

What was your SUTQ project about?

The goal of my SUTQ was to assess whether modern, IT-enabled, instructional methods 'outperform' frontal lectures. I therefore investigated the impact of such methods on student performance and their enjoyment. More specifically, I conducted a semi controlled experiment in which I taught one of my classes to a control group of students using the frontal lecture style. The experiment group, instead, watched 5 micro-lectures (online videos with a duration of 2-7 minutes) and attended an in-class session. Both groups covered the same lecture content and made a pre and post test. I also conducted a focus group to assess the students' enjoyment of the micro lectures. Unfortunately, the population of students was 27, and after deducing invalid measurements, this means that the study sample is too small to draw valid conclusions. Results are nevertheless interesting, as the micro-lecture students (experiment) seemed to significantly outperform the frontal-lecture (control) students. Also a focus group discussion revealed that students found the new instructional method more enjoyable.

What have you learned?

This learned me that video lectures – and probably similar technology – cannot substitute for a high-quality in-class discussion. Students really appreciated videos shown upfront, but all indicated that mastering instructional material usually requires contact with peers, tutors and lecturers. I do believe, though, that most unilateral transfer of knowledge through presentations or readings, should be moved outside the classroom as much as possible to create rewarding and dynamic sessions.

What was the biggest challenge?

The largest challenge for me was to prepare my experiments. Writing a script, preparing slides, and recording micro lectures really takes time. For 5 short lecture I easily spend 4 hours recording time, and at least 8 hours preparation.

What are you proud of?

What surprised me in a positive way was that many colleagues and students were interested in my SUTW topic and liked to contribute to it. I therefore am happy that this personal project actually impacted more than just myself. Even more specific to the course that I experimented with, I can say that it may chance the way in which we deliver our lectures in the next year. This is a rewarding outcome of my SUTQ.