



Meeting Student Needs while Maintaining Classroom Connection – Results from a Flexible Classroom Attendance Pilot



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Background

Professional Innovations Leadership and LifeSkills Course (PILLS) is a required course series in the P1 through P4 years covering personal and professional development topics.

Problem: In the P4 classes, students were requesting flexibility in attending class due to “off blocks” or scheduling conflicts with rotations.

Potential Solution: A flexible attendance policy that incorporated HyFlex (Hybrid-Flexible)¹, allowing students to attend class in the manner that works best for them on any given week.

Each class period was offered in three platforms:

Synchronous:
In Person-
Traditional
Classroom
Experience

Synchronous:
Online-
Through Zoom

Asynchronous:
Yuja® Video
with embedded
questions

Purpose

To assess initial perceived student benefit, classroom connection, and learning with a flexible attendance policy in a personal and professional development course at The University of Texas at El Paso.

Methods



Inclusion Criteria:

- Students enrolled the professional year three (P3) and P4 PILLS courses in Spring 2023.

Questions²:

Needs	Ranked how having flexibility in attending class helped them meet their various commitments and needs.
Connection	Asked how “connected” they felt to peers, material, and instructor for each of the attendance formats
Learning	Ranked their perceived learning in each attendance format

Respondents

A total of 41 students completed the questionnaire.

- P3 class (C/O 2024): 19 students (Response rate: 34.5%)
- P4 class (C/O 2023): 22 students (Response rate: 41.5%)

Student Quotes

“I think that having the option to attend in person/online/asynchronously really helped whenever I had an emergency or couldn’t make it in person. It’s a relief to have the option and takes away the anxiety if an unplanned emergency occurs.”

“We are all very busy people. Some of us have families, some work, some just need time off to have a mental health break. Having this flexibility really helps me to stay focused and in control of my time so I can complete tasks more efficiently. This format helps EVERYONE!!”

“It allows me to get the information when it best works. Being face to face doesn’t always mean I will be paying attention or focused so having the ability to get the information when I am ready was really helpful.”

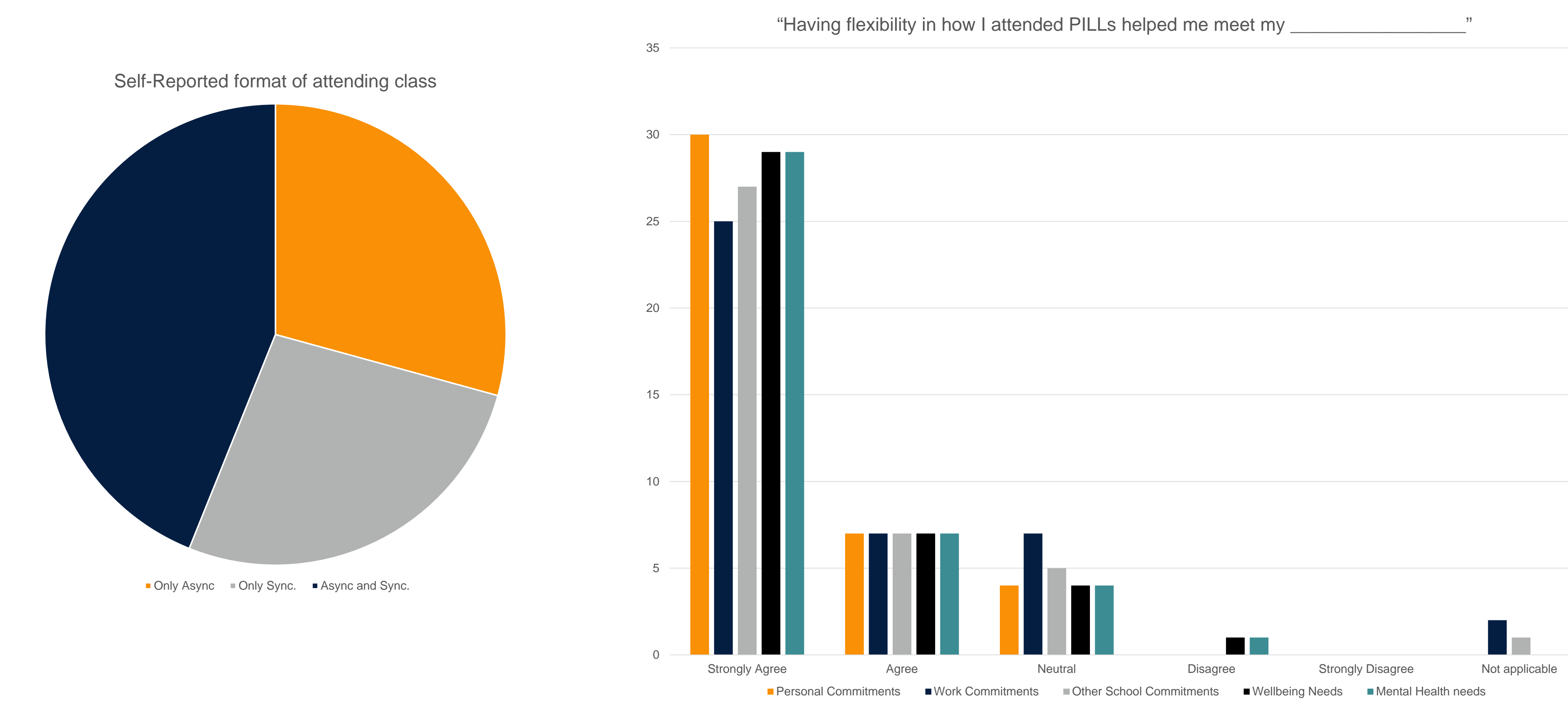
Discussion

- Connection between material, peers and instructors did not differ considerably between the attendance platforms.
- Students perceived their learning favorably with the largest number in in the asynchronous group.
- Students agreed that having flexibility in the PILLS class allowed them to meet their various commitments and needs.
- Limitations:
 - Pilot data with low response rate
 - Single course at a single University

Acknowledgements

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Results



Conclusion

Student rated favorable that having flexible attendance allowed them to meet their various commitments and needs. This flexibility did not appear to compromise classroom connection or perceived learning. Results from this pilot have led to full implementation of flexible attendance in the P3 and P4 PILLS courses.

Strategic implementation and placement in a curriculum may help provide benefits for students.

References

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