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Distance Education Course Evaluations Fall 2012

Overview: In Fall 2012, the Crafton Hills College (CHC) Distance Education (DE) Committee in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Planning (OIERP) administered an online course evaluation to students who were enrolled in an online or hybrid course. The purpose of this brief is to summarize the findings from participants who completed an evaluation.

Summary of Findings:

- 59% of the respondents reported taking 4 - 6 classes during the semester.
- 60% of the respondents were taking their first online course.
- 35% of the respondents reported not working during the semester; 39% reported working 21 or more hours per week.
- 50% of the respondents indicated that they typically devote 4-6 hours per week to the DE course; 35% indicated that they spent 1-3 hours per week on the course.
- Respondents strongly agreed that the instructor posted the syllabus in a timely manner and demonstrated knowledge of course subject matter.
- Students strongly agreed that the instructor applied course material to the real world, was available to help students, provided opportunities for discussion, and was open to other people's viewpoints.
- 94% would recommend their DE course to another student and 97% of the respondents would recommend the instructor to another student.
- Internet resources and instructor-generated content were rated as the most useful resources.
- 46% of respondents suggested video lectures as a useful resource for future DE courses.

Methodology: All students in a DE course at CHC in Fall 2012 were given access to the evaluations via an online link provided by their instructor. There were 12 instructors teaching 18 DE sections with a total of 502 students who received a grade-on-record (GOR). GOR is defined as students who earn A, B, C, D, F, P, NP, I or W. In the online survey, students indicated the instructor and course they were evaluating. They also gave demographic information including age, gender, race/ethnicity, hours worked per week, number of classes taken during the semester, number of online courses taken at CHC, and the weekly amount of time spent on coursework for the course being evaluated.

Next, the survey was divided into sections and students were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements about usefulness, timeliness, and accuracy of course content and pedagogy to capture the perceived level of satisfaction with online courses.

Responses to questions related to course components, instructional approach, and student satisfaction were recorded on a four-point scale (4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree). Responses to questions related to resources were recorded on a three-point scale (3=Very Useful, 2= Useful, 1= Not Useful). In addition, there was an option to choose "Not Applicable" as a response to all scaled questions. All "Not Applicable" responses were excluded from findings in this brief.

Sample: All students enrolled in a DE course at CHC in Fall 2012 were given access to the evaluations via an online link provided by their instructor. Of the 502 students, 108 students (from 11 DE sections taught by 8 different instructors) completed the online survey, representing an overall response rate of 22%. Table 1 presents the number of submitted evaluations compared to the actual number of GOR's by instructor and course section.

Table 1: Response Rate by Instructor and Course.

Instructor	Course	N	#	Response Rate
Allen	CIS 140X2	7	23	30.4%
Brink	PHIL 103	1	29	3.4%
Brink	PSYCH 111	3	39	7.7%
Carroll	CIS 142X2	0	14	0.0%
DiPonio	ENGL 101	1	26	3.8%
DiPonio	ENGL 102	0	29	0.0%
Downey	PSYCH 100	0	31	0.0%
Hogrefe	JOUR/SPEECH 135	35	36	97.2%
McCambly	ART 100	0	36	0.0%
McConnell	MUSIC 103	36	49	73.5%
McLaren	CD 105	1	35	2.9%
Petrovic	ART 102	0	29	0.0%
Petrovic	ART 120X4	0	19	0.0%
Urbanovich	SPEECH 100	3	28	10.7%
Urbanovich	SPEECH 125	5	25	20.0%
Urbanovich	SPEECH 174	9	24	37.5%
Yau	CIS 101	7	30	23.3%
Total		108	502	21.5%

N = Number of students who submitted an on-line course evaluation. # = Number of students who earned a grade on record. Response rate= the percent of students who participated by completing an evaluation (N/#)

As illustrated in Table 2, more females (61%) than males (38%) completed the survey. The majority of respondents were between 18 and 24 years old (73%) and of European-American (34%) or Hispanic/Latino ethnicity (28%). In addition, 50% of the respondents reported spending 4-6 hours on their DE coursework per week. Although 35% of respondents said they did not work, 19% reported working 11-20 hours per week, and 36% reported working 21 or more hours per week. Respondents were most likely to be enrolled in 4-6 classes this semester (59%), and 60% were taking their first online class at CHC.

Table 2: Distance Education Student Demographics and Characteristics

DE Student Demographics					
Gender	N	%	Ethnicity	N	%
Female	66	61.1	African American/Black	4	3.7
Male	41	38.0	Native American/Alaskan	3	2.8
Missing	1	0.9	Asian American	5	4.6
Total	108	100.0	European American/White	37	34.3
			Hispanic/Latino	31	28.7
Age	N	%	Multi-Racial	14	13.0
18-24	79	73.1	Other	11	10.2
25-30	13	12.0	Unknown/Missing	3	2.8
31-35	5	4.6	Total	108	100.0
36-40	1	0.9			
41 and above	9	8.3			
Missing	1	0.9	Hours spent on course per week	N	%
Total	108	100.0	1-3 hours	38	35.2
			4-6 hours	54	50.0
Hours at work this semester	N	%	7-9 hours	14	13.0
0 hours per week	37	34.6	10 hours or more	2	1.9
1-10 hours per week	8	7.4	Total	108	100.0
11-20 hours per week	20	18.5			
21-30 hours per week	16	14.8	# of CHC online classes taken	N	%
31-40 hours per week	15	13.9	1 online class	65	60.2
40 or more hours per week	11	10.2	2 online classes	27	25.0
Unknown/Missing	1	0.9	3 online classes	9	8.3
Total	10	100.0	4 online classes	3	2.8
			5 or more online classes	1	0.9
# of all classes this semester	N	%	Unknown/Missing	3	2.8
1-3 classes	43	39.8	Total	108	100.0
4-6 classes	64	59.3			
7-9 classes	1	0.9			
Total	108	100.0			

Findings: Students rated their satisfaction with the instructor’s teaching methods and organization. Referring to Tables 3, 4, and 5; the first column lists the statements, the second column (i.e. “N”) shows the number of Distance Education students who responded to the item, the column entitled “Min” shows the lowest response on the scale, the column entitled “Max” shows the highest response on the scale, the column “Mean” shows the average rating, and the last column shows the standard deviation. Students rated whether or not they agreed with the statements on a four-point Likert scale as follows:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Agree
- 4 = Strongly Agree

If the Min (i.e., lowest) score was a “3”, that means that none of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. If the Max score was a “4”, that means that at least one student strongly agreed with the statement. As an illustration, if the mean score was 3.65, that would indicate that, on average, students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. All tables are arranged by Mean score in descending order and exclude not applicable responses.

As illustrated in Table 3, most students agreed or strongly agreed with every statement in this section. Respondents most strongly agreed that the instructor posted the syllabus in a timely manner (mean = 3.84) and that the instructor demonstrated knowledge of course subject matter (mean = 3.81). On the other hand, students were somewhat less likely to feel that the instructor inspired interest or excitement in the subject matter (mean = 3.61).

Table 3: Course components and instructional procedures

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
The instructor posted a syllabus for this course in a timely manner	108	3	4	3.84	.37
The instructor demonstrated knowledge of course subject matter	108	3	4	3.81	.40
The instructor allowed sufficient time for assignments to be completed	108	1	4	3.74	.54
The instructor gave assignments and exams that were related to the learning objectives of this course	108	2	4	3.80	.45
The syllabus accurately described what was involved in the course	108	2	4	3.71	.49
The instructor organized the schedule effectively to promote learning	108	2	4	3.69	.52
The method of grading for this course was clearly stated in the syllabus with an outline of assignments.	108	2	4	3.69	.52
The instructor used explanations that were clear and understandable	107	2	4	3.67	.51
All course materials were posted in a timely manner	107	2	4	3.64	.57
The instructor inspired interest/excitement in the subject matter	108	1	4	3.61	.61

In the next section of the survey, respondents evaluated the instructional approach and techniques on social support, fairness, and reliability (see Table 4). Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all the statements. Students most strongly agreed that the instructor applied course material to the real world (mean = 3.80), that the instructor was available to help students (mean = 3.78), and that the instructor provided opportunities for student input/class discussion and was open to other people’s viewpoints (mean = 3.78). However, students were somewhat less likely to agree that the instructor returned grades in a reasonable length of time (mean = 3.64) or that the exams were fair and understandable (mean = 3.52).

Table 4: Instructional approach and techniques

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
The instructor applied course material to the real world	106	2	4	3.80	.42
The instructor was available to help students and made it clear how to contact him/her outside of class	107	3	4	3.78	.42
The instructor provided opportunities for student input/class discussion and was open to other people's viewpoints	108	2	4	3.78	.44
The instructor made an effort to help students succeed in the course	108	2	4	3.69	.54
The instructor was sensitive to gender and multi-cultural concerns	102	1	4	3.70	.58
The instructor responded to student communication within the guidelines described in the course syllabus	107	2	4	3.69	.52
The instructor treated students in an unbiased manner	106	2	4	3.70	.56
The instructor's system of grading was fair	106	1	4	3.65	.63
The instructor allowed group interaction or assigned group projects	103	2	4	3.65	.50
The instructor returned test and assignment grades/evaluations in a reasonable length of time	106	1	4	3.64	.62
The exams were fair and understandable	106	1	4	3.52	.72

Respondents rated the convenience of and satisfaction with DE courses (see Table 5), and agreed that they would recommend the online course experience to another student (mean= 3.57). DE students also agreed that they learned as much as they would have in a face-to-face course (mean = 3.48). On the other hand, fewer students agreed that communication with classmates was as frequent as in face-to-face courses (mean=3.22).

Table 5: Course satisfaction

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
I would recommend the online course experience to another student	103	2	4	3.57	.59
I found that I learned at least as much in this online course as I probably would in a face-to-face course	105	1	4	3.48	.70
I had to work at least as hard in this course as I would have in a traditional face-to-face course	104	1	4	3.43	.73
This course was more convenient to take than a traditional face-to-face course	103	1	4	3.40	.77
I would choose to take another online course	104	1	4	3.40	.80
Without the availability of this course via Internet, I would not have been able to enroll in this course/program	103	1	4	3.32	.97
I communicated at least as much with other students in this online course as I would in a face-to-face course	104	1	4	3.22	.91

Table 6 is a compilation of the resources and course components ranked by perceived usefulness in the opinion of the respondents using a three-point Likert scale of very useful = 3, adequately useful = 2, and not useful = 1. Students were most likely to rate as useful the Internet resources (mean = 2.78) and the instructor-generated content (mean = 2.77). In contrast, group projects (mean = 2.38) were more often rated as not useful to a student's distance learning experience; also, 29% of the respondents chose "not applicable" when asked to rate the usefulness of group projects.

Table 6: Evaluating resources and components used in DE courses

Please rate the usefulness of the following:	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Internet resources	106	1	3	2.78	.44
Instructor-generated content (e.g., PowerPoint, videos, podcasts, etc.)	105	1	3	2.77	.44
Quizzes and exams	104	1	3	2.71	.52
Online lectures	99	1	3	2.70	.48
Required assignments	108	1	3	2.69	.49
Textbooks/Workbooks	106	1	3	2.66	.50
Online Grade Book	97	1	3	2.65	.60
Discussion Boards	107	1	3	2.62	.58
Group projects	76	1	3	2.38	.63

Respondents were asked to choose which components they would consider to be useful and recommend be incorporated into future online courses. As illustrated in Table 7, video lectures were cited by the greatest percentage of respondents (46%) and instructional videos on using Blackboard by the lowest percentage (19%).

Table 7: Suggested components for future DE courses

Which would you like to see more of in future DE classes?	N	%
Video lectures	50	46.3
Videos on related course content from a variety of sources	49	45.4
Website links related to course content	48	44.4
Instructor podcasts	46	42.6
Chat rooms	39	36.1
Instructional videos on how to use Blackboard	21	19.4

As shown in Table 8, out of the 108 respondents, 94% would recommend the DE course to another student, and 97% would recommend the instructor to another student.

Table 8: Course and Instructor recommendation

Would you recommend this course to another student?	N	%	Would you recommend this instructor to another student?	N	%
Yes	102	94.4	Yes	105	97.2
No	6	5.6	No	3	2.8
Total	108	100.0	Total	108	100.0

Finally, respondents were asked to give any comments or suggestions for improvement of online and hybrid classes. The following feedback from 25 (23%) of the respondents is categorized into “compliments” and “suggestions and complaints.”

Compliments (N = 20)

- Awesome teacher
- [Instructor's name] is a wonderful, patient instructor. I will be looking to continue my [subject matter] courses with [Instructor's name]. Thank you
- Good experience
- Great instructor and course, would definitely recommend to other students. Learned a lot!
- [Instructor's name] was an excellent teacher and was always there for the students as well as making himself extremely available and giving as many helpful comments as he possibly could.
- I am extremely impressed with the instructor and completely satisfied with her way of teaching. Specifically her way of breaking up the curriculum and giving a head start to the important topics of [subject matter] was extremely helpful. I thank God for bringing her my way.
- I really enjoyed the topics and information covered in this class! Our teacher was also really great!
- [Instructor's name] did an excellent job in the Hybrid course I felt like I learned a lot.
- [Instructor's name] is an excellent instructor to this course. He knew everything about literally everything, it seems. His knowledge on [subject matter] is constructive and germane to the course.
- I very much enjoyed [Instructor's] class. He was very insightful and available to help me to understand the topics.
- [Instructor's name] is the best at responding to student emails over any teacher I have ever had on the Crafton Campus in my 3 semesters. He is understanding and always willing to help. His teaching style is likable by all students in his class and I notice that every time I'm in class the whole class attends.
- This course was a course I probably didn't need to take and I wasn't interested in it, BUT [Instructor's name] made it worth the while and really made sure we did our assignments and helped us with any questions we had.
- This was my first online class and I found the instructor to be very helpful with updating assignments and always making sure that we could contact him with any questions. I would take another online class and especially recommend this teacher to another student.
- [Instructor's name] is, by far, one of the best instructors I have taken a class from while at CHC. He is easy to contact with questions and concerns and always responds in a timely manner. He is extremely knowledgeable about [subject matter]. I recommend him to everyone! He genuinely wants his students to learn/gain something from his classes and to succeed. This class is out of my element, but [Instructor's name] has made it doable and even enjoyable.
- Course that was very fun to partake in!
- This is the coolest class that I have ever taken. It helped me to learn a lot more things about music, and most of them are new to me so this class is so helpful.
- The instructor displayed a good grasp of all of the course concepts and was able to relate them to common day experience, some of which was his own personal experience.
- [Instructor's name] is a great instructor. I think some people get a misconception about him a lot of the time. He is very fair and laid-back, but he also promotes challenge and rewards hard work. He's not the stereotypical teacher that gives the easy "A." I think it's a great course for anyone to take, but I also think it takes a very specific kind of student to succeed in his class.
- [Instructor's name] is a fantastic Professor, I have learned so much from her and I am very grateful to her.
- [Instructor's name] is a helpful, patient, and highly organized teacher.

Complaints/Suggestions (N = 5):

- The main weakness of the course and the instructor is that they are highly Windows-centric. Many of the activities required a Windows-based computer to complete. Since I don't own one, I had to do these at the lab. However, the fact that the lab computers are "locked down" limited my ability to do some of the activities. When [for example] troubleshooting utilities are discussed it would be useful to mention similar utilities available to Linux or Macintosh. I was disappointed that the syllabus and other class documents were provided in a format specific to MS Word. Some of us don't have the money for this program, and it would have been beneficial to export them in a more common format such as RTF. In any case, documents such as the syllabus that aren't expected to be edited by the student would be better to export as PDFs that don't even need a word processor to read.
- Not a whole lot of assignments, so no room to miss an assignment at all or receive a low grade on a test or homework. Would've been even more helpful to have had a week by week schedule or even a due dates list on BlackBoard. Missed a test due to the fact I had no idea it was due.
- For the final exam, I would have liked an actual outline to study from. The course was great, but I would have liked to have had more group gatherings. I am not very fond of online classes, face to face interaction is much better. Sunday field trips aren't the best.
- The most work that I have ever had in a class
- Books are too expensive!!