Introduction

Distance education enrollment growth continues in the U.S. even as overall higher education enrollments decline (Online Learning Consortium, 2017).

The distance education enrollment report 2017, conducted by the New Digital Learning Compass Organization, revealed the number of higher education students taking at least one distance education course now tops six million, with 21 million total college students in the United States.

Objectives of Session

• Compare effective online learning systems with effective face-to-face learning systems
• Understand the guidelines for the evaluation of distance education as offered by the council of regional accrediting commissions (C-RAC)
• Become familiar with tools and methodologies appropriate for effective evaluation of online learning systems.

Distance Education Facts

• According to Digital Learning Compass (2017), there has been a year-to-year increase of 226,375 distance education students, a 3.9% increase, up over rates recorded the previous two years.
• In the U.S. nearly one in three students (29.7%) now takes at least one distance education course (a total of 6,022,105 students).
• Distance education students are composed of 2.9 million taking all of their courses at a distance and 3.1 million taking some, but not all, distance courses.
• Public institutions command the largest portion of distance education students, with 67.8% of all distance students.
• Large enrollment drops among for-profit institutions were driven by a few of the largest institutions; the majority of for-profits grow their distance enrollments.
• The number of students studying on a campus has dropped by almost one million (911,317) for the three year period through 2015.

How do effective online vs. face-to-face learning systems compare?

Despite a proliferation of literature, student performance measurement for online instruction is difficult and often problematic. More theoretically grounded research is needed (Bettinger and Loeb, 2017).

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<th>Distance Education vs. Classroom Learning Environment</th>
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What tools and methodologies are most effective in evaluating online learning programs?

Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (C-RAC) http://nc-sara.org/files/docs/C-AC%20Guidelines.pdf

1. Online education is appropriate to the institution’s mission and purpose.
2. The institution’s plan for developing, operating, and, if appropriate, expanding online learning offerings is integrated into the institution’s regular plan for institutional improvement.
3. Online learning is integrated into the institution’s systems of governance and academic oversight.
4. Continuity for the institution’s online learning offerings are consistent, stable, and comparable to academic rigor to programs offered in traditional institutional formats.
5. The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its online learning offerings, including the extent to which the online learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals.
6. Differences in mean student GPA exist by mode of delivery for the online learning curriculum and evaluating the student’s success in achieving the online learning goals are appropriately qualified and effectively supported.
7. The institution provides sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand its online learning offerings.
8. The institution assures the integrity of its online offerings.

Focus Groups

• Students
• Alumni
• Faculty
• Surveys
• Online course evaluations
• Student Satisfaction Surveys
• Faculty and Staff Feedback Surveys

Tools and methodologies, continued

Course Evaluation Survey Specific to Online Sections : Fall 2017 (Side 1 of 5)

Student Course Survey

Survey design, layout, navigation was effective in providing the appropriate feedback.

The instructor knew how to see the 2.05 online course system.

The instructor required promptly and gained assignments in a timely manner.

The instructor provided meaningful, and engaging activities and assignments.

Students were satisfied with the 24/7 help Desk service after hours.

Research Question: Does mode of delivery affect student success?

Where: $\mu_1$ = mean on-ground course GPA $\mu_2$ = mean compressed video course GPA $\mu_3$ = mean course blended GPA $\mu_4$ = mean online course GPA

Student Success Rate by Modality of Delivery (A, B, or C)

Student Success Rate by Modality of Delivery

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Convenience and flexibility in schedule, accessibility, range of degree options and control of study time.
2. Student enrollment re: student interaction, approachability of faculty/communication, and time to allow material.
3. Cost effective choices including transportation and childcare as well as web-based texts and reading materials.
6. Differences in mean student GPA exist by modality of delivery. Students are more likely to struggle online.
7. Design courses following C-RAC Guidelines and certify all online courses and online faculty (e.g., Quality Matters).
8. Continuously evaluate online effectiveness through quantitative and qualitative student and faculty feedback.

References


John Dewey

"If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow."