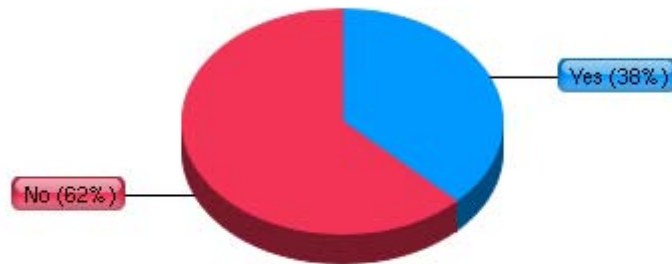


California Community Colleges Distance Education Course Survey

April 01, 2009

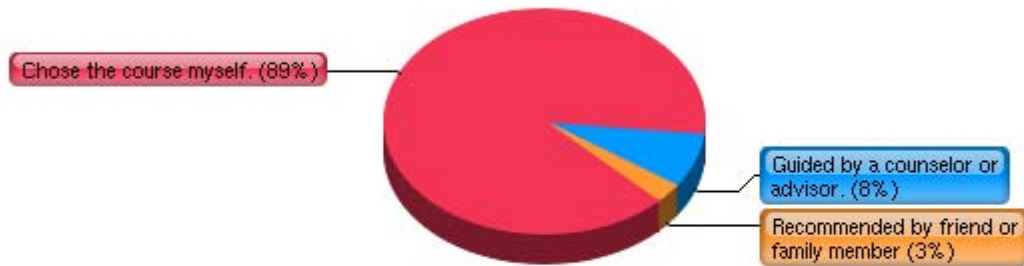
1. Was this your first experience with a distance education course?



| Item | Count | Percent % |
|------|-------|-----------|
| No | 133 | 62% |
| Yes | 80 | 38% |

Total responses to this question: 213

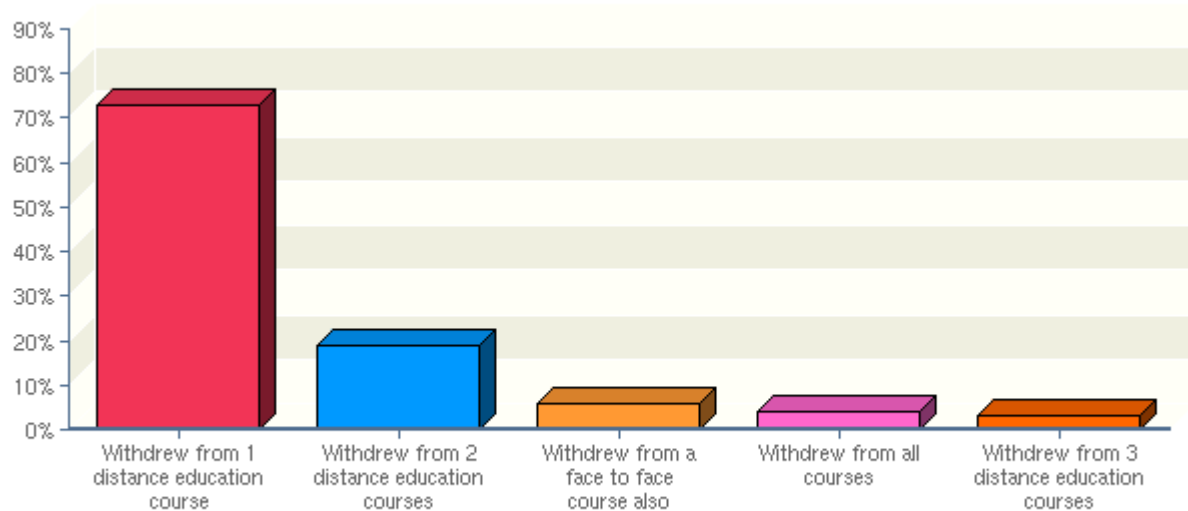
2. Did you choose to take this distance education course yourself, or was your choice guided by a counselor or advisor?



| Item | Count | Percent % |
|--|-------|-----------|
| Chose the course myself. | 189 | 89% |
| Guided by a counselor or advisor. | 17 | 8% |
| Recommended by friend or family member | 6 | 3% |

Total responses to this question: 212

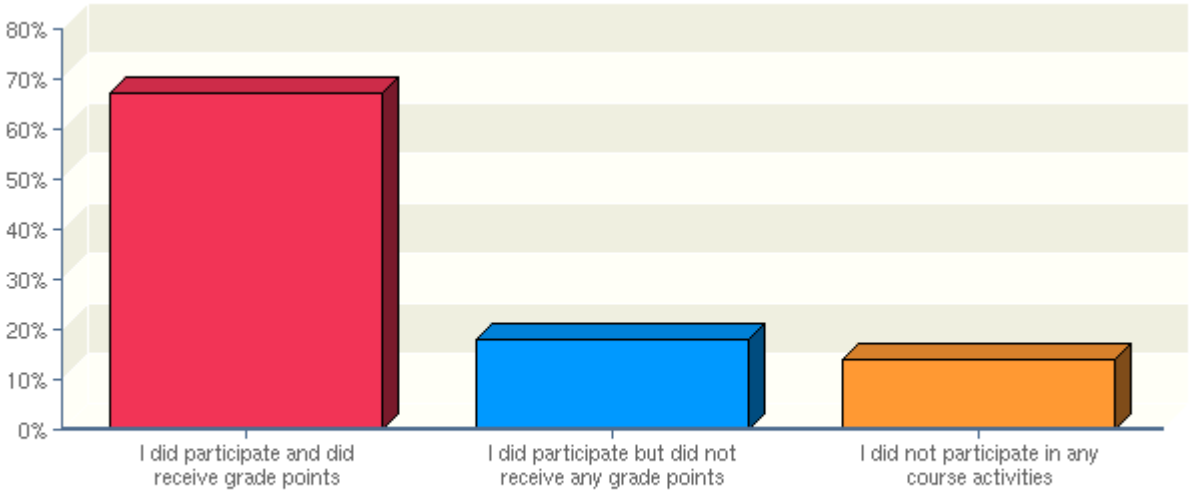
**3. From how many courses did you withdraw in the Fall 2008 term?
Select all that apply.**



| Item | Count | Percent % |
|--|-------|-----------|
| Withdrew from 1 distance education course | 154 | 73% |
| Withdrew from 2 distance education courses | 41 | 19% |
| Withdrew from a face to face course also | 13 | 6% |
| Withdrew from all courses | 9 | 4% |
| Withdrew from 3 distance education courses | 6 | 3% |

Total responses to this question: 211

4. Going back to the last distance education course from which you withdrew, did you participate in any of the course activities (assignments, discussions, quizzes etc)? Select only one.



| Item | Count | Percent % |
|--|-------|-----------|
| I did participate and did receive grade points | 142 | 67% |
| I did participate but did not receive any grade points | 39 | 18% |
| I did not participate in any course activities | 30 | 14% |

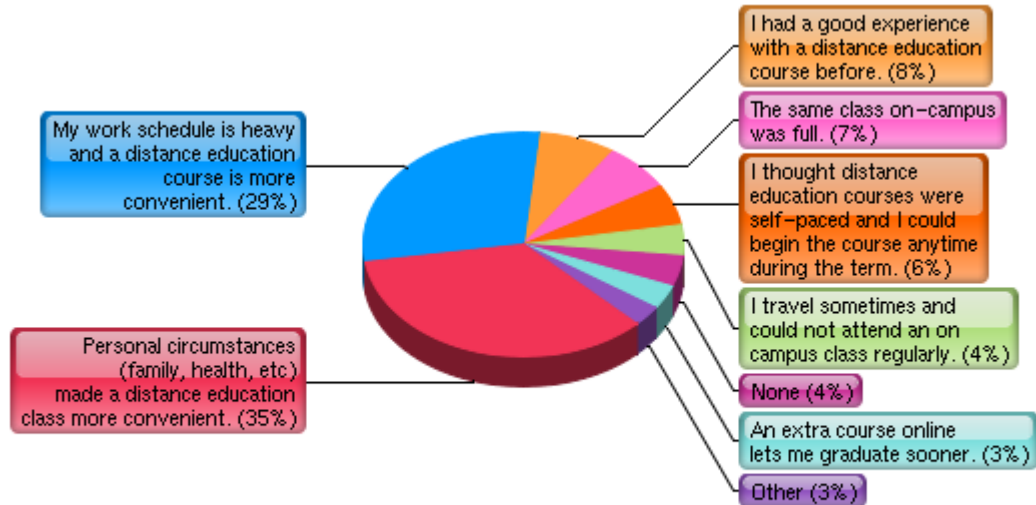
Total responses to this question: 211

5. Please think about the reasons why you enrolled in the distance education course. Indicate how important each of the following factors were in explaining why you enrolled in the course. Select Very Important or Somewhat important or Not important at all for each factor.

| Item | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important at all | Total |
|--|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------|
| I travel sometimes and could not attend an on campus class regularly. | 17.1% | 34.7% | 48.2% | 199 |
| My work schedule is heavy and a distance education course is more convenient. | 56.5% | 26.0% | 17.5% | 200 |
| I thought it was easier than an on-campus course. | 18.5% | 34.0% | 47.5% | 200 |
| I was curious, wanted to try something new. | 19.0% | 24.5% | 56.5% | 200 |
| It was recommended by someone. | 9.2% | 23.0% | 67.9% | 196 |
| I had a good experience with a distance education course before. | 49.2% | 15.6% | 35.2% | 199 |
| The same class on-campus was full. | 29.3% | 22.7% | 48.0% | 198 |
| Personal circumstances (family, health, etc) made a distance education class more convenient. | 60.7% | 20.9% | 18.4% | 201 |
| I thought distance education courses were self-paced and I could begin the course anytime during the term. | 30.8% | 25.8% | 43.4% | 198 |
| An extra course online lets me graduate sooner. | 28.3% | 25.8% | 46.0% | 198 |

Total responses to this question: 203

6. From among the previous ten reasons which was the most important for choosing a distance education course. (Select only one)



| Item | Count | Percent % |
|--|-------|-----------|
| Personal circumstances (family, health, etc) made a distance education class more convenient. | 71 | 35% |
| My work schedule is heavy and a distance education course is more convenient. | 59 | 29% |
| I had a good experience with a distance education course before. | 16 | 8% |
| The same class on-campus was full. | 14 | 7% |
| I thought distance education courses were self-paced and I could begin the course anytime during the term. | 12 | 6% |
| I travel sometimes and could not attend an on campus class regularly. | 9 | 4% |
| None | 9 | 4% |
| An extra course online lets me graduate sooner. | 7 | 3% |
| I thought it was easier than an on-campus course. | 5 | 2% |
| I was curious, wanted to try something new. | 1 | 0% |

Total responses to this question: 203

7. Please think about the reasons why you dropped this course. Comment on each factor below in explaining why you dropped this distance education course. Indicate if it was Very important or Somewhat important or Not important at all

| Item | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important at all | Total |
|---|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------|
| Directions to get started in and manage this course were poor. | 25.9% | 24.3% | 49.7% | 189 |
| Interaction with the instructor was lacking. | 24.3% | 21.2% | 54.5% | 189 |
| The course was too difficult. | 20.0% | 35.1% | 44.9% | 185 |
| I could not handle the combined study plus work responsibilities. | 26.3% | 25.8% | 47.8% | 186 |
| I had personal problems (family, health, job, childcare, etc). | 42.6% | 20.2% | 37.2% | 188 |
| I had financial problems. | 22.2% | 16.9% | 60.8% | 189 |
| I lacked motivation. | 17.0% | 21.8% | 61.2% | 188 |
| I lacked access to a computer. | 17.1% | 13.9% | 69.0% | 187 |
| I experienced too many technical difficulties. | 13.8% | 17.0% | 69.1% | 188 |
| I lacked basic computer skills. | 2.7% | 4.3% | 93.0% | 185 |
| The course required too much reading and writing. | 11.3% | 18.3% | 70.4% | 186 |
| I felt too alone, not a part of a class. | 13.5% | 17.3% | 69.2% | 185 |
| I got behind and it was hard to catch up. | 34.0% | 26.6% | 39.4% | 188 |
| I didn't realize when I registered that it was a distance education course. | 1.1% | 4.3% | 94.6% | 185 |
| I signed up for too many courses and had to cut down my course load. | 12.4% | 22.7% | 64.9% | 185 |

| Item | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important at all | Total |
|--|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------|
| I do not like the distance education format. | 13.9% | 15.5% | 70.6% | 187 |
| I didn't know where to go for help. | 12.3% | 19.8% | 67.9% | 187 |
| I was not interested in the subject matter. | 13.4% | 22.6% | 64.0% | 186 |

Total responses to this question: 195

8. Overall what do you feel was the main reason you were NOT able to successfully complete this distance education course? (Select only one.)

| Item | Count | Percent % |
|--|-------|-----------|
| I had personal problems (family, health, job, childcare, etc). | 39 | 21% |
| I got behind and it was hard to catch up. | 19 | 10% |
| I experienced too many technical difficulties. | 13 | 7% |
| None | 12 | 6% |
| The course was too difficult. | 12 | 6% |
| I could handle the combined study plus work responsibilities. | 11 | 6% |
| I had financial problems. | 11 | 6% |
| I signed up for too many courses and had to cut down my course load. | 11 | 6% |
| Interaction with the instructor was lacking. | 11 | 6% |
| Directions to get started in and manage this course were poor. | 10 | 5% |
| I lacked access to a computer. | 9 | 5% |
| I was not interested in the subject matter. | 9 | 5% |
| I lacked motivation. | 7 | 4% |
| I didn't know where to go for help. | 6 | 3% |
| The course required too much reading and writing. | 5 | 3% |
| I do not like the distance education format. | 3 | 2% |

Total responses to this question: 188

9. How likely are you to register for another online course?

| Item | Count | Percent % |
|-----------------|-------|-----------|
| Very likely | 133 | 68% |
| Somewhat likely | 22 | 11% |
| It's possible | 21 | 11% |
| Not likely | 15 | 8% |
| Not a chance | 6 | 3% |

Total responses to this question: 197

Appendix 1: If your most significant reason was NOT listed in the previous question, please describe it in the space below.

Q7. PLEASE THINK ABOUT THE REASONS WHY YOU DROPPED THIS COURSE.

Open Text Responses:

n/a

- 1) The times available on campus did not work with my work schedule. I also find it easier to get answers to any questions in a classroom. It depends on the class and how hard or easy it is. I have taken online classes before and like them as I could work at my own pace and time.
- 2) Working full time and going to school full time.
- 3) I am a mother of a toddler. My boyfriend works in the morning and I work at night.
- 4) Pretty much more convenient since I don't have to spend time going into class, plus I don't like being around people.
- 5) I thought I had wanted to be a Web Designer, but I don't want to be one.
- 6) I absolutely love the online course concept. The only reason I withdrew was health reasons and was unable to catch up with the homework tests.
- 7) I also thought it would be much easier to self-teach in a way and I thought there was more freedom with it. As in I could do the assignments whenever I wanted as long as it was by the end of the semester.
- 8) Single mom over time, works full-time, school part-time, son's activities part-time; online courses are very important.
- 9) I work a lot also I like the self paced classes I know my assignments and due dates and have time to do them
- 10) I couldn't find an appropriate class with the appropriate time frame to fit my schedule.
- 11) I live quite a distance away from the actual campus and taking distance courses helps to save time and money
- 12) Scheduling and potential ability to improve personal capabilities
- 13) I need a teacher and a classroom to stay on track
- 14) The class is always only available through online. I had a hard time understanding that needed to be done or how to work my way around the course since the teacher created the site herself. It was a lot different than the one the college provides teachers to go to (etudes) or any math lab I have encountered. All the other websites for online courses have been extremely easy for me to navigate around.
- 15) Personal reasons being my son is very young and I need to be home

Open Text Responses:

to raise him. I also suffer from occasional depression and anxiety which makes it very hard for me to be in a class setting.

16) The on campus class was either at a later time than I needed, or was not available on campus at all.

17) I could couldn't keep up with all my classes because I had work and some family problems

18) I was unable to take a test because the hours the test was I had to work and there was no make up and it messed up my grade in the class so I dropped and found it better to try for the class next semester in class

19) I tried a pre algebra course on line twice. Dropped both times. I need to be in class for this subject I know nothing about. Unfortunately, it's only offered day time at my location chose and I work during the day.

20) THE REASON WHY I TAKE ONLINE COURSES IS BECAUSE OF MEDICAL REASONS. I HAVE TO SAY THAT I DROPPED THE CLASSES BECAUSE I WAS OVERWHELMED WITH TOO MANY CLASSES.

21) I live far away and it was most convenient at the time.

22) I took the class because I could spend as much time on one topic as I needed and then move on to the next chapter vs. trying to keep up with class on campus

23) None.

24) None.

25) Was not available on campus i.e. only option

26) I live Pretty far from the campus.

27) family

28) I go to school in San Luis Obispo and Cuesta does not have very many online courses available.

29) It was the only way for me to fit the courses into my schedule based on the classes I was focusing on and the times available.

30) Military Spouse. We move too much.

31) Did not pick the right child development class and all other courses were full on campus

32) I can't afford the gas, and I thought the course would let me learn the material at my own pace, instead of being rushed in a class setting

Total responses to this question: 32

Appendix 2: If your most significant reason was NOT listed in the previous question, please describe it in the space below.

Q8. OVERALL WHAT DO YOU THINK WAS THE MAIN REASON YOU WERE NOT ABLE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THIS DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE.

Open Text Responses:

- 1) My screen reader was not working well with the web site
- 2) I did not have the material for the classes.
- 3) I did not decide to drop the class, one day after I had missed two assignments I tried logging in and the tab was not longer available. I thought that there was an error on the page, since it was my first time taking an online class till I checked with my counselor and said that I had a W. I believe my teacher dropped me for some assignments that I did not do but yet on the syllabus it said that if you fall behind to not try to catch up and just do the rest of the work, which I did. I e-mailed her and I never got a response back from her, and now this semester I am re-taking the course.
- 4) I had requested financial aid. didn't get approved. then didn't have the money to buy the book leading to me getting behind and had to drop the class. ironically this is the same reason I had to drop previous classes, because financial aid had not been approved timely in a previous semester. this then led to academic probation, now completely prohibiting me from getting financial aid. I had to buy books myself this year causing a significant burden to me. but at least I am enrolled and succeeding in this semester's online classes.
- 5) I forgot to take a test and it closed and I couldn't make it up, so no matter how well I did the rest of the course, I wouldn't be able to make up the ground I lost from missing the test.
- 6) I did not receive my financial aid check in time in order to purchase the book mandatory to complete the required reading and work.
- 7) Paying for College credits and paying for the significantly more expensive course materials for the distance learning course --which the companies ensure cannot be purchased used--proved too much for my budget to bear.
- 8) I dropped before the drop date to avoid a "W" on my transcript. I was advised by the teacher to give the class another chance so I was reenrolled. My assignments were not being graded, my work was turned in on time, and I wasn't getting any feedback from the teacher. When I finally received a response, the teacher told me my grade wouldn't be discussed until the end of the semester. I didn't want to wait until the end of the semester to find out I was failing the class with no chance of

recovery. So, I dropped the class a second time. When I asked the teacher to remove the "w" from my transcript she refused, even though reentering the class was her suggestion!

9) I changed my major and no longer needed that class.

10) Like I said before, I thought I would be doing all the assignments whenever I wanted and have more freedom. When I had trouble it was very difficult getting help over typing. They should set up something like Skype for a more classroom feel to it.

11) There was way too much reading and assignments to be done each week. I actually dropped this course within the first week and for some reason my transcript still says I received a W. I will be discussing that with a counselor.

12) The subject matter would've been better to learn in a class room setting.

13) Horrible instructor; did not care to teach, only cared to hand out grades. Very rude instructor.

14) I didn't really feel like completing the work and this caused me to nearly fail the course, so I withdrew.

15) I dropped the course because I want to get an A grade but I was getting B grade which was unacceptable for ADN program.

16) It was basically like " here is the course, do the work"

17) I have had success in the past with online classes, however I felt that this instructor had tests on too many chapters and was not specific enough, so I enrolled in the same course the following semester, but on campus

18) Submission times of exams and tasks were on EST instead of PST which caused automatic rejection of exams. I finally determined this from someone else who had taken online class. Question regarding this was not answered by instructor before I dropped class. I had already obtained all of the information available from class by purchasing and reading balance of textbook

19) I could not figure out the "thesis" for each short story, now taking the class @ the local college is working better for me.

20) I would have dropped the course before the W but I didn't realize it was a faster pace which meant the deadline date for the W was sooner than all my other classes. I also had problems signing in.

21) I was having some personal issues

22) My husband had surgery in the middle of the semester and I got far behind in my class so I had to drop.

when a test was given and I had to work between the hours it was up I was unable to make it in time to a computer for a test

23) Once I got past the technical difficulties, I made great progress, but I

didn't have enough time to bring my grade up. I was too far behind.

24) I thought I could teach myself. Didn't work either time I tried.

25) Teacher unorganized

26) I made it as far as I could thru the course but was unable to finish with a passing grade so I withdrew

27) I would like to detail my reason for dropping that class. Not only did this teacher require the three a week on three different days discussions, but she also required eight mini-ethnographies. A student is expected to meet eight different people from eight different races (e.g. Italian-American) somehow who are not from the same family and interview each of them about how they feel about various issues. She suggested living with them for 2 weeks. I am not a terribly social person (hence the online course) and I found these assignments to be far too demanding. I also felt it would be kind of insulting to insinuate to someone that they're different because they're Italian-American or something. It seems kind of ignorant. There were A LOT more involved assignments that I won't bore you with the details with. Okay a little bit: Find a real Greek person at the Greek festival and interview them. If there's dancing, you must dance. This was for extra credit, so you can see how much that was never going to happen.

28) My parents were in a financial situation so I had to drop the class and find a job to help them out.

29) Teacher was rude and inconsiderate.

30) The instructor was unfair in his grading.

31) I could not do one assignment that was worth the most points

32) During the semester my computer broke and I did not have the finances to repair it. I lacked the transportation to the campus site to use the computer lab.

33) Being as it was a "conceptual" chemistry class, I needed to be in a classroom setting once we got into the actual CHEMISTRY part of it. The subject matter wasn't terribly hard, but I think I needed to be in a classroom with a teacher to fully understand it.

34) I was working full time and didn't have the time for all the reading.

35) I lost my job and couldn't afford to pay my internet bill.

36) I was admitted to the VA Hospital for personal problems for 2 weeks and when I was discharged the instructor did not allow me to log back in... or to catch up

37) No computer access

38) Did not withdraw, instructor gave me W but I was expecting to fail class due to miss worked

39) I had difficulty signing in because it needed a code from the book and one our instructor emailed us I tried logging in with only the instructors

code then went back to finish the enrollment with the book code and I lost the instructors code...too hard to get in and catch up

40) It was a math class with an online "filmed" teacher, who tried to be entertaining, but was just irritating.

41) Couldn't stand the guy. Spent too much time telling bad jokes, and not enough time breaking down the solutions to the problems.

42) The Managerial Accounting course I was taking was too much to handle while commuting to a stressful job, working in excess of 40 hrs. per week, and trying to juggle a husband and family. Something had to give, so it was the course that I dropped. However, I do plan to return to school now that I have changed jobs and simplified my life somewhat.

Total responses to this question: 42

Appendix 3: What advice would you give to students who are considering registering for a distance education course?

Open Text Responses:

- 1) It's a fun and exciting way to see how self paced and responsible you are.
- 2) Be prepared to have a lot of work. I found that online classes generally require a lot of reading. I took a course online because I work full time and thought that taking at least one online course would help my schedule, but it seems like it required the most work.
- 3) Make sure your computer and software is up to the task first
- 4) Don't take a course where you are not interested in the subject, or a course where you have a hard time with the subject
- 5) It is a great asset to education and recommend it highly.
- 6) Log in everyday and keep on top of your email for extra information.
- 7) Make sure you are very focused and positive with the decision you're making because distance education is more independent study.
- 8) You need to be able to work on your own as it is up to you to remind yourself when homework is due.
- 9) In order to be productive and successful you need to be disciplined and structured. Also need to make time everyday to take care of school work
- 10) Make time and read all the material presented. I even print most of the parts and put them in a folder by chapter so I can reference the material. Back tracking on the quizzes and tests will log off the program. Keep up and if possible stay a week ahead.
- 11) Make sure to get everything done early.
- 12) I would say, that some online classes are not complicated if you are knowing what to do. Online classes give you the time to run errands and do house work.
- 13) Be organized.
- 14) Make sure you log on everyday and know where to go for help
- 15) To always stay on top of the agenda given by the instructor
- 16) Get financial aid in order prior to attempting any class, including online.
- 17) Just because it's an online class, don't think that you can over schedule yourself. In other words keep in mind that you will need study time.
- 18) Check ratemyprofessor.com for feedback from previous students regarding the online class and instructor.
- 19) make sure that you have a good internet connection and it is working

Open Text Responses:

properly.

20) Don't forget to check when your assignments and tests are due. Write it out somewhere so you know when to get your stuff done by.

21) I suggest taking regular classes, with professors right at your fingertips. It's much easier to learn if it is demonstrated in front of you.

22) Do not fall behind.

23) They need to be self motivated and know what to do and when to do it, online classes are super easy if one likes to work by themselves with no interruptions from classmates, but they do have deadlines just like on campus classes.

24) It is a bit harder to keep yourself motivated but if you have a busy life schedule online courses provide a great way to be able to do it on your own time. I do my work very late at night on the weekends

25) Make sure it is a course you would be interested in and you are willing to learn on your own basically.

26) Research it first. Explore the site. Ask someone who has taken online classes before to help you. Assignments test and lectures are imbedded all over the site, FIND THEM ALL!!

27) Make sure to have purchased the required book by the first week.

28) Email the teacher--several weeks beforehand to ensure a response from people unaccustomed to helping students--to find out what materials are needed.

29) To make sure they have enough time to always stay up to date with the online class.

30) Online courses require a lot of time management and focus as well as discipline.

31) Go to ratemyprofessor.com and take the advice of others.

32) Stay on top of your work, set aside time each week to log in. Don't wait until the last minute to do your assignments. Have a back up computer that you can use.

33) To remember that even though it's an online class doesn't mean the work is any easier. You still should schedule time a couple times a week so you don't get behind on your work.

34) You have to be very self-motivated and have someone in mind that could help you with the subject if you needed it because getting help over email and such is pretty difficult.

35) Study and do work just like an on campus course, if not more.

36) It is not any easier than an on campus course. Have a good amount of time set aside.

37) Make sure that the topic being covered is one in which you feel comfortable learning on your own,

Open Text Responses:

- 38) Do not wait till near the end of the semester to start your assignments.
- 39) have self motivation
- 40) If you have a busy schedule online courses are great. That is if the course does not have really specific due dates that don't match up with your schedule, which may make it difficult.
- 41) Make sure you have the initiative to do the work by your own time frame and not get behind.
- 42) You have to be very self motivated. Get a calendar and write down all your due dates for everything so you can remember
- 43) Stay on task. Don't wait til the last minute to finish all assignments.
- 44) Make sure you find out if the teacher is good or not and if they are easily accessible for help if you need it.
- 45) Make sure you are comfortable with the subject matter in the course as a distance education course.
- 46) Participate in the class but if you do not feel that you will do well, drop before the W date.
- 47) Buckle down and actually do the work before you get distracted. Whatever you do, DON'T put off working on it for a calculated amount of time or sections each week. If you have a crisis, or you simply forget, then put up post-it notes or big pieces of paper where you KNOW you will see them if you don't use a planner.
- 48) allocate more time to read and study materials than you would in an on campus course
- 49) It is convenient.
- 50) Take only subjects that you are VERY confident with!!!!
- 51) Prioritize
- 52) I would tell them that Online Classes are good if you are self-motivated and enjoy learning on your own.
- 53) It's not any easier than an on-campus class...in fact it's more difficult.
- 54) I do not have any
- 55) Make sure that your access to a computer is always there. Make sure you have time for the classes and try to do work before due.
- 56) Realize that cutoff times are 9:00 pm instead of midnight if they live in PST
- 57) Schedule time, make an appt for yourself to do the class work online.
- 58) My advice is to only take an online course if absolutely necessary. They are easy to get behind in and it seems there is much more work than in a regular class.

Open Text Responses:

- 59) Make sure that you do the homework right away and do not get behind
- 60) If it's a repeat course, or a challenging subject you might want to take it with a real person, not via the computer.
- 61) take the real class
- 62) Don't do it. It's not worth it.
- 63) To make sure you drop ASAP when you realize the format is too difficult to understand.
- 64) Prepare to buckle down, and pace yourself. Give at least 1 hr from your day for studying and book work.
- 65) It is harder than on campus classes and you have to be very disciplined and allow yourself quiet study time almost every day. I would also say don't get too far behind because it is almost impossible to catch up.
- 66) Ask questions about it first, some classes don't have study groups or tutoring to help you learn what to do.
- 67) Do not take a distance education course if you are not disciplined enough to monitor yourself.
- 68) Not to get behind on the work because I got really sick and then I was unable to catch up, and felt really overwhelmed, but I was not behind until I got ill
- 69) To be very self motivated and have a time schedule to dedicate that time to the course.
- 70) Don't unless you have to. The teachers just put everything they want you to do up, and don't really explain anything, or help you with anything. Only take these classes if you already know everything they're going to "teach" you.
- 71) Access to a computer every day is very important
- 72) Make sure your schedule fits it
- 73) You must have discipline and have motivation to work independently.
- 74) To research about the instructor before taking his or her online course. Because some are plain mean.
- 75) Self motivation is very important. Financial Aid is also very important. Be sure to be 100% dedicated and ready for class.
- 76) It is so much easier to put off an assignment when it is on-line. Keep up with the class and meet with the teacher as soon as any questions pop up. Don't fall behind.
- 77) If you have some prior training in subject go ahead and try it. If you have had no skills take the in class course.
- 78) I would let them know that discipline is needed when taking on-line courses because no one will remind you when tests or homework are

Open Text Responses:

due.

79) Remember to buy your book on time, and read them

80) Be prepared to experience self-learning without an instructor teaching you (i.e. readings, assignments, etc. all without a person giving examples or interacting with feedback).

81) Don't wait till the last minute, or you will get behind

82) I have no advice some people can do it some people can't

83) Make sure to have a lot of discipline.

84) Must be determined and self motivated

85) Make sure you know exactly how you will work it out with your work schedule.

86) Check out the instructors before you sign up for one of their classes. There are plenty of websites that let you grade your professor. Make sure you get an instructor who actually participates in the class and doesn't just give you things to read and expect you to understand. Online courses are inherently time consuming, so just because a review says the class is hard or has a lot of work, doesn't mean the instructor is bad. You can also tell within the first 3 - 4 weeks if the instructor is going to be involved in the class. If they aren't drop it. It isn't worth the frustration.

87) Stay on top of your work.

88) DO NOT do this your first semester -- its too hard in the beginning

89) CHECK OUT THE COURSE AND WHAT IT IS THAT YOU ARE ACTUALLY HAVING TO DO FOR THE COURSE TO SEE IF THIS IS WHAT TYPE OF COURSE YOU ARE LOOKING FOR.

90) It is very easy to get behind, work at a steady pace.

91) Do not take any mathematics courses online if it is not a strong subject. The lack of an instructor, combined with the requirement for exact answers inputted into the system make it timely, redundant, and even harder than usual. If math is already hard, this will make it a nightmare.

92) Make sure you are 100% sure you will set aside enough time to study. It seems to be more time consuming. 93) Manage your time wisely.

94) To keep up to date with your assignments.

95) Be sure to make your own syllabus that makes sense to you if there is not an adequate syllabus provided by the instructor. It is very easy to forget to turn in assignments if you don't have a hard copy of an easily understood syllabus to view.

96) I would advise them to be dedicated and never be afraid to ask for help.

97) Become familiar with the class format before class begins. I would

Open Text Responses:

not advise distance ed. courses for hands-on type classes such as computer applications.

98) Things happen. Make sure you always have a backup plan or two when your courses are online.

99) Don't hesitate to ask question...participate in the class discussions...read the materials...go in the chat room often and don't get behind on the assignment.

100) Enroll in the one you know you need to take in order to move further in your education.

101) It is nice to take the online course if you already know how to use computer.

102) Ask other students and check instructor rating websites, choose the teachers and the courses according to your job/course schedule and don't think online classes are comparable or easier than in campus classes, sometimes they are far more harder than needed.

103) Make sure that you have enough time on your hands for a distance education course because even though it is not on campus, you still have to put the same or even more amount of effort and dedication as any other campus class.

104) make sure you have good childcare if you have a child and make sure you plan your time correctly.

105) Have Self Discipline

106) Make sure to keep up with the course work. Don't think that just because it's on-line, it's ok to not do the reading that day. It's much harder to catch up with an on-line course than it is on-campus.

107) The time is perfect

108) Don't do it unless you have to. It is self taught.

109) Check it out before you register and really really get a step ahead

110) Set time aside to read and study material on a daily basis.

111) Just to know that just because you don't have a teacher in front of you doesn't mean that the class is going to be easy. And make sure you leave enough time to take the class.

112) Keep in mind you have to keep a regular study schedule, just like you were in a class on campus.

113) Be very able to work without much help

114) Don't get behind. Log on daily to see what assignments are available and due

115) Log in on the first day of class and get acclimated to the online environment.

116) Don't overload yourself with too many online classes.

117) You have to be very motivated and disciplined to be able to set up a

Open Text Responses:

time and place to do your work on your own

118) Ask for help if you don't understand something.

119) keep up with the time line/schedule

120) Keep on the ball--don't fall behind in assignments!

121) Be careful

122) I would not advise them not to take the course if they lacked motivation. I would advise them to set aside a certain time to do the class.

123) Very time consuming, your just teaching yourself so it's hard to understand.

124) Have a balanced schedule from free time and working time.

125) Don't let their assignments get behind and keep up with the reading assignments

126) These online classes are great when you are not able to get to school and more convenient at home when you have a family and trouble.

127) Make sure you have a back up plan in case of computer glitches, etc. NEVER wait until the last day, because if something happens you can drop a whole letter grade, sometimes two.

128) Maintain access to a laptop computer first

129) Take it more seriously than an on campus class. utilize the instructors' time to answer all questions you have.

130) It's a great course don't give up.

to make sure they know what they are getting into

131) You need to treat it as a class. You can plan when and what time to do your work, but make sure you plan the time and treat it as a campus class.

132) Only enroll in online courses that require specific and straight to the point answers (such as a math course). 133) Do not enroll in such courses as English and science.

134) Stay focused.

135) Don't take an algebra class online unless you already know it, and don't take an accelerated algebra class, ever!

136) Make sure they know exactly how the site works and maybe talk to a counselor or the instructor so they know exactly what is expected.

137) Make sure you can handle the subject and work load. It is not easy

138) Make sure that you are a self starter and can do the work on time w/o having to be reminded.

139) It's a good idea for a course that isn't necessarily part of your major but required to graduate. Any history class, philosophy, or sociology class

Open Text Responses:

would be good for a distance learning class, but technical classes are tough!

140) It requires most of your time. I work full time and pay for all of my finances including school. So just take one class online at a time. It is extremely challenging. Especially a math class.

141) make time for it and don't stay behind on your readings.

142) You need to have self discipline, because it gets to easy to forget about or put off an internet course.

143) print out syllabus and timeline before starting class, so that you have access to what is due and when it is due...

144) At least give it a try maybe it will work for them better than being in class.

145) Make sure you know the instructor. Make sure you've met them in person and you like the teacher to your standard so that in the future they can help you out if something goes wrong online.

146) That just because it is sometimes self paced you can still get behind if you don't have discipline.

147) where to go online at home

148) try to take an introduction to online courses class before signing up for one.

149) Great if you work ten hours a day and cannot attend on campus.

150) Do your homework.

151) Be able to manage your time well so you do not forget when homework is due and have time to go through all the literature online...you have to be a self starter

152) Talk to a counselor. Do not overload yourself with several online courses.

153) Do not do it unless you have to.

154) If you are someone who likes to work at their own pace, these types of classes are great. However, you can Not procrastinate with these classes and must be on top of deadlines.

155) Be sure to find a way to communicate with the instructor if you are still interested in taking the course but had challenges come up that restricted you from participating actively.

156) My advice would be that, taking an online class is convenient and much more manageable. Yes you can work at your own pace, it depends on what class you are taking, some instructors have a time frame for assignments, and last it is not easy.

157) Just stay focused on what you need to do in order to succeed.

158) Make sure you are a self starter and motivated

159) If you're down for it and your mind is set you can do it!

Open Text Responses:

- 160) Must be self-motivated and able to access the internet for the duration of the course.
- 161) Do not think it is an easy way out.
- 162) Read the course description and see if you even need that course.
- 163) be prepared to pace yourself!
- 164) Take the online class that you have interest in.
- 165) Only do it in a field you are good at. Check out the teacher first.
- 166) Make sure you have time and have access to a good computer.
- 167) Think about the kind of course it is, and if classroom discussion would be important to you first.
- 168) It is great if you stay on top of deadlines and don't fall behind. Too hard to catch up if the teacher will not allow late work.
- 169) I really enjoyed doing course work any time, day or NIGHT, on my time. With my crazy schedule it was ideal. You still have to meet assignment due dates, but you could also move ahead to the next section once you have completed the current assigned section. It was a good experience & highly recommend it.
- 170) I would suggest to only take a distance education course if you have self-discipline. You must also have good time management because you will have due dates all the time and if you miss turning something in then you receive a zero. However, if you can handle taking a course like this they are very rewarding.
- 171) They're good and easier
- 172) On-line education is great! I decided to take a "W" in my most recent course when I realized I didn't have the time or energy to devote to the class and earn a high grade. I wasn't willing to settle for a "C" grade, so I withdrew and will sign up for the course again next term when I have more time to focus. On-line learning is harder than taking a regular class, but the fact that you complete your studying and homework around your own schedule is well worth the extra studying you have to do to grasp the subject matter.
- 173) Be disciplined and check your email regularly, don't forget to check your assignment, reading, quiz due dates
- 174) Very convenient, but make sure you reserve time for it otherwise you will be wasting your time. Also, ask, ask, ask questions if you do not understand. The best part about taking an online course is that there are many other students you can ask questions to instead of a few that you may get to know in the actual classroom.
- 175) Be prepare in advance with all we need for the class. In my case my computer broke for a couple weeks, and I wasn't able to catch the class.

Total responses to this question: 175

Appendix 4: What advice would you give to the college to improve distance education courses?

Open Text Responses:

- 1) No advice...I love it all. It's convenient and a great way to get education and work (supporting family) at the same time.
- 2) Well, I think most people take online courses because they think it is more convenient. I found that it was actually more work to do an online class. It seems as though online courses fail to realize that some people do not have the time to sit and read 4 chapters that are 20+ pages long each, in 1 week. I tried a few online courses but dropped all of them because it was the same scenario. I was not only taking just the one online class, I was also taking classes at the campus which ALSO requires homework and such. So since the online course took up a lot of time, I chose the classes on campus rather than the internet course which kind of defeats the purpose because it then became more of an inconvenience.
- 3) Make all students computers that want in pass a minimal test before they can take and that dsps must be on line first
- 4) Great Job!
- 5) Sometimes it is difficult to get a response from the instructors, this could use some improvement
- 6) Reread every lecture and make sure you understand it carefully. Make sure all the work is completed and especially past most of the exam because most online courses, the exam is one of the key that would knock your grade down.
- 7) The cost is too high! For registration, the book, and online for one class cost me \$280.00. Not all of us are able to get government help!
- 8) Sometimes the teachers are not as involved in the activities or in the responses to questions regarding their course work
- 9) I like the online course with (1) 3 hour day at the school with the instructor. I think this would be a great motivator for the students. Can you imagine 100 students at a time? It would be great to get to ask questions in person.
- 10) I would give more time on the test and work.
- 11) Have the teacher give more work and less reading.
- 12) Allow some classes, such as math, at a go-at-your-own pace. It gives the student time to get help and fully understand what they are being taught.
- 13) Be more clear and communicative.
- 14) None, but I have lots of suggestions for the financial aid department.

Open Text Responses:

15) Clear directions on how to handle a situation where the teacher sends out notices/private e-mails to the students that he/she is too tired to do their job properly.

16) I think that they are a good thing it makes taking more classes easier.

17) A better way of alerting the students when tests are due, and maybe even when each assignment is due. My biggest problem was accidentally missing out on things because I forgot it was due.

18) On the first day of class, please have your syllabi ready, and some students may not have their books yet, so assign work one to two weeks after the start date. Also, the chapter outlines is a must, so that the students may know what is on the midterm and final.

19) That all instructors should have the same requirements, it would be easier if the coursework and class requirements were consistent among all instructors.

20) Delta college is doing a great job on the distance education courses, all the platforms are super easy to understand and all the instructors are very helpful, I had taken more than 9 online classes and have been successful in almost all of them, I don't know what I would do if they didn't offer online courses.

21) The use of etudes. I have classes on blackboard and course compass etudes is much easier for someone who may not be computer savvy and most older returning students can navigate it easier

22) I just wished that there was some way where the teacher instead of only answering our emails to also have like lecture notes or something so we know the basic outline on what we have to read or do.

23) work on the site format, make it easier to understand.

24) Be flexible with time when it comes to students who rely on financial aid for books.

25) Other courses that have fees associated with them list those fees in the campus catalog. It seems a simple matter to list the cost of materials alongside other course information in the online and print college catalog. The College also needs to encourage teachers to use online learning programs with lower costs, like Etudes. It seems as if students are forced into paying the college for a teacher that has little to do with the course itself and then pay even more to a private distance learning company that actually manages the course. While this is obviously a boon to distance learning companies and teachers who'd rather not put in the work, it is extremely detrimental to the students, especially community college students who are already far more likely to be economically disadvantaged. Teachers can also be encouraged to offer hybrid courses, which have lower associated costs than many current online-only

Open Text Responses:

courses. Colleges also need to ensure that if instructors are being compensated for work, they have an active role in the course. There are some online math courses, for instance, in which the instructors appear to have NOTHING to do with the administration or grading of coursework. Rather, all assignments and tests are submitted to the online program for grading, leaving the instructor to fill the role of a forwarding service for tech-support. An enviable job, perhaps, but hardly the one that taxpayers believe they are paying for. The classroom of the future, indeed.

26) I hope they learn to better explain what it is exactly they want us to do or read or even be ready for.

27) Nothing, the courses are great!

28) Clarity is the key!... If you (the Teacher) don't care about us (the students), make the assignments clear. Grade the assignments. Don't make up your own rules (Put assignments in the tab that says "Assignments")! And finally, don't suggest a student give your class a second chance if you aren't going to fix the reason they previously left your class. The whole purpose is to avoid "W's" and avoid retaking the class.

29) Overall I have been very satisfied with the classes I have taken online. Thanks!

30) To not overload on assignments and have the due dates all landing the last day of class. I had a class where we had a homework assignment (which was very time consuming) every week and every assignment wasn't due until the last day of the semester which led me to be incredibly behind. A nice steady due date for each assignment would be great.

31) Have way more freedom with every course because that's usually the reason people take these courses. Also have something like Skype to create more of a classroom.

32) Be sure that classes are interesting and instructors are interesting.

33) It is of very important that the instructor teaches what is in the syllabus, and orders the right books. The reason of my W is that the class was supposed to be about VB Net, and the teacher ordered the books for Java programming, in essence teaching us about Java, and not about VB net like we were supposed to. This set me back a year, as I have to retake the class, and also, I'm out the tuition money, as well as books that I didn't use, or need!

34) Have more chances for the student to get caught up if they fall behind.

35) Some instructors use really good programs and others use horrible ones. Also some instructors really just require too much reading and assignments due in one week. They assume it is our ONLY class that

Open Text Responses:

semester. Which for me, it was one class out of six.

36) I would make sure that there is someone on campus to go to in case you get stuck.

37) Make an assignment due in a week or so because having too much time in between won't make the students do their work online.

38) Check the way these teachers are handling the course to see if they are doing everything they can to help students. Look at their reviews on ratemyprofessors.com to see what other students think of them because most of the time they are right.

39) I found no problems with the distance education course.

40) Better instructors! When numerous people drop the same class every semester, it should be a sign that an instructor is not doing his or her job.

41) Make an online course available in a flexible schedule and an inflexible schedule.

provide a list and description of the online platform with the course information online and in the course catalog

42) I would like to have good communication instructors so no one feel behind or left alone.

43) More instruction, better interactions, and a better way to familiarize the work and assignments.

44) Make sure that the instructor is narrowing down the chapters rather than have so many, in order for the student to be able to retain the information

45) It was very time consuming, more than an on campus course.

46) not to make it complicated

47) Make the student have a computer. Get back to the student when they write you an email asking for help

48) Change cutoff times

49) have more courses available online for those that have full time jobs but still want the opportunity to further their college education.

50) The platforms are sometimes confusing and the instructors should be more available and more willing to help, after all they are instructors

51) dissolve the program

52) Make it easier so students can do it. Have an online tutoring system.

53) Don't let the teachers create their own web page unless it was well done and also require the class to have a face to face, especially if it is mandatory for a certificate.

54) Have better directions before the online class starts. prepare the students better for how the online course works

Open Text Responses:

- 55) I really don't have any advice for the school.
- 56) Supply students with an introduction to online work. I felt lost working online and there was nowhere to go for help.
- 57) Give us more!
- 58) Well I was going to say have more Mac compatible programs to go with these classes but you have already done that, also for people with disabilities to have extra time added to do the work, I have a disability and therefore have a hard time with my education. Otherwise I would have already been done with delta
- 59) Probably to have workshops were they teach how to use the system for those persons or students that don't know how.
- 60) Reduce or cap the amount of questions teachers put on their online tests and quizzes. I can't stare at my computer answering 200 question tests for too long before I start checking answers randomly because my eyes start to hurt. I would also like it if all of the homework and tests were posted and accessible at the beginning of the semester so I could do it all in advance instead of having to keep checking the website to see if there's anything new. I think a minimum amount of time for any assignment should be set. For instance, I don't check the website everyday; so if a teacher posts something one day and has it due the next day, I won't even see it. I think at least a week or two would be great. Also if a majority of the other students in a given online class don't complete all of the assignments, some of the assignments should be cut and not count against anyone's grade.
- 61) Access to forms and assistance from the instructor be easier
- 62) Take away timed quizzes because some of us have to work
- 63) Everything is well planned already.
- 64) Know more about the lecturers taking these courses, because they might be going through something in their life, and paying the student back for their frustration in life...which affects the students educationally.
- 65) Please hire better instructors
- 66) I feel this is the ability of the student. School and on line course offered many resources for help.
- 67) I have to say that I like using ETUDES. I have tried taking classes using the other system that Delta College uses and it is very difficult to use.
- 68) Offer more courses, similar to the ones offered in school
- 69) For certain classes it might benefit students if instructors would post some videos of their lectures on all lessons if not only the most difficult sections. For example, they could record themselves in a regular class on campus (if applicable) and post that video daily on the course website or

Open Text Responses:

even a you tube account.

70) Instructor involvement needs improvement. When I tried to ask a question I was just sent the answer to the problem not explained how he got there I could have easily passed the course but I would have had zero understanding

71) Nothing really

72) Do not make the whole course based off reading the text book. It's proven that very few students can learn that way and it's really tedious to read chapters on +concepts you don't understand nor care to read.

73) Make sure teachers are willing to help students via email or phone calls. Teachers must inform students what the course entails in some detail. It cannot be revealed the week a big assignment is due!

74) Primarily, have performance reviews on the instructors or someone we can go to when the instructor isn't living up to their part of the bargain (i.e., giving further explanation when we don't understand). When you take an online class and ask the instructor a question, and the only response you receive in return is "Well, didn't you read the lecture? Read the lecture" or something else equally unhelpful, it only leads to frustration, failing, and dropping classes. We don't have time to fight with instructors who don't want to do their job and actually teach.

75) Get everyone together on one website for which to host the classes.

76) It would be easier if they had open time for tests taking and assignment work because part of the reason for online course would be the free leverage of getting it done when you have time.

77) More online articles

78) The program itself only allows for specific, exact answers with no room for any typographical error. Even if a correct answer is entered, if the computer system does not have the ability to discern slight errors such as a missing comma, nor does it give partial credit for correct answers with only slight typographical errors as an instructor would. This makes it extremely redundant and timely. A typical homework assignment given in a classroom setting takes me 1 1/2-2 hours, online due to the system itself it takes literally six hours. The time involved makes having a life outside of class impossible....and as a single mother of two, it was simply not an option to continue.

79) None. I think it depends on the person taking the course.

80) I have taken several distant learning course and like the ETUDES website

81) I think it's important for teachers to understand how to change online classes in a way which is conducive to teaching the class. Some teachers will make discussions due each week with responses required on at least

Open Text Responses:

3 different days, which is really unnecessary and a bit excessive in my opinion, especially because many people take online classes because they don't have a lot of time. The syllabus is also a VERY important item for the teachers to provide the students with in the very start of the semester. There should be an easily printable checklist with basic assignment names and due dates, as well as a longer syllabus which details the assignment requirements and may also be printed out separately, if the student chooses to do so.

82) I would improve communication with online students when changes are made to their professors. I had since registered for Eng 1a with professor XXXX and purchased my materials but a few days before the semester started my professor was switched and I needed to return and purchase new materials. Also, the professor I was "assigned" to professor XXXX was not an acceptable replacement for my learning style, so I have since dropped that class (I waitlisted for another professor but did not get a response), so I will try again next semester.

83) Don't expect that the students will fully understand the tasks and objectives by themselves, please be thorough.

84) To make the instructors more aware of the (technical) difficulties that may arise. To make sure that instructors are able to communicate well with people when not in a face-to-face environment.

85) no comments

86) Sometimes directions give the students hard time.

87) If it's not a science or transferable course please give us more time or at least the freedom to do the HWs at our own pace, I am repeating the same course with another instructor and I had also a month to do the HWs and assignments!!! Last semester we had less than a week and so much workload!

88) Assist students in training for online classes rather than the sink or swim method.

89) Have the teachers write a syllabus that gives good amount of information of what to expect in class. There are some teachers who are very bad at replying back to e-mails, and it should become mandatory for them to at least check their e-mails or messages at the end of the day.

90) everything is fine with those courses

91) Don't offer then for core classes.

92) better online help, someone to instantly talk to online to walk you through it

93) Maybe not to be too technical to someone who is not majoring in their profession.

94) Make it easier to get a hold of teacher for help, and also other

Open Text Responses:

students for help.

95) be more helpful

96) For statistics; lengthen the time on tests. although they are multiple choice you still have to work the problems out and that takes time.

97) Please don't give your students too much reading and writing homework. I think some teachers forget that the main reason why students choose to do online class because of time management due to work and kids. Just because students are doing online classes doesn't mean they have a lot of time to waste.

98) encourage the professors to interact with their students more

99) have the instructors be as informational as possible

100) better instructors

101) better knowledge through the online course.

102) That the distance education courses are for working people and for stay home mom's and dad's who has children who cannot afford to get childcare

103) Nothing much just does a great job.

104) Allow make up if glitch is their fault, particularly if it continues for several days

105) I very much enjoyed the distance education it helped me I am a single mom with no additional income (other than my job) I have already re enrolled in courses. the prices of books and teacher syllabus should be accessible at least 1 week prior to class beginning

106) take time to yourself and relax

107) to better the instructions and processes from one step of a problem to another

108) Instructors should be closely supervised. Online teachers sometimes have too much freedom and they may not be there for students.

109) be more self explanatory with what to do and how to go about it.

110) Allow for some kind of discussion back and forth, my teacher did not seem to want to correspond and I did have some questions about how to accomplish problems. The lab at Delta was not readily available to me due to the distance and my work schedule.

111) If anymore interaction is possible, I think that would benefit the students and motivate them a bit more

112) There does not need to be improvement I was just the teacher.

113) I've learned that it really depends on the teacher and how organized they are. If the teacher isn't organized, I don't see how they can expect you to be.

114) Allow more time on hw and don't assign so much hw, I'm taking a math class now and at times when I see that I have 100 questions for

Open Text Responses:

one assignment it get me very stressed out. I know it's important to learn the information but I don't think over working someone is appropriate or necessary. Most people take more than one class and that is always my case and it's just hard when I have to work to support myself and also want to become an educated individual.

115) pretty much nothing as far as I'm concern.

116) have more interaction between teachers and students, like monthly chats at a certain time or personal file checks if student looks to be having a hard time... have instructors available in person

117) have better direction for those of us that are not computer literate as others.

118) Try to combine like rules and regulations and put them in simplest terms. Just like most teachers do in class, I think it would be okay to be as lenient online as they are on campus. Not all students have the choice to take online classes and as a last resort you should be able to help them AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE in order for them to succeed.

119) Make more classes available.

120) face to face with cameras optional

121) require that an introduction to online courses class be completed before registering for an online course of any academic subject.

122) Just provide more classes if possible??

123) Our instructor had weekly discussion online, but he just wanted all encompassing question based on the text answered and spelled out what words and phrases ahead of time. The instructor had this idea that we had to work on the course every day (compared when something was due the next day) and I think he 'mistakenly' locked students out of discussions on purpose.

124) I wish they would stick to one online website and or not have so many codes needed for students to sign on to a class with.

125) Pace, pace, pace..... as long as you pace yourself, you will succeed.

126) More interaction with teachers more activities less test concentration.

127) These classes are great and definitely prove many solutions to problems that many students encounter with having to attend an on campus class. I think there can be more interaction between the instructor and the student. For example, a designated time slot where the teacher will be online to answer questions for 1.5 hour a day.

128) Attempt more communication with any students by phone or mail just in case they are still interested in continuing the course but had some issues/difficulties.

Open Text Responses:

- 129) Fix websites they have way too many technical difficulties
- 130) Offer more online opportunities for each course as they tend to fill very quickly.
- 131) Understand that some work loads are a little heavy. Almost too advanced to understand.
- 132) e-mail links like my new online professor does in order to let you get the help you need.
- 133) I think it works well so far with most of my classes!
- 134) If you can't study at home go somewhere that offers free wi-fi for your laptop.
- 135) Only employ teachers who live locally and can be on campus. I took a speech class from a teacher in Maine, and had to record and mail my speeches. Technical problems took my A to a C. If she'd been on campus, I could have delivered my speeches in person.
- 136) have more options
- 137) Offering more courses with more teachers would improve the distance education courses.
- 138) No sure...will have to think about it.
- 139) To take the exam right after you have finished a section early, instead of waiting until the assigned exam date. Could you set up "chapter exams" to where you can be locked out from trying again if your grade/score was 85% - 100%. AND allow 1 retake if the score is below the 85%???? It was sometimes frustrating because I wanted to move on, but I didn't want to forget what was fresh in my mind because I still had to wait 3-7 days before taking the chapter exam (i.e. Math course I had completed previously). Thanks.
- 140) I do not have any advice to give to the college because I have been very satisfied with the distance education courses that I have taken. In fact some of my favorite courses were distance education courses.
- 141) More choices each semester.
- 142) I tended to do my homework and tests late at night close to the instructor's deadline, along with several other students, as that is what my schedule allowed. However, this seemed to be the time that I experienced the most trouble with the website. I would suggest not doing maintenance during this time.
- 143) Offer more distance learning. Make the textbooks/access more cheap not more expensive. Be more flexible about the pace of the class.
- 144) Provide more tutorial material if the course is based on the majority of reading for understanding. I think the best thing is to also provide software for the class that may include tutorials.
- 145) In my case the Math 82 needs the full semester not only late-start

Open Text Responses:

class, because the class is going very fast for my and some assignments are too long.

Total responses to this question: 145