Blended learning: Is there an optimal mix of online and face-to-face instruction?

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Conference on E-Learning
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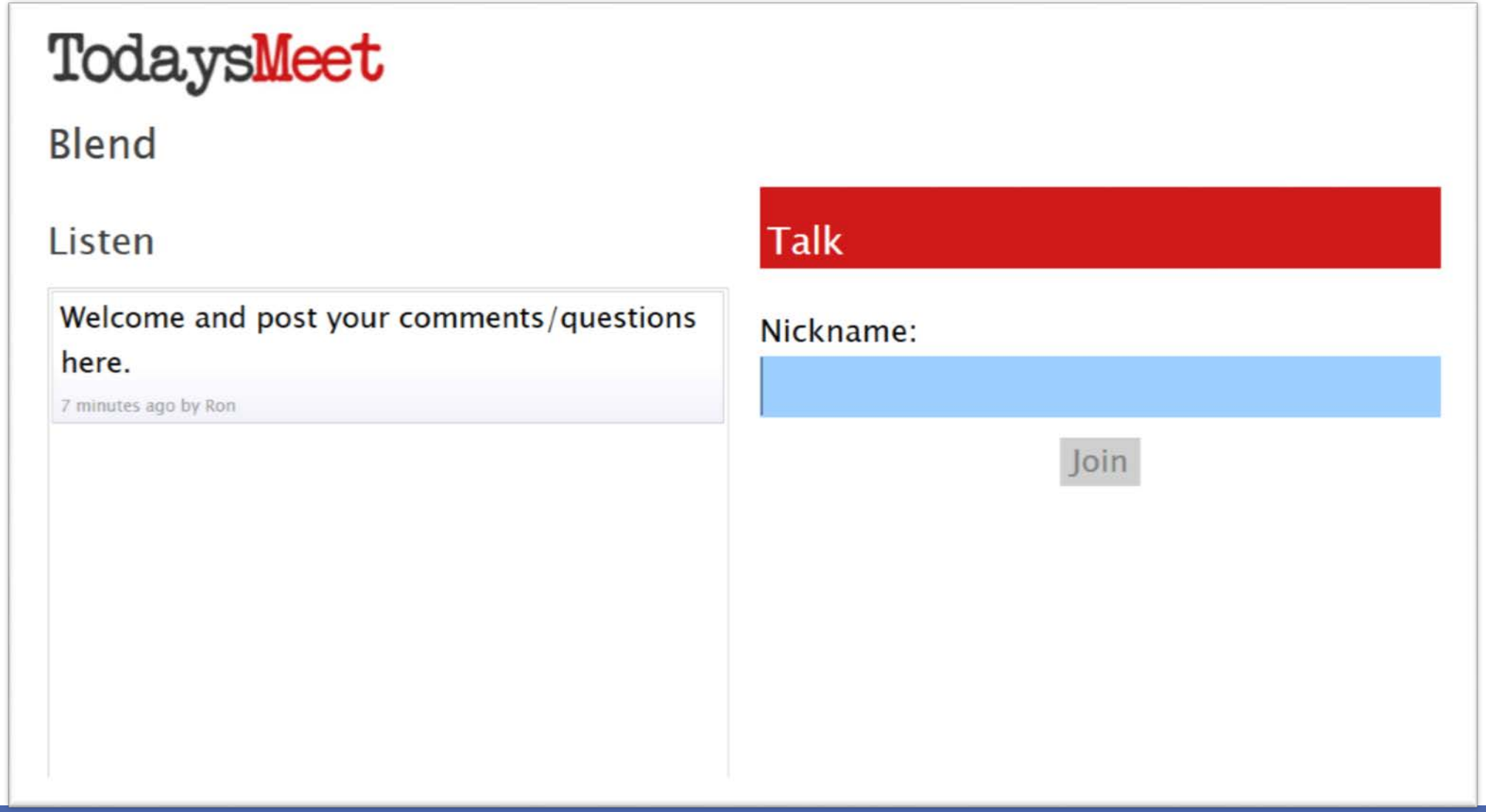
Ron Owston, PhD
Faculty of Education

education | YORK UNIVERSITE UNIVERSITY

Proportion of Content Delivered Online	Type of Course	Typical Description
0%	Traditional	Course with no online technology used — content is delivered in writing or orally.
1 to 29%	Web Facilitated	Course which uses web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course. Uses a course management system (CMS) or web pages to post the syllabus and assignments, for example.
30 to 79%	Blended/Hybrid	Course that blends online and face-to-face delivery. Substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, typically uses online discussions, and typically has some face-to-face meetings.
80+%	Online	A course where most or all of the content is delivered online. Typically have no face-to-face meetings.

Source: Sloan-C report Blending-In

Todaysmeet.com/Blend



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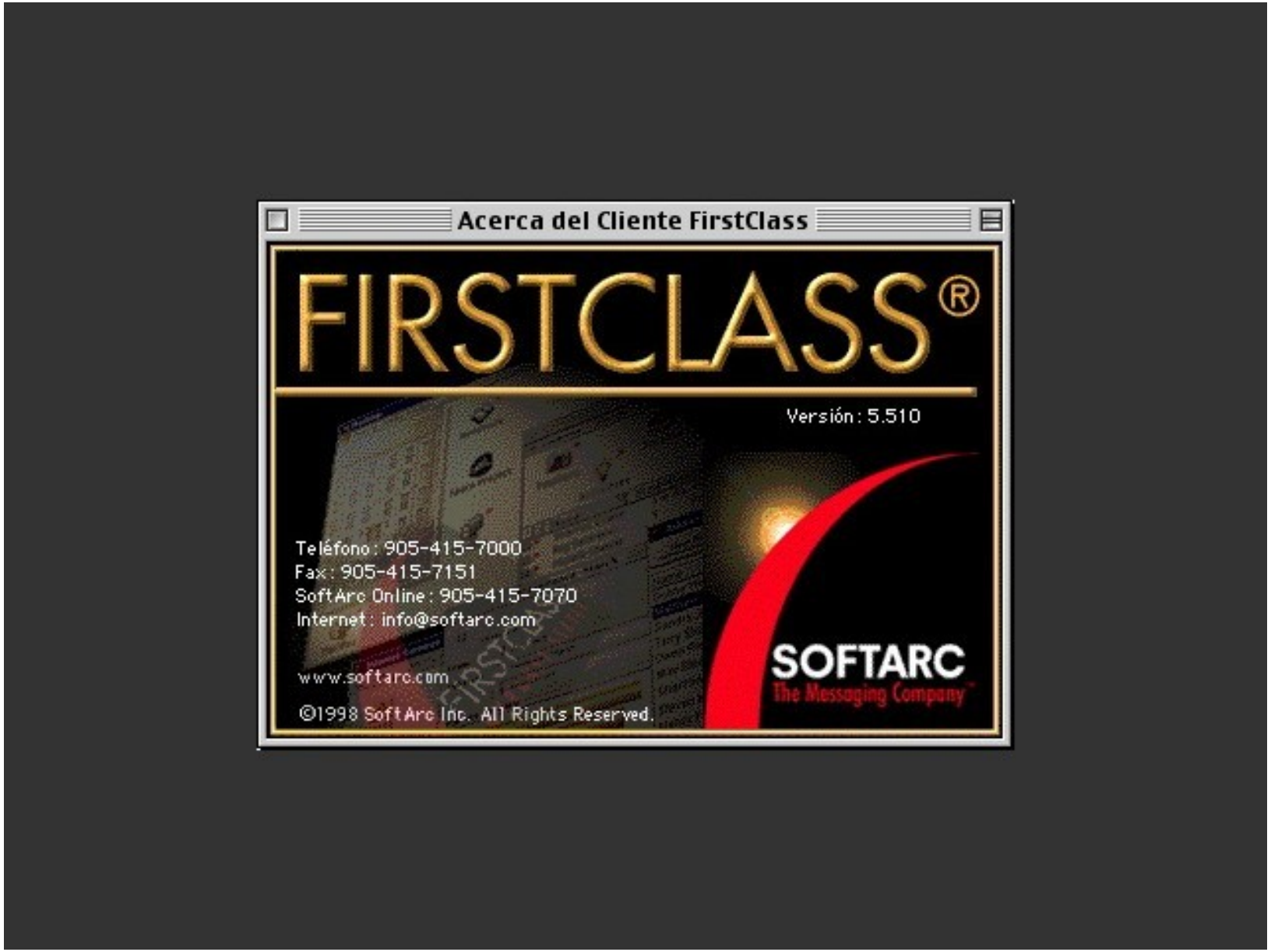
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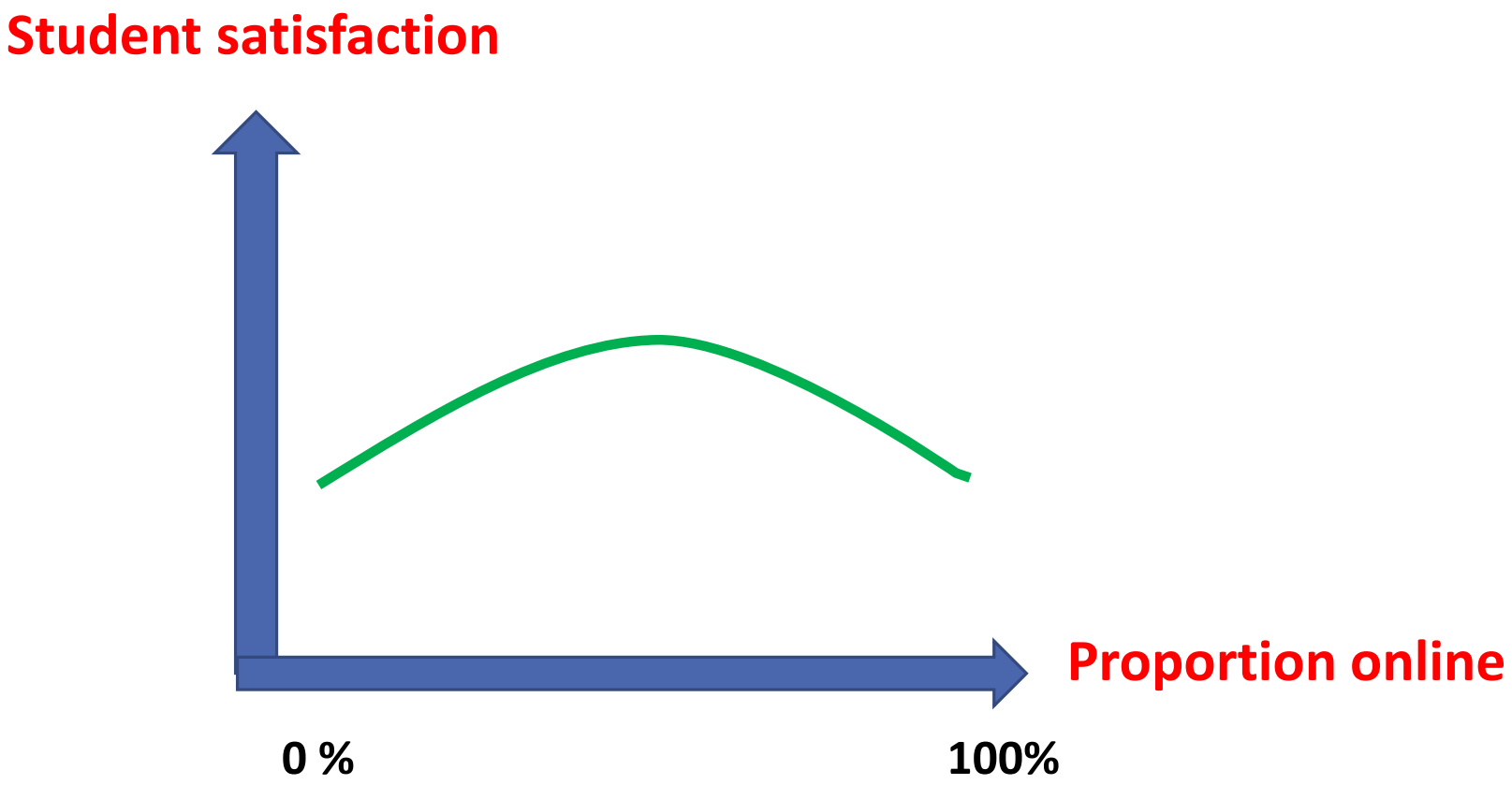
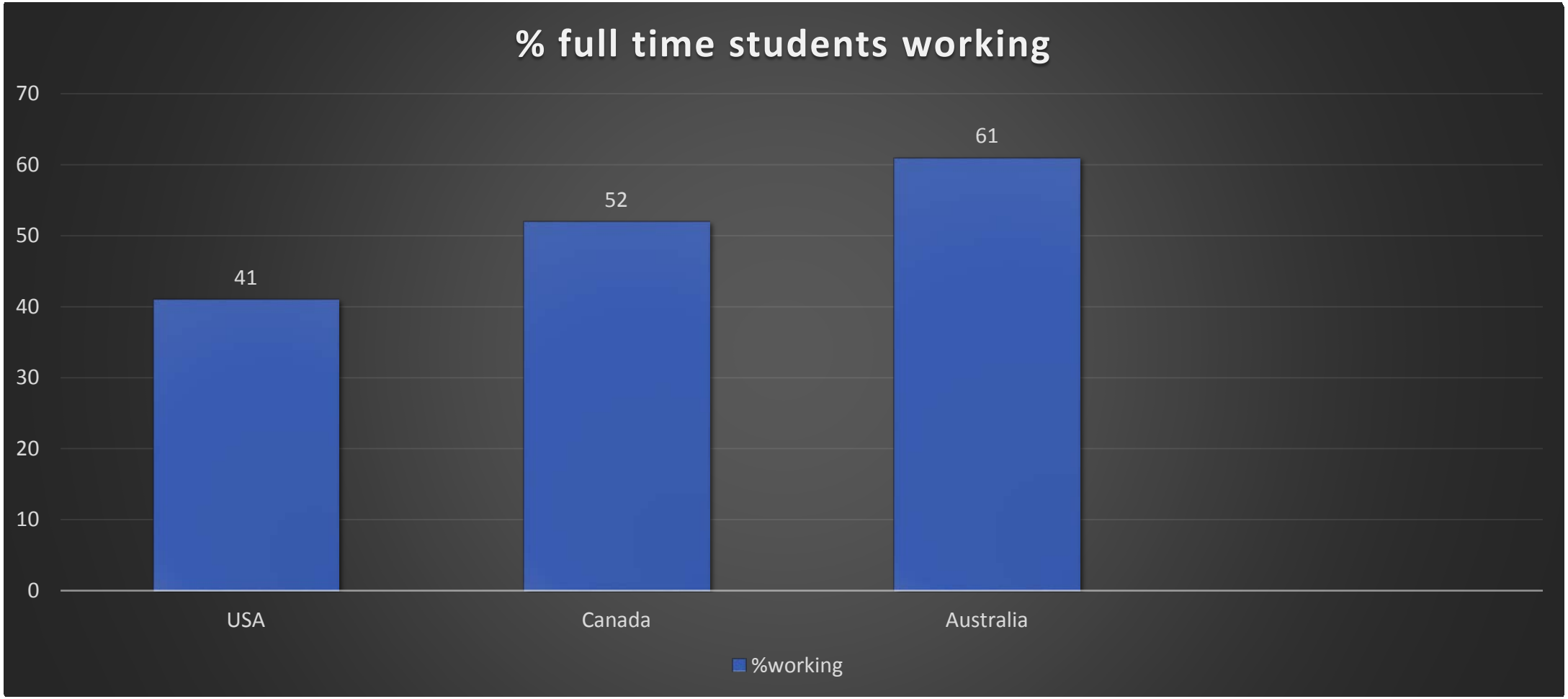
Quality of experience in my course



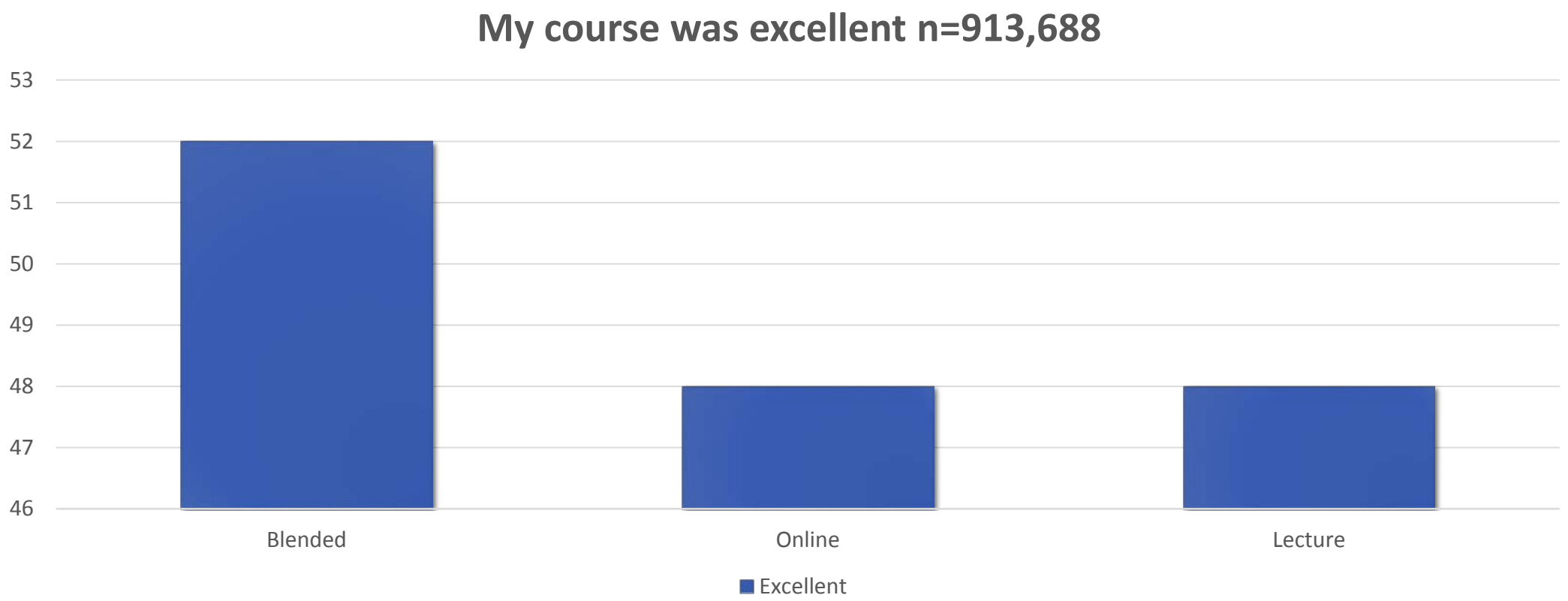
Blended learning clearly provides students with choice

Allows for flexibility in students' study, work, and life balance

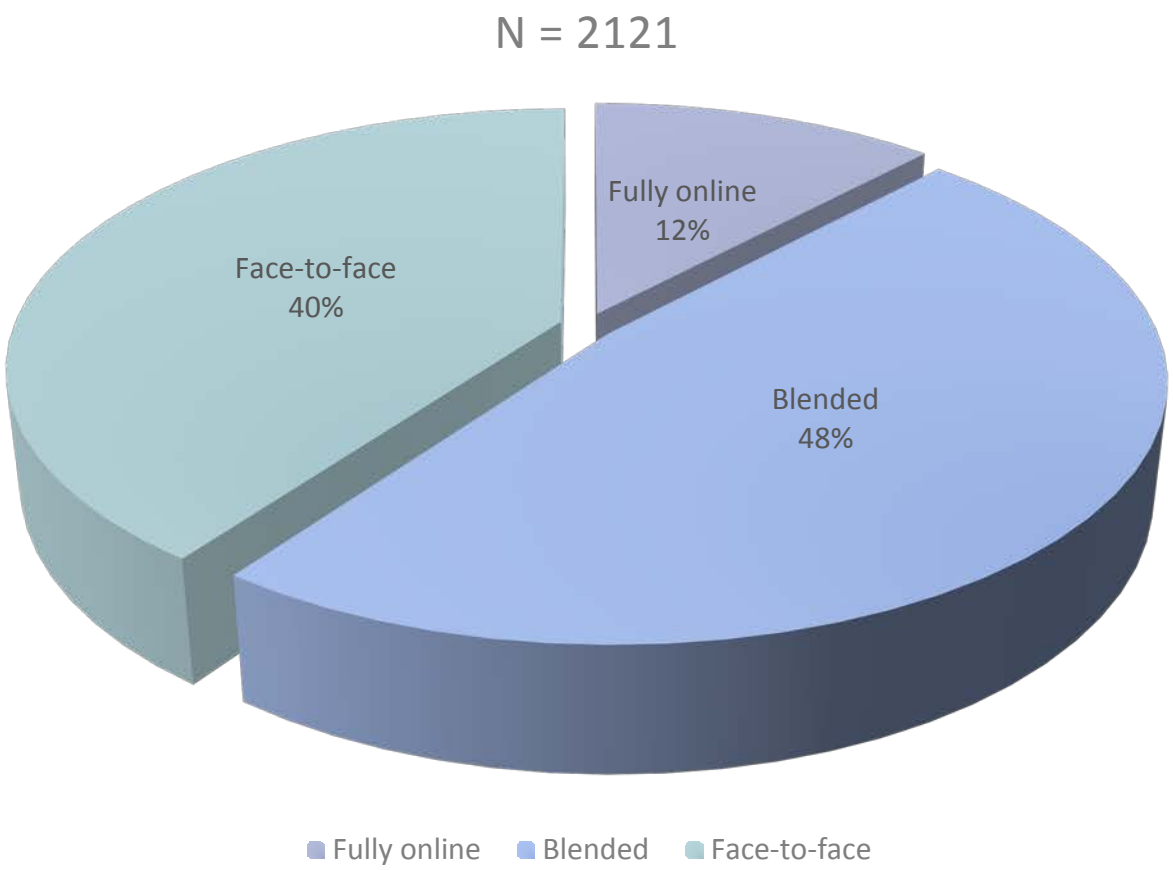
Our full-time students are working!



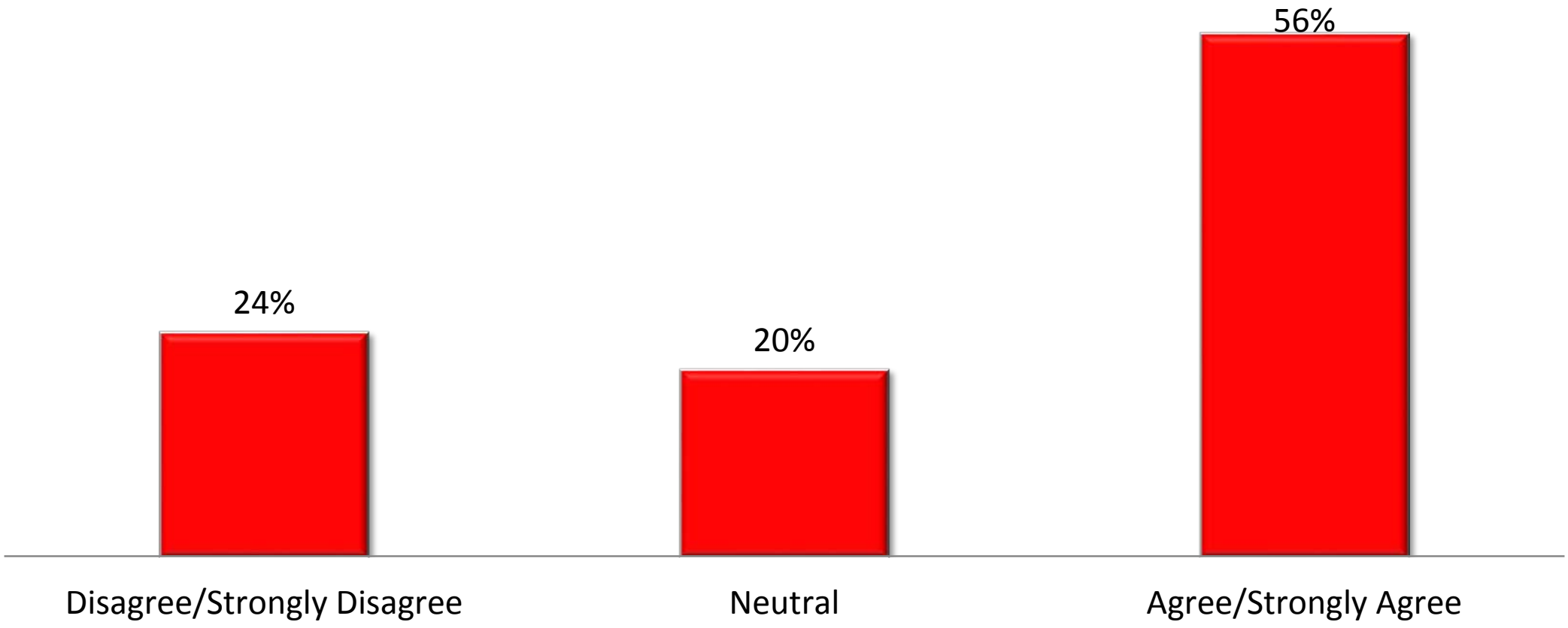
University of Central Florida (Moskal et al 2013)



Preference for blended course format at York University



I would take another course in the future that has both online and face-to-face components [at York U]

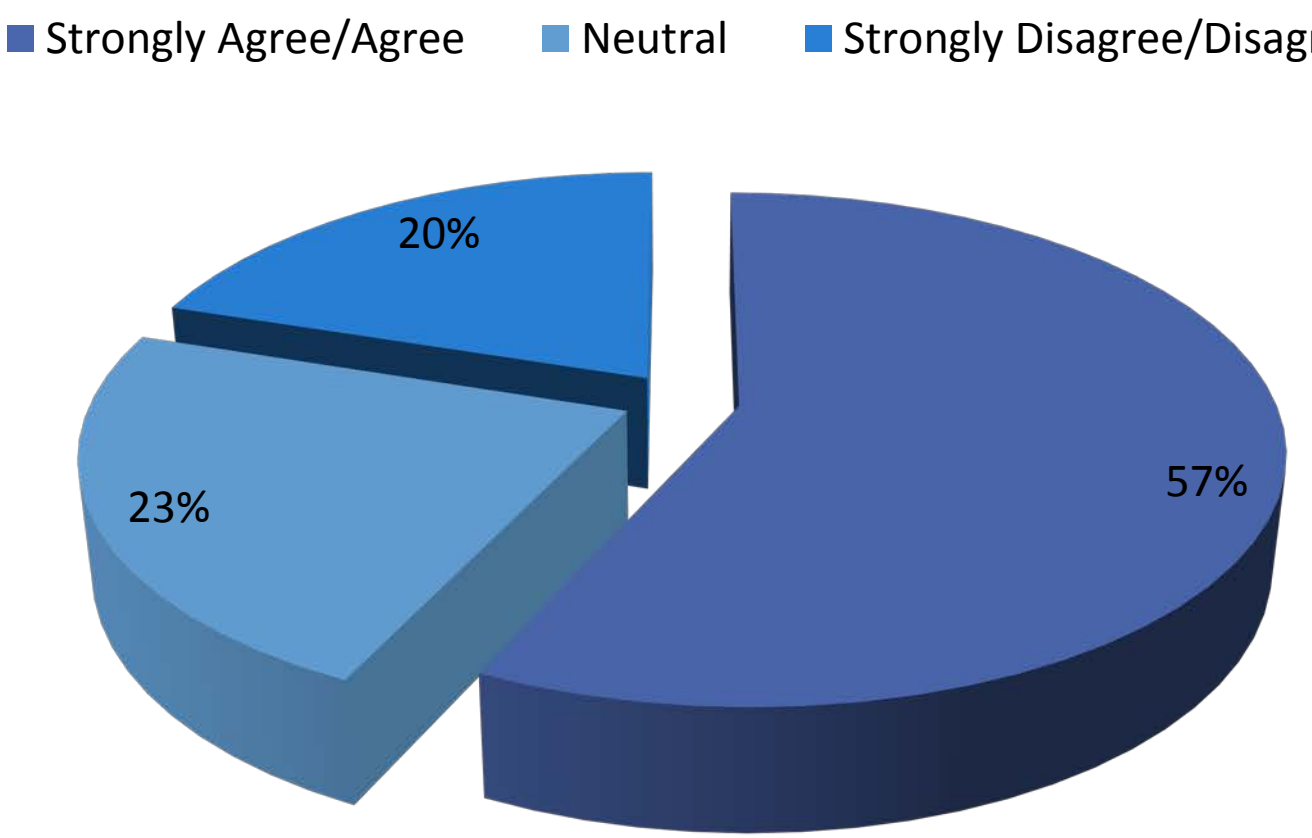


N = 2121, 34 courses

Many blends are possible

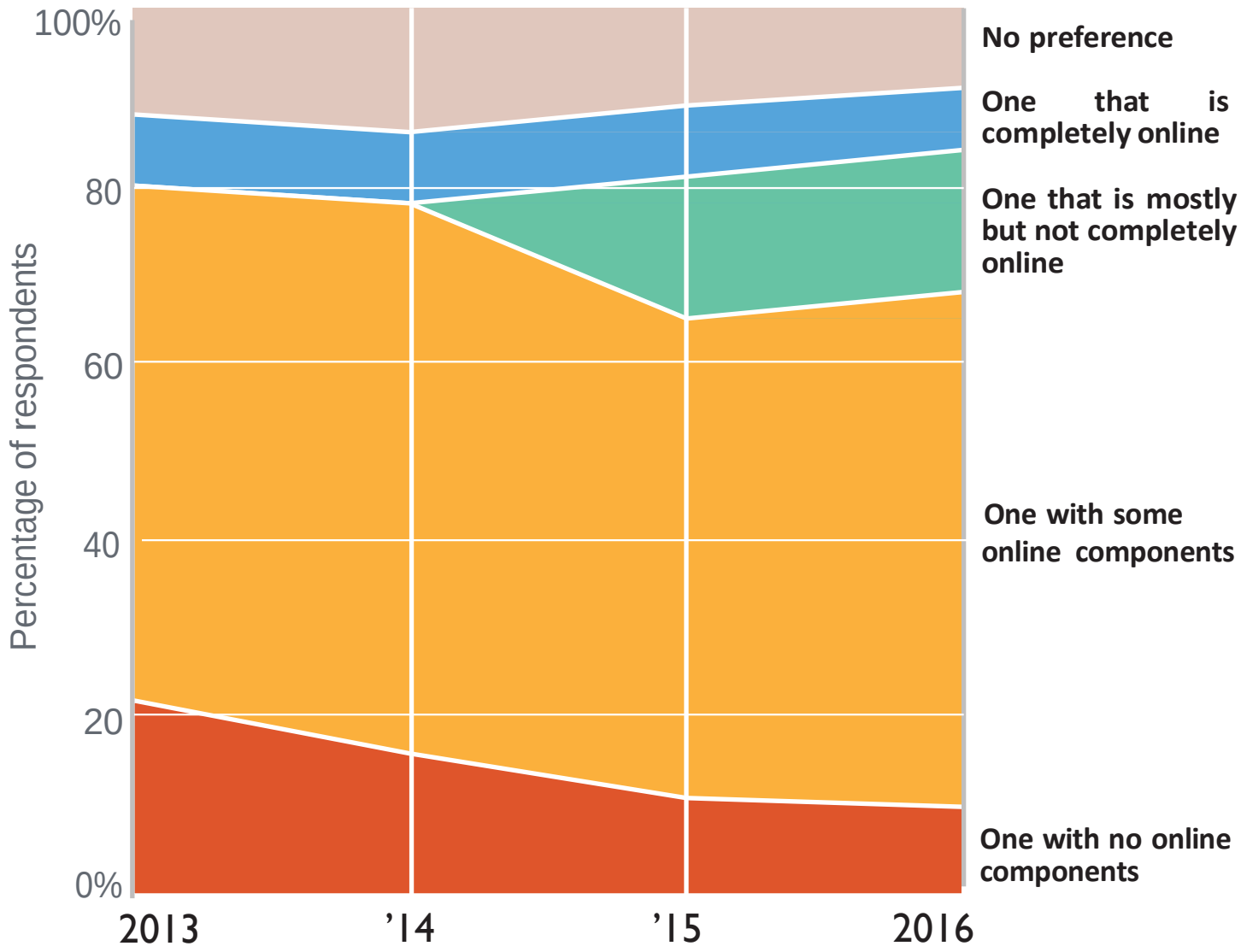
- Weekly replacement
- Alternating week replacement
- Beginning or end replacement
- Tutorials/online lectures
- Others ???

Taking this blended course increased my interest in the material [at York U]



34 courses N = 2121

Students don't want "all tech, all the time"



Brooks (2016) ECAR report

But what about performance with different blends?

Success and withdrawal rates by modality (Moskal et al. 2013)

Success by modality

Modality	n	Success (%)
Blended	69,436	90.8
Fully online	188,776	88.3
Face-to-face	839,028	87.7
Lecture capture	16,354	83.9
Blended lecture capture	45,213	84.7

Withdrawal by modality

Modality	n	Withdrawal (%)
Lecture capture	18,037	5.3
Fully online	188,916	4.3
Face-to-face	933,846	3.1
Blended lecture capture	55,665	3.0
Blended	70,045	2.8

Meta-analytic studies

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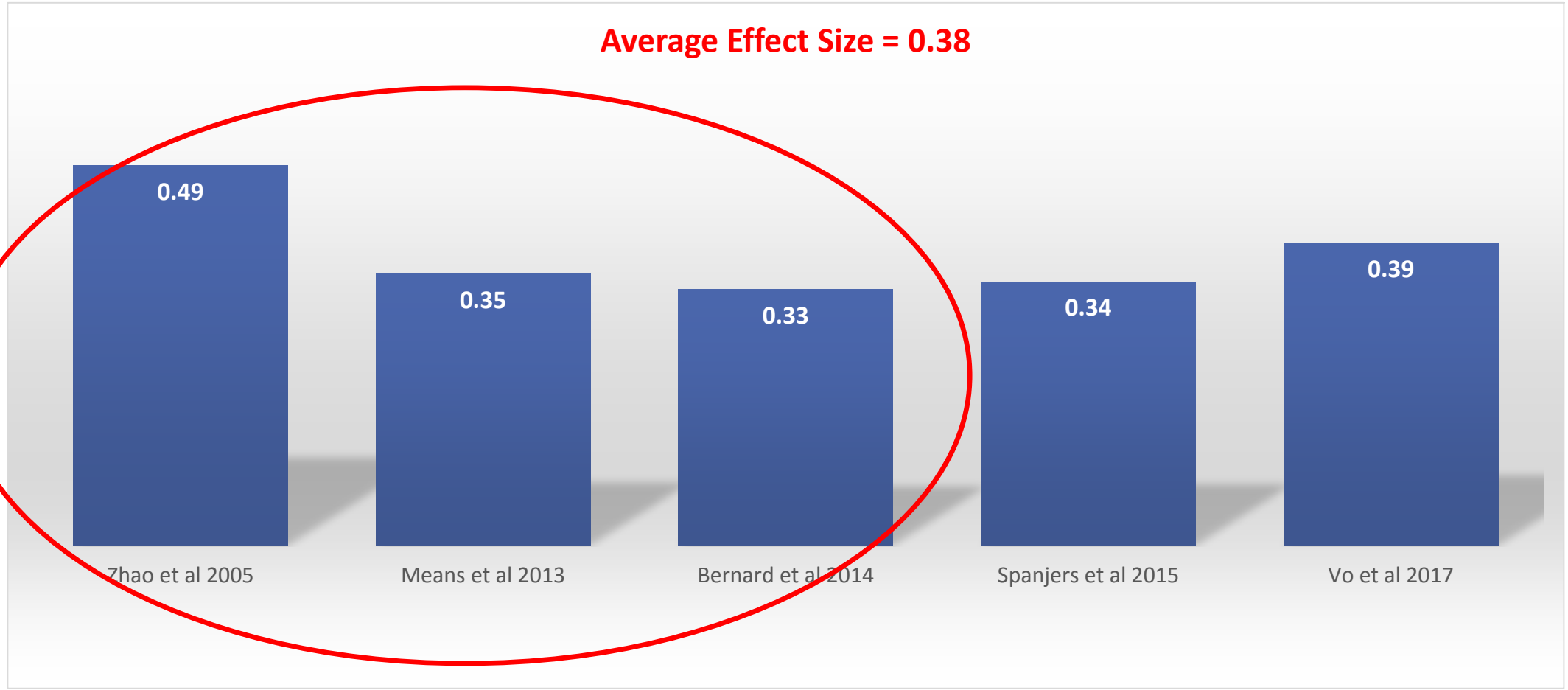
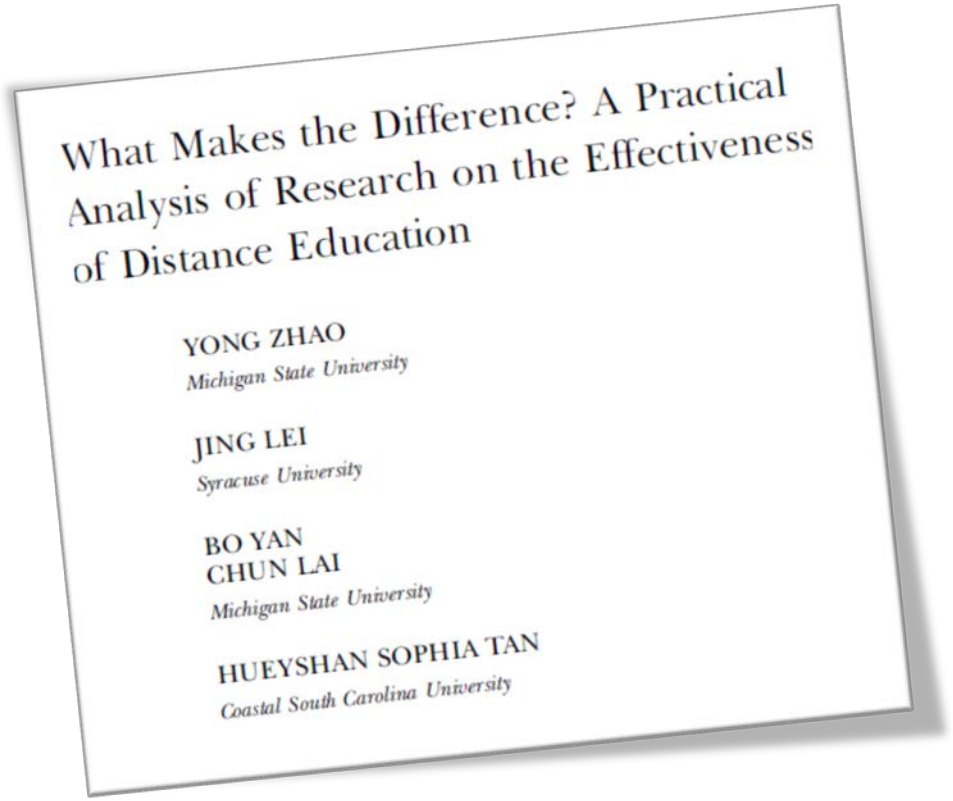
Five meta-analyses show BL students higher than F2F



Zhao et al. (2007) meta-analysis



What Makes the Difference? A Practical Analysis of Research on the Effectiveness of Distance Education

YONG ZHAO
Michigan State University

JING LEI
Syracuse University

BO YAN
CHUN LAI
Michigan State University

HUEYSHAN SOPHIA TAN
Coastal South Carolina University

- 100 % Online = face-to-face
- 90 – 100% Online > face-to-face
- 60 – 80% online >> face-to-face

Means et al.	Bernard et al	Zhao et al.
>50%	30% - 50%	60% - 80%

Students attend 50% of classes when given the choice

Asarta & Schmidt 2015

Now to my study…

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The Internet and Higher Education

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/iheduc

The nagging question when designing blended courses: Does the proportion of time devoted to online activities matter?

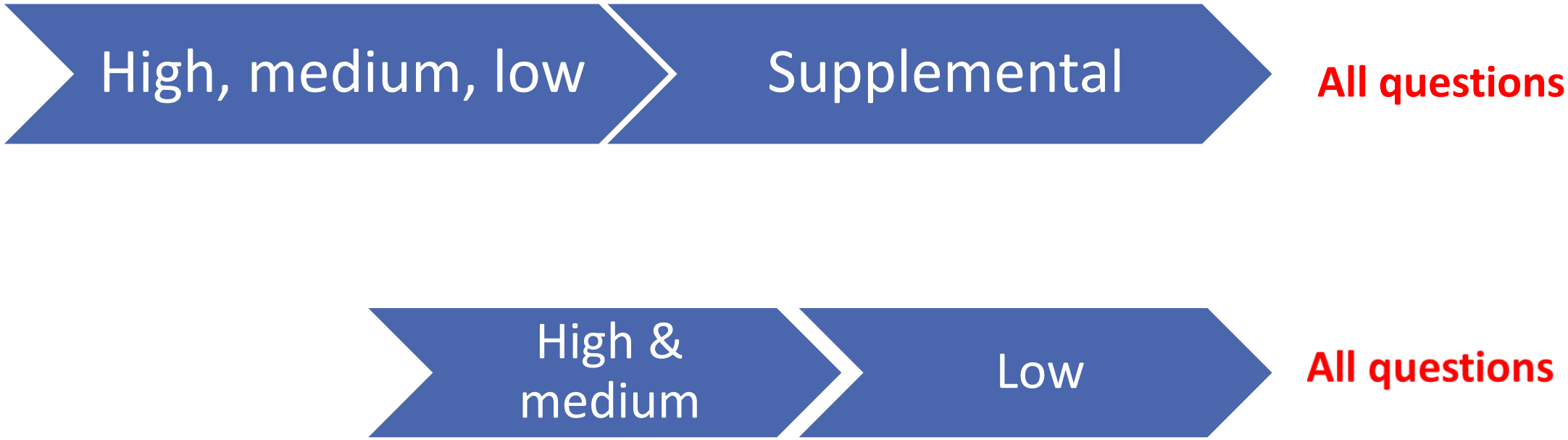
Ron Owston*, Dennis N. York[1]

Faculty of Education, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 4700 Keele St., Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3, Canada

- Low blend (27-30% online)
- Medium blend (36-40% online)
- High blend (50% online)
- Supplemental (F-2-F classes/online tutorials)

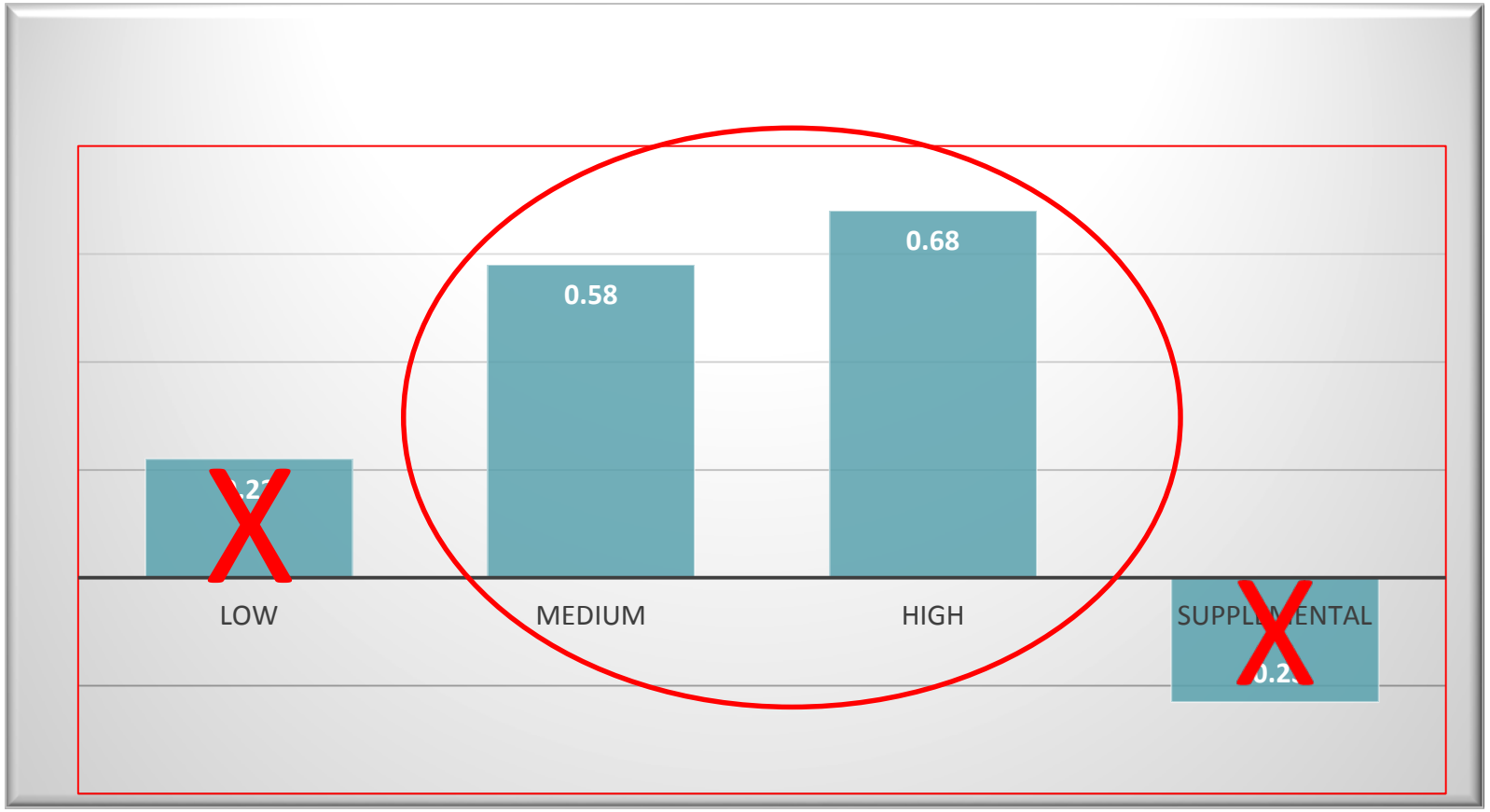
1010 students in 20 different courses

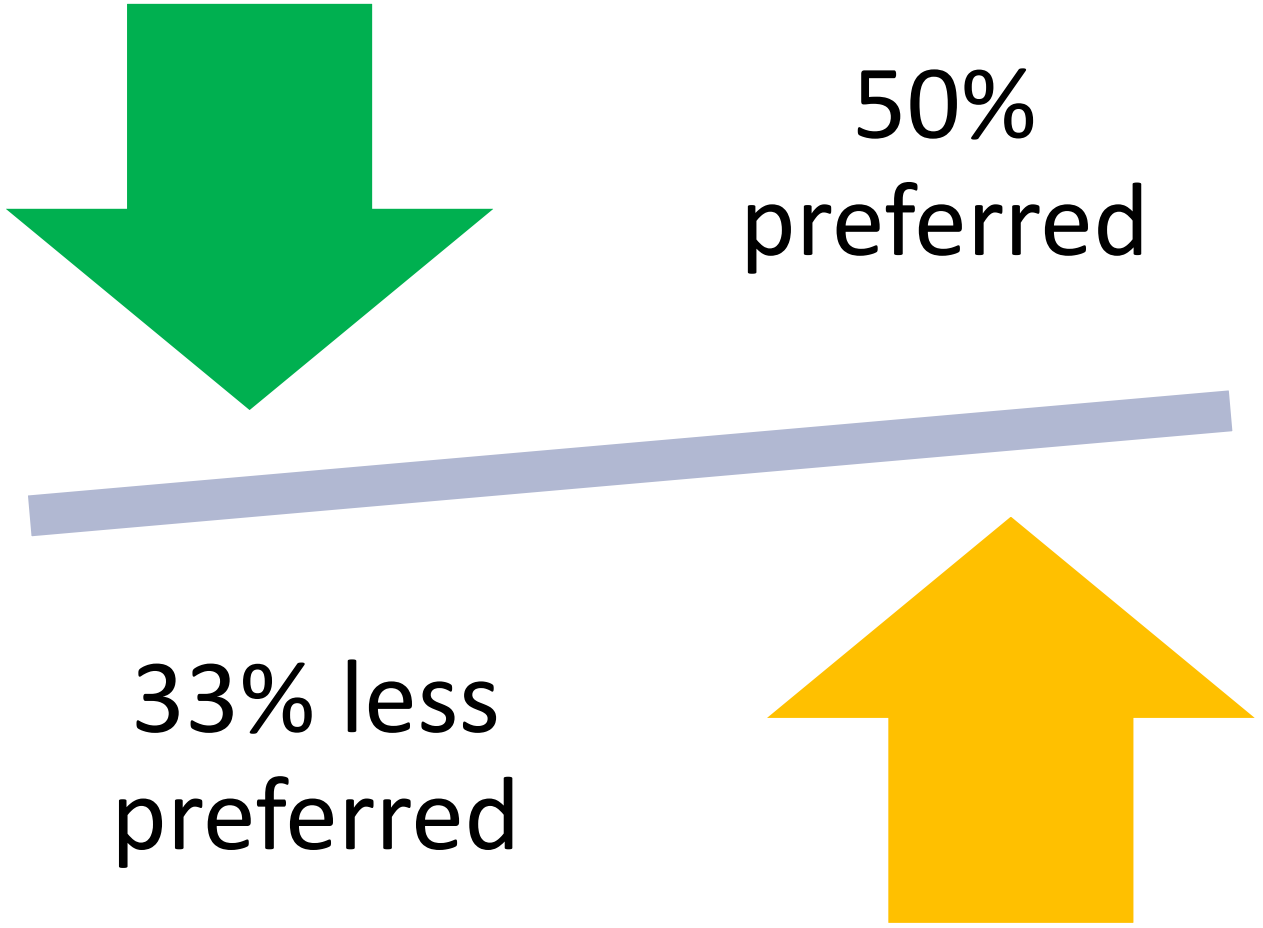
What blends do students prefer most?



What about performance?

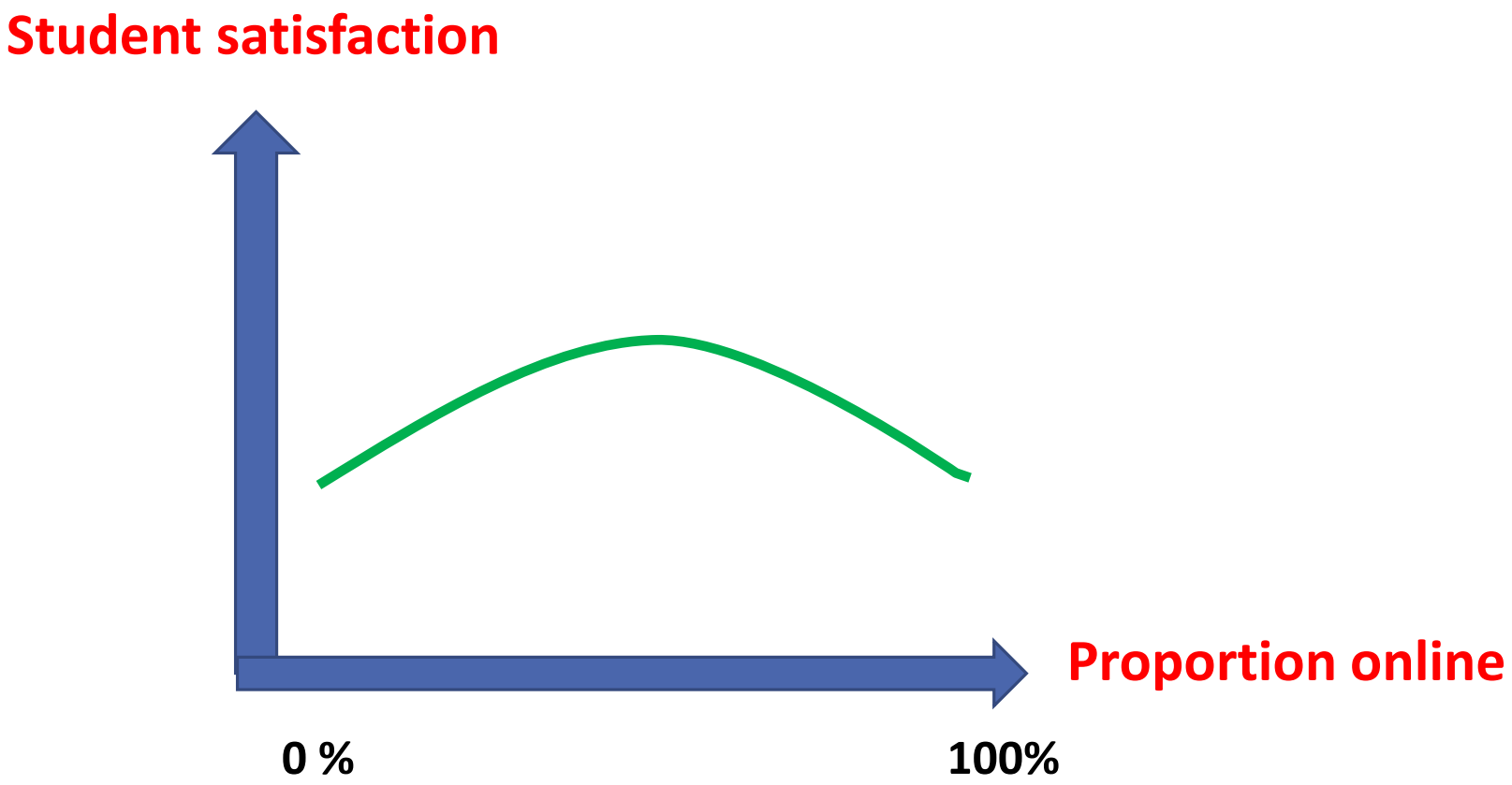
Grade point difference



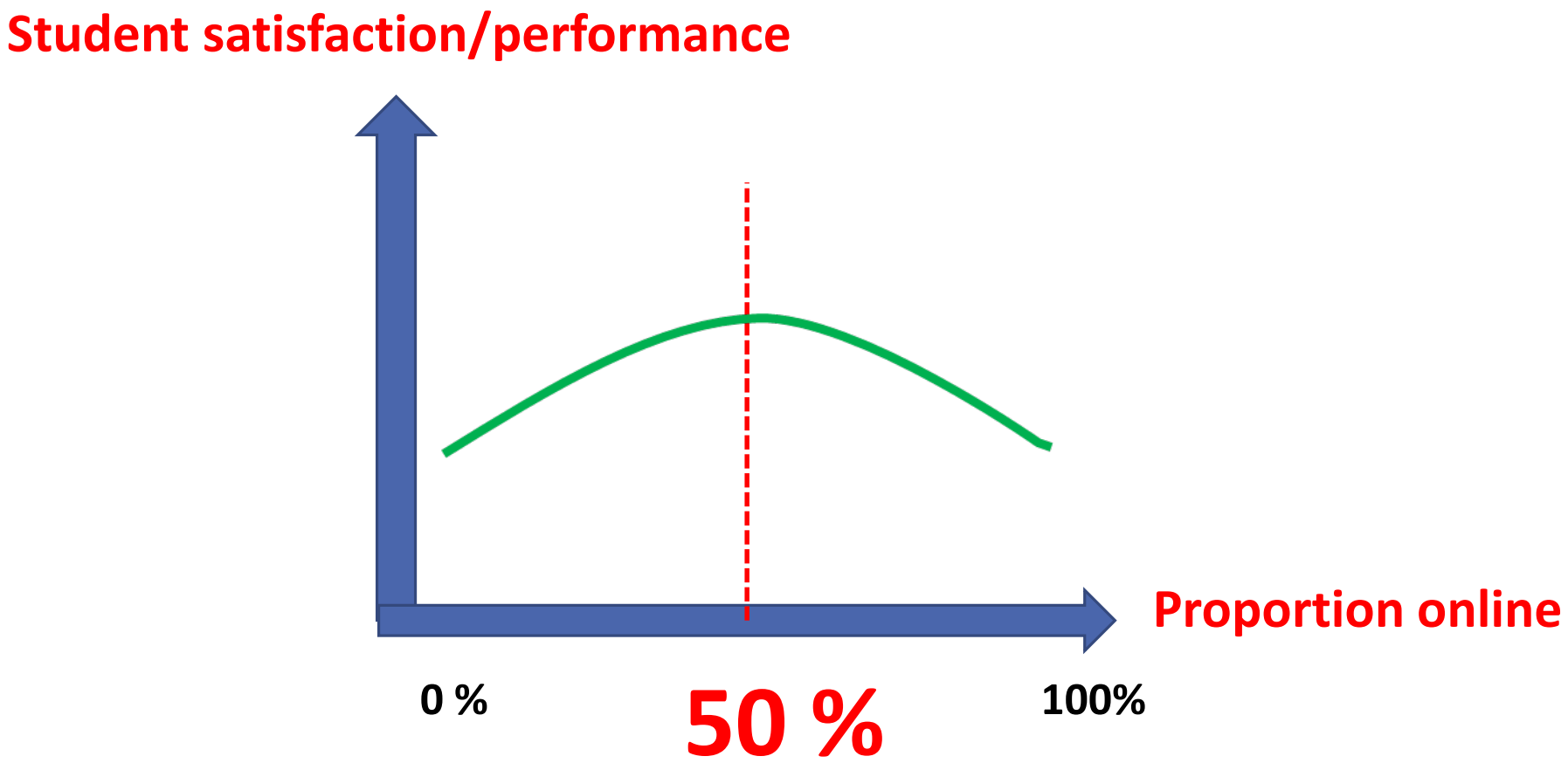

50%
preferred
33% less
preferred

So what can we conclude about proportion of online time in blended courses?

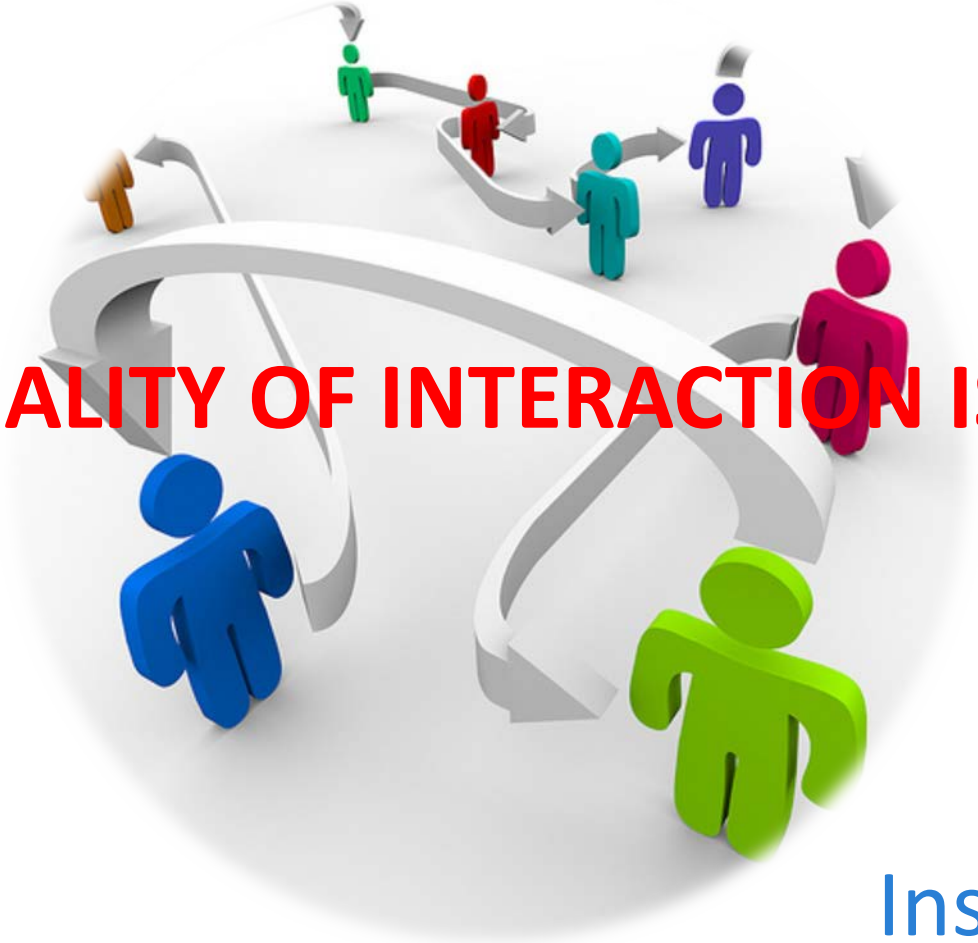
Quality of experience in my course



Ideal blend???


Student satisfaction/performance
Proportion online
0 %
50 %
100%

Student < > Student



QUALITY OF INTERACTION IS KEY

Instructor < > Student

Instructor presence essential

Class discussions flow into online

Synthesize online discussions in class

Collaborative projects

FAQs – where students and instructors respond

Give frequent, focused feedback

Grade online activities appropriately

In summary…

Blended learning can lead to greater student satisfaction and learning

BUT

Consideration must be given to amount of time online and how that time is used

Questions/comments?

Follow up …

rowston@edu.yorku.ca

@RonOwston

http://ronowston.ca