Online Course Satisfaction
Spring 2008
Research Note

Office of Institutional Research and Planning
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PURPOSE

This report has been created to measure the attitudes and opinions of students who took online courses in the spring 2008 semester.

DATA

To be eligible for the study a student had to be enrolled in an online course in the regular spring semester for 2008. This did not include students who dropped the course or never attended. There were 9,208 emails sent out on April 21st inviting students to participate in this survey. Two reminder emails were sent on April 24th and April 30th. From these emails, 1,682 students responded to the survey. Data were collected for approximately two weeks.

RESULTS

Student Preparation for Online Courses

- The majority of respondents (66.5%) had previously taken an online course at SDCCD in the past two years, and approximately one in five respondents (20.5%) had taken an online course at another college in the past two years.

- Most respondents (65.3%) responded that they had sufficient information about online course requirements prior to enrolling. However, 27% indicated that they had some, but not enough, information.

- Less than one-third (29.7%) of the respondents reported attending a WebCT orientation. Almost 18% were unsure or did not respond.

- Only 27% of the respondents reported completing an online learning readiness assessment. However, 19% of the respondents were unsure and 11% did not respond.

- Most respondents (67.2%) reported above average information technology experience.

Table 1: Preparation for Online Courses

How many online courses at the San Diego Community College District have you taken in the past two years before Spring 2008?			How many online courses have you taken at other colleges in the past two years?			Did you have enough information about online course requirements prior to enrolling?		
	N	%		N	%		N	%
None	558	33.2	None	1335	79.4	Yes	1098	65.3
One	265	15.8	One	97	5.8	Some, but not enough	449	26.7
Two	224	13.3	Two	75	4.5			
Three	172	10.2	Three	49	2.9	Not at all	118	7
Four	148	8.8	Four	29	1.7	Missing	17	1
Five	60	3.6	Five	19	1.1			
More than five	250	14.9	More than five	76	4.5			
Missing	5	0.3	Missing	2	0.1			
Total	**1682**	**100**	**Total**	**1682**	**100**	**Total**	**1682**	**100**

Did you attend a Blackboard/WebCT orientation either online or on-campus?			Did you complete the Online Learning Readiness Assessment before you took this course?			My overall experience with information technology is:		
	N	%		N	%		N	%
Yes	500	29.7	Yes	447	26.6	Expert	240	14.3
No	882	52.4	No	741	44.1	Experienced	889	52.9
Unsure	145	8.6	Unsure	315	18.7	Average	447	26.6
Missing	155	9.2	Missing	179	10.6	Beginner	69	4.1
						Missing	37	2.2
Total	**1682**	**100**	**Total**	**1682**	**100**	**Total**	**1682**	**100**

Student Experience with Online Courses

- Nearly half of the respondents (47.5%) reported they enrolled in two or more online courses during spring 2008.

- Less than one-quarter of respondents (22.9%) withdrew from any online classes in spring 2008.

- When asked to report the reason they took their online course, respondents most often reported an intention to transfer to a four year college (38.5%), followed by a desire to apply the course toward their AA/AS degree (26.7%).

- Nearly half of the respondents (48.6%) reported visiting their online course a few times a week and most respondents (43.6%) spent between 1 and 5 hours logged into their online course per week.

Table 2: Student Experience with Online Courses

How many online courses at the San Diego Community College District did you enroll in during Spring 2008?			Did you withdraw from any online classes you enrolled in for Spring 2008?			Why did you take this online course?*		
	N	%		N	%		N	%
One	877	52.1	Yes	386	22.9	Personal enrichment	359	16.6
Two	424	25.2	No	1256	74.7	Apply toward AA/AS	576	26.7
Three	180	10.7	Missing	40	2.4	Apply toward certificate	176	8.1
Four	111	6.6				For vocational develop.	125	5.8
Five	46	2.7				Transfer to a 4-year	832	38.5
More than five	37	2.2				Other	92	4.3
Missing	7	0.4						
Total	1682	100	Total	1682	100	Total	2160	100

Respondents could select multiple answers for this question.

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	18	1.1	None	11	0.7
			1-5 hours	733	43.6
Once a month	6	0.4	6-10 hours	403	24
A few times a month	75	4.5	11-20 hours	212	12.6
A few times a week	818	48.6	21-40 hours	53	3.2
Once every day	377	22.4	More than 40 hours	16	1
More than once a day	379	22.5	Missing	254	15.1
Missing	9	0.5			
Total	1682	100	Total	1682	100

Technical Support

- The majority of respondents felt comfortable navigating through their online course (95.2%) and had a positive experience using the online course tools (91%).

- Most respondents (61.7%) needed no technical support.

- Of the 27% of respondents who received technical support, most (95.9%) found the technical support to be helpful.

Table 3: Technical Support

Did you feel reasonably comfortable navigating online through the course?			Did you have a positive experience using the online course tools?		
	N	%		N	%
Absolutely	801	47.6	Absolutely	678	40.3
Mostly	602	35.8	Mostly	590	35.1
Somewhat	199	11.8	Somewhat	262	15.6
Mostly Not	46	2.7	Mostly Not	80	4.8
Absolutely Not	26	1.5	Absolutely Not	55	3.3
Missing	8	0.5	Missing	17	1.0
Total	**1682**	**100**	**Total**	**1682**	**100**

Were you able to get the technical support you needed from the 24/7 helpdesk?			If requested, was the technical support helpful?		
	N	%		N	%
Yes	453	26.9	Very helpful	287	63.4
No	142	8.4	Somewhat helpful	147	32.5
Website answered questions	40	2.4	Somewhat unhelpful	11	2.4
No support needed	1037	61.7	Very unhelpful	4	0.9
Missing	10	0.6	Missing	4	0.9
Total	**1682**	**100**	**Total**	**453**	**100**

Communication

- Most respondents (76.6%) felt they could communicate effectively with their instructor. However, about 11% were disappointed with their communication with their instructor.

- The majority of respondents (70.7%) were able to communicate effectively with their classmates.

- Most respondents were satisfied (65.5%) or somewhat satisfied (22.8%) with the interaction with their online classmates.

Table 4: 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	594	35.3	Agree Strongly	455	27.1	Absolutely	517	30.7
Agree	695	41.3	Agree	734	43.6	Mostly	585	34.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	197	11.7	Neither Agree nor Disagree	358	21.3	Somewhat	384	22.8
						Mostly Not	121	7.2
Disagree	122	7.3	Disagree	95	5.6	Absolutely Not	54	3.2
Disagree Strongly	68	4	Disagree Strongly	32	1.9	Missing	21	1.2
Missing	6	0.4	Missing	8	0.5			
Total	1682	100	Total	1682	100	Total	1682	100

Perception of Learning

- Most respondents (74.7%) rated the online format as an effective way to learn.

- The majority of respondents (65.3%) felt that the number of students in the course was appropriate, while 33% had no opinion on the matter.

- Over half of the respondents reported a greater enjoyment for the online learning method compared to a traditional classroom setting. However, 22% found it to be about the same and 20% found the online format to be less enjoyable.

- Of the respondents, 37% felt they learned more in an online course than in a traditional classroom course, and 42% felt that they learned about the same amount in an online course as in a traditional classroom course.

Table 5: Perception of Learning

Was the online format an effective way for you to learn?	N	%	Was the number of students appropriate for this online course?	N	%
Absolutely	702	41.7	Agree Strongly	496	29.5
Mostly	555	33	Agree	602	35.8
Somewhat	263	15.6	Neither Agree nor Disagree	556	33.1
Mostly Not	73	4.3	Disagree	13	0.8
Absolutely Not	45	2.7	Disagree Strongly	4	0.2
Missing	44	2.6	Missing	11	0.7
Total	**1682**	**100**	**Total**	**1682**	**100**

Compared to traditional classroom courses, how much did you enjoy this online method of taking a course?	N	%	Compared to traditional classroom courses, how would you rate how much you have learned in this course?	N	%
Much more	548	32.6	Much more	289	17.2
Somewhat more	401	23.8	Somewhat more	336	20
About the same	376	22.4	About the same	701	41.7
Somewhat less	212	12.6	Somewhat less	235	14
Much less	131	7.8	Much less	107	6.4
Missing	14	0.8	Missing	14	0.8
Total	**1682**	**100**	**Total**	**1682**	**100**

Future Services

- Most respondents (86.9%) would be likely to take another online course rather than a traditional on-campus course if given the choice.

- When asked what course they would like to see in the future, among the top responses, about one-quarter (25.5%) stated that they would like to see any or all courses in an online format; math (14%), English (10.1%), and history (9.4%) were the top 3 classes mentioned.

- Respondents most frequently mentioned that tutoring (18%) would be a beneficial support in the future, followed by counseling services (14.7%), and library services (14.4%). However, a large number of respondents (16.8%) noted that they had no need for additional services or support.

Table 6: Future Services

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?			What online course would you like to see in the future?**			What additional services or support would be beneficial?*		
	N	**%**		**N**	**%**		**N**	**%**
Very likely	897	53.3	Any/All courses	106	25.5	Tutoring	506	18
Likely	565	33.6	Math	58	14	Counseling	413	14.7
Not at all likely	209	12.4	English	42	10.1	Library	404	14.4
Missing	11	0.7	History	39	9.4	Financial aid	378	13.5
			Computer-related	36	8.7	Online orientation	278	9.9
			Spanish	35	8.4	Technical support	236	8.4
			Biology	32	7.7	None of the above	117	4.2
			Psychology	25	6	No need for additional services/support	472	16.8
			Child Development	14	3.4			
			Business	14	3.4			
			Calculus	14	3.4			
Total	**1682**	**100**	**Total**	**415**	**100**	**Total**	**2804**	**100**

Respondents could select multiple answers for this question.
**Open-ended question in which respondents could record multiple answers for this question. Top 11 courses are displayed.*

Demographics

- Slightly over one-third (35.8%) of respondents reported their age to be between 18 and 24 years.

- The majority of respondents reported their gender as female (67.2%).

- Almost half of the respondents reported their ethnicity as white (44.2%), followed by Latino (14.3%), and Asian (10.3%).

Table 7: Demographics

Age	N	%	Gender	N	%	Ethnicity	N	%
Under 18	10	0.6	Male	531	31.6	American Indian	10	0.6
18 to 24	602	35.8	Female	1131	67.2	Asian	174	10.3
25 to 29	367	21.8	Missing	20	1.2	African American	121	7.2
30 to 39	365	21.7				White	744	44.2
40 to 49	221	13.1				Latino	240	14.3
50 and above	112	6.7				Filipino	80	4.8
Missing	5	0.3				Pacific Islander	18	1.1
						Other	121	7.2
						Decline to answer	165	9.8
						Missing	9	0.5
Total	**1682**	**100**	**Total**	**1682**	**100**	**Total**	**1682**	**100**

SUMMARY

- Most students found the online format to be an enjoyable and effective method for learning.

- The majority of students had previously taken an online course and would take another in the future if given the opportunity.

- For the most part, online students feel comfortable navigating the course and do not need technical support. When assistance was required, respondents found it almost always helpful.