

**Online Course Satisfaction
Spring 2006
Research Note**

**Office of Institutional Research and Planning
May 2007**

Online Course Satisfaction Spring 2006 Research Note

Purpose

This report has been created to measure the attitudes and opinions of students who took online courses in the Spring 2006 semester.

Data

To be eligible for the study a student had to be enrolled in an online course in the regular Spring semester for 2006. This did not include students who dropped the course. There were nearly 8,000 emails sent out starting on May 26, 2006, inviting students to participate in this survey. From these emails, 525 students responded to the survey. Data were collected for approximately four weeks.

Results

Demographics

- Nearly one-third of the respondents (29.9%) reported their age between 18 and 24, and another 24.9% reported their age between 30 and 39 (see Table 1).
- The majority of the respondents (69.8%) reported their gender as female.
- Just under half of the respondents reported their ethnicity as white (49.1%), followed by Latino (13.7%), and Asian (9.1%).

Table 1: Demographics

Age	N	%	Gender	N	%	Ethnicity	N	%
Under 18	1	0.2%	Male	156	30.2%	American Indian	7	1.4%
18 to 24	153	29.9%	Female	361	69.8%	Asian	47	9.1%
25 to 29	116	22.7%			African American	31	6.0%	
30 to 39	127	24.9%			White	254	49.1%	
40 to 49	78	15.3%			Latino	71	13.7%	
50 and above	36	7.0%			Filipino	30	5.8%	
					Pacific Islander	7	1.4%	
					Other	31	6.0%	
					Decline to answer	39	7.5%	
Total	511	100%	Total	517	100%	Total	517	100%

Student Preparation for Online Courses

- The majority of the respondents (65.6%) had previously taken an online course (see Table 2).
- Less than 30% of the respondents reported attending a WebCT orientation. Around 7% of the respondents were unsure if they had taken a WebCT orientation.
- Nearly 40% of the respondents reported completing an online learning readiness assessment. However, a sizeable portion of the respondents (13.5%) reported not being sure whether they had taken a readiness assessment.
- A large majority of the respondents (80.7%) reported their experience with information technology as experienced or average.

Table 2: Preparation for Online Courses

How many online courses did you take before taking this course?			My overall experience with information technology is:		
	N	%		N	%
None	178	34.5%	Expert	77	14.9%
One	108	20.9%	Experienced	265	51.2%
Two	86	16.6%	Average	153	29.5%
Three	47	9.1%	Beginner	23	4.4%
Four	33	6.4%			
Five	9	1.7%			
More than five	56	10.8%			
Total	517	100%	Total	518	100%

Did you attend a WebCT orientation either online or on-campus?			Did you complete the Online Learning Readiness Assessment before you took this course?		
	N	%		N	%
Yes	149	28.6%	Yes	193	37.9%
No	337	64.7%	No	248	48.6%
Unsure	35	6.7%	Unsure	69	13.5%
Total	521	100%	Total	510	100%

Student Experience with Online Courses

- Most respondents (92.1%) reported that they visited their online course a few times a week or more.
- Just over half of respondents (55.5%) spent between one and five hours logged into the class per week followed by 28.1% who reported they logged into the class between six and ten hours per week.
- More than half of the respondents (56.4%) reported that the reason they took an online class was to apply it toward an AA/AS Degree.
- The majority of the respondents (80.6%) completed their online course, and 87.6% were likely or very likely to choose an online course in the future compared to a face-to-face on-campus course.

Table 3: Experience

On average, how often did you visit this online course during the semester?			On average, how many hours per week did you spend logged into this online course this semester?		
	N	%		N	%
Less than once a month	10	1.9%	None	5	1.0%
Once a month	5	1.0%	1-5 hours	270	54.5%
A few times a month	26	5.0%	6-10 hours	138	27.8%
A few times a week	227	44.2%	11-20 hours	63	12.7%
Once every day	116	22.6%	21-40 hours	17	3.4%
More than once a day	130	25.3%	More than 40 hours	3	0.6%
Total	514	100%	Total	491	100%

Why did you take this online course?			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 is it that you would take another online course?		
	N	%		N	%		N	%
Personal enrichment	64	12.5%	Yes	101	19.4%	Very likely	306	59.4%
Apply toward AA/AS	289	56.4%	No	419	80.6%	Likely	145	28.2%
Apply toward certificate	26	5.1%				Not at all likely	64	12.4%
For vocational develop.	24	4.7%						
Other	109	21.3%						
Total	512	100%	Total	520	100.0%	Total	515	100%

Technical Support

- The majority of respondents felt comfortable navigating online (86.4%) and had a positive experience using the online course tools (77.3%) (see Table 4).
- Nearly 70% of the respondents did not request technical support. Of those who did receive technical support, the majority reported that the technical support was very helpful or somewhat helpful.

Table 4: Technical Support

Did you feel reasonably comfortable navigating online through the course?			If requested, was the technical support helpful?			Did you have a positive experience using the online course tools?		
	N	%		N	%		N	%
Absolutely	279	53.8%	No technical support requested	236	67.2%	Absolutely	254	49.3%
Mostly	169	32.6%	Very helpful	60	17.1%	Mostly	144	28.0%
Somewhat	54	10.4%	Somewhat helpful	32	9.1%	Somewhat	68	13.2%
Mostly Not	7	1.3%	Somewhat unhelpful	8	2.3%	Mostly Not	28	5.4%
Absolutely Not	10	1.9%	Very unhelpful	15	4.3%	Absolutely Not	21	4.1%
Total	519	100%	Total	351	100%	Total	515	100%

Communication

- The majority of the respondents felt they could communicate with the instructor (76.7%) and their fellow students (75.1%) (see Table 5).
- The majority of the respondents (68.1%) were satisfied with the interaction with their online classmates.

Table 5: Communication

I was able to communicate effectively with my instructor in this course.			I was able to communicate effectively with fellow students in this course.			Were you satisfied with the interaction with your online classmates?		
	N	%		N	%		N	%
Agree Strongly	223	43.2%	Agree Strongly	212	41.0%	Absolutely	180	35.2%
Agree	173	33.5%	Agree	176	34.1%	Mostly	168	32.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	57	11.1%	Neither Agree nor Disagree	89	17.2%	Somewhat	105	20.6%
Disagree	32	6.2%	Disagree	25	4.8%	Mostly Not	45	8.8%
Disagree Strongly	31	6.0%	Disagree Strongly	15	2.9%	Absolutely Not	13	2.5%
Total	516	100%	Total	517	100%	Total	511	100%

Perception of Learning

- 80.4% of the respondents rated the effectiveness of the online format for learning as favorable (see Table 6).
- 65.6% of the respondents felt that the number of students in the class was appropriate.
- Nearly 60% of the respondents reported greater enjoyment for the online course method compared to a traditional classroom course.
- Nearly 80% of the respondents rated the amount learned as about the same, more or much more for an online course compared to a traditional classroom course.

Table 6: Perception of Learning

Was the online format an effective way for you to learn?			Was the number of students appropriate for this online course?		
	N	%		N	%
Absolutely	248	48.3%	Agree Strongly	173	33.5%
Mostly	165	32.1%	Agree	166	32.1%
Somewhat	54	10.5%	Neither Agree nor Disagree	162	31.3%
Mostly Not	31	6.0%	Disagree	11	2.1%
Absolutely Not	16	3.1%	Disagree Strongly	5	1.0%
Total	514	100%	Total	517	100%

Compared to traditional classroom courses, how much did you enjoy this online method of taking a course?			Compared to traditional classroom courses, how would you rate how much you have learned in this course?		
	N	%		N	%
Much more	177	34.6%	Much more	94	18.4%
Somewhat more	118	23.0%	Somewhat more	92	18.0%
About the same	117	22.9%	About the same	204	39.8%
Somewhat less	58	11.3%	Somewhat less	84	16.4%
Much less	42	8.2%	Much less	38	7.4%
Total	512	100%	Total	512	100%

Open-ended Question

What online course would you like to see in the future?*		
	N	%
1. Any/All	55	16.1%
2. History	31	9.1%
3. English	25	7.3%
4. Math	23	6.7%
5. Foreign Language	20	5.8%
6. Computer-related	19	5.6%
7. Accounting	12	3.5%
8. Science	11	3.2%
9. General Education	10	2.9%
10. Humanities	10	2.9%
Total		

* The top ten responses are shown. Respondents were able to give multiple responses. A total of 342 responses were submitted. Percentages shown are based on the total number of responses.

Summary

- Most students taking online courses do not need technical support.
- Online students agree that they can communicate with other students and the course instructor.
- Generally, online students enjoy the online teaching method and feel they learn about the same amount as a traditional classroom course.