

**Final Report – Online Learning Survey**  
March 15, 2006

**Context**

For the purpose of developing a customer survey to assess student online learning experience and to improve the quality of student experience in online learning, an online questionnaire was designed to collect information on: (1) student demographics, (2) preparedness for taking online courses, (3) online learning behavior in Fall 2005, and online learning experience in fall 2005, (4) perception of online learning, (5) problems encountered during online learning, and (6) opinions and comments. On January 17, 2006, the questionnaire was sent to 4,412 students who were enrolled in online courses in fall 2005. As of Feb 8, 2006, a total of 533 students responded (response rate: 12.1%).

The current report summarizes the survey responses with detailed information presented in tables. Text analysis was conducted on responses to open-ended questions regarding problems encountered during online learning and comments. A summary of the text analysis is presented in the Appendix.

**Summary of Major Results**

Student Demographics

- The typical respondent of this survey was a white female between age eighteen and twenty-four.
- The demographics of the respondents (37% between age 18 and 24; 67% female; 49% white) are basically representative of the whole online student population (35% between age 18 and 24; 62% female; and 41% white) in fall 2005.

Table 1: Student (Respondent) Demographics

<b>Age</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Under 18	1	0.2	Male	172	32.3	American Indian	9	1.7
18-24	199	37.3	Female	356	66.8	Asian	57	10.7
25-29	121	22.7	Non-response	5	0.9	African American	44	8.3
30-39	121	22.7				White	259	48.6
40-49	63	11.8				Latino	70	13.1
50 & above	26	4.9				Filipino	28	5.3
Non-response	2	0.4				Other	31	5.8
						Decline	30	5.6
						Non-response	5	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Student preparedness for taking online courses

- The majority of the respondents who took online courses in fall 2005 were experienced with Information Technology, had previously taken online courses, and were well informed about online course requirements.
- However, more than half of them didn't attend online orientation or complete the Online Readiness Assessment.
- **Please note that among the respondents, who took an online course for the first time, 65% did not attend online orientation and 49% did not complete the Online Readiness Assessment.**

Table 2: Student Preparedness for taking online courses

How many online courses did you take before taking this course?			My overall experience with information technology is:		
Response	#	%	Response	#	%
None	188	35.3	Expert	57	10.7
One	102	19.1	Experienced	282	52.9
Two	80	15	Average	167	31.3
Three	63	11.8	Beginner	23	4.3
Four	26	4.9	Non-response	4	0.8
Five	20	3.8			
More than five	47	8.8			
Non-response	7	1.3			
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Did you have enough information about online course requirements prior to enrollment?			Did you attend an online orientation?			Did you complete the Online Readiness Assessment before you took this course?		
Response	#	%	Response	#	%	Response	#	%
Yes	386	72.4	Yes	115	21.6	Yes	183	34.3
Little, but not enough	101	18.9	No	380	71.3	No	274	51.4
Not at all	40	7.5	Unsure	36	6.8	Unsure	70	13.1
Non-response	6	1.1	Non-response	2	0.4	Non-response	6	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Student online learning behavior at SDCCD

- The majority of the respondents took online courses to apply toward their AA/AS degree; visited their online course rather frequently; completed their online courses (*please note this is self-reported*); and were likely to take an online course instead of an on campus course if given a choice.

Table 3: Student online learning behavior

On average, how often did you visit the online course during the semester?			On average, how many hours per week did you spend logged into this online course this semester?		
Response	#	%	Response	#	%
Less than once a month	8	1.5	None	8	1.5
Once a month	2	0.4	1 - 5 hours	245	46.4
A few times a month	17	3.2	6 - 10 hours	164	31.1
A few times a week	210	39.4	11 - 20 hours	75	14.2
Once everyday	142	26.6	21 - 40 hours	23	4.4
More than once a day	152	28.5	More than 40 hours	7	1.3
Non-response	2	0.4	Don't know	6	1.1
			Non-response	5	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100</b>

Why did you take the online course in Fall 2005?			Did you drop or withdraw from the online class you enrolled in?			If you were given the choice between an online course and a face-to-face, on-campus course, how likely would you take another online course?		
Response	#	%	Response	#	%	Response	#	%
Personal enrichment	48	9	Yes	99	18.6	Very likely	313	58.7
Apply toward AA/AS	322	60.4	No	433	81.2	Likely	151	28.3
Apply toward certificate	23	4.3	Non-response	1	0.2	Not at all likely	62	11.6
For vocational develop.	26	4.9				Non-response	7	1.3
Other	114	21.4						
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100</b>

Student online learning experience at SDCCD (A- technical aspect)

- Most of the respondents had a positive experience in navigating online through the course and using the online tools (e.g., discussion board, class email, quizzes, and calendar).
- More than half of the respondents did not need technical support. For those who requested it, most found the technical support helpful. However, about a quarter of them (24%) did not find the technical support helpful.

Table 4: Student online learning experience (A - technical aspect)

<i>Did you feel reasonably comfortable navigating online through the course?</i>			<i>If requested, was the technical support helpful?</i>			<i>Did you have a positive experience using the online tools?</i>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Absolutely	274	51.4	No technical support requested	308	57.8	Absolutely	232	43.5
Mostly	188	35.3	Very helpful	63	11.8	Mostly	170	31.9
Somewhat	48	9.0	Somewhat helpful	49	9.2	Somewhat	75	14.1
Mostly not	14	2.6	Somewhat unhelpful	18	3.4	Mostly not	30	5.6
Absolutely not	7	1.3	Very unhelpful	17	3.2	Absolutely not	19	3.6
Non-response	2	0.4	Non-response	78	14.6	Non-response	7	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Student online learning experience at SDCCD (B - communication)

- The majority of the respondents felt that they were able to communicate effectively with their instructor and fellow online learners.
- More than half were satisfied with the interaction with their online classmates.

Table 5: Student online learning experience (B - communication)

<i>I was able to communicate effectively with my instructor in this course.</i>			<i>I was able to communicate effectively with fellow students in this course.</i>			<i>Were you satisfied with the interaction with your online classmates?</i>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Agree strongly	243	45.6	Agree strongly	197	37.0	Absolutely	151	28.3
Agree	182	34.1	Agree	211	39.6	Mostly	200	37.5
Neither agree nor disagree	36	6.8	Neither agree nor disagree	78	14.6	Somewhat	162	30.4
Disagree	44	8.3	Disagree	36	6.8	Mostly not	8	1.5
Disagree strongly	21	3.9	Disagree strongly	9	1.7	Absolutely not	3	0.6
Non-response	7	1.3	Non-response	2	0.4	Non-response	9	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Student perception of online learning at SDCCD

- Many students perceived the time flexibility as the most valuable attribute of online learning (See Question 3 in Appendix on page 6).
- The majority of the respondents perceived the online format as an effective way to learn and more than half of them found their online class size appropriate.
- When comparing online courses with on campus courses, more than half of the respondents reported to have enjoyed online courses more than on campus courses; the majority thought that they learned in online courses either as much as or more than in courses on campus.

Table 6: Student perception of online learning at SDCCD

<i>Was the online format an effective way for you to learn?</i>			<i>Was the number of students appropriate for this online course?</i>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Absolutely	234	43.9	Agree strongly	151	28.3
Mostly	192	36.0	Agree	200	37.5
Somewhat	63	11.8	Neither agree nor disagree	162	30.4
Mostly not	20	3.8	Disagree	8	1.5
Absolutely not	13	2.4	Disagree strongly	3	0.6
Non-response	11	2.1	Non-response	9	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>

  

<i>Compared to traditional classroom courses, how much did you enjoy this online method of taking a course?</i>			<i>Compared to traditional classroom courses, how would you rate what you have learned in this course?</i>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Much more	197	37.0	Much more	95	17.8
Somewhat more	129	24.2	Somewhat more	120	22.5
About the same	92	17.3	About the same	198	37.1
Somewhat less	76	14.3	Somewhat less	75	14.1
Much less	30	5.6	Much less	34	6.4
Non-response	9	1.7	Non-response	11	2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Students Comments

- The problem identified by the most respondents was related to the system (e.g., WebCTdown) (See Question 1 in Appendix), though many students reported not to have had any technical problems.
- Quite a few students commented that instructor-related aspects (e.g., quicker feedback) needed improvement.
- Few students indicated specific online courses to take in the future and the limited responses spread across disciplines. This information should not be used, by any means, as a reference in course scheduling (See Question 4 in Appendix).

## Appendix

### **Question 1: Describe any technical problems you encountered when taking this online course. (N = 323)**

The top eight categories of responses were:

- No technical problems (123)
- System slow or down (e.g., WebCT) (47)
- Issues submitting homework/tests (19)
- “Other” Instructor Issues (14) – such as instructor not helpful or confusing
- Personal computer issues (13)
- Slow or no response from instructor (10)
- Links not working (8)
- Password issues(6)

### **Question 2: What would you change about the course you took? (N = 202)**

The seven categories of responses were:

- Nothing (88)
- Instructor related (e.g., better Instructor, quicker feedback, and more attention to students) (58)
- Tests and quizzes (19)
- More site interaction (e.g., videos, chat and discussion board) (16)
- Assignments (e.g., less work, and no group assignments) (11)
- Keep students well informed (use of reminders, calendar, orientation, class syllabus and requirements available prior to start) (8)
- Easier navigation/better layout (8)

*Please note that some students have multiple responses; therefore, the total counts may exceed the number of respondents.*

### **Question 3: What elements of the online course were valuable to you? (N= 209)**

The nine categories of responses were:

- Time (e.g., flexible, and self-paced) (140)
- Discussion and message board (33)
- Ability to work at home (e.g., no driving, taking care of kids) (23)
- Everything (21)
- Easy access to instructor (20)
- Self-study/Quiz practices (14)
- Nothing (11)

*Please note that some students have multiple responses; therefore, the total counts may exceed the number of respondents.*

**Question 4: What online course would you like to see in the future? (N = 298)**

Top 10 responses are as follows (most students do not specify any particular level):

- Any course (53)
- Math (20) – MATH 95 (3)
- English (20) – ENGL 101 (2), ENGL 205 (3)
- History (16)
- Computer-related (14)
- Child Development (9)
- Sociology (9)
- Spanish (8)
- Psychology (7)
- Accounting (7)
- Biology (6)