

Teacher Effectiveness: What Do Students And Instructors Say?

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ABSTRACT

Educators often discuss teaching strategies as the means to enhance students' education; however, many effective educators share characteristics that also strongly influence students' learning. Few studies have made progress in identifying the characteristics of effective teachers. This study used data from an online survey completed by 733 graduate or undergraduate university students and 92 full time university instructors to explore their perceptions about the characteristics of effective university instructors. Instructors, undergraduate and graduate students from a Catholic, Liberal Arts University participate in an online survey. The survey was used to explore the characteristics of effective instructors who taught online and on-ground college courses. Using a Likert scale rating and a rank ordering of importance of 19 characteristics which were combined to inform 10 categories, participants rated how important the viewed behaviors/characteristics in an effective instructor for online and on-ground coursework. Results indicated important similarities and differences in perceptions between instructors and students. Both students and instructors rated knowledgeable as the most important characteristic in online and on-ground instruction. The only characteristic that differed depending on the age of the participant was humor. The younger the participant, the more important humor in instruction was.

Keywords: Teacher effectiveness, Higher education, Teaching Characteristics, Students' learning

INTRODUCTION

Teaching effectiveness is a topic of significant conversation and attention in the media, the legislative area, and education, but there is little agreement about what "teacher effectiveness" actually means. Lewis et al. [8] indicated that teacher effectiveness is a "complex phenomenon, and there is little consensus on what it is or how to measure it" (p. iii). Almost two decades later, educators are no closer to reaching a consensus about the characteristics that determine teacher effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness has been assessed in many different ways, including: instructors' qualifications, their behavior/characteristics, the instructional practices used, student achievement, or a combination of these factors [11].

Especially in higher education, students' perceptions are often viewed as a central element in determining teacher effectiveness. Universities have used student course evaluations extensively as a means for measuring teacher effectiveness [4]. Faculty evaluations have been used in at least three different ways: as formative measures to help faculty improve teaching

and course content, summative evaluations of teaching effectiveness, and as information to aid students in selecting courses and instructors [4].

In addition, much research has been conducted in an attempt to identify the characteristics of effective teachers. As early as 1995, Clark [5] used student completed university evaluation forms to identify qualities of effective university instructors. The results indicated that students felt effective instructors' possessed important cognitive and affective components. The cognitive skills included content, organization of ideas, clarity of concepts, and effective presentation skills. Four affective components of increasing student interest, encouraging participation, developing interpersonal relations, and enhancing communication were identified.

By contrast, in their qualitative study of teacher effectiveness, Madsen and Cassidy [9] examined educators' perception of effective teaching behaviors rather than students' perceptions of effective teaching. In analyzing their data, Madsen and Cassidy [9] focused on categories of behaviors rather than listing individual teaching characteristics. Experienced instructors, student teachers, and beginning education students with no teaching experience observed videos of instructors and analyzed the instruction across 5 pre-identified dimensions of teacher behavior: instructional practices, content delivery, classroom environment, student learning, and student social interaction. The study participants identified teachers' instructional practices as the most important component that differentiated effective instructors from those who were viewed as less effective, while teacher delivery was the least important characteristic and according to their results had little impact on teacher effectiveness.

Stronge, Ward, and Grant [11] in their research placed the emphasis of teacher effectiveness on student achievement rather than teacher instructional practices. Stronge, et al. determined teacher effectiveness by comparing the characteristics of teachers whose students had high academic growth to those whose students experienced low academic growth. The two groups of instructors were compared across 15 characteristics which Stronge, et al. [11] then organized into 4 dimensions: instructional delivery, student assessment, classroom learning environments, and personal qualities. Differences were found between the instructors of high and low achieving students in two of the dimensions: classroom environment and personal qualities. However, in contrast to Madsen and Cassidy's [9] findings, no difference was found between the groups in the dimensions of teacher instructional delivery and student assessment. The dimensions of students' social interactions and teachers' personal characteristics were not examined in this study.

Instructors of high achieving students scored significantly higher in the dimension of the classroom learning environment and its two components: managing and organizing the environment. Managing the classroom environment included establishing classroom routines, monitoring student behavior, and managing time efficiently and effectively. The other dimension of the classroom environment encompassed classroom organization, which included the availability of student materials, the classroom layout, and effective use of space.

Significant differences were found in two dimensions of personal qualities between academically effective and less academically effective teachers. Instructors of high achieving students scored higher in the areas of respect and fairness. In addition, they also evidenced stronger positive relationships with their students when compared with the instructors of lower achieving students [11]. These results were similar to those found in an earlier

exploratory study analyzing the educational practices of more and less academically effective instructors [12].

Depending on whose perspective is considered, effective teaching practices may be identified differently. Kern [7], determined that students and teachers have different classroom expectations. Williams and Burden [13] found that this difference can negatively affect learners' satisfaction, motivation and interest in learning, and their academic achievement. In contrast, a close match between students' and teachers' perceptions as to what constitutes effective instruction may result in greater student gains and motivation [10]. Despite the importance of achieving consensus between instructors and students, few studies have compared teachers' and students' perceptions of effective teaching [3, 1]. The present study addresses this void in the literature by comparing instructors' and students' perceptions regarding effective instructional practices. The literature review provided the basis for the research questions.

1. What do students perceive to be characteristics of effective online and on-ground instructors?
2. What do instructors perceive to be characteristics of effective online and on-ground instructors?
3. How do the perceived characteristics of effective teachers differ with regards to age, gender, major, and/or course delivery?

METHOD

Full-time instructors and undergraduate and graduate students from a Catholic, Liberal Arts university that offers on-ground as well as online educational programs throughout the United States were invited via email to participate in an online survey. The survey was developed by the researchers based on prior studies and was pilot tested with 20 students who provided feedback for improvement. The study was then approved by the University's IRB.

All participants were adults who provided consent and then completed an online survey which was distributed during the spring 2016 and spring 2017 semesters. The anonymous, voluntary survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Students and instructors supplied their demographic information and then rated the importance of 19 teacher characteristics/behaviors in online or on-ground settings. Those 19 characteristics/behaviors were combined into 10 qualities which students and instructors used to rate the importance of the instructional characteristics in the online and on-ground settings based upon the categories determined by Delaney, et al. [6].

RESULTS

Students' Demographics

A total of 733 undergraduate and graduate students participated in the study. There were 450 female students and 215 male students, 68 students did not indicate their gender. Three hundred and seventy-five students were undergraduate, 290 students were graduate level, with 68 students not indicating their current educational level. When asked how they have completed college coursework, 142 reported that they had only taken traditional on-ground courses, 233 indicated that they had taken online courses only, and 290 stated that they have taken some combination of both on-ground and online coursework. Sixty-eight students did not answer this question. Students reported a variety of majors including, but not limited to: Business, Social Work, Biology, Education, and Computer Information Systems.

Participants were grouped into three age ranges. The respondents between the ages of 18-29 years of age composed 30% of the sample. Forty to 49 year - old respondents constituted the

next largest group, or 22% of the sample. Students between 30-39 years of age composed 21% of the sample.

Students' Means

Participants were asked to rate how important behaviors/characteristics were in an effective instructor for on-ground coursework and then again for online coursework (if the student had taken online coursework). Ratings were scored 1-4 with 1 being Not important at all, 2 was a Little important, 3 was Important, and 4 was Absolutely necessary. The means for each item are listed followed by the numerical order of importance (see Table 1). Students indicated that the three most important behaviors/characteristics for on-ground instructors were: "Delivers concepts clearly and comprehensively" (3.82), "Demonstrates foundational and current knowledge about content" (3.81), and "Readily responds to student concerns and/or questions" (3.69).

Table 1
Characteristics/Behaviors in Online and On-ground Instructors by Mean and Order of Importance- Students' Responses

Characteristics/Behaviors	Online Mean*	On-ground Mean*
Delivers concepts clearly and comprehensively	3.79 (1)	3.82 (1)
Demonstrates foundational and current knowledge about content	3.76 (3)	3.81 (2)
Readily responds to student concerns and/or questions	3.79 (2)	3.69 (3)
Is professional and respectful in dealings with students and colleagues	3.68 (4)	3.66 (4)
Applies course content to current, practical solutions	3.46 (8)	3.61 (5)
Explains difficult concepts in multiple ways	3.51 (7)	3.59 (6)
Treats students fairly and does not have "favorites."	3.41 (9)	3.58 (7)
Delivery of course content flows in organized manner	3.55 (6)	3.56 (8)
Assigns the appropriate workload at the appropriate level of difficulty	3.57 (5)	3.52 (9)
Encourages varying ideas and opinions into the classroom	3.41 (10)	3.36 (10)
Explains the information on the syllabus and agenda and its organization	3.41 (11)	3.33 (11)
Recognizes and appreciates student diversity	3.29 (13)	3.33 (12)
Encourages students' active participation with course content	3.25 (14)	3.28 (13)
Clearly explains course rules and policies	3.37 (12)	3.27 (14)
Provides effective and sympathetic guidance	3.21 (16)	3.25 (15)
Increases students' interest in the topic	3.25 (15)	3.18 (16)
Encourages students seek additional support within & in addition to lesson	3.17 (17)	3.02 (17)
Uses humor effectively and appropriately to reduce student stress/ anxiety	2.72 (18)	2.94 (18)
Presents course content in an amusing or humorous way	2.60 (19)	2.83 (19)

***Note. Mean out of a possible 4.0**

The means and numerical order for each statements as rated for online instructors are also found in Table 1. Students indicated that the three most important behaviors/characteristics for online instructors were: "Delivers concepts clearly and comprehensively" (3.79), "Readily responds to student concerns and/or questions" (3.79), and "Demonstrates foundational and current knowledge about content" (3.76). It is interesting to note that the highest and lowest rated characteristics/behaviors for both on-ground and online instructors were the same.

In addition to determining a rating for each statement, the final survey question asked students to identify the three most important qualities in their on-ground instructor from ten qualities. 43% of students indicated "Knowledgeable," 17 % of students indicated "Respectful," and 11% indicated "Approachable." These qualities were followed by "Engaging" (8%), "Communicative"

(7%), "Organized" (5%), "Responsive" (5%), "Fair" (5%), "Professional" (4%) and "Humorous" (1%).

Online students rated the three most important qualities in their online instructor (see Table 2), 34% of students indicated "Knowledgeable," 17 % of students indicated "Communicative," and 12% indicated "Respectful." These were followed by "Engaging" (8%), "Approachable" (7%), "Organized" (6%), "Responsive" (6%), "Fair" (5%), "Professional" (4%) and "Humorous" (1%). It is interesting that "Approachable" was one of the top three characteristics for on-ground instructors, but "communicative" was more important for online instructors. This difference in characteristics appears to be a function of the format in which the course content is presented.

Table 2
Important Qualities of Online and On-ground Instructors by Order of Importance- Students' Responses

Order of Importance	Online	On-ground
1	Knowledgeable	
2	Respectful	Communicative
3	Approachable	Respectful
4	Engaging	Engaging
5	Communicative	Approachable
6	Organized	Organized
7	Fair	Responsive
8	Professional	Fair
9	Responsive	Professional
10	Humorous	Humorous

Similar, to the outcome regarding characteristics/behaviors, the highest and lowest rated qualities of instructors were similar for both on-ground and online instructors.

Additionally, Spearman's rho correlations were conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the type of student/student demographics (specifically, gender, age, major, location, and level of education) and their ratings regarding characteristic/behavior of instructors. Several significant associations were noted. First, Age and the two items related to Instructors' use of humor online and Age and one item regarding Instructors' use of humor on-ground were significant and negatively related. This indicates that younger students' view the use of humor as more important compared to older students. Secondly, College level and the two items related to Instructors' use of humor online and on-ground were significant and negatively related. This reveals that undergraduate students' view humor as more important for Instructor effectiveness than Graduate level students, and do so for both online and on-ground teaching (See Table 3). No other significant associations were found which suggests that gender, age, major, location, and level of education are generally not related to the characteristics/behaviors viewed as important in effective instructors. Therefore, these desired or important characteristics/behaviors for instructors were consistent across all other varying types of students.

Table 3
Spearman's rho Significant Correlations
Correlations

			Are you an Undergraduate or a Graduate?	Presents course content in an amusing or entertaining way- Online
Spearman's rho	Are you an Undergraduate or a Graduate?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.126**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.003
		N	665	542
	Presents course content in an amusing or entertaining way- Online	Correlation Coefficient	-.126**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.
		N	542	542

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			Are you an Undergraduate or a Graduate?	Uses humor effectively and appropriately to reduce students stress/anxiety- Online
Spearman's rho	Are you an Undergraduate or a Graduate?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.153**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	665	541
	Uses humor effectively and appropriately to reduce students stress/anxiety- Online	Correlation Coefficient	-.153**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	541	541

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			What is your age?	Presents course content in an amusing or entertaining way-Online
Spearman's rho	What is your age?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.101*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.019
		N	665	542
	Presents course content in an amusing or entertaining way- Online	Correlation Coefficient	-.101*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.
		N	542	542

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			What is your age?	Uses humor effectively and appropriately to reduce students stress/anxiety-Online
Spearman's rho	What is your age?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.099*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.022
		N	665	541
	Uses humor effectively and appropriately to reduce students stress/anxiety- Online	Correlation Coefficient	-.099*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	.
		N	541	541

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			Are you an Undergraduate or a Graduate?	Presents course content in an amusing or entertaining way-On-ground
Spearman's rho	Are you an Undergraduate or a Graduate?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.165**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	665	414
	Presents course content in an amusing or entertaining way- On-ground	Correlation Coefficient	-.165**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	414	414

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			Are you an Undergraduate or a Graduate?	Uses humor effectively and appropriately to reduce student stress/anxiety-On-ground
Spearman's rho	Are you an Undergraduate or a Graduate?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.096*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.050
		N	665	414
	Uses humor effectively and appropriately to reduce student stress/anxiety- On-ground	Correlation Coefficient	-.096*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	.
		N	414	414

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			What is your age?	Presents course content in an amusing or entertaining way- On-ground
Spearman's rho	What is your age?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.177**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	665	414
	Presents course content in an amusing or entertaining way- On-ground	Correlation Coefficient	-.177**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	414	414

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

No other significant associations were found which suggests that gender, age, major, location, and level of education are not related to the characteristics/behaviors viewed as important in effective instructors. Therefore, these desired or important characteristics/behaviors for instructors were consistent across varying types of students.

Instructors' Demographics

A total of 92 full-time instructors participated in the study. There were 44 female and 33 male instructors, 15 instructors did not indicate their gender. 31 Instructors taught at the undergraduate level, while 10 taught graduate level and 39 taught at both levels. 12 Instructors did not indicate their current teaching level. When asked how they have taught college courses, 18 reported that they have taught traditional on-ground courses only, 6 taught online courses only, and 56 stated that they have taught some combination of both traditional and online coursework. Twelve instructors did not answer this question. Instructors came from a variety of disciplines including, but not limited to: Business, Social Work, Biology, Education, and Computer Information Systems.

Instructors were grouped into 4 age ranges. The respondents between the ages of 50-59 years of age composed 32% of the sample. Forty to 49 year - old respondents constituted the next largest group at 21% of the sample. Instructors between 60-69 years of age, comprised 19% and 30-39 years of age composed 11% of the sample.

Instructors' Means

Instructors completed the same survey as students. They were also asked to rate how important behaviors/characteristics were in an effective instructor for on-ground coursework and then again for online coursework. According to instructors, the three most important behaviors/characteristics for on-ground instructors were: "Demonstrates foundational and current knowledge about content" (3.91) "Is professional and respectful in dealings with students and colleagues (3.89) and "Delivers concepts clearly and comprehensively" (3.80).

Table 4
Characteristics/Behaviors in Online and On-ground Instructors by Mean and Order of Importance- Instructors' Responses

Characteristics/Behaviors	Online Mean*	On-ground Mean*
Is professional and respectful in dealings with students and colleagues	3.82 (1)	3.89 (2)
Delivers concepts clearly and comprehensively	3.69 (2)	3.80 (3)
Demonstrates foundational and current knowledge about content	3.64 (5)	3.91 (1)
Treats students fairly and does not have "favorites."	3.65 (4)	3.79 (4)
Clearly explains course rules and policies	3.66 (3)	3.61 (10)
Encourages students' active participation with course content	3.55 (8)	3.69 (6)
Recognizes and appreciates student diversity	3.54 (9)	3.61 (9)
Readily responds to student concerns and/or questions	3.48 (11)	3.67 (7)
Applies course content to current, practical solutions	3.45 (13)	3.69 (5)
Explains difficult concepts in multiple ways	3.50 (10)	3.61 (8)
Delivery of course content flows in organized manner	3.61 (6)	3.56 (12)
Encourages varying ideas and opinions into the classroom	3.57 (7)	3.57 (11)
Assigns the appropriate workload at the appropriate level of difficulty	3.48 (12)	3.47 (13)
Encourages students seek additional support within & in addition to lesson	3.40 (14)	3.35 (15)
Explains the information on the syllabus and agenda and its organization	3.37 (15)	3.30 (17)
Provides effective and sympathetic guidance	3.33 (16)	3.41 (14)
Increases students' interest in the topic	3.16 (17)	3.31 (16)
Uses humor effectively and appropriately to reduce student stress/anxiety	2.54 (18)	3.07 (18)
Presents course content in an amusing or humorous way	2.43 (19)	2.68 (19)

*Note. Mean out of a possible 4.0

The means and numerical order for each statements as rated by instructors for online instruction are also found in Table 3. The three most important behaviors/characteristics for online instructors were: "Is professional and respectful in dealings with students" (3.82), "Delivers concepts clearly and comprehensively" (3.69), and "Clearly explains course rules and policies" (3.66).

It is interesting to note that the highest and lowest rated characteristics/behaviors for both on-ground and online instructors were similar. However, the mid-rankings of characteristics varied between on-ground and online teaching.

In addition to determining a mean for each statement, in the final survey question instructors were asked to identify from the ten qualities the three most important characteristics in an effective on-ground instructor. 42% of instructors indicated "Knowledgeable," 13 % indicated "Engaging," and 5% indicated "Professional." These were followed by "Respectful" (4%), "Communicative" (4%), "Organized" (2%), "Approachable" (2%), "Fair" (2%) and "Responsive" (0%) and "Humorous" (0%).

Instructors rated the three most important qualities in an online instructor (see Table 5). 29% of students indicated "Knowledgeable," 7 % of students indicated "Communicative," and 5% indicated "Respectful," "Responsive" (5%), and "Professional" (5%). This was followed by "Engaging" (3%), "Approachable" (2%), "Organized" (1%), "Fair" (1%) and "Humorous" (0%).

Table 5
**Important Qualities of Online and On-ground Instructors by Order of Importance-
 Instructors' Responses**

Order of Importance	Online	On-ground
1	Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable
2	Communicative	Engaging
3	Respectable	Professional
4	Responsive	Respectful
5	Professional	Communicative
6	Engaging	Organized
7	Approachable	Approachable
8	Organized	Fair
9	Fair	Responsive
10	Humorous	Humorous

Similar, to the outcome regarding characteristics/behaviors, the highest and lowest rated qualities of instructors were similar for both on-ground and online instructors. However, the characteristics “Responsive” and “Communicative” were rated far lower for on-ground teaching than online instruction.

Correlations were conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the type of instructor/instructor demographics (specifically, gender, age, discipline, level of teaching, and delivery method) and their ratings regarding characteristic/behavior of instructors. No significant associations were found which suggests that gender, age, discipline, level of teaching, and delivery method are not related to the characteristics/behaviors viewed as important in effective instructors. Therefore, these desired or important characteristics/behaviors for instructors were consistent across varying types of Instructors.

Comparing Students' and Instructors' Perceptions of Effective On-ground and Online Teaching

Table 6 indicates the rankings of characteristics of instructor's effectiveness from students' and instructors' perceptions related to online teaching. The most important (“Knowledgeable”) and the least important characteristics (“Humorous”) were the same. The order of importance of the other characteristics was not consistent. “Respectful” was a characteristic that both instructors and students viewed as important, but its placement in order of importance differed slightly. Further analysis revealed that “Communicative” and “Responsive” were deemed more important by instructors than students, and students perceived “Approachable” and “Engaging” as more important than instructors (See Table 6).

When comparing the rankings of characteristics from students' and instructors' related to instructor effectiveness for on-ground teaching, the top five and the bottom five items are very closely matched. However, the characteristic of “Professional” was rated much higher by instructors than students, and students rated “Approachable” as more important than instructors did (See Table 6).

Table 6
**Important Qualities of Online and On-ground Instructors by Order of Importance-
 Instructors and Students Responses**

Order of Importance	Instructors		Students	
	Online	On-ground	Online	On-ground
1	Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable
2	Communicative	Engaging	Respectful	Communicative
3	Respectable	Professional	Approachable	Respectful
4	Responsive	Respectful	Engaging	Engaging
5	Professional	Communicative	Communicative	Approachable
6	Engaging	Organized	Organized	Organized
7	Approachable	Approachable	Fair	Responsive
8	Organized	Fair	Professional	Fair
9	Fair	Responsive	Responsive	Professional
10	Humorous	Humorous	Humorous	Humorous

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Many of the findings from this study are aligned with prior research. For both online and on-ground instructors, "Knowledgeable" was the most important characteristic which supported Clark's [5] findings from 20 years ago. This characteristic/behavior has remained consistent even though we are currently educating a new generation of learners using both on-ground and online formats.

The findings of this study also support the finding of Delaney et al. [6] that the three most important characteristics for effective online instructors were: "Respectful," "Knowledgeable," and "Approachable." This aligns with students' perceptions, but not with the instructors in the sample, who believed "Professional" and "Responsive" were indicative of effective teaching. Instructors should take note that students seemed to value approachable instructors, more than those that demonstrate responsiveness or professionalism.

Since the differences in characteristics/behaviors of effective instructors in the online or on-ground setting were not significantly different, the findings of this study did not support Brocato, Bonanno, and Ulbig's [2] research that indicated students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness were different between on-ground and online classroom settings. But they did support Madsen and Cassidy's research [8] who found the quality of the educators' instructional practices to be more important than delivery method used.

This study added more to our understanding of the qualities that exemplify effective instructors by identifying that the top three and lowest three characteristics/behaviors of effective instructors were the same whether the course was delivered online or on-ground. The data also indicated that the top three qualities of instructors were closely aligned. This is very interesting, in that it suggests that the delivery method does not necessarily mean the characteristics/behaviors of instructors should change. In other words, good teaching is good teaching whether it occurs online or on-ground. This study also furthered our understanding of types of students and their perceptions of good instructors. No matter their gender, age, major, level of education, or location, all students tended to rate good instructor characteristics/behaviors and qualities similarly. The only significant difference was found for younger students and undergraduate students, who rated use of humor as more important than older, graduate level students did. The findings from this research suggest that for educators to be perceived as effective they can use the same characteristics/behaviors and exhibit the same qualities for all students no matter their age, gender, or program of study. Use of humor, however, is recommended when teaching younger, undergraduate students.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER STUDY

The findings of this study are limited to students at a southern, private, liberal arts university. It is unknown whether these findings are representative of a larger cross section of university students. It is unknown if studies involving a larger cross section of university students will support these findings.

Since "Knowledgeable" was considered to be the most important characteristic for both online and on-ground instructors by both students and instructors, further study would be beneficial in an attempt to determine more specifically what students and instructors mean by this term. A qualitative study could provide more specific information to help university instructors understand how to better demonstrate that they are "Knowledgeable."

This study examined teacher effectiveness from the perspective of university students and instructors. Since teacher effectiveness is a topic frequently discussed by university instructors, K-12 instructors, their administrators, further studies might provide insights for comparing university instructors with K-12 instructors. More in-depth qualitative studies might provide additional information to allow instructors at both levels to continue to refine and improve their instruction to better meet students' needs.

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