

# **Profile and Survey Results of Online Students El Camino College Fall 2006 and Spring 2007**

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In Spring 2007, the online (e.g., Internet-delivery) segment of distance education students completed a student opinion survey administered via the web. The purpose of the survey was twofold: 1) to enhance the picture we have of the types of students who typically take courses online at El Camino College (ECC) and 2) to gauge their satisfaction with online courses and offerings.

This report contains a summary of the distance education survey results along with a fall 2006 profile of the online student body.

## **STUDENT PROFILE**

The report begins with the fall 2006 profile (attached). The number and percentage of all online students is presented along with the corresponding percentage for all El Camino College students. It is assumed that the spring 2007 students who participated in the survey will not be much different from the fall group.

In general, online students are more likely to be female and older in age. The median age of online students is 24, compared with 22 for all ECC students (statistics not shown). Larger percentages of African-American and White students enroll in online courses, especially White students. Asians and Latinos are less likely to be found in online courses.

The online student is more frequently a continuing or returning student, indicating that the he or she begins in traditional courses and transitions into distance education. Online students are more likely to be high school graduates or to have a bachelor's degree compared with ECC students as a whole.

Online students also are more often interested in transfer and are enrolled full time. This suggests that today's online student at El Camino College is quite different from the original image of a working adult taking a class or two to retool for a job.

## **Profile Information from Survey**

The survey collected a few additional items about the El Camino College online student. Please note that there is a 4.8% margin of error to consider with this information and very little comparable ECC data is available. This means that percentages for given items that are below 5% might actually be close to zero.

**Work Hours (Q1):** About half of all online students are working over 30 hours per week. Another 18% are working 10 hours or less per week (or not working). Nearly 8% are full-time homemakers.

**Gender (Q2):** Almost 82% of respondents were women, indicating that a somewhat larger proportion of women than men responded to the survey. [Women make up 72% of all online students.]

**Age (Q3):** Over half of respondents were under 25 years of age, with the largest group of respondents representing 17 to 21 year olds (35%).

**College Attendance (Q4):** Nearly 9% of respondents indicated that they attended another college or university in addition to El Camino College. Two-thirds of these were attending a 4-year institution.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

The spring 2007 Online Student Survey was distributed to nearly 2000 students through two methods: 1) posting of the survey link by faculty on electronic bulletin boards and 2) emailing the survey link directly to each student using their ECC email address. A total of 342 surveys were submitted online resulting in a 17% response rate. As stated above, results for this sample size are accompanied by about a 5% margin of error (with 95% confidence).

A report of complete results is attached. The highlights of each question are provided below. The question number is in parentheses following each header.

**Primary purpose (5):** Students were asked about their primary purpose for taking the course in which they enrolled. Fulfilling a general education requirement and transfer to a 4-year institution each garnered more than one-third of the total. About 16% were taking the course to complete a degree or certificate.

**Reasons to take an online course (6-7):** The most important reason students indicated for taking an online course was work and family commitments (65%). The second most common reason was a preference for the online course format (40%). Other items also checked by more than 40 students were "on-campus sections full or not available." Students were able to check more than one reason. Distance from ECC did not turn out to be a significant reason for taking an online class (5%).

Students were also asked if they would still take their current course if it were only available on campus. Over 78% said yes or maybe, while 22% said no.

**First online class (8-10):** About 42% of students indicated that this was their first online class. Of the students who had taken a previous course, most had taken 3 or more courses (mostly at El Camino College).

**Likely to repeat (11-12):** The vast majority (91%) indicated that they were somewhat or very likely to take another online course. Of those who were *unlikely* to take another online course, 27% indicated that they were finished with course work. A few students pointed to motivation, technical problems and a preference for the classroom environment.

**Interest in online degree (13):** Over 72% of respondents were either somewhat or very interested in completing a degree or certificate entirely online.

**Courses of interest (14):** The top subjects of interest were general education (62%), math (57%), English (40%), sciences (40%), reading or writing (36%), languages other than English (31%), computer information systems (27%), and accounting (25%).

## **Use of Technology**

A variety of questions were added to the survey to gauge students comfort with and use of technology for personal and college purposes.

**Electronic devices (15):** The most commonly used electronic devices by online students were cell phones (for phone calls and text messaging) – 92%, DVD or CD recorders (62%), laptop computers (60%), and MP3 audio players (e.g., iPod) – 48%.

**Websites (16):** The most commonly accessed websites included: MyECC (81%), google.com (74%) and yahoo.com (69%). Networking websites had an interest range between 1% and 41% (MySpace). Shopping websites had a range of 28% to 33%. Compared with MyECC access, only about 34% of students accessed other parts of the El Camino College website.

**Comfort with online/technical activities (17):** Students were asked about their comfort in doing a variety of technical or online activities. The vast majority (95%) were comfortable navigating the web. The majority (>55%) were comfortable with the following: downloading data or text files, downloading audio or video files, installing software, and uploading data or text files. Students were least comfortable creating and modifying web pages and transferring data via FTP.

## **Online Course Experience**

This section covers some general questions about students' online course experience.

**Finding out about online class (18):** Nearly 64% of students found their class through the searchable schedule. Another 24% found it in the paper schedule of classes.

**Communication before enrolling (19-20):** Most students did not consult others about the pros and cons of taking an online course (71%). Of those who did, nearly half spoke with family or friends. Over 14% discussed online courses with an ECC professional or faculty member.

**Platforms and browsers (21-22):** Students were asked about the computer platforms and browser they used to ensure that online courses can be utilized in a variety of settings. Most students used a PC platform and Internet Explorer for a browser. But at least some students used Firefox and America Online. About 7% were on a Mac platform.

**Course management system (23-24abc):** Most students were enrolled in courses which utilized the Blackboard course management system. Overall, more than 78% of students felt that the system's ease of use, features and technical support were either good or excellent. No significant difference in ratings was found across different course management systems.

**Course orientation (25):** Most students experienced a faculty-led orientation in class (50%). About 10% participated in a faculty-led orientation online or on a website.

**Support materials (26-27):** Students were asked to rate the Distance Education Online Student Handbook in preparing for an online course. Nearly 53% felt that the handbook was helpful or very helpful. About 22% did not access the handbook.

About 76% of students felt that *other* support materials made available were either helpful or very helpful.

**Desired technological tools (28):** Students indicated that they would like to see more of the following – interactive web pages (49%), links to other resources (46%), video (43%), and downloadable podcasts (25%).

**Reading online (29):** Students were asked how they read materials online. Nearly 50% print out materials as is to read on paper. Over a third read materials on-screen.

**Online support services (30):** Over three-quarters of students utilize the online catalog or other library databases. A quarter each utilizes online counseling and financial aid services.

**Course work (31-33):** Nearly 80% of respondents work on their online courses at home. Very few indicated that they spent time on course work in public settings or on campus. Most students felt that online courses required about the same (47%) or more work (35%) than a traditional course. Most students also agreed or agreed strongly that they learned as effectively online as in the traditional classroom environment.

Several sections of the survey provided an opportunity for individual comments. Comments will be compiled and analyzed for future follow-up later in the year.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, students are comfortable with the online environment at ECC and will likely return for another course. They are also interested in expanded online offerings for the future, especially those that facilitate degree/certificate receipt or transfer to a 4-year institution.

**Headcount by Demographic and Enrollment Characteristics  
Distance Education Students  
Fall 2006**

Category	Characteristic	Distance Ed Students		All ECC
		n	%	%
<i>All Students</i>		1,356	100.0	100.0
<b>Gender</b>	Female	975	71.9	54.8
	Male	380	28.0	45.2
<b>Age</b>	Under Age 17	4	0.3	2.0
	17	10	0.7	2.9
	18	72	5.3	12.6
	19	127	9.4	12.9
	20	139	10.3	10.5
	21	135	10.0	8.2
	22	94	6.9	5.8
	23	78	5.8	4.6
	24	83	6.1	4.1
	25-29	237	17.5	11.9
	30-39	210	15.5	11.7
	40-49	117	8.6	7.3
	50-64	47	3.5	4.4
	65+	3	0.2	1.2
<b>Ethnicity</b>	African-American	269	19.8	18.2
	Amer Ind/Alaskan	7	0.5	0.4
	Asian	157	11.6	13.6
	Filipino	47	3.5	3.8
	Latino	330	24.3	31.6
	Pacific Islander	17	1.3	1.0
	White	369	27.2	21.1
	Other	38	2.8	1.9
	Unknown or Declined	122	9.0	8.4
<b>Residency</b>	California Resident	1,303	96.1	93.8
	Out of State	20	1.5	2.8
	International	33	2.4	3.3
<b>Enrollment Status</b>	First-time Student	46	3.4	13.1
	First-time Transfer	72	5.3	6.9
	Returning	302	22.3	20.9
	Continuing	928	68.4	55.8
	K-12 Special Admit	8	0.6	3.0
<b>Education Level</b>	Not HS Grad	27	2.0	5.2
	HS Grad or Equiv.	1,106	81.6	78.6
	AA/AS Degree	54	4.0	4.3
	Bachelor's or Higher	117	8.6	7.6

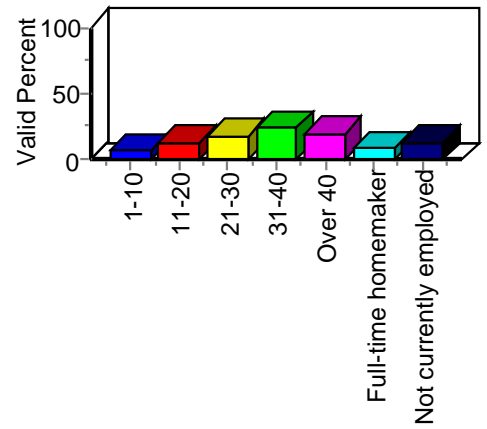
<b>Category</b>	<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Distance Ed Students</b>		<b>All ECC</b>
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>All Students</i>		1,356	100.0	100.0
<b>Educational Goal</b>	Intend to Transfer	550	40.6	35.7
	Degree/Certif. Only	62	4.6	4.6
	Retrain/recertif.	108	8.0	8.5
	Basic Skills/GED	30	2.2	3.5
	Enrichment	37	2.7	4.3
	Undecided	349	25.7	28.7
<b>Enrollment Level</b>	Full-time	485	35.8	28.7
	Part-time	871	64.2	67.9
	Non-Credit	n/a	n/a	26.8
	Not enrolled or N/A	0	0.0	3.3
<b>Unit Load</b> <i>(At Census)</i>	Fewer than 6 units	345	25.4	33.3
	6 to 8.5 units	301	22.2	18.9
	9 to 11.5 units	225	16.6	15.7
	12 to 14.5 units	346	25.5	21.8
	15 units or more	139	10.3	6.9

Source: CCC Chancellor's Office, El Camino College (Colleague)

# On-Line Student Survey

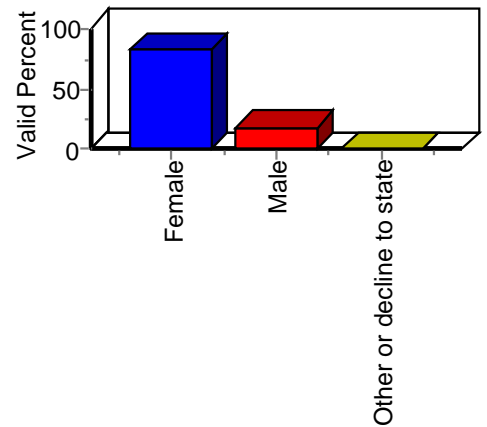
## 1. On average, how many hours do you work each week?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
1-10	1	20	5.87
11-20	2	42	12.32
21-30	3	60	17.60
31-40	4	85	24.93
Over 40	5	65	19.06
Full-time homemaker	6	26	7.62
Not currently employed	7	43	12.61
Total Valid		341	100.00



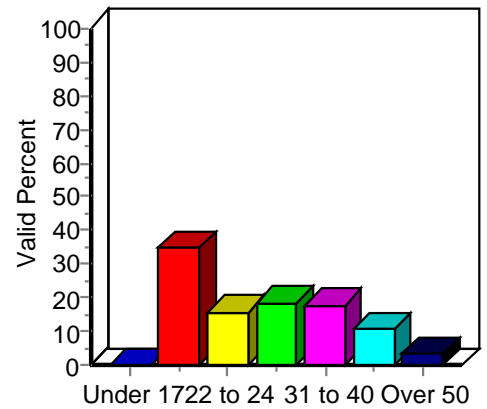
## 2. What is your gender?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Female	1	279	81.58
Male	2	63	18.42
Other or decline to state	3	0	0.00
Total Valid		342	100.00



## 3. What is your age group?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Under 17	1	0	0.00
17 to 21	2	118	34.71
22 to 24	3	53	15.59
25 to 30	4	62	18.24
31 to 40	5	60	17.65
41 to 50	6	36	10.59
Over 50	7	11	3.24
Total Valid		340	100.00



## On-Line Student Survey

### 4. Which of the following statements best describes you? (Check all that apply)

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
I am attending El Camino College and/or Compton Center	1	322	94.43
I am attending another community college	2	10	2.93
I am enrolled at a 4-year public university	3	14	4.11
I am enrolled at a 4-year private university	4	5	1.47
I am not attending any college	5	7	2.05
Total Valid		341	100.00

### 5. What is your primary purpose for taking this or a recent course?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Fulfill a general education requirement	1	121	35.38
Complete a degree or certificate	2	53	15.50
Transfer to a four-year institution	3	119	34.80
Job or career training	4	11	3.22
Personal development	5	30	8.77
Other	6	8	2.34
Total Valid		342	100.00

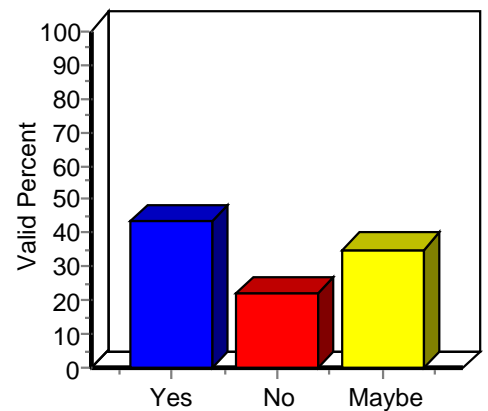
## On-Line Student Survey

### 6. What are your main reasons for taking a course online (vs. in-class)? (Check all that apply)

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Do not live within driving distance of campus	1	17	5.03
Work/family commitments	2	218	64.50
On-campus sections I wanted were full or not available	3	43	12.72
Prefer the online course format	4	135	39.94
Other	5	42	12.43
Total Valid		338	100.00

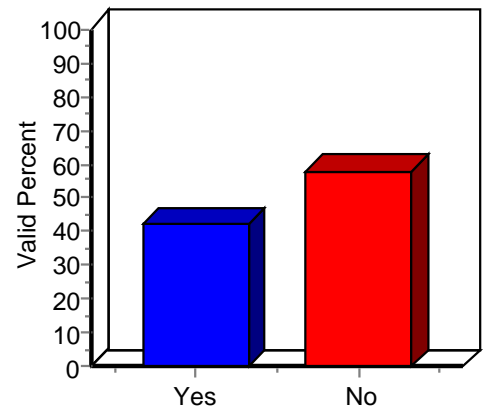
### 7. If the course(s) you have enrolled in were available only on campus, would you take them?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	1	147	43.24
No	2	74	21.76
Maybe	3	119	35.00
Total Valid		340	100.00



### 8. Is this your first time taking an online class?

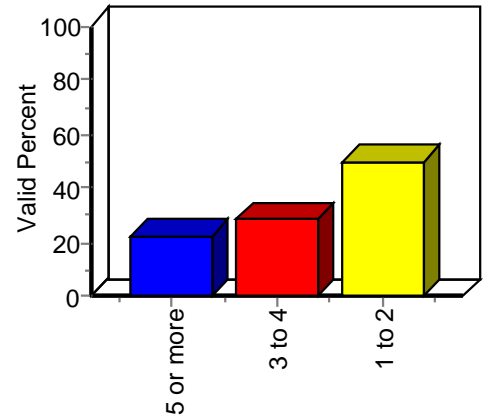
Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	1	143	42.06
No	2	197	57.94
Total Valid		340	100.00



## On-Line Student Survey

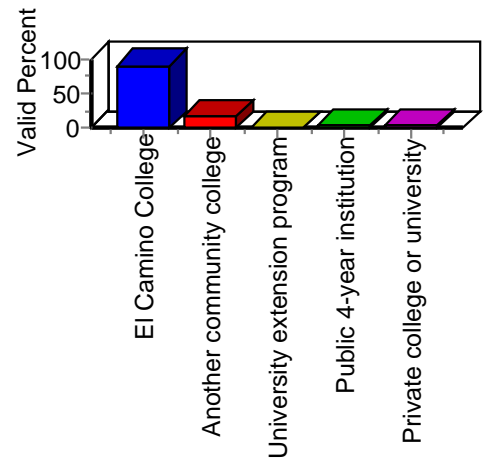
### 9. If no, how many courses have you taken online in your college experience?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
5 or more	1	47	22.07
3 to 4	2	61	28.64
1 to 2	3	105	49.30
Total Valid		213	100.00



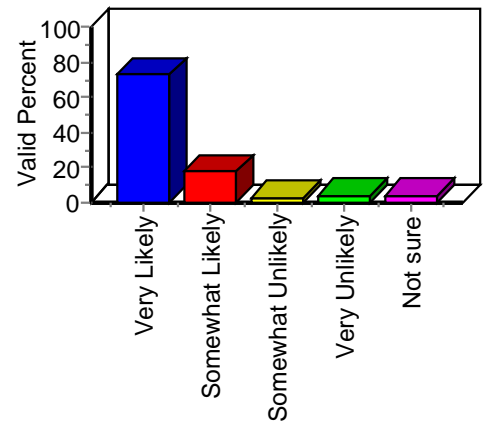
### 10. Where were these online courses taken? (Check all that apply)

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
El Camino College	1	236	91.83
Another community college	2	40	15.56
University extension program	3	4	1.56
Public 4-year institution	4	5	1.95
Private college or university	5	8	3.11
Total Valid		257	100.00



### 11. What is the likelihood that you will take other online classes?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very Likely	1	250	73.53
Somewhat Likely	2	59	17.35
Somewhat Unlikely	3	9	2.65
Very Unlikely	4	11	3.24
Not sure	5	11	3.24
Total Valid		340	100.00



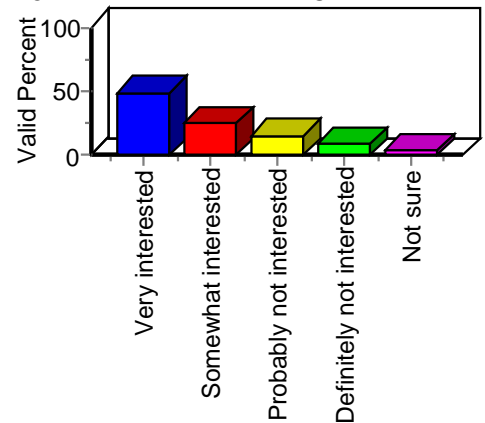
## On-Line Student Survey

12. If you marked somewhat or very unlikely, for what reason would you not take other online classes?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Finished taking course work	1	20	27.40
Prefer the classroom environment	2	11	15.07
Had trouble staying motivated in an online setting	3	14	19.18
Too many technical problems	4	7	9.59
Other	5	21	28.77
Total Valid		73	100.00

13. If you could complete an entire degree or certificate online, what is your interest in doing so?

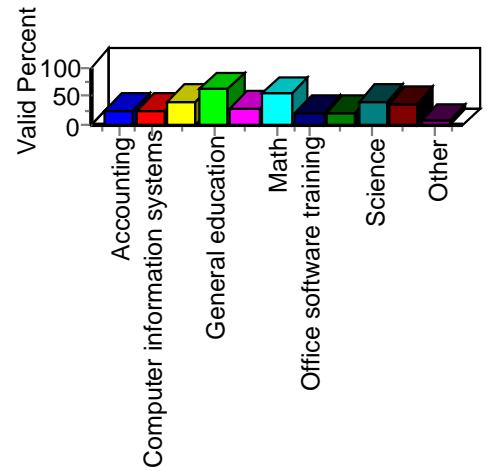
Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very interested	1	163	47.94
Somewhat interested	2	83	24.41
Probably not interested	3	50	14.71
Definitely not interested	4	30	8.82
Not sure	5	14	4.12
Total Valid		340	100.00



## On-Line Student Survey

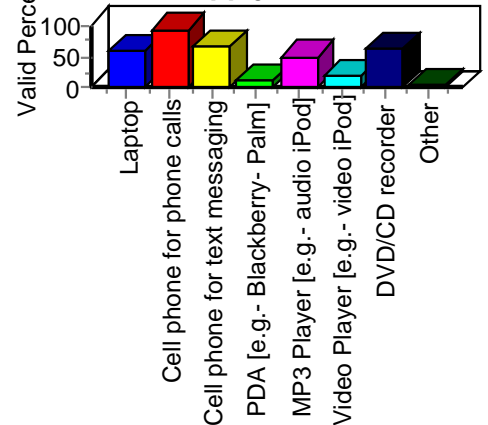
14. What types of courses would you like to see offered online by El Camino College? (Check all that apply)

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Accounting	1	80	25.16
Computer information systems	2	85	26.73
English	3	128	40.25
General education	4	196	61.64
Languages other than English	5	100	31.45
Math	6	180	56.60
Office software training	7	73	22.96
Real estate	8	71	22.33
Science	9	128	40.25
Writing or Reading	10	116	36.48
Other	11	29	9.12
Total Valid		318	100.00



15. Which of the following electronic devices do you use regularly? (Check all that apply)

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Laptop	1	203	60.06
Cell phone for phone calls	2	310	91.72
Cell phone for text messaging	3	217	64.20
PDA [e.g.- Blackberry- Palm]	4	34	10.06
MP3 Player [e.g.- audio iPod]	5	161	47.63
Video Player [e.g.- video iPod]	6	61	18.05
DVD/CD recorder	7	210	62.13
Other	8	17	5.03
Total Valid		338	100.00



## On-Line Student Survey

### 16. Which of the following websites do you access regularly? (Check all that apply)

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Amazon.com	1	112	33.23
Bebo.com	2	2	0.59
Blogger.com	3	9	2.67
Craigslist.com	4	63	18.69
eBay.com	5	94	27.89
Elcamino.edu - MyECC [Web portal]	6	272	80.71
Elcamino.edu - excluding MyECC	7	116	34.42
Facebook.com	8	34	10.09
Friendster.com	9	4	1.19
Google.com	10	248	73.59
Live.com	11	4	1.19
MSN.com	12	108	32.05
MySpace.com	13	138	40.95
Yahoo.com	14	232	68.84
YouTube.com	15	90	26.71
Other	16	20	5.93
Total Valid		337	100.00

### 17. Which of the following activities do you feel comfortable doing on your own? (Check all that apply)

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Navigating the web	1	317	94.91
Downloading data or text files	2	265	79.34
Downloading audio or video files	3	221	66.17
Uploading data or text files	4	194	58.08
Uploading audio or video files	5	169	50.60
Installing software	6	208	62.28
Creating/modifying websites	7	70	20.96
Transferring data via FTP	8	49	14.67
Handling routine computer problems	9	123	36.83
Seeking technical support	10	139	41.62
Total Valid		334	100.00

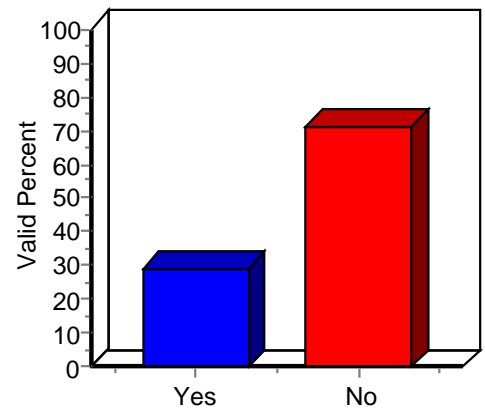
## On-Line Student Survey

### 18. How did you find out about your online class?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Searchable schedule of classes	1	218	63.93
Paper copy of schedule of classes	2	81	23.75
California Virtual Campus website	3	1	0.29
Academic Counselor	4	5	1.47
Department advertisement	5	3	0.88
Friend or family	6	29	8.50
Other	7	4	1.17
Total Valid		341	100.00

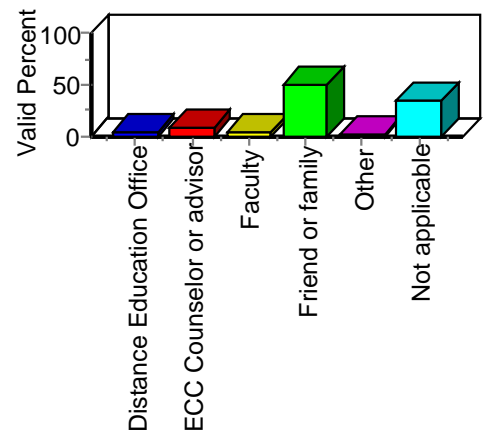
### 19. Before enrolling, did you communicate with (speak with or email) someone about the advantages and disadvantages of taking an online course?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	1	98	28.82
No	2	242	71.18
Total Valid		340	100.00



### 20. If yes, with whom did you communicate?

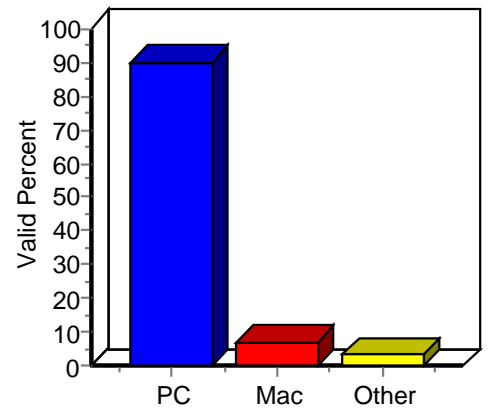
Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Distance Education Office	1	5	3.23
ECC Counselor or advisor	2	12	7.74
Faculty	3	5	3.23
Friend or family	4	77	49.68
Other	5	2	1.29
Not applicable	6	54	34.84
Total Valid		155	100.00



## On-Line Student Survey

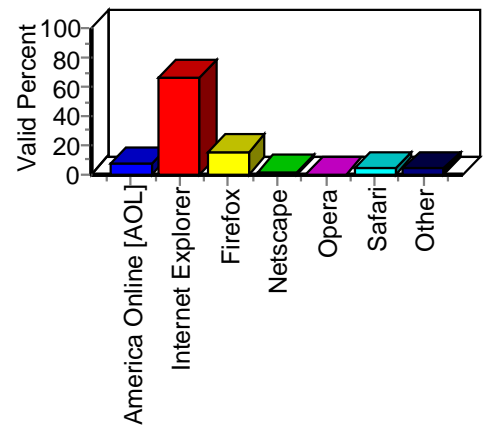
### 21. What computer platform do you normally use?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
PC	1	305	89.97
Mac	2	23	6.78
Other	3	11	3.24
Total Valid		339	100.00



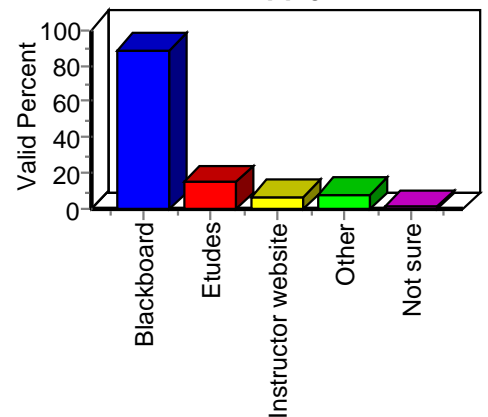
### 22. What web browser do you normally use?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
America Online [AOL]	1	24	7.06
Internet Explorer	2	228	67.06
Firefox	3	55	16.18
Netscape	4	3	0.88
Opera	5	1	0.29
Safari	6	14	4.12
Other	7	15	4.41
Total Valid		340	100.00



### 23. Which course management system are you using in your course(s)? (Check all that apply)

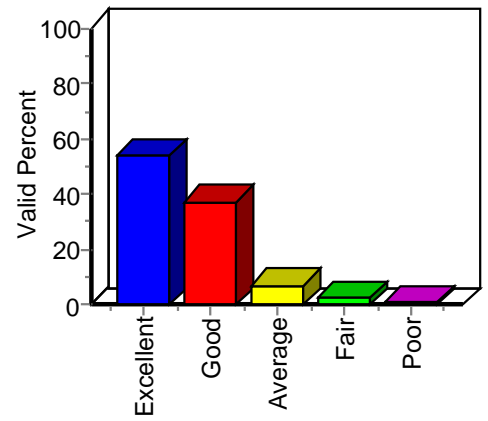
Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Blackboard	1	301	88.53
Etudes	2	51	15.00
Instructor website	3	25	7.35
Other	4	29	8.53
Not sure	5	6	1.76
Total Valid		340	100.00



## On-Line Student Survey

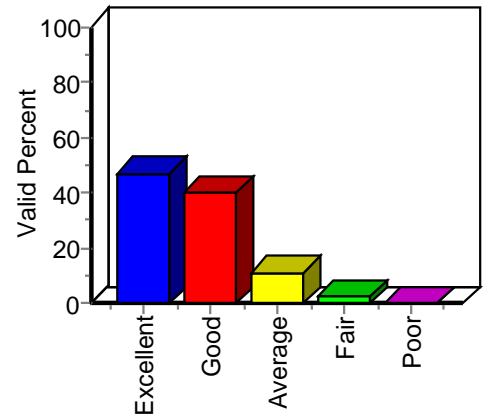
### 24A. Ease of use

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Excellent	1	180	53.57
Good	2	123	36.61
Average	3	23	6.85
Fair	4	7	2.08
Poor	5	3	0.89
Total Valid		336	100.00



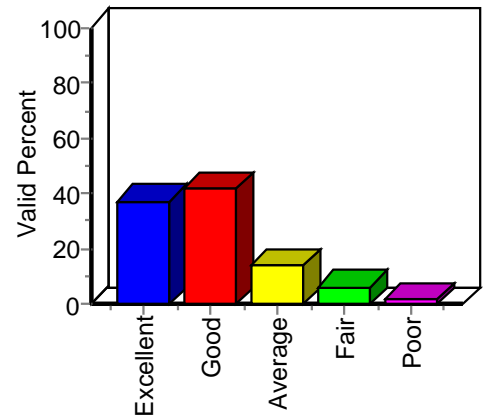
### 24B. Features

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Excellent	1	157	46.73
Good	2	134	39.88
Average	3	37	11.01
Fair	4	8	2.38
Poor	5	0	0.00
Total Valid		336	100.00



### 24C. Technical support

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Excellent	1	120	36.59
Good	2	137	41.77
Average	3	46	14.02
Fair	4	19	5.79
Poor	5	6	1.83
Total Valid		328	100.00



## On-Line Student Survey

### 25. What type of course orientation did you experience in your current or most recent course?

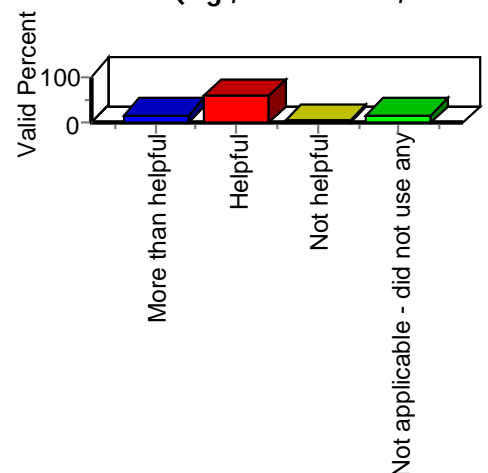
Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Course management system orientation	1	27	8.01
Faculty-led orientation on a website	2	33	9.79
Faculty-led orientation in class	3	170	50.45
Other type of course orientation	4	5	1.48
Did not participate in a course orientation	5	51	15.13
Don't remember	6	51	15.13
Total Valid		337	100.00

### 26. Please rate the helpfulness of the Distance Education Online Student Handbook in preparing you for an online course.

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very Helpful	1	68	20.12
Helpful	2	110	32.54
Neutral	3	68	20.12
Unhelpful	4	14	4.14
Very Unhelpful	5	2	0.59
Did not access the online handbook	6	76	22.49
Total Valid		338	100.00

### 27. Overall, how helpful were any other support materials you used for this class (e.g., orientation, other materials/support)?

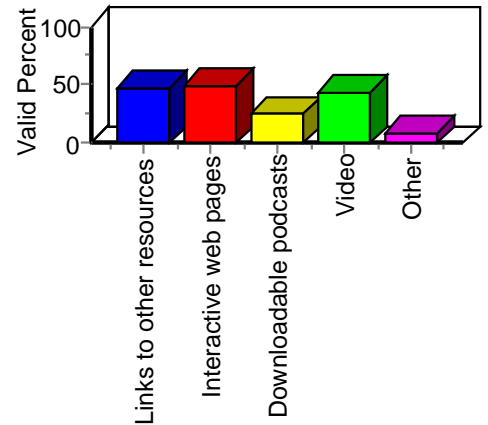
Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
More than helpful	1	62	18.45
Helpful	2	194	57.74
Not helpful	3	16	4.76
Not applicable - did not use any	4	64	19.05
Total Valid		336	100.00



## On-Line Student Survey

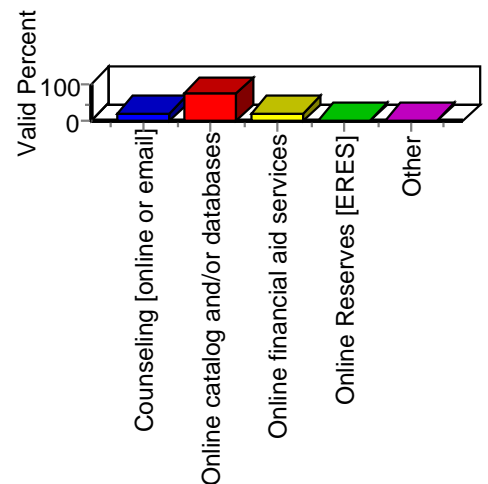
### 28. What technological tools would you like to see more of in your course(s).

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Links to other resources	1	138	46.46
Interactive web pages	2	145	48.82
Downloadable podcasts	3	75	25.25
Video	4	129	43.43
Other	5	26	8.75
Total Valid		297	100.00



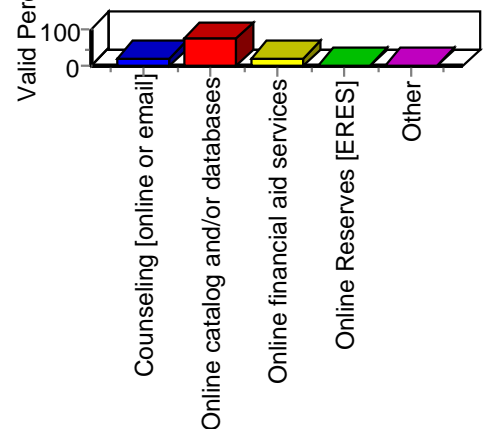
### 29. When reading materials in your online course, what approach do you use most often to read the materials?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Print out materials as is and read	1	163	49.39
Copy and paste materials into another kind of software and read	2	44	13.33
Read on-screen	3	123	37.27
Total Valid		330	100.00



### 30. Which online support services have you utilized?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Counseling [online or email]	1	69	24.38
Online catalog and/or databases	2	220	77.74
Online financial aid services	3	71	25.09
Online Reserves [ERES]	4	20	7.07
Other	5	16	5.65
Total Valid		283	100.00



## On-Line Student Survey

### 31. Where do you usually work on your online course?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
On campus	1	7	2.06
At work	2	30	8.85
At home	3	269	79.35
In a public place with my own computer	4	2	0.59
In a public place with an available computer [e.g.- public library]	5	2	0.59
It varies	6	29	8.55
Total Valid		339	100.00

### 32. In terms of the amount of time spent on the course, how would you compare an online course to an on-campus course?

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Online course involves more work	1	117	34.51
Online course involves less work	2	39	11.50
About the same amount of work is required for each	3	161	47.49
No opinion	4	22	6.49
Total Valid		339	100.00

### 33. I learned/am learning as effectively in an online course as I would have in a traditional classroom environment.

Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	1	139	41.12
Agree	2	117	34.62
Neutral	3	56	16.57
Disagree	4	20	5.92
Strongly disagree	5	6	1.78
Total Valid		338	100.00

