation
- Course satisfaction

Instructor Variables

- Familiarity with technology for remote attendance
- Managing in person and remote classroom environment
- Materials used in class (presentation slides, videos)

Class Variables

- How often the course meets
- Class participation requirements
- Hands-on experiences, labs, group work

Program Variables

- Is the school psychology program online, hybrid, or in person?
- How is this course being represented in NASP and other types of accreditation?
- How many classes are already being delivered online or blended?
- Are students meeting objectives when they attend remotely?

Student Testimony

"The biggest argument for in-person class attendance is to increase engagement between participants. While this is understandable, there are very few class sessions/activities that I believe could not have been successfully done using the technology already present in classrooms. I believe that the demand for more well-trained school psychologists far outweighs the slight advantages of compulsory in-person attendance. As graduate students, we are the ones accountable to show that we have learned material sufficiently and are capable of determining if in-person attendance is necessary to be able to do so."

- Samantha Rawlings, Practicum & Commuter Student

"With the low amount of school psychology students in the program and in the field, we should try and accommodate these students in any way we can to ensure success within the program"

- Dylan Moore, Practicum Student

UNK School Psychology Courses

Course	Course Delivery
Academic Problem-Solving Assessment	In Person
Orientation to School Psychology	Blended
Cognitive Assessment	In Person
Behavioral Problem-Solving Assessment	In Person
Child and Adolescent Dev. & Intervention	Blended
Infant & Preschool Assessment	In Person
Globalization of School Psychology	Online
Research Methods	In Person
Problem Solving Consultation	Blended
Interventions Practicum	In Person
Problem Solving Assessment Practicum	In Person
Techniques of Counseling	In Person
Advanced Educational Psychology	Online
Multicultural Counseling	Online
Ethical, Legal and Professional Practice in Schools	Blended
Scholarly Study	Blended

Implications and Future Directions

Systematic research about the impact of remote attendance is needed. Do students who attend remotely engage as much as peers who attend in person? Is retention of material similar? Is course satisfaction higher? Additional questions to answer include the following: What technology best suits the needs of remote attendance of a few students and in-person attendance of others? Are certain class structures and types of activities better for HyFlex courses?

References

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