

Introducing Change to Japanese Universities: Digital Vs Paper Assignments

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Abstract

Due to a number of "States of Emergency" announced in Japan during the COVID-19 Pandemic, there was a systematic shift towards online learning. While that drastic change in teaching approaches was both stressful and difficult for some to adjust to, this paper argues that there are inherent benefits to the technology used during this unprecedented time. In particular, this study will look at how projects for university students in Japan were assignment, submitted, and graded, both before and after the pandemic. It will then go on to compare both "paper" and "digital" assignments, and state the preferences of both teachers and students. The study is based upon existing, contemporary literature in this field, as well as two semi-structured interviews with key informants, and a small-scale survey of 56 Japanese university students. While the paper does not argue for traditional methods of teaching to be altogether abandoned, it does point to some benefits that can be enjoyed if existing curriculums are enhanced with instructional technology.

Keywords: Japanese education; tertiary education; online learning; 4IR; instructional technology