



# ***The Effect of Synchronous Instructor Presence on Student Learning: A Critical Review***

Mary Ellen Dello Stritto, Lidija Krebs-Lazendic Enoch Park

## **Research Question**

How does synchronous instructor presence in the form of synchronous activities relate to course outcomes (i.e. grades)?

## **Study Scope**

- **7591** studies searched; **7562** removed (pre-screen); **19** removed (coding phase); **10** studies analyzed (15 outcomes) - 9 mean grades and 6 grade distributions; multiple disciplines

## **Key Findings**

- Grade Distribution (3 studies): asynchronous showed slightly higher outcomes
- Course Grades (7 studies): Mixed results

## **Challenges Identified**

- Lack of uniform operational definitions of instructor presence, variability in research design, inconsistent measurement of outcomes, limited institutional diversity (4 studies from one institution)

## **Future Research Imperatives**

- Implement robust methodology, establish clear variable definitions, use reliable outcome measures, control confounds and bias, ensure large sample sizes, practice effective reporting

## **Conclusions**

- Insufficient evidence to determine significant effect of synchronous instructor presence, more comprehensive studies and standardised research approaches needed