**TET - 763**

**Applied Research in Educational Technology**

**Final Project - Conduct a Survey**

**Evaluation of Distance Education Courses vs. Traditional Courses**

**By: Josh W. Bergquist and Dustin L. Mees**

**Spring Semester: 2009**

**Instructors: Dr. Susan Santo**

**Statement of the Research Question:**

With the latest advancements in technology, students are no longer limited to traditional classroom setting. In the rural communities in South Dakota, students no longer have to miss opportunities that their school district cannot provide. The size and number of online courses continues to expand at phenomenal rates; therefore, it is important to answer the following research question: Do online courses as readily meet student needs of accessibility, knowledge gained, availability of instructor time, collaboration among students, and overall personal satisfaction as traditional instruction does?

**Summary and Conclusions:**

The survey was sent out to Beresford Elementary School and Elk Point-Jefferson Middle School to faculty and staff. The method of distribution and return of the surveys was using the school mailboxes. The participants included ten faculty members from Elk Point-Jefferson and nineteen from Beresford. For question one, the majority, 83% of are participants fall in the age range of 26-40. The responses were more spread out for question two on the number of on-line courses taken. The number of participants who have not taken an online course was the same as participants who have taken ten or more which was 28%. These two choices yielded the highest response. The remainder of the participants had answers that spread out between taking 1-9 on-line courses. The responses to question three were similar to question two as in participants that have not taken an on-line class do not spend any time on homework. Participants that had taken ten or more courses spend between 9-11 hours a week. The results showed that no one spends more than 12 hours a week on homework. The majority, 43%, of participants gave the reason of better schedule flexibility for taking an on-line course. The idea that on-line courses would be less intimidating for older students was not a prime factor for participants in this study. The survey showed that lack of computer skills was not a major determinant for not taking an on-line course. Responses indicated that 79% of participants felt neutral or disagreed that lack of technology skills would prevent them from taking an on-line course. Twenty-four out of the twenty-nine faculty (83%), if given the choice, would choose an on-line course over a traditional course setting. After reviewing the comments on some of the surveys, participants feel that on-line courses offer the most flexibility with spending time with family and other responsibilities. Overwhelmingly, 93%, the most preferred type of distance learning was an on-line (web-based) course. Fifteen participants (52%) felt neutral about choosing between an asynchronous or synchronous setting. The remainder of the participants were split between asynchronous over synchronous. On a few surveys returned, comments indicated that students would prefer synchronous meeting times because interaction with peers and instructor. When it came to cost, 80% of participants responded neutral or disagree when asked if they would still take an on-line course over a traditional course even if the on-line one costs more money. Twenty-four out of twenty-nine (83%) felt that they would learn just as much from an on-line course as a traditional one. The majority of participants (93%) strongly agreed that time flexibility would encourage them to take an on-line course. When asked if an on-line would help participants feel less intimidated by younger classmates, 86% slightly agreed or felt neutral to the statement. Participants neither agreed nor disagreed that by having a course on-line that favoritism would be reduced. Eighty-three percent of participants felt that they could get technical support from family or friends if needed.

From the results of our survey, we conclude that most faculty members would not be opposed to an on-line learning environment. Many believe that time flexibility would be the major reason for taking an on-line course. Those who have technical support were more likely to prefer an on-line course setting to that of a traditional one. Although many favored an on-line learning environment, most were not willing to pay more money for this experience. Last, participants felt that favoritism or intimidation from younger classmates was not a major factor in choosing between an on-line course and traditional one.

**Survey:**

For one of our master's courses, we want to find some information on reasons why people would take courses online. There are many people from all walks of life who take courses online for all sorts of reasons. We are also curious about the extent of how they feel about the conveniences of distance education particularly an online course (web-based). Names will not be included in the results. Thank you so much for your participation!

**Instructions:**

Please read each question and circle the answer that best describes you. When you are finished filling out the survey, please return it to our school mailbox. This survey is to be anonymous so you do not need to put your name on it. Thank you for your time.

Personal

1. Please select the age range that best describes you.

1. 18 or younger
2. 19-25
3. 26-40
4. 41-65
5. 66 and older

2. Number of on-line courses you have taken.

1. 0
2. 1-3
3. 4-6
4. 7-9
5. 10 or more
6. How many hours on average per week do you spend on homework, (traditional setting or on-line)?
7. 1-3
8. 4-6
9. 6-8
10. 9-11
11. 12 or more

4. Please rate the biggest reason why you would take an online course.

1. Get to spend more time with family
2. Better schedule flexibility
3. Don't want to drive
4. Less intimidation from younger, traditional students
5. Other

5. Lack of basic computer and web surfing skills would prevent me from taking an online course.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Preference for Type

6. If some courses you take in a classroom were also offered online, which would you be more apt to choose?

1. Take courses traditionally
2. Take courses online
3. Take some traditionally and some online

7. What type of distance course would you feel most comfortable with?

1. Online (web-based) can be taken anytime
2. Video conference that is synchronous (same time) of on-campus class.
3. Video-taped lessons that can be watched anytime
4. Correspondence (mail)

8. I would prefer an asynchronous (not at the same time) online course to a synchronous (same time) online course.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

9. If an online class costs a little more ($250 for a 3 credit class) than that of the same class taught on campus, I would still take the online class because of convenience.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Learning in an On-line Environment

10. I would learn just as much from a distance course online as I would with a classroom setting.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

11. Schedule flexibility would encourage me to take a class online versus a traditional classroom.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

12. I would feel less intimidated by younger classmates if I were to take a class online as compared to an on-campus course.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

13. I feel there would be less favoritism shown in an online class setting.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

14. I could get the technical support I need to participate in an online course from family, friends, and co-workers.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Comments: