

**Online Course Satisfaction
Spring 2007
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 2007 semester.

Data

To be eligible for the study a student had to be enrolled in an online course in the regular Spring semester for 2007. This did not include students who dropped the course. There were 7,373 emails sent out starting on April 24th inviting students to participate in this survey. From these emails, 982 students responded to the survey. Data were collected for approximately two weeks.

Results

Demographics

- One-third (32.9%) of the respondents reported their age between 18 and 24, and a quarter (25.1%) of respondents reported their age between 30 and 39.
- The majority of respondents reported their gender as female (68%).
- Almost half of the respondents reported their ethnicity as white (46.7%), followed by Latino (13.2%), and Asian (10.4%).

Table 1: Demographics

Age	N	%	Gender	N	%	Ethnicity	N	%
Under 18	4	0.4	Male	303	30.9	American Indian	6	0.6
18 to 24	323	32.9	Female	666	67.8	Asian	102	10.4
25 to 29	181	18.4	Missing	13	1.3	African American	74	7.5
30 to 39	246	25.1				White	459	46.7
40 to 49	152	15.5				Latino	130	13.2
50 and above	73	7.4				Filipino	54	5.5
Missing	3	0.3				Pacific Islander	13	1.3
						Other	64	6.5
						Decline to answer	77	7.8
						Missing	3	0.3
Total	982	100	Total	982	100	Total	982	100

Student Preparation for Online Courses

- The majority of respondents (66.3%) had previously taken an online course (see Table 2).
- Less than one-third (29%) of the respondents reported attending a WebCT orientation.
Around 8% were unsure if they had taken a WebCT orientation.
- Only 27% of respondents reported completing an online learning readiness assessment.
However, a sizeable portion (18%) reported not being sure if they had taken a readiness assessment or not.
- The majority of respondents reported average to expert experience with information technology.

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	329	33.5	Expert	150	15.3
One	206	21.0	Experienced	504	51.3
Two	136	13.8	Average	278	28.3
Three	97	9.9	Beginner	41	4.2
Four	54	5.5	Total	973	99.1
Five	29	3.0	Missing	9	0.9
More than five	129	13.1			
Missing	2	0.2			
Total	982	100	Total	982	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	286	29.1	Yes	268	27.3
No	613	62.4	No	533	54.3
Unsure	82	8.4	Unsure	175	17.8
Total	981	99.9	Total	976	99.4
Missing	1	0.1	Missing	6	0.6
Total	982	100	Total	982	100

Student Experience with Online Courses

- Most respondents reported that they visited their online course a few times a week and spent between 1 and 5 hours logged into the class per week.
- The majority of respondents reported (48.3%) that the reason they took an online class was to apply it toward their AA/AS degree.
- Most respondents completed their online course and were likely to choose an online course in the future compared to a face-to-face on-campus course.

Table 3: Student Experience with Online Courses

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	7	0.7	None	7	0.7
Once a month	4	0.4	1-5 hours	489	49.8
A few times a month	38	3.9	6-10 hours	303	30.9
A few times a week	453	46.1	11-20 hours	119	12.1
Once every day	225	22.9	21-40 hours	28	2.9
More than once a day	248	25.3	More than 40 hours	6	0.6
Missing	7	0.7	Missing	30	3.1
Total	982	100	Total	982	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	211	18.8	Yes	160	16.3	Very likely	551	56.1
Apply toward AA/AS	542	48.3	No	820	83.5	Likely	306	31.2
Apply toward certificate	113	10.1	Missing	2	0.2	Not at all likely	116	11.8
For vocational develop.	69	6.1				Missing	9	0.9
Other	187	16.7						
Total	1122*	100	Total	982	100	Total	982	100

*Respondents could select multiple answers for this question.

Technical Support

- Most respondents felt comfortable navigating online and had a positive experience using the online course tools.
- Of the 24% of respondents who received technical support, most (97%) 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	489 49.8	No Technical Support		Absolutely	415 42.3
Mostly	332 33.8	Requested	703 74.2	Mostly	346 35.2
Somewhat	113 11.5	Very helpful	171 17.4	Somewhat	129 13.1
Mostly Not	22 2.2	Somewhat helpful	57 5.8	Mostly Not	57 5.8
Absolutely Not	18 1.8	Somewhat unhelpful	2 0.2	Absolutely Not	26 2.6
Missing	8 0.8	Very unhelpful	5 0.5	Missing	9 0.9
Total	982 100	Total	948 100	Total	982 100

Communication

- Most respondents felt they could communicate effectively with the instructor and their fellow students. However, about 12% reported that they were not able to effectively communicate.
- The majority of respondents were satisfied with the interaction with their online classmates. However, more than 100 students (11.4%) were not satisfied with the interaction.

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	342	34.8	Agree Strongly	238	24.2	Absolutely	257	26.2
Agree	406	41.3	Agree	443	45.1	Mostly	357	36.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	103	10.5	Neither Agree nor Disagree	204	20.8	Somewhat	243	24.7
Disagree	84	8.6	Disagree	67	6.8	Mostly Not	75	7.6
Disagree Strongly	37	3.8	Disagree Strongly	22	2.2	Absolutely		
Missing	10	1	Missing	8	0.8	Not	37	3.8
Total	982	100	Total	982	100	Missing	13	1.3
						Total	982	100

Perception of Learning

- Most (75%) respondents rated the effectiveness of the online format for learning as favorable.
- More than half of the respondents felt that the number of students in the class was appropriate.
- Over half of the total respondents reported greater enjoyment for the online course method compared to a traditional classroom course. However, about 21% reported that they preferred the traditional classroom course and another 18% reported the experience about the same.
- Most respondents (42%) rated the amount learned at about the same 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	429	43.7	Agree Strongly	241	24.5
Mostly	306	31.2	Agree	339	34.5
Somewhat	158	16.1	Neither Agree nor Disagree	372	37.9
Mostly Not	28	2.9	Disagree	14	1.4
Absolutely Not	22	2.2	Disagree Strongly	7	0.7
Missing	39	4.0	Missing	9	0.9
Total	982	100	Total	982	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	342	34.8	Much more	155	15.8
Somewhat more	242	24.6	Somewhat more	202	20.6
About the same	177	18.0	About the same	416	42.4
Somewhat less	146	14.9	Somewhat less	144	14.7
Much less	64	6.5	Much less	60	6.1
Missing	11	1.1	Missing	5	0.5
Total	982	100	Total	982	100

Open-ended Question

What online course would you like to see in the future?		
	N	%
English	49	19%
Any course	48	18%
Math	46	18%
History	23	9%
Computer-related	16	6%
Spanish	14	5%
Biology	14	5%
Child Development	13	5%
Psychology	13	5%
Business	13	5%
Accounting	9	3%
Sociology	5	2%
Total	263	100

Summary

- Most students taking online courses do not need technical support.
- Online students agree that they can communicate effectively 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.