CMU Students’ Views about and Experiences with On-line Courses

Final Report of Findings

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Center for Applied Research and Rural Studies
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Introduction and Methodology

In Fall, 2015, the Online Academic Program Committee at CMU contracted with the Center for Applied Research and Rural Studies (CARRS) to complete telephone interviews with undergraduate students to learn about their experiences with on-line courses and their opinions about them. CARRS worked with a sub-committee of the larger group to develop a telephone survey instrument, which is found in Appendix A.¹

CARRS suggested, and the committee approved, a sample design that intentionally targets two groups of undergraduate students: students who had completed CMU online courses in Spring, 2015 and students who had not completed online CMU courses as of that semester. The sample of names along with contact information on students was secured from CMU’s information technology staff. All students in the sample were enrolled on the Mount Pleasant campus for Fall, 2015, and telephone numbers with U.S. area codes were available for them.

The goal of 400 completed telephone interviews was established, with a quota of 200 students from each of the two groups. Consequently, the total sample is not a random sample of the entire student body; for most analyses it is important to view each of the two student groups separately. For ease of nomenclature, these groups will be called “online” and “not online students.”

Interviewing took place in the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) lab associated with CARRS. Interviews were completed by interviewers employed by CARRS, all of whom had previously been trained as survey interviewers. The pretests and training for the interview schedule took place on Thursday, November 5 and Friday, November 6, 2015, with

¹ Susan Zobl of Global Campus also took the time to review the instrument and share her expertise regarding the analysis of students’ on-line experiences.
interviewing beginning on Monday, November 9 and ending on Wednesday, November 18. Students in the sample were sent a pre-survey invitation by email prior to the beginning of calling. This email message signed by Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson, Committee Chair, Jeffrey Betts, Student Input Workgroup Co-leader, Latoya Lain, Student Input Workgroup Co-leader, and Mary Senter, Director of CARRS. The note informed students to expect a call from CARRS, assured them of the confidentiality of the information provided over the telephone, and indicated that interviewers would be happy to call them back if the initial call was made at an inconvenient time. See Appendix B for a copy of the communication.

Calls were made to 1,695 students, and students in the sample were called a minimum of five times. In the end, 446 students completed the interview, and only 104 refused to participate (or simply hung up the phone). Two hundred of these interviews were completed by students defined in the sample as “online” students, and 246 were completed by students defined in the sample as “not online students.” We will see below that the actual experience of students differs slightly from what was available in the sample data file prior to the beginning of interviewing. The interview for online students lasted on average for 11 minutes, while the interview for not online students averaged six minutes. CARRS thanks both groups of students for the time they spent with interviewers sharing their opinions and experiences.

Each phone call made by CATI interviewers is logged with a disposition. Almost 200 phone numbers (N=187) were coded as “out of service,” or “wrong number,” or as “error-not CMU student.” Ninety students refused to take part in the project, with another 14 simply hanging up the telephone. The calls to the remaining students resulted in dispositions on the final call attempt such as “answering machine,” “busy,” “no answer,” “not home now,” or “not available until study over.”
Findings

Academic Characteristics of the Sample

A number of questions in the survey were designed to learn about students’ academic characteristics. These data are summarized in Table 1, using percentage distributions. The table provides data on the online and not online students, separately.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Sample Subgroups:
Percentage Distributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Online Students Percent N = 222</th>
<th>Not Online Students N = 224</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online student, given CMU records</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not online student, given CMU records</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of online courses taken through CMU</th>
<th>Online Students Percent</th>
<th>Not Online Students Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did you ever meet in a traditional face-to-face format for any of the classes taken online from CMU?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Online Students Percent</th>
<th>Not Online Students Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t remember/Don’t know</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken online courses for credit offered by institution other than CMU?*</td>
<td>Online Students Percent N = 222</td>
<td>Not Online Students N = 224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How likely are you to take a CMU online course in the future?**</th>
<th>Online Students Percent N = 222</th>
<th>Not Online Students Percent N = 224</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat likely</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not too likely</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all likely</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class year**</th>
<th>Online Students Percent N = 222</th>
<th>Not Online Students Percent N = 224</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For undergraduates, Transfer status</th>
<th>Online Students Percent N = 222</th>
<th>Not Online Students Percent N = 224</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entered as Freshman</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered as Transfer</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College of Major Field of Study</th>
<th>Online Students Percent N = 222</th>
<th>Not Online Students Percent N = 224</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and Fine Arts</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Human Services</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Professions</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Undecided</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with academic experiences at CMU</th>
<th>Online Students Percent N = 222</th>
<th>Not Online Students Percent N = 224</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Not at all satisfied</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Very satisfied</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant at p < .05  
** Statistically significant at p < .01
There is a small discrepancy between the sample records that depended on students’ experiences as of Spring, 2015 and information confirmed by students in the interview when they were asked “how many online courses have you taken through CMU” prior to the current semester. Note that 10 percent of students that we are calling “online students” throughout this analysis were coded in the sample records as not having taken an online CMU course. This may result from students’ experiences during Summer, 2015. It is also possible that some courses that CMU does not consider to be online courses may nonetheless be so defined by students. Some courses do integrate one or more traditional face-to-face meetings into the online environment. As Table 1 indicates, about one online student in six reports that there were such meetings for one or more of their online classes.

The modal number of online courses at CMU taken by online students is one, although comparable numbers (about one quarter) of online students have taken two courses at CMU with this format. In fact, the mean number of online CMU courses taken by online students is 2.8, with about 10 percent having taken more than five online courses from Central. Online students are more likely than not online students to report having taken courses for credit on line offered by institutions other than CMU. These could have been high school courses or courses offered by a community college or other university. The difference between the two groups is statistically significant (p<.05), although not large; 44 percent of online students have taken online courses elsewhere compared to 33 percent of not online students.

More than one half of online students report that it is very likely that they will take an online course from CMU in the future, while about 50 percent of not online students indicate that it is not too or not at all likely that they will do so in the future.
More than three quarters of the students who have taken online courses are juniors or seniors, while only about half of the not online students are undergraduate upperclassmen. Students who are juniors and seniors are much more likely than those who are sophomores to take online courses. Only about six percent of online students are graduate students, while twice as many not online students are in graduate programs. Remember that the sample design makes it virtually impossible for freshmen to be included in this analysis. About three quarters of each group of undergraduate students entered CMU as freshmen, and there is no difference between the online and not online students.

Online students and not online students are found in reasonably large numbers across all six colleges. There is a slight tendency for students from the College of Business Admiration to be overrepresented in the online student group compared to the not online group and for students from the College of Science and Technology to be underrepresented (p < .07).

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with their academic experiences at CMU using a seven-point semantic differential scale, with “1” labeled “not at all satisfied” and “7” labeled “very satisfied.” There is no difference in the satisfaction levels of the two groups of students, suggesting that students are not taking online courses because they are especially dissatisfied with the traditional CMU experience. In fact, satisfaction with academics is reasonably high. About one quarter of each group of students chose scale score “7” to describe their satisfaction with academics at CMU, and fewer than six percent of either group of students chose the low scale scores ranging from “1” to “4.”

The Types of Classes Take by Online Students

Students who have taken one or more online course from CMU were asked how the course fit into their academic program—that is, whether any of the courses were part of the
General Education program (for undergraduates), were part of their major or minor field of study, or were an elective for their major or minor field.

Table 2: Important of Factors in the Decision to Enroll in CMU Online Courses: Percentage Distributions for Online Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part of General Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of major or minor field of study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective course for major or minor field of study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than three quarters of online students reported that their credit hours were part of the General Education program, while about two thirds indicated that the course or courses they completed on line were part of their major or minor field of study. Only 37 percent of students reported that the course they took on line from CMU was an elective for their major or minor field of study.

Reasons for Taking Online Courses from CMU

It was understood that reasons for taking online courses may vary from student to student and also any one student’s rationale for taking online courses may vary from course to course. A key section of the interview for online students focused on the reasons they took online courses from CMU rather than completing courses offered using the traditional, face-to-face format. In particular, respondents were asked how important each of 13 factors were in their decision to
take any online course. They were asked to “answer using a 5-point scale where 1 is not at all important and 5 is very important.” Table 3 provides the mean scores and the percentage distributions to summarize online student responses. The table is arranged so that the factor with the highest mean appears first, and the factor with the lowest mean is last.

### Table 3: Importance of Reasons for Taking CMU Online Courses: Percentage Distributions for Online Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important was …</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>1 Not at all important</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The time flexibility of an online class</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a good experienced in the past</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXTRA credit hours so that your graduation would not be delayed</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to take a class with a shorter format</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to take a PARTICULAR class on line even though you could probably take the course using a traditional format</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding an additional trip to campus to take a course?</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to take a particular class that you could not get into using the traditional face-to-face format</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking that an online course would be easier academically</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking that an online course would be an interesting change from a course offered with a traditional format</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to take a class with a PARTICULAR instructor</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important was …</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1 Not at all important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 Very Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking that an online course would be more rigorous academically</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking that an online course would allow for more interaction with professor</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking that an online course would allow for more interaction with your fellow students</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean scores suggest a grouping of factors into three broad importance categories. Of greatest importance to online students—with means ranging from 3.21 to 4.18—are five specific factors. Three of the five involve aspects of time—the time flexibility of an online class, wanting extra credit hours so that graduation would not be delayed, and wanting to take a class with a shorter format. (Online courses are offered in an eight-week format rather than the traditional 16-week format.) The other two factors with high importance ratings are having had a good experience with online courses in the past and wanting to take a particular class even though the class could have been taken with the traditional face-to-face format.

Four other factors have means that hover around the midpoint (3) of the five-point importance scale. They are a mixture of convenience, necessity, and interest. In particular, avoiding an additional trip to campus to take a course, wanting to take a particular class that you could not get into using the traditional face-to-face format, thinking that an online course would be easier academically, and thinking that an online course would be an interesting change from a course offered with a traditional format.

Four additional factors were rarely seen as important for online students. In each case, the mean importance score is below 2.5. Each of these factors represent what could be a
positive academic reason for taking a class. Few students find each of these rationales compelling. That is, fewer than five percent of students report that a “very important” reason for taking an online course is thinking that online courses are more rigorous academically, would allow for more interaction with the professor, or would allow for more interaction with fellow students. Relative few students—but still one in six—indicate that a very important reason for taking an online course is wanting to take a class with a particular instructor.

**Comparisons between Online and Traditional Classes**

Online students were asked to compare their online course to their traditional face-to-face courses. For example, respondents were asked: “Generally, was there more reading, less reading, or about the same amount of reading as in your traditional face-to-face courses? The same format was used for eight additional factors. Table 4 provides the percentage distributions summarizing online students’ responses. The table is organized so that the online experience viewed most positively—that is, the percentage of “more” or “higher” responses is highest—appears first.
Table 4: Comparisons between Online and Traditional Courses: Percentage Distributions for Online Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More</th>
<th>About the same</th>
<th>Less</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to class discussions</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time studying</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on your work from faculty</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your grade</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with professor</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with fellow students</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several conclusions are apparent from the table. First, in two cases, but only two, online courses are seen as preferable academically to traditional courses. Almost 50 percent of students report doing more writing in online courses and almost 60 percent report doing more reading. Relatively few students—no more than one in six—report doing less academic work of this type.

In five cases, the most common (modal) response is to report that the online experience is “about the same” as the traditional experience. Between 40 and 50 percent of online students indicate that their contribution to class discussions, their time studying, and the feedback that they receive from faculty on their work is the same for online and traditional classes. However, in each of these three situations, the percentage of students providing the more favorable “more” response exceeds the percentage providing the less favorable “less” response. Nonetheless, about 20 percent of students report that their contributions to class discussions, their time studying, and the feedback they receive from faculty is less than what would have occurred in a traditional class. At least 60 percent of online students indicate that their learning and their grade
is “about the same” in classes with the two formats. More than 20 percent of students say that their grade is higher in online courses and 10 percent say that it is lower. More than 20 percent indicate that they learn less is online courses while 14 percent say that they learn more.

In two cases, online courses clearly provide “less.” More than one half of online students report less contact with their professors or with their fellow students when they take online courses, with about one student in eight (12%) reporting more contact of each of these two types.

Satisfaction with Online Support

Online students were asked three questions about their level of satisfaction with support services offered in the online environment. Four response options were provided ranging from “very satisfied” to “not at all satisfied.” Table 5 presents the percentages of online students in each response category.

Table 5: Satisfaction with Support Services in the Online Environment:
Percentage Distributions for Online Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>Not too satisfied</th>
<th>Not at all satisfied</th>
<th>Did not use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology Help Desk</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System for registering</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard shell</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By and large, online students were very satisfied with the three support services that the survey discussed. While two thirds of students did not use the Technology Help Desk, at least two thirds were very satisfied with the system for registering for online classes and with the Blackboard shell associated with their online class.
Source of Influence about Online Courses

Students who had taken online courses were also asked about who or what had influenced their decision. This set of questions was introduced by the interviewer as follows: “Now, I’m going to ask you about the factors that had a positive influence on your decision to take classes online. For each factor tell me if it was a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor in your decision to take an online class.” Table 6 summarizes their responses with percentages.

Table 6: Source of Influence about Online Courses: Percentages Distributions for Online Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Influence</th>
<th>Major factor</th>
<th>Minor factor</th>
<th>Not a factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course search and registration website</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice from an academic advisor</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice from another CMU student</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table makes clear that advice from an academic advisor has rarely been a factor influencing a student’s decision to enroll online. Almost three quarters of students say that such advice was not a factor at all. Meanwhile, more than one third of online students indicate that advice from another student was a major factor in their decision to enroll in an online course, and almost as many indicate that the course search and registration site (that lists both online and traditional courses) was a major factor. Interestingly comparable numbers of online students report that the registration site and other students’ advice was not a factor in their decision.

Online students were also asked: “Were there other major factors in your decision making? What were they?” While most students said “no,” those that answered focused on one of three factors. These comments can be found, by category, in Appendix C. The largest number of students who did respond to this open-ended question—41 of them—reported that issues related to scheduling played a major role in their decision.
Time scheduling with work

Time Flexibility, time for work

Graduating on time

*I couldn’t fit all my classes into my schedule so I needed to take some online ones*

Others talked about trying to make things easier in terms of course length or travel time. Comments from 32 online students are included in this category.

*Location, didn’t want to drive to campus*

*Saving time*

*The shortness of classes*

Finally, a small number—16 online students—reiterated that the online course was their only option.

*The online class was the only option available.*

*It was required.*

**Advice to Others from the Online Students**

Online students were asked whether or not they would recommend CMU’s online courses to other students. They were also asked to provide advice to students thinking about online classes. The specific open-ended question was: “What advice would you give to other students to help them be successful in an online course?” CARRS staff coded these qualitative comments into three discrete categories and “other.” Table 7 summarizes the responses to these two questions. Appendix C contains the verbatim responses organized into the code categories developed by CARRS. Recognize that any one response from online students might be coded into more than one category.
Table 7: Advice to Others from Online Students: Percentage Distributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would you recommend CMU’s online courses to other students?</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably not</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely not</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advice to other students to help them be successful: Open-ended question coded by CARRS</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent (based on N=222)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep up with workload</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the reading</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact professor and fellow students</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than one half of online students definitely would recommend CMU’s online courses to others with more than another one third reporting that they would probably make this recommendation. Hence, less than 10 percent of students who have had the online course experience at CMU indicate that they would not recommend others to take courses from CMU online.

Online students were most likely to advise others to keep up with the workload of online courses. By far the largest number of comments, expressed by more than three quarters of online students, were of this type. It is unusual to find such unanimity of opinion from open-ended responses. Examples of comments included in this category are:

*Time management*

*Pay attention to due dates*

*Make sure you stay up to date on homework, don’t put it off.*
Don’t procrastinate

Stay on top of work and don’t fall behind.

Students also encouraged their peers to do the reading for the course (a specific kind of “keeping up”). The following comments are illustrative of this kind of advice.

Do all of the readings
Keep up with reading

Read the book

Some students encouraged their peers wanting to be successful in an online course to initiate contact with their professor and fellow students. Here are examples of the advice included in this category.

Engage in more interaction with students and prof

Contact the professor

Try to make contact with professor

The Decision Not to Take Online Courses

Students who have not taken online courses were asked about that decision. This section of the interview schedule was introduced as follows: “I’m going to ask you how important a number of factors were in your decision NOT to take CMU classes on line.” Then, respondents were asked to use a five-point scale ranging from 1 equals not at all important to 5 equals very important to indicate the importance of five factors in their decision not to enter the online environment for classes. Table 8 provides the means and percentage distributions that summarize not online students responses. Again, the table lists the most important factor first and the least important factor last (given mean scores).
## Table 8: Importance of Reasons for NOT Taking Online Courses: Percentage Distributions for Not Online Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>1 Not at all important</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liking face-to-face interaction with other students</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need the structure of showing up for a class in person as opposed to the flexibility of an online course</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not liking classes that depend on a lot of computer technology</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not needing the class to stay on track for graduation</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having negative experiences with online courses in the past</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reason (than those above) (N=129)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two reasons stand out as being important explanations for students not taking online courses. That is, the means on the five-point scale are well above the midpoint of 3. More than 40 percent of not online students report that a “very important” reason for not taking online courses is that they like the face-to-face interaction with other students, and more than one third of not online students report that a very important reason for eschewing the online environment is their need for the structure of showing up in person for a class. No other reason was reported as being very important for even 25 percent of students.
More than 40 percent of not online students did indicate that there was some other reason for their decision not to take online courses. They were then asked to elaborate. These open-ended responses were coded by CARRS into a series of discrete categories. Five types of reasons were provided. Verbatim responses organized into these categories are found in Appendix C.

The largest number of students providing an “other” response—41 of them out of a possible 95—mentioned the positive features of traditional, face-to-face classes as a reason for not wanting to choose the online environment or, similarly, the negative features of online courses. What students like about the traditional format varies, but included in this category are the following comments:

- **Learn better in a classroom**
- **Likes to establish relationships with professors**
- **Learn better in person, one on one interaction**
- **Can't learn that way, reiteration from professors really helps comprehension**
- **Major requires a lot of labs. Can't do those online.**

Comments focused on what students perceive to be negative features of online courses include the following:

- **Heard online courses are more challenging because they are a shorter duration and it's not as easy to contact professors**
- **Afraid of loss of internet connection**
- **Feedback from friends who have taken online courses was negative**
- **Worried about forgetting assignments**
- **You don’t learn anything; you can take tests with all your notes in front of you**
Twenty-five not online students were explicit in stating that the courses they needed were simply not offered on line. They made comments such as:

*They aren't offered for me*

*Classes needed not offered online*

*Courses for major not offered online*

A few not online students—but only six of them—were unaware that online courses were an option for them or had not pursued the matter. Examples of responses included in this category are:

*Didn't know they were offered for so many classes*

*Never looked into it*

Others simply saw no need to take such courses. The following are illustrative of the 13 comments included in this category.

*I haven't needed to; so that's about it*

*I haven't needed to. Ability to sit in class fitting into schedule.*

**Knowledge about Online Courses and Requisite Skills for Not Online Students**

In an effort to learn more about their decision not to take an online course, these students who had not taken a CMU online course were asked about their computer access and skills. The thinking was that students will be reluctant to take an online course if they are not comfortable with computers. Table 8 above suggests that computer technology does not seem to “scare” students away from taking online courses, and Table 9 confirms this point of view.

**Table 9: Computer Technology Issues: Percentage Distributions for Not Online Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to computer technology</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own computer skills</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More than 70 percent of not online students rate their access to computer technology as excellent; less than 10 percent say fair, and none say poor. Similarly, more than one half rate their own computer skills as good, with another one third giving themselves excellent ratings.

Interviewers also asked not online students about what they had heard about online courses and about their knowledge of online course offerings. Table 10 uses percentage distributions to summarize not online students’ responses to this diverse set of questions designed to learn more about the context in which students have made a decision not to enroll in one of CMU’s online courses. The table reinforces a number of points made in the discussion above.

**Table 10: Knowledge about and Reputation of Online Courses: Percentage Distributions for Not Online Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware that CMU offers online courses that are part of General Education?</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does CMU offer online courses that are part of your major field of study?</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has an advisor or faculty member ever talked to you about online courses at CMU?</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>74.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have friends or acquaintances that have taken online courses at CMU?</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever considered taking an online course from CMU?</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bad things</th>
<th>Good things</th>
<th>Nothing at all</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What have you heard from others about online courses?</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vast majority—more than 90 percent—of not online students are aware that some General Education courses at CMU are offered online; however, almost 40 percent of students
do not know if there are online CMU courses in their major. Not online students are in a social environment where taking online courses is not unusual—more than 80 percent of these students report that they do have friends or acquaintances who have taken online courses from CMU. Students are much more likely to have heard good things rather than bad things about online courses—by a factor of 4 to 1 (52 percent have heard good things while 13 percent have heard bad things). Meanwhile, about 30 percent of not online students report that they have heard “nothing at all” from others about online courses, and only about one quarter of these students indicate that a faculty member or academic advisor has ever talked to them about online courses. More than 60 percent of not online students have considered taking an online course from CMU.

Summary

This report summarizes telephone interview data collected in Fall, 2015 from 222 students admitted through CMU’s Mount Pleasant campus who have completed online courses offered by CMU and 224 students who have not. Highlights of findings are that:

➢ Thirty percent of students with the online experience from CMU have completed one online course, and 25 percent have completed two. More than one half of online students report that it is very likely that they will take an online course from CMU in the future, while about 50 percent of students who have not taken CMU online courses indicate that it is not too or not at all likely that they will do so in the future.

➢ More than three quarters of online students report that their online credit hours were part of the General Education program, while about two thirds indicate that the course or courses they completed online were part of their major or minor field of study.

➢ Five factors stand out as being important reasons for taking online courses. Three of the five involve aspects of time—the time flexibility of an online class, wanting extra credit hours so that graduation would not be delayed, and wanting to take a class with a shorter format. The other two factors with high importance ratings are having had a good experience with online courses in the past and wanting to take a particular class even though the class could have been taken with the traditional, face-to-face format.
Almost one half of students who have taken online courses report doing more writing in such courses compared to traditional, face-to-face courses, and almost 60 percent report doing more reading. However, more than one half of students with the online experience from CMU report less contact with their professors or less contact with their fellow students when they take online courses.

By and large, students who took online courses were very satisfied with the Technology Help Desk (if they used it), with the system for registering for online classes, and with the Blackboard shell associated with their online class.

Few students (13%) indicate that advice from an academic advisor was a major factor influencing the decision to take a CMU course online. Slightly more than 30 percent of these students report that the course search and registration website was a major influence, and more than 35 percent tell interviewers that advice from another CMU student was a major factor in their decision making.

Very few students (8%) with the online CMU experience report that they would not recommend it to others. These students, however, stressed how important it is to keep up with the workload in order to be successful in such courses.

Two reasons stand out as being important explanations for students not taking online courses. More than 40 percent of students who have not taken online courses report that a “very important” reason for not taking them is that they like the face-to-face interaction with other students, and more than one third of these students report that a very important reason for avoiding the online environment is their need for the structure of showing up in person for a class.

More than 70 percent of students who have not taken online courses from CMU do report having excellent access to computer technology, and 85 percent indicate that their own computer skills are excellent or good.

Students who have not taken online courses are definitely aware that General Education courses are offered online; however, many (almost 40%) do not know whether courses that are part of their major field are available in the online environment. While most students (80%) without the online experience from CMU report having friends or acquaintances who have taken such courses, only about one quarter have an advisor or faculty member who has discussed online courses with them. About one half of students who have not taken online courses have heard “good things” about them, although almost 30 percent have heard “nothing at all.”
APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule
Fall, 2015 Telephone Interview for CMU Students Who Have and Who Have Not Taken Online CMU Courses
Center for Applied Research and Rural Studies

Note: SKP means “skip to”

Q: HELLO
T: 5
Hello. May I speak with ____________________?
My name is ____________, and I'm calling from the Center for Applied Research at CMU. You should have received an email from the committee interested in on-line learning. (Would this be a good time to talk?)

INTERVIEWER: PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE, CTRL/END TO EXIT

T: 14
Hello. May I speak with ____________________?
I'm calling from the Center for Applied Research at CMU to finish the interview that we began earlier.

INTERVIEWER: PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE, CTRL/END TO EXIT

Q: IRB
T: 5
I want to assure you that all of your responses will remain confidential. Your participation in this project is totally voluntary and will not affect your relationship with CMU in any way.
T: 9
If you have NO OPINION or don't want to answer any particular question, just tell me and we'll move on. The interview will take about 10 minutes. Two randomly chosen students who complete the interview will win a $50 gift card from the bookstore in the UC.
T: 13
INTERVIEWER: YOU MUST CLICK HERE

Q: YEAR
T: 5
Are you a freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student?
T: 7
FRESHMAN
SOPHOMORE
JUNIOR
SENIOR (including super senior)
GRADUATE STUDENT
refusal
Q: MAJOR
T: 5 5
What is your major or field of study?

Q: BEGINWHEN
T: 5 5
Did you begin attending CMU as a freshman or were you a transfer student?
T: 7 10
FRESHMAN
TRANSFER
don't know/not sure
refusal

IF (YEAR = 5) SKP

Q: SATIS
T: 5 5
Overall, how satisfied are you with your academic experiences at CMU?
Please answer using a 7-point scale, where 1 is not at all satisfied and 7 is very satisfied.
T: 9 10
1 NOT AT ALL SATISFIED
2
3
4
5
6
7 VERY SATISFIED
don't know
refusal

Q: ELSEONLINE
T: 5 5
Have you ever taken an on-line course for credit offered by an institution OTHER THAN CMU – perhaps your high school, a community college, or another university?
T: 9 10
YES
NO
not sure
refusal
Q: CONFIRM
T: 4 5
Thinking about courses you have taken BEFORE this semester -- how many on-line courses have you taken through CMU -- that is CMU courses that were offered all or almost all on-line?

INTERVIEWER: CRITICAL DISTINCTION IS BETWEEN 0 AND MORE THAN 0. CAN ESTIMATE IF GREATER THAN 0.

IF (ANS = 0) SKP NONEED

Q: GENEDON
T:5 5
Now, we are going to ask you a series of questions about your experiences with on-line courses at CMU.

Have any of your on-line courses been part of the General Education program -- that is, the U.P. and competencies?
T:10 10
YES, PART OF GENERAL EDUCATION
NO
don't know
refusal

IF (YEAR = 5) SKP

Q: MAJORON
T:5 5
Have any of your on-line courses been required for your major or minor field of study?
T:7 10
YES, REQUIRED FOR MAJOR OR MINOR
NO
don't know
refusal

Q: ELECMAJON
T:5 5
Have any of your on-line courses been an elective for your major or minor field of study?
T:7 10
YES, ELECTIVE FOR MAJOR OR MINOR
NO
don't know
refusal
Q: GETCLSON
T:5 5
I’m going to ask you how important a number of factors were in your decision to enroll in any of your CMU on-line courses.

T:8 5
How important was wanting to take a particular class that you could NOT GET INTO using the traditional face-to-face format?

T:11 5
Please answer using a 5-point scale where 1 is not at all important and 5 is very important.

T:14 10
1  NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5  VERY IMPORTANT
6  don’t know/not sure
7  refusal

Q: PARTCLSON
T:5 5
How important was wanting to take a PARTICULAR class on line even though you could probably take the course using the traditional face-to-face format?

T:9 5
(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)

T:11 10
1  NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5  VERY IMPORTANT
6  don’t know/not sure
7  refusal

Q: FACON
T:5 5
How important was wanting to take a class with a PARTICULAR instructor?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)

T:9 10
1  NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5  VERY IMPORTANT
6  don’t know/not sure
7  refusal
Q: FORMATON
T: 5 5
How important was wanting to take a class with a shorter format – that is a class that is completed in fewer weeks than the semester-long format of 15 weeks?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)
T: 10 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
6 don’t know/not sure
7 refusal

Q: FACINTERON
T: 5 5
How important was thinking that an on-line course would allow for more interaction with your professor?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)
T: 10 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
never thought it would
don’t know/not sure
refusal

Q: FLEXON
T: 5 5
How important was the time flexibility of an on-line class?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)
T: 9 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
6 don’t know/not sure
7 refusal
Q: PASTLIKEON
T:5 5
How important was having a good experience with on-line courses in the past – whether at CMU or elsewhere?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)

T:10 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
never had a good experience with on-line course
don’t know/not sure
refusal

Q: GRADON
T:5 5
How important was completing EXTRA credit hours so that your graduation would not be delayed?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)

T:10 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
6 don’t know/not sure
7 refusal

Q: EASYON
T:5 5
How important was thinking that an on-line course would be easier academically than a course using the traditional face-to-face format?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)

T:10 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
6 don’t know/not sure
7 refusal
Q: RIGORON
T:5 5
How important was thinking that an on-line course would be more rigorous academically than a course using the traditional face-to-face format?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)
T:10 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
6 don’t know/not sure
7 refusal

Q: DRIVEON
T:5 5
How important was avoiding an additional trip to campus to take a course?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)
T:10 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
6 don’t know/not sure
7 refusal

Q: PEERINTERON
T:5 5
How important was thinking that an on-line course would allow for more interaction with your fellow students?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)
T:10 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
6 don’t know/not sure
7 refusal
Q: CHANGEON
T:5 5
How important was thinking that an on-line course would be an interesting change from a course offered with a traditional face-to-face format?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)
T:10 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
6 don’t know/not sure
7 refusal

Q: ReadComp
T:5 5
The next questions ask you to compare your on-line course to your traditional face-to-face courses.

Generally, was there more reading, less reading, or about the same amount of reading as in your traditional face-to-face courses?
T:10 10
MORE READING
LESS READING
ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT
don’t know
refusal

Q: WriteComp
T:5 5
Generally, was there more writing, less writing, or about the same amount of writing as in your traditional face-to-face courses?
T:8 10
MORE WRITING
LESS WRITING
ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT
don’t know
refusal
Q: PROFCOMP
T:5 5
Generally, was there more contact with your professor, less contact, or about the same amount of contact as in your traditional face-to-face courses?
T:8 10
MORE CONTACT
LESS CONTACT
ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT
don't know
refusal

Q: PEERCOMP
T:5 5
Generally, was there more contact with your fellow students, less contact, or about the same amount of contact as in your traditional face-to-face courses?
T:10 10
MORE CONTACT
LESS CONTACT
ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT
don't know
refusal

Q: LEARNON
T:5 5
Generally, did you learn more, learn less, or learn about the same amount as in your traditional face-to-face courses.
T:10 10
LEARN MORE
LEARN LESS
ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT
don't know
refusal

Q: FEEDON
T:5 5
Generally, did you receive more feedback on your work from faculty, less feedback, or about the same amount of feedback as in your traditional face-to-face courses.
T:10 10
MORE FEEDBACK
LESS FEEDBACK
ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT
don't know
refusal
Q: TIMEON
T:5 5
Generally, did you spend more time studying, less time studying, or about the same amount of time studying as in your traditional face-to-face courses.
T:10 10
MORE TIME STUDYING
LESS TIME STUDYING
ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT
don’t know
refusal

Q: DISCUSSIONON
T:5 5
Generally, did you contribute more to class discussions, less to class discussions, or about the same amount as in your traditional face-to-face courses.

INTERVIEWER: CLASS DISCUSSION INCLUDES CHAT ROOMS AND DISCUSSION BOARDS
T:10 10
MORE
LESS
ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT
don’t know
refusal

Q: ONGRADE
T:5 5
How did your grade in the on-line course compare to your grades in traditional face-to-face courses -- higher, lower, or about the same?
T:10 10
HIGHER
LOWER
ABOUT THE SAME
don’t know
refusal
Q: ADVICEON
T:5 5
What advice would you give to other students to help them be successful in an on-line course?

Q: SATHelpON
T:5 5
How satisfied were you with the technology Help Desk -- very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not at all satisfied, or didn't you use the Help Desk?

T: 10 10
Very satisfied
Somewhat satisfied
Not at all satisfied
DID NOT USE
don't know
refusal

Q: SATREGON
T:5 5
How satisfied were you with the system for registering for your on-line class -- very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

T: 10 10
Very satisfied
Somewhat satisfied
Not too satisfied
Not at all satisfied
don't know
refusal

Q: SATTECHON
T:5 5
How satisfied were you with the Blackboard Shell associated with your on-line class -- very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

T: 10 10
Very satisfied
Somewhat satisfied
Not too satisfied
Not at all satisfied
don't know
refusal
Q: RECOMMENDON
T:5 5
Would you recommend CMU’s on-line courses to other students --
definitely yes, probably yes, probably not, or definitely not?

T:10 10
DEFINITELY YES
PROBABLY YES
PROBABLY NOT
DEFINITELY NOT
don't know
refusal

Q: EVERFACE
T:5 5
Did you ever meet in a traditional face-to-face format for any of the classes
that you have taken on line from CMU?

T:7 10
YES
NO
don't remember/don't know
refusal

SKP MAJADVIS

Q: NONEED
T:5 5
I’m going to ask you how important a number of factors were
in your decision NOT to take CMU classes on line.
T:8 5
How important was NOT needing to take an on-line course to stay
on track for graduation?

Please answer using a 5-point scale where 1 is not at all important
and 5 is very important.
T:14 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
6 don’t know/not sure
7 refusal
Q: NOFLEX
T:5 5
How important was the fact that you need the structure of showing up for a class in person as opposed to the flexibility of an on-line course?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)
T:10 10
1  NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5  VERY IMPORTANT
6  don’t know/not sure
7  refusal

Q: NOLIKE
T:5 5
How important was having negative experiences with on-line courses in the past – perhaps in high school or at another college?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)
T:10 10
1  NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5  VERY IMPORTANT
6  don’t know/not sure
7  refusal

IF (ELSEONLINE > 1) SKP

Q: NOPEERINT
T:5 5
How important was liking face-to-face interactions with fellow students?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)
T:10 10
1  NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5  VERY IMPORTANT
6  don’t know/not sure
7  refusal
Q: NOTECH
T:5 5
How important was NOT liking courses that depend on a lot of computer technology?

(Use 5-point scale again 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important)
T:10 10
1 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
2
3
4
5 VERY IMPORTANT
6 don’t know/not sure
7 refusal

Q: NOOTHER
T:5 5
Is there any other reason that you have NOT taken an on-line course from CMU?

T:8 10
YES
NO
refusal

IF (ANS > 1) SKP NOAWARE

Q: NOWHY
T:5 5
What are those reasons?

INTERVIEWER: YOU MUST PUT SOMETHING IN THE BOX

Q: NOAWARE
T:5 5
Are you aware that CMU offers on-line courses that are part of the General Education program?

T:8 10
YES
NO
don’t know/not sure
refusal

IF (YEAR = 5) SKP
Q: NOAWFIELD
T:5 5
Does CMU offer on-line courses that are part of your major field of study?

T:8 10
YES, COURSES OFFERED
NO, COURSES ARE NOT OFFERED
I DON'T KNOW
refusal

Q: NOACCESS
T:5 5
How would you describe your own access to computer technology -- excellent, good, fair, or poor?

T:10 10
EXCELLENT
GOOD
FAIR
POOR
don't know/not sure
refusal

Q: NOCSKILL
T:5 5
How would you describe your own computer skills -- excellent, good, fair, or poor?

T:10 10
EXCELLENT
GOOD
FAIR
POOR
don't know/not sure
refusal

Q: BADREP
T:5 5
What have you heard from others about on-line courses -- bad things, good things, or nothing at all?

T:10 10
BAD THINGS
GOOD THINGS
NOTHING AT ALL
don't know/not sure
refusal
Q: EVERADV
T:5 5
Has an advisor or faculty member ever talked to you about on-line courses at CMU?

T:8 10
YES
NO
don't know
refusal

Q: EVERFRN
T:5 5
Do you have friends or acquaintances who have taken on-line courses at CMU?

T:8 10
YES
NO
don't know
refusal

Q: CONSIDER
T:5 5
Have you ever considered taking an on-line course from CMU?

T:8 10
YES
NO
don't know
refusal

SKP FUTUREON
Q: MAJADVIS
T: 5 5
Now, I’m going to ask you about the factors that had a positive influence on your decision to take classes on line.

For each factor tell me if it was a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor in your decision to take an on-line class.

T: 11 5
Was advice from an academic advisor a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor in your decision to take classes?

T: 14 10
MAJOR FACTOR
MINOR FACTOR
NOT A FACTOR
don’t remember/not sure
refusal

Q: WEB
T: 5 5
Was the CMU Course Search and Registration website a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor in your decision to take classes on line?

T: 8 10
MAJOR FACTOR
MINOR FACTOR
NOT A FACTOR
don’t remember/not sure
refusal

Q: CMUSTUD
T: 5 5
Was advice from another CMU student a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor in your decision to take classes on line?

T: 8 10
MAJOR FACTOR
MINOR FACTOR
NOT A FACTOR
don’t remember/not sure
refusal

Q: OTHDECIDE
T: 5 5
Were there other major factors in your decision making? What were they?
Q: FUTUREON
T: 5 5
How likely are you to take a CMU on-line course in the future -- very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

T: 10 10
VERY LIKELY
SOMewhat LIKELY
NOT TOO LIKELY
NOT AT ALL LIKELY
don't know
refusal

Q: THANKS
T: 5 5
That's all the questions I have for you. Thanks very much for your time.

INTERVIEWER: Click NEXT (not the X at the top)

Q: NOTQAL
T: 5
I'm sorry. We need to interview CMU students.

INTERVIEWER: Click NEXT

Q: END
T:
I'm sorry we have all the interviews we need at this time.

INTERVIEWER: Click NEXT
APPENDIX B

Pre-survey Invitation to Students
Dear NAME:

In the next two weeks, the Center for Applied Research and Rural Studies (CARRS) will be conducting a telephone survey to learn about the experiences at CMU of a sample of students. Your name has been selected randomly to be included in this group of students, and I hope you will agree to participate. This project is part of a larger effort of the Online Academic Program Studies Committee to learn about students’ views and experiences with traditional and on-line classes.

Be assured that all of your responses will remain confidential and your participation is totally voluntary. Reports shared with the campus will present results in an aggregate format that will always preserve confidentiality. A random drawing will give two students who complete the interview $50 gift certificates to the University Center Bookstore.

If interviewers call you at an inconvenient time, just tell them, and they will be happy to call you back at a time that fits your schedule better.

If you have any questions about this project, please call the study director, Dr. Mary Senter of CARRS at 774-2572.

Thanks very much.

Mary Senter
Professor, CHSBS
CARRS Director

Jeffrey Betts
Professor and Director School of Allied Health, CHP
Student Input Workgroup Co-Leader

Latoya Lain
Assistant Professor Music and Voice, CCFA
Student Input Workgroup Co-Leader

Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson
Professor and Dean, College of Education and Human Services
Committee Chair
APPENDIX C

Open Ended Responses
SOURCES OF INFLUENCE ABOUT ONLINE COURSES

Were there other major factors in your decision making? What were they?
(Asked to on-line students)

Scheduling issues
N = 41

7   OTHDECIDE  I couldn't fit all my classes into my schedule so I needed to take some online ones
9   OTHDECIDE  Take class over summer while out of state in Iowa, lighten workload
10  OTHDECIDE  Work, scheduling
21  OTHDECIDE  Graduation deadline
33  OTHDECIDE  just didn't want to have class on tuesday and thursday. Scheduling
43  OTHDECIDE  Ability to take a heavy workload for a portion of the semester
83  OTHDECIDE  Scheduling
84  OTHDECIDE  work schedule
95  OTHDECIDE  timing
135 OTHDECIDE  taken over the summer
232 OTHDECIDE  Better for schedules
265 OTHDECIDE  Graduating on time
278 OTHDECIDE  take online classes to take more credits but feeling less overwhelmed because of the 8 week thing. Separate times of the semester.
279 OTHDECIDE  availability, class conflicts
293 OTHDECIDE  graduate on time available over the summer
294 OTHDECIDE  graduating as soon as possible
318 OTHDECIDE  Offered a certain semester or not
320 OTHDECIDE  Time scheduling with work
334 OTHDECIDE  Scheduling
337 OTHDECIDE  online summer classes
339 OTHDECIDE  professor and semester
346 OTHDECIDE  Time Flexibility, time for work
348 OTHDECIDE  Scheduling
350 OTHDECIDE  I got offered a long term sub position and could not take traditional face to face class because of time conflict
362 OTHDECIDE  work schedule, time
383 OTHDECIDE  Semester the class was offered (Summer Vs. Fall or Spring)
445 OTHDECIDE  face to face didn't fit into your schedule worked better for accelerated classes
453 OTHDECIDE  couldn't get into traditional class and wanted to stay on track with her four year plan.
454 OTHDECIDE  Some over the summer to graduate without taking too many credits that would overload during the school year. Better schedule.
462 OTHDECIDE  Scheduling
507 OTHDECIDE  Time of the year (summer)
514 OTHDECIDE  traditional face to face class time conflicted so she opted to take online instead
574 OTHDECIDE  took online classes over the summer while doing an internship in Florida, had to remain a student to get financial aid to pay rent
581 OTHDECIDE  scheduling conflict
612 OTHDECIDE  flexibility for schedule
parents work for cmu, only a certain amount of benefits per semester, took summer courses online to graduate on time and use free credits, sports, freed up schedule, scheduling, Convenience of the semester, time; schedule; convenient for time

Wanted easier course length or travel time
N = 32

having less classes to attend- convenience
Location, didn't want to drive to campus
saving time
Flexible time
Yes, take a class and its online; location; not having to be at CMU
Convenience and distance
Distance (avoiding a trip to campus)
The shortness of classes
Able to take class due to the distance, not in state at the time
having more times on hand without extra commute to classes
Not living on campus
The fact that online classes are a lot shorter. There's a lot more work but I liked that it would end early and then I had less classes to work on after.
Opportunity and not having to go to a classroom.
Easier to take online then go into class
The reason: To try them out; and saved a trip since it was 20 miles away and I liked that it was an 8 week class length
Avoiding an extra trip to campus
just being able to take more credits without having to be physical in class
Being a single mother, needed the time flexibility
easier to get done when if it’s not something you’re interested in
didn't want to walk to another class
Traveling to campus
to get credits done in short time
short courses, time managing
the shortened time to have to take the class
when the course began and ended
Not having to take a trip to campus
Shorter class length
timing
Live far away
commuted. easier to skip travel
time, travel to campus
time, not going to campus
Class availability/only option available
N = 16

206  OTHDECIDE Availability of classes
219  OTHDECIDE Class Availability
222  OTHDECIDE All the face to face classes were filled
387  OTHDECIDE Availability of the class (it was only available online)
421  OTHDECIDE All the classes for in-class were full so on-line was only option
513  OTHDECIDE Just being available online
613  OTHDECIDE needed the class and saw that it was offered online
739  OTHDECIDE They were the most available
776  OTHDECIDE One was only offered online
792  OTHDECIDE The online class was the only option available
1009 OTHDECIDE Only way the class was offered was online
1130 OTHDECIDE availability of classes
1375 OTHDECIDE required for major and an eight week class
1450 OTHDECIDE it was required
1598 OTHDECIDE Required class; would have rather stay home than go on campus everyday
1637 OTHDECIDE Required class only offered online

No comment/Other
N = 132

12   OTHDECIDE No
14   OTHDECIDE No
16   OTHDECIDE no
22   OTHDECIDE convenience, doing things at her own pace
25   OTHDECIDE No, I just wanted to take it
27   OTHDECIDE n/a
31   OTHDECIDE No
42   OTHDECIDE nope
48   OTHDECIDE No
54   OTHDECIDE n/a
59   OTHDECIDE staying at home for a semester and that she likes them a lot
64   OTHDECIDE Time because you don't have to meet at specific times and they are usually shorter (the duration)
65   OTHDECIDE No
67   OTHDECIDE No
70   OTHDECIDE No
71   OTHDECIDE Rate My Professor
77   OTHDECIDE Time frame
80   OTHDECIDE limitation of face to face classes
81   OTHDECIDE Not really.
85   OTHDECIDE No
86   OTHDECIDE No
Wanted to take a graduate level class and it was only offered online. Professor suggested I take it online even though I was leery of the online format for a graduate class.
because it was a pre req for the major, and another was a 300 level requirement

No

no

n/a

no

no

n/a

No

NA

no

n/a

no

what he heard about professors, difficulty

Bad professors teaching face to face, and the fact that the two classes were

general ed, and was being forced to take these, so he wanted to take them on his own time. Tests are

graded subjectively.

Avoiding the one professor who taught the course

previous experience and success in online courses

Had to take UPs

no
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ADVICE TO OTHERS FROM THE ONLINE STUDENTS

What advice would you give to other students to help them be successful in an on-line course?

Keep up with the workload
N = 170

7  ADVICEON  You have to brace yourself for the work, you can't just do it all at once. Work on it every day.
9  ADVICEON  Keep on top of assignments, easy to fall behind, start work early & keep ahead, don't procrastinate, keep organized
10 ADVICEON  Time management
12 ADVICEON  Pay attention to due dates
14 ADVICEON  Make sure you stay up to date on homework, don't put it off.
22 ADVICEON  Time management skills, keep up with the reading and participate in the discussions
25 ADVICEON  Don't procrastinate with it
31 ADVICEON  Follow syllabus, keep up with readings
33 ADVICEON  Keep up on it; don't save it for the last minutes. A lot due that you don't realize.
42 ADVICEON  stay on top of your reading; no classroom to see your professor so it's like going to class but reading
43 ADVICEON  More difficult, be on top of course material, don't take lightly, heavy workload
54 ADVICEON  keep track of assignments
59 ADVICEON  follow the rubric and the schedule set for the class
64 ADVICEON  Keep up with when things are due and make sure you know when they are do and keep in contact with your professor if you have questions
65 ADVICEON  Don't fall behind, don't procrastinate
67 ADVICEON  Make sure you understand what to expect as far as assignments, due dates, and participation. E-mail your professor with any questions since you don't have office hours you can go into.
70 ADVICEON  Prepare ahead of time, pay attention to due dates
71 ADVICEON  Don't fall behind, so all work
77 ADVICEON  Don't do work at last minute, talk to your professor with questions and explain situations
78 ADVICEON  don't procrastinate
83 ADVICEON  Discipline
84 ADVICEON  not slack
86 ADVICEON  Get stuff early, don't wait till last minute for deadlines
89 ADVICEON  pace yourself, make sure you have time to do all your work, don't take more than 2 at the same time
92 ADVICEON  Keep track of due dates
95 ADVICEON  read all the directions carefully!!!!! don't put things off!
100 ADVICEON  Plan your course out, time management
105 ADVICEON  Know the pace of the course, keep up on your work
106 ADVICEON  time-management
115 ADVICEON  Do online discussions, stay on top of assignments
118 ADVICEON  Schedule weekly time to work
ADVICEON Don't fall behind
ADVICEON Make sure you know the schedule
ADVICEON Take it seriously, don't neglect- put in same amount of effort
ADVICEON Stay on top of your work
ADVICEON stay on top of the schedule
ADVICEON you have to be self-motivated. NOT a good option for students who can’t be proactive and set their own personal due dates
ADVICEON Stay on top of work and don't fall behind on the schedule
ADVICEON Don't skip assignments, do your work
ADVICEON keep in constant contact with your professor get your homework done ahead of time don’t go into it thinking it will be easy
ADVICEON keep up with work
ADVICEON manage time well
ADVICEON Keep a schedule
ADVICEON You have to check Blackboard every day
ADVICEON Don't procrastinate
ADVICEON Study
ADVICEON keep up with the work, don't slack
ADVICEON Make sure to read directions before they get to class, do all homework/discussion boards
ADVICEON I would say to make sure good time management and self-discipline and to have a schedule and planner to know when things to do
ADVICEON time-management
ADVICEON Read the books and manage your time
ADVICEON Meet the deadlines
ADVICEON look ahead
ADVICEON be prepared a lot specific time to do the work
ADVICEON stay on top of homework assignments
ADVICEON Don't get behind, do your work ASAP so you have time to talk to your prof
ADVICEON Only take them if you have the time, they are very time-consuming
ADVICEON Use time management, don’t procrastinate
ADVICEON Keep up with the schedule, don't get behind. Contribute to discussion boards.
Do homework
ADVICEON Don't procrastinate
ADVICEON stay on top of the material because it is a shorter class time and read all your messages
ADVICEON Keep up with due dates
ADVICEON do the work ahead of time and on time
ADVICEON Have good organization
ADVICEON check blackboard frequently
ADVICEON Need to be very self-motivated, contact prof with plenty of time for response
ADVICEON Keep up with the work
ADVICEON Time management, be responsible for own work
ADVICEON pace yourself, don’t do it all at once set "due dates" ahead of time and plan accordingly
ADVICEON Don't put it off to the end of the week, when it's all due
ADVICEON keep up with the work
366 ADVICEON Stay on top of work
372 ADVICEON go at your own pace, but keep up. stay organized
374 ADVICEON Keep up with work
378 ADVICEON spend right amount of time on it
383 ADVICEON Keep up with what the syllabus says
391 ADVICEON Find a time and stay focused
394 ADVICEON Stay on track with your work throughout the week
397 ADVICEON check blackboard at least every other day
406 ADVICEON keep up with the assignments
422 ADVICEON Remember due dates and be proactive
423 ADVICEON Stay on top the assignments, they can pile up if you don't turn them in
424 ADVICEON keep up on all course work when assigned
432 ADVICEON Do your homework, do what you're supposed to do and turn it in.
445 ADVICEON make sure you keep up with the material, you can't fall behind
454 ADVICEON Set time aside to actually do work and to have time management skill because
457 ADVICEON they require a lot; especially if it’s in a shorter time
458 ADVICEON keep up with the deadlines/due dates
462 ADVICEON Time management, use self-discipline
470 ADVICEON Make sure you keep up with work. Turn it in on time.
472 ADVICEON Stay on top of weekly assignments
485 ADVICEON Keep up pace, stay on track
488 ADVICEON Keep up with all of the classwork
499 ADVICEON Plan ahead, don't procrastinate
501 ADVICEON Don't procrastinate
502 ADVICEON time-management
507 ADVICEON Stay on track with the syllabus and don't be afraid to ask questions
513 ADVICEON To do all the homework.
514 ADVICEON don't wait until the last minute
521 ADVICEON be consistent with studying
535 ADVICEON Do all homework early
542 ADVICEON Be self-motivated
549 ADVICEON Stay on track
553 ADVICEON plan out assignments, time management
566 ADVICEON keep up with the work, time management
575 ADVICEON Make sure you schedule time into your schedule as if it were a traditional class
581 ADVICEON Do everything 100%
583 ADVICEON Be mindful of time and what assignments would be coming up.
584 ADVICEON check blackboard everyday actually try/ don’t google answers you still paid for
it, so don't blow it off
588 ADVICEON stay ahead of schedule
596 ADVICEON Show up to the virtual class on time, do all of your work on time, don't let
yourself get behind
598 ADVICEON don't procrastinate
603 ADVICEON Stay on top of the work
606 ADVICEON Stay caught up and do not fall behind
612 ADVICEON you have to take initiative and teach yourself manage time realistically
ADVICE ON keep a scheduled know due dates
ADVICE ON stay on top of work, note due dates
ADVICE ON be organized, time manage important
ADVICE ON be prepared for the time commitment, it's more time than a traditional face to face course
ADVICE ON time management, study
ADVICE ON don’t fall behind and procrastinate
ADVICE ON Write down your assignments, stay on top of it, self-discipline
ADVICE ON Plan ahead
ADVICE ON Makes sure you know how to manage your time. Online classes require more time/effort than a face-to-face class
ADVICE ON keep up with the work
ADVICE ON check your email every day and stay on top of your classwork
ADVICE ON Stay on top of your work and meet with professors on the virtual conference thing/virtual office hours if you need to
ADVICE ON time-management, use planner
ADVICE ON make sure that you log on once a day to keep updated
ADVICE ON Time management
ADVICE ON don’t procrastinate
ADVICE ON Keep up on the readings and assignments, don’t wait until the last minute
ADVICE ON don’t get distracted
ADVICE ON Pay attention
ADVICE ON Time management and talking to the professor helps
ADVICE ON write out the schedule
ADVICE ON Don’t get behind
ADVICE ON Follow your syllabus, stay on track, don’t wait until the last minute
ADVICE ON set time aside to do work
ADVICE ON Time management, not to forget about class
ADVICE ON Make sure you stick to the assignment due dates, contact the professor if you find yourself falling behind
ADVICE ON don't procrastinate, contact professor if you have problems
ADVICE ON stay on top of the work
ADVICE ON make sure you focus on schedule
ADVICE ON Don’t take it online if you live close by. Stay on top of deadlines
ADVICE ON stay on task, manage your time
ADVICE ON Stay on top of the syllabus
ADVICE ON set aside time every week to work on it
ADVICE ON Don’t Procrastinate, any help should be taken
ADVICE ON stay on top of the work know due dates
ADVICE ON make sure you have a schedule
ADVICE ON keep up with the work
ADVICE ON Set a schedule for yourself to stay on task, stay in contact with your prof, pay attention to syllabus
ADVICE ON keep up with the homework
ADVICE ON be prepared start studying early schedule studying
ADVICE ON study, keep up
ADVICE ON Set aside enough time for it, manage time well
ADVICE ON check it regularly
ADVICEON pay attention, read the readings
ADVICEON do the reading, stay on top of your work don’t get behind
ADVICEON stay on top of it and don’t put it all off.
ADVICEON stay on top of assignments and write everything down
ADVICEON do things on time. Prepare for the coming thing in advance
ADVICEON stay up on the information and do not procrastinate. Remind yourself to do the work, you might forget.
ADVICEON time-management
ADVICEON Pay attention as much as you would in a regular class
ADVICEON stay organized
ADVICEON keep up on your work

Do the reading
N = 21

16    ADVICEON buy the book
21    ADVICEON Stay in contact with prof, keep up with reading
48    ADVICEON Do the readings.
136   ADVICEON Do all of the readings
147   ADVICEON It requires more time than you think and it’s a lot of required reading and writing but I think it’s worth it
175   ADVICEON Keep up with reading
246   ADVICEON spend time reading, more time than normal classes
280   ADVICEON Definitely read the book
283   ADVICEON Keep up on reading
337   ADVICEON don’t skip the reading study a lot
376   ADVICEON Buy book and read assigned chapters, complete the study guide
390   ADVICEON More reading; and start by yourself and spend more time with your professor, and if you have any questions ask your professor for time
413   ADVICEON read and study very much
500   ADVICEON stay on top of reading
515   ADVICEON be ready to read and turn stuff in on time
552   ADVICEON Always do the reading and make sure to keep up a fluid conversation with your professor
597   ADVICEON read the book
775   ADVICEON Just make sure you do all readings and look at notes before exams
815   ADVICEON keep up with reading
1375  ADVICEON pay attention, read the readings
1394  ADVICEON do the reading, stay on top of your work don’t get behind
### Initiate Contact with instructor and fellow students

**N = 16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVICEON</th>
<th>Stay in contact with prof, keep up with reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Keep up with when things are due and make sure you know when they are due and keep in contact with your professor if you have questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>stay in contact with your professor, try to communicate with fellow students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>go to professors' office hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Email teachers and classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Meet with your prof when you can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>contact the professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Engage in more interaction with students and prof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Stay on top of your work and meet with professors on the virtual conference thing/virtual office hours if you need to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Try to make contact with professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Time management and talking to the professor helps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>participate as much as you can, do whatever work the professor gives you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Make sure you stick to the assignment due dates, contact the professor if you find yourself falling behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>don't procrastinate, contact professor if you have problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Set a schedule for yourself to stay on task, stay in contact with your prof, pay attention to syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>take advantage of blackboard collaboration sections, be able to engage in discussions with classmates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other

**N = 28**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVICEON</th>
<th>don’t take too many at once</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Take a class that you want to take if you're going to do it, not just a requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Don't go there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Make sure good on discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Don't take them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Read the syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Nope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>take it with people they know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Take it in class if possible, or devote at least 6 hours to online class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Do the online allie study buddy: broken down by week. Online orientation in Park Library explains all of the big components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Take a course you are experience about to some degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>take initiative to find all answers on your own to look at other sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>take face-to-face if you can instead of online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICEON</td>
<td>Take it in the classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I hate taking online courses. If you're going to take an online course don't put it on top of a full course load. It's extremely hard to take it in addition to a full course load with campus academics and online academics. Professors don't know that you have more.

My thing with online classes is when I take an exam, I'm not allowed to write down the questions I have about questions I get wrong. I want to know why a question is wrong and I can't fight it or receive feedback about my exam. So that's a problem with me that I want fixed.

Don't take the shorter duration of the class

Make sure look up professor and don't take it with any one

Recommend online classes because opposed to general education curriculum as a whole. Most people should take them for Gen ed because they are easier. However, satisfaction with online is lower than face to face, but face to face is still low. A big factor is not going to campus, but amount of learning depends on when you take an online course. Marketing class had answers online, so there was less learning. Overall satisfaction is okay. Could count amount of teachers that he would recommend on one hand.

If you struggle in a class you know you're not great at, taking it online is probably easier

You could cheat

Take online courses without a proctor

NA

no

if you are an active learner, online courses would be harder, so stick to traditional

don't take it unless required

look at reviews online before picking a professor
THE DECISION NOT TO TAKE ONLINE COURSES

Is there any other reason that you have NOT taken an on-line course from CMU?

IF YES: What are those reasons?

Like/need traditional, face-to-face classroom; concerns about on-line environment

N = 41

873  NOWHY  Forget to do it without daily reminder
893  NOWHY  Procrastinate, online was hard to manage and be motivated and complete assignment.
906  NOWHY  interior design student, very hands-on, working on programs CMU offers, much drafting by hand, online course would be impractical for building concept boards and models
937  NOWHY  Affects my focus
955  NOWHY  not enough structure, makes it harder for her
977  NOWHY  not best applied for his learning
1034 NOWHY  you don’t learn anything, you can take tests with all your notes in front of you
1071 NOWHY  Learn better in a classroom
1098 NOWHY  More work than traditional classes, more time commitment
1169 NOWHY  likes taking notes by hand
1172 NOWHY  I prefer traditional classroom setting
1173 NOWHY  likes to establish relationships with professors
1187 NOWHY  likes to procrastinate
1207 NOWHY  easier to learn in person
1208 NOWHY  Learn better in person, one on one interaction
1224 NOWHY  Face to face teacher interaction
1249 NOWHY  All online classes are self-determined, motivation and self-reliance needed
1263 NOWHY  needs to be held accountable
1264 NOWHY  can't learn that way, reiteration from professors really help comprehension
1276 NOWHY  More face to face connections, interactions
1335 NOWHY  Bio chemistry is more of a hands on class
1365 NOWHY  the way she learns. She learns from lecture and writing notes. It’s easier to have the professor there to ask; easier than having to do it online and communicating via email.
1404 NOWHY  like interaction on campus
1406 NOWHY  Face-to-Face interactions with professors
1425 NOWHY  didn’t want to teach himself
1464 NOWHY  The lack of communication scares me. I feel like sometimes if I were to take one, I'd forget about homework because I'd have to get online and do it.
1501 NOWHY  I'd rather be hand's on and face-to-face with a professor
1516 NOWHY  Never thought of it, wanted to attend physical classes (for the college experience, being around people)
1583 NOWHY  prefer in person, many not offered online
1587 NOWHY  engineering is mostly hands on
1594 NOWHY  Feedback from friends who have taken online courses was negative
1599 NOWHY  worried about forgetting assignments
1615 NOWHY  prefer in person classes
There is an extra fee for those classes, and they are too fast-paced and time consuming.

prefer lectures in person, likes asking questions immediately

Enjoys face-to-face interaction with professors and students

major requires a lot of labs. can't do those online

Heard online courses are more challenging because they are a shorter duration and it's not as easy to contact professors

Prefer traditional

Personal preference

Afraid of loss of internet connection

 Courses needed not offered on line

Don't want to take too heavy of a course load, don't offer wide range of summer courses

No opportunity to

classes weren't offered online

They aren't offered for me

degree doesn't offer online courses, bad experiences before

It's not required in my program and not a lot of grad courses offered online in economics

not very many offered in major

Doctoral program does not offer online courses

Classes needed aren't offered

when he needed the courses, they were not offered online

classes needed not offered online

Not a lot of courses with biology

no Major classes

Most classes I've had to take aren't even offered online

They weren't offered

Not available

No classes offered for the major online

courses for major not offered online

There are no online classes in her major. It is a very hands-on major.

no online courses in his major, and his advisor never recommended them, and also the same price so doesn't see the point bc values online learning as less, should be less expensive

not available because I have to take 3 courses to finish; but I couldn't find online courses. Not available yet for the classes I plan to take

To my knowledge; no online courses in your discipline; although some management classes no industrial organizational psychology. Could take management courses for credit; not interested. Disabilities--using computers is very distracting and tough for maintaining focus. I shy away from online courses; because interacting with course material through internet--distractions make it difficult.

course offerings were not offered online
1661  NOWHY  Not offered many classes
1735  NOWHY  Higher level courses are not offered online

No need for on-line class
N = 13

913  NOWHY  hasn't had an opportunity or reason to yet
914  NOWHY  Basic courses already out of the way
924  NOWHY  No need to take an online course
1186  NOWHY  Haven't had the need to
1212  NOWHY  never needed to
1284  NOWHY  Never felt need to personally
1301  NOWHY  I Haven't needed to. Ability to sit in class fitting in to schedule
1381  NOWHY  he never had the need to, all his courses were offered traditionally and also he prefers fact to face
1409  NOWHY  I haven't needed to; so that's about it
1476  NOWHY  wasn’t necessary
1629  NOWHY  Haven't needed it so far
1686  NOWHY  no need to
1714  NOWHY  no need - plans to take one in future so she can graduate on time

Not aware of on-line classes
N = 6

1385  NOWHY  Never looked into it
1471  NOWHY  I didn't know it was so widely available and that I had the opportunity before.
1531  NOWHY  never looked into it
1588  NOWHY  Didn't know they were offered for so many classes
1665  NOWHY  haven't looked into it
1737  NOWHY  Not aware of them

Other
N = 11

874  NOWHY  All classes were offered online, so it was easier
928  NOWHY  I can get in cheaper other places
953  NOWHY  expensive
987  NOWHY  Centralis Scholarship pays for classes might as well put in classroom like the honor's program wants her to have
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>NOWHY</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1129</td>
<td>NOWHY</td>
<td>cost (compared to community college)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1174</td>
<td>NOWHY</td>
<td>had not yet come up in course schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1233</td>
<td>NOWHY</td>
<td>all classes offered on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1258</td>
<td>NOWHY</td>
<td>Available in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1627</td>
<td>NOWHY</td>
<td>Scholarship only covers face-to-face courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1634</td>
<td>NOWHY</td>
<td>cheaper at community college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1729</td>
<td>NOWHY</td>
<td>online courses are cheaper at community colleges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>