UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF A QUALITY ONLINE COURSE: ONLINE EXPERIENCE VERSUS NO ONLINE EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

This research study explored students’ perspectives about the quality of online courses using the Quality Matters Standards (Nath & Ralston-Berg, 2008) to apply the quality standards for online course design. The study examined if there was a difference in perceptions of quality between students who have had experience with an online course with students who have not had an online course. The participants were undergraduate students at a Midwestern Urban University located in the northeastern region of Ohio. The study took place in the Fall 2010. There were 135 participants. Of those 135, 128 had a valid response yielding a response rate of 94.8%. Seven did not respond. The study utilized a questionnaire developed by the researcher with 27 Likert questions, 7 demographic questions, and two questions being open-ended. The findings indicated that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of the quality pertaining to online courses between students who have had an online course with those students who have not had an online course. Students who have taken an online course had lower perceptions (mean scores) than students who have never had an online course. This was consistent among all variables examined: gender, age, ethnicity, working over 30 hours a week, credit hours enrolled, and GPA.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

“The first distance education program was started in the United States in the 1800s when the postal system delivered teaching texts and lessons to rural learners for them to acquire skills because institutions were too far away” (McGorry, 2003, p. 159). This shows that distance education is neither a recent nor new concept, although the development and adoption of refined communication technologies often creates that impression. In the past, distance education has been implemented by means such as correspondence or video transmission, but now it is often conducted via the Internet. The internet-based courses are one pedagogical approach within the field of distance education (McGorry, 2003). Moore defined distance education to be “learning that normally occurs in a different place from teaching and as a result requires special techniques of course design, special instructional techniques, special methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as special organizational and administrative arrangements” (as cited in Carabaneanu, Mierlus, Mazilu, & Nistorescu, 2006, p. 61).

Online education continues to be increasingly used in higher education, making it more likely that online courses are available throughout many colleges and universities. The first fully online degree was approved June of 2010 for the university used in this
study with 229 courses currently available online at the undergraduate level. “The traditional higher education classroom has moved from a face-to-face environment to one that is integrated, blended, or even replaced by total online interaction” (Craig, Goold, Coldwell, & Mustard, 2008, p. 205). Online courses are those in which at least 80% of the course content is delivered online (Allen & Seaman, 2010). Face-to-face instruction includes courses in which zero to 29% of the content is delivered online, and blended or hybrid instruction refers to 30-80% of the course content delivered online (Allen & Seaman, 2010).

In the Fall of 2008, over 4.6 million U.S. students were taking at least one online course which is a difference from 2002 where only 1.6 million students were taking at least one online course (Allen & Seaman, 2010). It is a 17% increase over the number reported in 2007. The authors go on to indicate this growth for online enrollments far exceeded the 1.2% growth overall in higher education students, with more than one in four higher education students now taking at least one online course. Research by Allen and Seaman (2010) historically suggests that bad economic times have been good for higher education enrollments, either because less availability of good jobs makes people seek education, or simply because those who are employed want to improve their skills by bettering their education. With the economic impact, it has resulted in a 66% increased demand for new courses and programs and 73% increased demand for existing online courses and programs (Allen & Seaman, 2010).
Purpose of the Study

As institutions continue to expand their distance education courses, it is important to envision where distance education is heading. The quality of online courses from the student’s perspective offers several benefits such as flexibility, better use of time, and fitting in with their life styles (Astani, Ready, & Duplaga, 2010). Unfortunately, there is a scarcity of research studies exploring students’ perspectives on issues such as the quality of learning in online courses (Astani et al., 2010). This research study explored students’ perspectives about the quality of online courses using the Quality Matters Standards (Nath & Ralston-Berg, 2008) for online course design.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine how a sample of undergraduate students view a quality online course, based on students who have had an online course versus students who have not had an online course. This study also described students’ perceptions of a quality online course based on their experience. In addition, it looked to see if there was a relationship between students’ perceptions of an online course based on their age, gender, current credit hours enrolled, GPA, students who work over 30 hours, and ethnicity.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are presented below.

1. What role do students’ online course experiences have on their perceptions of a quality online course?

2. How is the age of students related to their view of a quality online course?
3. How does gender relate to students’ view of a quality online course?

4. How do the current credit hours students are enrolled in relate to how they view a quality online course?

5. How does students’ GPA relate to how students view a quality online course?

6. How do students who work over 30 hours a week relate to their view of a quality online course?

7. How does ethnicity relate to students’ perceptions of a quality online course?

**Delimitations**

This study was delimited to a convenient sample of college students enrolled in two communication courses at a Midwestern research intensive university. Data were only collected during the Fall of 2010 from students that wished to respond from the two classes.

**Operational Definitions**

**Distance Education**: “Learning that normally occurs in a different place from teaching and as a result requires special techniques of course design, special instructional techniques, special methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as special organizational and administrative arrangements” (Carabaneanu et al., 2006, p. 61).
**Distance Learning:** “A planned teaching/learning experience that uses a wide spectrum of technologies to reach learners at a distance and is designed to encourage learner interaction and certification of learning” (Greenberg, 1998, p. 36).

**Quality Online Course:** “The Quality Matters (QM) Rubric, initially developed under a 3-year grant (2003-2006) from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), is a set of 40 specific standards that address primarily [SIC] matters of the design and organization of the online materials for fully online and hybrid courses. These 40 specific standards are grouped under 8 general standards that address the following areas: Course Overview and Introduction, Learning Objectives, Assessment and Measurement, Resources and Materials, Learner Engagement, Course Technology, Learner Support, and Accessibility” (Legon & Runyon, 2007, p. 1).

**Conceptual Framework**

How does one know if a distance education course or program is effectively designed? Many organizations have established standards that detail the essential qualities of effective distance education systems (Burton, Lockee, & Potter, 2010). For purposes of this study, the Quality Matters (QM) program was selected. Quality Matters (QM) is a program designed to offer quality assurance in online education (Nath & Ralston-Berg, 2008). It offers a set of review criteria, including a list of desired features for online course design based on research and national standards (Nath & Ralston-Berg, 2008). Quality Matters designed a rubric which includes eight broad standards, shown to positively impact student learning and by which to evaluate the design of online and hybrid courses. The eight standards are course overview and introduction, learning
objectives, assessment and measurement, resources and materials, learner interaction, course technology, learner support, and ADA compliance. This program also allows instructors teaching online to participate in a peer review process to check and see if their course meets the recommended requirements as developed from years of research, national standards, and a team of scholars (Nath & Ralston-Berg, 2008). This study uses these standards to determine how students view a quality online course. The rubric contains annotations that explain the application of the standards and the relationship between them. A specific scoring system and set of online tools facilitate the evaluation by a team of reviewers (Legon & Runyon, 2007).
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter was to present a summary of the research literature pertinent to this study. The chapter is divided into the following sections: quality online course overview, Quality Matters program, student perceptions of online learning and courses, and challenges and trends.

Quality Online Course Overview

Designing effective learning environments and developing strategies to achieve student learning outcomes continue to be important factors in educational institutions in the online sphere (Goldsmith, Snider, & Hamm, 2010). The basis of effective online learning is comparable to the foundation of effective learning in general (Smart & Cappel, 2006). “Learning theory suggests that learning is promoted or enhanced when students are actively involved in the learning, when assignments reflect real-life contexts, and when critical thinking or deep learning is promoted through applied and reflective activities” (Smart & Cappel, 2006, p. 202).

Two benefits to online programs are that they have important strengths and offer unique accessibility to quality education (Rice, 2004). Rice described some advantages of an online course including: technology revolutionizes learning; anytime, anywhere, anyone; cost savings from reduced travel expenses; just in time access to
information; higher retention of content through learner-centered methods; improved collaboration and interactivity between students; being learner controlled; and self-paced.

Rice (2004) further suggested that interaction in distance courses is more complex than face-to-face classrooms. Moore (1990) also related the idea of communication (and interaction with instructor and fellow classmates) to distance but not in the sense of distance as a geographical phenomenon. Rather distance should be viewed as a pedagogical phenomenon – the distance between student and instructor interactions falls on a continuum whether in virtual classrooms or traditional face-to-face classrooms. Thus, a course that is highly structured, planned, and implemented will result in greater transactional distance no matter how the course is offered. A course that is more loosely structured and student-centered will result in less transactional distance and more learner autonomy. Therefore, good quality online courses will provide an environment for collaboration, interaction, and community.

According to Herrington, Herrington, Oliver, Stoney, and Willis (2001), “Institutional, national and global pressures demand that universities address issues of quality in teaching and learning” (p. 263). The maintenance of existing courses and the imperative to present new courses online necessitates the growth of measures and guidelines that can inform instructional designers and academics. Research by Chaney, Eddy, Dorman, Glessner, Green, and Lara-Alecio (2007) developed an instrument entitled SASODE (Survey to Assess Student Opinions of Distance Education) to assess the quality of distance education courses at a university in the Southern United States. The research evaluated students, attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of distance education. According to Chaney et al. (2007), some of the common quality indicators
identified in the study were: “student teacher interaction, prompt feedback from instructor, ease of program evaluation and assessment, clear analysis of audience, documented technology plan to ensure quality, institutional support and institutional resources, course structure, active learning techniques, and respect diverse ways of learning” (p. 146).

Research by Churchill (2004) identified some of the frameworks that have emerged for assessing quality in online education. He noted that the Institute for Higher Education identified a set of 24 benchmarks and clustered them into seven categories. These categories included: institutional support, course development, teaching/learning, course structure, student support, faculty support, and evaluation and assessment. The author also identified the Sloan Consortium in which it identifies Five Pillars of Quality Online Education. The five pillars are “learning effectiveness, student satisfaction, faculty satisfaction, cost-effectiveness, and access” (pp. 13-14).

Another group identified by Churchill (2004) was the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions which developed a detailed list of quality criteria for online education programs. Some of the evaluation measures are:

- evaluations of student performance; review of student work; student surveys; faculty surveys; documentation concerning access provided to students not previously served, through a combination of enrollment records and student surveys; usage records concerning use of library and learning resources, and instructor assignments that require such usage; assessment of students’ fundamental skills in communication, comprehension, and analysis; documentation of the institution’s analyses that relate costs to goals of the program. (p. vii)

The author described some ways that other institutions regard assessment of quality. Some institutions indicated that assessment was not being done; some left it up
to individual instructors; and some institutions did it sporadically or inconsistently. He also mentioned that some used a variety of mechanisms for ensuring and assessing quality such as course development, student and faculty orientation, and student satisfaction.

**Quality Matters Program**

With higher education institutions facing increasing demands from both internal and external constituents to engage in meaningful quality assurance to demonstrate the value and impact of their efforts, the expectations for quality assurance of online education are even higher (Legon & Runyon, 2007). Quality Matters (QM) is a program that focuses on quality standards for online course design. According to Ralston-Berg and Nath (2008), it is one program that is getting a lot of notice from campuses around the country. This program offers quality assurance through a rubric for online course design. The rubric includes eight broad standards shown to positively impact students learning and measure quality. The standards are: course overview and introduction, learning objectives, assessment and measurement, resources and materials, learner interaction, course technology, learner support, and ADA compliance (Ralston-Berg & Nath, 2008). Legon (2006) indicates the Quality Matters rubric has been validated further through its comparison to accreditation standards for distance learning (see Table 1).
Table 1

Quality Matters Rubric Standards

| Course overview and introduction | • Instructions for navigating the course  
|                                 | • Instructor introduces himself/herself  
|                                 | • Prerequisite knowledge clearly stated  
|                                 | • Minimum technology requirements stated  
|                                 | • A statement introducing students to the course  
|                                 | • Minimum student skills clearly stated  
|                                 | • Netiquette/etiquette behavior  
|                                 | • Students requested to introduce themselves  |
| Learning Objectives             | • Outcomes are realistic and achievable  
|                                 | • Adequate and easy instructions on how to meet outcomes  
|                                 | • Specific outcomes for each module, unit, and lesson  
|                                 | • Learning outcomes clearly stated  |
| Assessment and Measurement      | • Grading Policy is easy to understand  
|                                 | • Feedback received on work related to course activities  
|                                 | • Assignments appropriate for online learning  
|                                 | • Outcomes consistent with activities and resources  
|                                 | • Self-Check or practice types of assignments are available  |
| Resources and Materials         | • Materials are easily accessible and usable by student  
|                                 | • Materials are well organized  
|                                 | • Materials are presented in format appropriate for online learning  
|                                 | • Instructional materials consistent with stated outcomes  
|                                 | • Materials have sufficient breadth and depth  
|                                 | • Resources and materials are appropriately referenced  |
| Learner Interaction             | • Requirements for course interaction clearly articulated  
|                                 | • Clear standards set for instructor response and availability  
|                                 | • Activities promote achievement of stated outcomes  
|                                 | • Activities foster content-student interaction  
|                                 | • Course design prompts instructor to be present, active, engaged  
|                                 | • Activities foster instructor-student interaction  
|                                 | • Activities foster student-student interaction  |
| Course Technology               | • Required technologies are provided or easily downloaded  
|                                 | • Instructions to access online resources are sufficient and easy to understand  
|                                 | • Tools and media support outcomes and are integrated with text and assignments  |
| Learner Support                 | • Clear description of technical support offered  
|                                 | • Tutorials and resources to answer basic questions  
|                                 | • Clear description of academic support offered  |
| Accessibility                   | • Accessible to people with disabilities  
|                                 | • Web links are self-describing and meaningful  
|                                 | • Equivalent alternatives to audio and visual content  
|                                 | • ADA services provided by university  |

The QM Rubric was initially developed under a 3-year grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). It was awarded $509,177.00 from 2003 to 2006. The QM Rubric is applied to mature online/hybrid courses that are courses that have previously been offered at least several times in a process that involves a team of three peer reviewers (Legon & Runyon, 2007). The peer reviewers go through extensive training in the interpretation of the QM Rubric. According to Legon and Runyon (2007), at least one member of the review team must be from an institution other than the sponsoring institution of the course being reviewed, and one reviewer must be a content area specialist. Legon and Runyon (2007) state that the results of a review consist of a score on the 40 standards, and a series of comments and recommendations for the course to meet the standards. According to the authors, one of the foundations of the QM rubric is that the 40 standards are based on the findings of the extensive and growing body of research on online education. Most of these standards are focused on characteristics of online course design that have been shown to influence student learning. The QM website publishes a research matrix and updates the findings of the 40 specific standards periodically.

Survey research is now being done to document the impact of participation in Quality Matters course reviews (Legon & Runyon, 2007). During the grant period, the Quality Matters project peer-reviewed 111 online courses from 29 institutions. Fifty-three percent of the courses met quality expectations during the initial course review; this percentage was consistent from year 1 to year 3 of the grant. Legon and Runyon (2007)
also stated that the remaining 47% have now met expectations through revision. The results of the study indicated some common problem areas for online course design. Legon and Runyon (2007) listed some of the standards that were most commonly unmet: 22% of courses lacked an instructor self-introduction; 22% of courses lacked activities that foster student-to-student interaction; 24% of courses did not clearly state a pre-requisite knowledge and technical skills; 24-27% of courses did not have links to academic support, campus tutoring services, or student support services; 27% of courses did not state learning objectives or outcomes at the module/unit level; 32% of courses lacked any netiquette standards; 38% of courses did not provide students with any self-check with feedback on their progress; 54% of course lacked any black and white or text alternates to color content; and 59% of courses did not provide adequate text alternatives to sound and graphical content (p. 2). Legon and Runyon (2007) also stated that since the ending of the grant period, many of the courses that were under review are now meeting standards, but the items that were listed above still seem to be the common deficiencies.

**Student Perceptions**

Understanding how students perceive successful online course experiences can provide suggestions for instructors and students to promote improved learning outcomes (Rodriguez, Ooms, & Montanez, 2008). One study by Hannay and Newvine (2006) utilized a 22-question survey with 217 respondents who were enrolled in criminal justice courses. This research examined why students chose distance education and student perceptions of the quality and difficulty of those courses compared to face-to-face. According to Hannay and Newvine (2006), the data indicated that students strongly
prefer distance education largely because it allows them to balance their other commitments more easily. The respondents also perceived that they achieved higher quality educational outcomes in their distance learning environments. This study also showed that students did not believe they sacrificed a quality education for the convenience of utilizing distance learning.

Another study done by Rydezewski, Eastman, and Bocchi (2010) examined important characteristics of an MBA online program. The study looked at whether the level of importance of certain characteristics varied by demographic variables such as gender, age, years’ work experience, and income. The study found that there were few differences among demographic groups. Although women rated quality, length, and courses at a higher level of importance than men did, those with more years of work experience rated availability at a significantly higher level of importance than those with fewer years of work experience.

In another study by Babb, Stewart, and Johnson (2010), students’ perceptions of performance and satisfaction in a hybrid course were compared by course design and delivery, active learning, student-to-student interaction, and instructor feedback. They found that students who were more active in learning were less likely to withdraw from online courses and were more likely to be satisfied with their education. A different study by Barnard (2008) showed that in relation to GPA and student perceptions of an online course, students had more positive perceptions of online course communication and collaboration if they had higher GPAs.
Buzzetto-More (2008) did a comprehensive study that examined the e-learning perceptions and preferences of students enrolled at a historically Black university. The study found that despite their high success rates with Black students who attended there, the students have been found to be from lower socio-economic backgrounds, scored lower on standardized tests, and were less prepared for college than Black students attending majority institutions (Buzzetto-More, 2008). The study also found that in regards to technology, there were inequalities of computer and internet access across socio-economic status and the students (Buzzetto-More, 2008). Furthermore, the study found that the ways different groups have been exposed to technology education, and technology facilitated education has been shown to vary with minority students from lower socio-economic backgrounds; these students are more likely to be exposed to drill and practice exercises while white students from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to gain from technologies that help build and require the use of the higher order thinking and skills (Buzzetto-More, 2008). The author also found that minorities have been found to be less likely to be technological literate.

In a study conducted by Rodriguez et al. (2008), a survey of 700 students regarding perceptions of online-learning quality was analyzed with a structural equation model. It examined students with online-learning experience, comfort with technology, and motivation to learn technology skills which were related to satisfaction with online courses, which was related to perceived quality. The results from this survey showed that students with hybrid-learning experience, comfort was related to motivation and perceived quality; motivation was related to satisfaction; and satisfaction was related to
perceived quality. For students with no online-learning experiences, comfort was related to motivation to learn technology skills, but neither of these factors was related to perceived quality of online courses (Rodriguez et al., 2008).

To further elaborate on student perceptions, another study looked at one faith-based liberal arts university in Texas which had a traditional educational administration preparation program (Goldsmith et al., 2010). The university transitioned the program to an online program. Students from the first online program were the subject of this study. Student perception of the online learning experience, effectiveness of course design, academic rigor, interaction between students and faculty to student-to-student interactions, and comparisons between the students’ online and face-to-face experiences were important to the researchers in this study (Goldsmith et al., 2010). The researchers gave a pre/post test survey of student perception data. The study revealed that all four areas demonstrated significant change. One factor that was significant was gender. Female students had statistically significant higher perceptions of their ability to use a word processor, keyboard, and participate effectively in an online discussion group. Males had higher perceptions than females in perceiving an online course to be more motivating than a face-to-face course and that it would be easier to be discourteous in an online course (Goldsmith et al., 2010).

Literature indicates that students’ perceptions of online courses vary, but overall are positive (Song & Kidd, 2005). For example, McFarland and Hamilton (2005) examined the level of student engagement as an indicator of quality and found no difference in satisfaction or performance of students enrolled in online courses versus
those students enrolled in face-to-face courses (as cited in Astani et al., 2010). In the 2005 Quarterly Review of Distance Education, more than 40% of responding institutions reported that student satisfaction with online courses was similar to satisfaction with face-to-face courses (as cited in Astani et al., 2010). A study by Astani et al. (2010) examined students’ perceptions of online courses and found that students who had no experience with online courses were uncertain about many features of online learning and did not know what to expect. Furthermore, this study found that the experienced students were satisfied with the online courses and would recommend online courses to others. Astani et al. (2010) also stated that the participants in their study believed that the quality of online courses is as good as the traditional face-to-face course.

To help students have success with their online learning experiences, universities and colleges must create “distance education policies that will maintain course integrity and quality and foster innovation in the virtual classroom to enhance student learning” (McGorry, 2003, p. 160). With the rapid growth worldwide of teaching and learning on the internet, more attention must be dedicated to the nature and quality of online higher education (McGorry, 2003). Online instruction in higher education is here to stay. In order to address many of these issues, faculty and staff must be aware of the needs of the students prior to developing the online course and materials.

**Challenges and Trends in Online Higher Education**

An increasing number of students are choosing online education programs to complete their higher education degrees (Barnard, Paton, & Rose, 2007). According to the Distance Education Survey Results from the Instructional Technology Council (ITC)
2009 report, respondents gave several reasons for the increase in these enrollments (Lokken, 2010). The results showed that 42% cited the downturn in the economy, 39% cited typical growth for distance education courses, and 16% cited new enrollment initiatives (Lokken, 2010). Three percent showed no response. This study also described some of the greatest challenges for students enrolled in distance education courses. The greatest challenge in 2009 related to the orientation and preparation for taking distance education classes, while the least challenging aspect for students was recruitment or interest in distance education (Lokken, 2010). Completion rates were also included in this report and showed that in 2009 the average retention rate for online classes was 72% compared to 76% in face-to-face classes.

**Summary**

Still today, “research has not converged on an archetypal profile of the online learner” (Dabbagh, 2007, p. 217). “The concept of the independent, place-bound, adult, self-motivated, disciplined self-starter, and goal-oriented learner, which largely characterized the classic distance education learner, is now being challenged with socially mediated online learning activities that de-emphasize independent learning and emphasize social interaction and collaboration” (Dabbagh, 2007, p. 219). However, the Distance Education Survey results from the ITC 2009 report showed that older students are nearly as likely to take an online course as millennial tech-savvy students (Lokken, 2010). The results of the ITC survey showed that 52% of students were traditional (18-25), and 47% were non-traditional students (26+). According to the ITC report, data on
gender have consistently showed that females are more likely to take an online class than males. The results from the report showed that 63% of students taking online courses were females, and 36% were males.

There is still much unknown about today’s online learner. More research could be conducted to examine online courses and understanding of proper online course design. With the ever-changing population, online course design needs to continuously be up-dated and communicated to students and faculty. Additional information would provide curriculum designers in developing and creating quality rigorous online courses.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was designed to determine how undergraduate students view a quality online course based on students who have had an online course versus students who have not had an online course. This study looked at the relationship between students’ perceptions of an online course based on their age, gender, current credit hours enrolled, grade point average (GPA), students who work over 30 hours, and ethnicity. This chapter discusses the statement of the problem, the research questions, the research design, data collection procedures, and the limitations of the study.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine how a sample of undergraduate students view a quality online course, based on students who have had an online course versus students who have not had an online course. This study also describes students’ perceptions of a quality online course based on their experience. In addition, it looked to see if there was a relationship between students’ perceptions of an online course and their age, gender, current credit hours enrolled, GPA, students who work over 30 hours, and ethnicity.
The research questions guiding this study are presented below.

1. What role do students’ online course experiences have on their perceptions of a quality online course?
2. How is the age of students related to their view of a quality online course?
3. How does gender relate to students’ view of a quality online course?
4. How do the current credit hours students are enrolled in relate to how they view a quality online course?
5. How does students’ GPA relate to how students view a quality online course?
6. How do students who work over 30 hours a week relate to their view of a quality online course?
7. How does ethnicity relate to students’ perceptions of a quality online course?

**Research Design**

This research study was aimed at exploring students’ perceptions about the quality of online courses using the Quality Matters Standards (Nath & Ralston-Berg, 2008) for online course design. The study examined if there was a difference in student’s perceptions of a quality online course from students who have had experience with an online course with students who have not had an online course.

**Participants**

The subjects utilized in this study were a convenient sample of currently enrolled students in a communication course at a large mid-western university. These students came from two core theory classes within the School of Communication. The two classes used were Survey of Mass Communication and Survey of Communication
Theory. There were 135 participants. Of those 135, 128 had a valid response with a response rate of 94.8%. Seven did not respond. There were 73 female respondents, 49 males, and 13 who did not indicate either. Of the participants, 29.8% reported working over 30 hours a week, 70.2% said they worked less than 30 hours a week, and 14 students did not respond. Of the 122 participants that reported their race, the results showed: Caucasian (82%), African American (10.7%), Hispanic (2.5%), Asian American (.8%), other (4.1%), and 13 did not indicate their ethnicity. The ages of the 123 reported respondents ranged from under 22 to over 53 years old with 80.5% being under 22. Twelve respondents did not indicate their age. Of the 121 respondents, most (65.3%) students were enrolled in 13-18 credits. Fourteen did not indicate their enrollment. There were 116 participants that reported they had a GPA of 4.0-3.5 (21.6%) or 3.49-3.0 (31.9%) or 2.99-2.5 (34.5%). Nineteen did not indicate their GPA (see Table 2).
Table 2

Student Demographics of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>No. (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (n=122)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>73 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of online courses taken (n=135)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Courses</td>
<td>108 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Course</td>
<td>19 (14.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Courses</td>
<td>5 (3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Courses</td>
<td>2 (1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 4 Courses</td>
<td>1 (.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range (n=123)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 22 years</td>
<td>99 (80.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-32 years</td>
<td>20 (16.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-42 years</td>
<td>1 (.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43-52 years</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 53 years</td>
<td>1 (.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (n=122)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>100 (82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>13 (10.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3 (2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>1 (.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5 (4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work over 30 hours a week N=(121)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36 (29.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>85 (70.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Hours enrolled in N=(121)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 credits</td>
<td>2 (1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 credits</td>
<td>37 (30.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-18 credits</td>
<td>79 (65.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-21 credits</td>
<td>3 (2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA (n=116)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0-3.5 GPA</td>
<td>25 (21.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.49-3.0 GPA</td>
<td>37 (31.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.99-2.5 GPA</td>
<td>40 (34.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.49-2.0 GPA</td>
<td>10 (8.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 2.0 GPA</td>
<td>4 (3.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey

The study utilized a questionnaire developed by the researcher with 27 Likert questions, 7 demographic questions, and the last two questions being open-ended. The 27 Likert questions developed were based on the Quality Matters Rubric (Nath & Ralston-Berg, 2008). Independent variables measured were experience with online classes, age, gender, current credit hours enrolled, GPA, students who work over 30 hours, and ethnicity. The dependent variable was students’ perceptions of a quality online course. The quality of an online course was measured using a 27-item 5-point Likert type scale with “1” indicating “Strongly Agree” to “5” indicating “Strongly Disagree.” As a measure of reliability, Cronbach’s Alpha was calculated in the final survey for the 27 item scale showing .95 reliability.

Pilot Study

Prior to the questionnaire being delivered, a pilot study with four undergraduate student assistants in the School of Communication was conducted to clarify the wording of the questions and to remove or add questions (see Appendix B). The students were instructed to answer the questions as if they were taking the survey. They were also asked to comment about the questions, relevance, and wording. The students verbally informed the researcher where changes were needed. The original questionnaire only listed 35 questions. After the four students reviewed the survey, they suggested adding a comment under question 1 for students who answered “never” to taking an online course. The comment added was, “If you answer “A” on this question, go to question 29 on the survey.” The students then informed the researcher to add questions 29-55 reflecting the
same questions from 2-28 but referencing students who have never taken an online course. Information from the pilot study resulted in the adding of several questions and directions.

**Procedures**

The survey was administered to two sections of undergraduate communication classes at a large mid-western university (see Appendix C). The researcher handed out green Scantron sheets, the survey, and number two pencils for the students to use to record their responses. The students were told that the survey would take about 10-15 minutes and written directions were stated at the beginning of the survey. They were also informed that when they completed the survey to bring the number two pencils, the Scantron sheets, and the completed surveys to the front of the classroom for the researcher to collect.

**Data Collection**

Participation was on a voluntary basis, and students were made aware of this through verbal directions (see Appendix D), and it was also indicated on the survey. The university’s Institutional Review Board granted permission prior to the research being conducted (see Appendix E).

Data were collected in a face-to-face class setting. After the surveys were collected, participants were thanked for their involvement and made aware of where and when they could find the final outcome of the study. The green Scantron sheets were taken to the university’s computer-based testing center to scan in the results. After the
results were scanned, they were emailed to the researcher to further analyze. The researcher then organized all open-ended questions and inputted them into an MS word document (see Appendix F).

**Statistical Analysis**

The researcher obtained information regarding students’ perceptions of a quality online course based on the seven research questions listed above. Frequency data were run for each independent variable by those with experience and those without experience. The SPSS statistical package was used to analyze the data. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to see if there was a significant difference between groups by total mean scores for those who had online experience and those who did not.

The qualitative data also needed to be analyzed. Question number 62 on the survey (Would you take an online course, why or why not?) was first grouped by two categories. The categories were those who had an online course and those who have not had an online course. Then the responses were grouped by six patterns which were: flexibility, convenience, learning style, schedule, classroom interaction, and if online courses are easy. Question number 63 on the survey (Is Course Management System easy to navigate, why or why not?) was grouped into five categories. The categories were: easy/yes, clear/straight-forward, helpful/useful, negative perspective, and no answer.
Study Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. The small sample size of 128 undergraduate students may not be completely representative of all students. Also, the majority of the sample was traditional undergraduate students under the age of 22. The sample was also over 80% Caucasian. Another limitation is that the students' GPA, current credit hours enrolled, and other data were self reported. Additionally, the survey results of undergraduate communication students or even all students in other populations may yield different results.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data collected to address the seven research questions. The results are presented as follows: data results for measures of quality online courses; gender; age; ethnicity; working over 30 hours a week; credit hours enrolled; and grade point average.

Data Results for Measures of Quality Online Courses

The quality of online courses were measured using 27 questions from a 5-point Likert response format with “1” indicating “Strongly Agree” to “5” indicating “Strongly Disagree.” The questions were developed based on the Quality Matters Rubric (Nath & Ralston-Berg, 2008). As a measure of reliability Cronbach’s Alpha was calculated for the 27 item scale showing .95 reliability. Students were asked about their online course experiences whether ever having an online course versus not having an online course.

Table 3 provides the mean and standard deviation of the 27 Likert questions that made up the scale for a quality online course (see Table 3).
Table 3

Quality Matters Items: Experience versus No Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>No Online</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Course Overview and Intro (1-4) The instructions for navigating the course were clear</td>
<td>(.58), 108</td>
<td>1.96 (.72), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The instructor introduced him/herself</td>
<td>1.4 (.71), 108</td>
<td>1.96 (.96), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The requirements for technology were clearly stated</td>
<td>1.25 (.5), 108</td>
<td>1.7 (.6), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Netiquette/etiquette was clearly addressed</td>
<td>1.7 (.76), 108</td>
<td>2.5 (.8), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Learning Outcomes (5-7) Learning outcomes are realistic</td>
<td>1.5 (.8), 108</td>
<td>2.12 (.8), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Instructions on how to meet the learning outcomes were clearly stated</td>
<td>1.4 (.7), 108</td>
<td>2.1 (.7), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Specific outcomes for each module were stated</td>
<td>1.4 (.7), 108</td>
<td>2.3 (1.0), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Assessment and Measurement (8-11) Grading policy is clearly stated</td>
<td>1.2 (.5), 108</td>
<td>1.9 (.8), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Feedback was received in a timely manner</td>
<td>1.4 (.7), 108</td>
<td>2.0 (.9), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Assignments that were assigned were appropriate for the online course</td>
<td>1.3 (.6), 108</td>
<td>2.2 (1.1), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The learning outcomes were consistent with the assignment activities</td>
<td>1.5 (.7), 108</td>
<td>2.2 (1.1), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Resources and Materials (12-17) There were practice assignments available</td>
<td>1.7 (.8), 108</td>
<td>2.9 (1.3), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The online materials were accessible and usable</td>
<td>1.3 (.5), 107</td>
<td>2.0 (1.0), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The course materials were well organized</td>
<td>1.3 (.7), 107</td>
<td>2.0 (.8), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The materials presented were appropriate for the online course</td>
<td>1.4 (.6), 107</td>
<td>1.9 (.7), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The instructional materials were consistent with the learning outcomes</td>
<td>1.4 (.7), 106</td>
<td>1.9 (.8), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The resources and materials were referenced</td>
<td>1.7 (.8), 106</td>
<td>2.2 (1.0), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Learner Interaction (18-22) The requirements for the course interaction were clearly listed</td>
<td>1.4 (.7), 106</td>
<td>2.1 (1.0), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The instructor clearly stated his/her standards for response and availability</td>
<td>1.4 (.7), 106</td>
<td>1.29 (1.0), 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The activities fostered content to student interaction</td>
<td>1.9 (1.0), 106</td>
<td>2.7 (1.2), 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The activities fostered instructor to student interaction</td>
<td>1.9 (.9), 106</td>
<td>2.8 (1.2), 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The activities fostered student to student interaction</td>
<td>2.3 (1.1), 106</td>
<td>3.1 (1.4), 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Course Technology (23-24) Required technologies were easily downloaded</td>
<td>1.2 (.6), 104</td>
<td>1.7 (.6), 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Instructions to offer online resources were clearly stated</td>
<td>1.4 (.7), 105</td>
<td>2.2 (1.0), 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Learner Support (25-26) There were clear descriptions of technical support offered</td>
<td>1.5 (.7), 105</td>
<td>2.6 (.9), 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>There were clear descriptions of academic support offered</td>
<td>1.5 (.7), 104</td>
<td>2.5 (1.0), 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Accessibility (27) The courses was accessible to people with disabilities</td>
<td>1.4 (.8), 104</td>
<td>2.1 (.9), 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Source: Ralston-Berg, (2009). Score 1-strongly agree to 5 strongly disagree. Table 3 showed wording relating to the students with experience, students with no experience had different wording. Example, Q26, “There should be clear descriptions of technical support offered.”
Questions 1-4 which measured course overview and introduction showed that students who have not had an online course strongly agreed that the instructions for navigating the course should be clear, the instructor should introduce him/herself, requirements for technology should be clearly stated, and netiquette/etiquette should be clearly addressed. Students with experience showed that they agreed that these items are important to quality online courses, but maybe they did not feel they had the best experience when comparing the two groups with the students who had experience rating items such as netiquette/etiquette with a mean difference of .8.

Questions 5-7 which addressed learning outcomes showed that those who have not had an online course strongly agreed that the learning outcomes were important. Those students who have had an online course did agree they experienced learning outcomes being offered, but showed a difference of .9 in the mean score relating to the item stating, “Specific outcomes for each module were clearly stated” when comparing the two groups.

Questions 8-11 which measured assessment and measurement showed that students without online course experience strongly agreed that the grading policy should be clearly stated, feedback should be reported in a timely manner, assignments should be appropriate to the online course, practice assignments should be available, and the learning outcomes should be realistic. Those students with experience also agreed they experienced those items listed above, but still showed higher mean scores in each category comparing the two groups.
Questions 12-17 referenced resources and materials based on the Quality Matters Rubric, and again, this showed that students with no online course experience strongly agreed that resources and materials should be accessible, well organized, appropriate to the online course, instructional materials should be consistent with the learning outcomes, and resources and materials should be referenced. The students with experience showed that they agreed, but still had higher mean scores and in relation to the question stating; “There were practice assignments available,” there was a mean difference of 1.2 showing students felt they did not have the strongest experience with this.

Questions 18-22 looked at learner interaction. The students with no online course experience strongly agreed that the requirements for the course interaction should be clearly stated, the instructor should state his/her standards for response and availability, and activities should foster student to student, instructor to student, and content to student interaction. The students with experience agreed and were neutral to their experience with the topics listed, but again showed a higher mean score with a .8 and .9 difference among three of the five categories.

Questions 23-24 measured course technology. The students with no online experience showed that they strongly agreed that technologies should be easily downloaded, and instructions to offer online resources should be clearly stated. Those students with experience agreed but still had a higher mean score with a .8 difference in their experience with online resources being clearly stated.

Questions 25-26 related issues of learner support based from the Quality Matters Rubric. The students with no experience showed they strongly agreed that clear
descriptions of technical and academic support should be offered. The students with experience agreed they had support, but there was a consistently higher mean score of 1.1 points when comparing the two groups and the question(s). The last question, 27 which measured accessibility, showed that both groups strongly agreed and agreed that accessibility is important to the quality of an online course with less than a .7 difference in the group’s experience and perceptions.

In summary patterns of greater differences between the groups appeared in the sections relating to learner support, learner interaction, and resources and materials with those in the group with no online course experience more likely to score the item higher (strongly agree or agree) than the group with online learning experience (agree, neutral or disagree).

A one-way ANOVA was performed among three levels of course experience for the dependent variable of perceived online course quality as measured by the sum of the 27 Likert questions from the Quality Matters Rubric. There was a significant difference between the experience/perceptions of quality online courses of those students who have had an online course and those students who have not had an online course. The significance was found between students who never had an online course, and students who have had an online course. The significance was at the .000 level. The statistics showed that there is a poorer perception of online courses from students who have had experience. To further clarify, the students with experience were asked if they agreed/disagreed that their online course experience exhibited the standards from the
Quality Matters rubric, compared to the students with no online experience who were asked if they felt an online course should exhibit the qualities (see Table 4).

Table 4

One-way ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>8387.901</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4193.950</td>
<td>26.333</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>19908.092</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>159.265</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28295.992</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scheffe’s test for multiple comparisons was used to differentiate among three levels of class experience: no online classes; 1 online class; 2 or more online classes. The table shows that there is a significant difference between the students who never had an online class, and the students who had just one online class. The mean of the sum was -22.78 showing a poorer perception of online courses from students who have had one online course. There was no significant difference between those that never took an online course and those who had two or more online courses (see Table 5).
Table 5

Scheffe Multiple Comparisons of Students Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) online classes</th>
<th>(J) online classes</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-22.78105*</td>
<td>3.22637</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-30.7740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2&lt;&gt;</td>
<td>-11.14216</td>
<td>4.63352</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>-22.6211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>22.78105*</td>
<td>3.22637</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>14.7881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;&gt;</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>11.63889</td>
<td>5.36247</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>-1.6460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;&gt;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.14216</td>
<td>4.63352</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>-.3368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-11.63889</td>
<td>5.36247</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>-24.9237</td>
<td>1.6460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Age

Results of age and the student’s related perception/experience on a quality online course shows that students who have not had an online course have a more positive perception of a quality online course compared to students who have had experience. The statistics showed that 81 students were under the age of 22 and had no online course experience and scored a mean of 39.83 compared to the same group that had online course experience and had a mean score of 58.71. This pattern of difference was consistent with all age groups (see Table 6).
Table 6

Age and Perception of a Quality Online Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your age range?</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no online class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 22</td>
<td>39.8272</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>11.75988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-32</td>
<td>38.5714</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.40903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-42</td>
<td>27.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43-52</td>
<td>37.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39.4845</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>11.89548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had an online class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 22</td>
<td>58.7059</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.31243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-32</td>
<td>62.2500</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24.52720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43-52</td>
<td>67.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 53</td>
<td>52.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59.3913</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16.10968</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender

A student’s view of a quality online course by gender showed that females/males that had no online course experience had a more positive perception of a quality online course than females/males that had an online course. Those with no online experience had similar mean scores (female=39.78 vs. males 38.07). For those with online course experiences, males (67.17) scored more disagreeable with the items in the survey than did females (56.65) (see Table 7).
Table 7

Gender and Online Quality Perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your gender?</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no online class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>39.7818</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12.34338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>38.0732</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9.41645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39.0521</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>11.16514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had an online class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>56.6471</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.71429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>67.1667</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.23792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59.3913</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16.10968</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Credit Hours**

When comparing a student’s credit hours, and how it relates to their view of a quality online course, the study looked at those students with experience, and those students without experience. Students with no online course experience have a much higher perception of a quality online course than students with online course experience. Those with no online course experience taking 13-18 credit hours received a mean score of 41.02 compared to those students taking 13-18 credit hours with online course experience showing a mean score of 57.13. Again those without experience provided more strongly agree statements to the 27 Quality Matters items than those with experience (see Table 8).
Table 8

Number of Credit Hours and Quality Online Course Perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many credit hours are enrolled in?</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no online class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>27.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>37.4000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.67656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>41.0161</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>13.28316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-21</td>
<td>33.6667</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.02377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39.5104</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>11.95517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had an online class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>64.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>63.5714</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21.71679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>57.1333</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.78336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59.3913</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16.10968</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade Point Average**

Overall, Table 9 shows that student’s GPA and no online course experience have a higher perception of a quality online course. There is a consistent 20-30 mean point difference between the groups with similar patterns across GPA scores. Again, those with no experience scored higher (see Table 9).
Table 9

GPA and Perception of Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your GPA?</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no online class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 - 3.5</td>
<td>39.7778</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.66118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.49 - 3.0</td>
<td>37.7407</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.37916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.99 - 2.5</td>
<td>40.5294</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12.84225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.49 - 2.0</td>
<td>41.8750</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.69856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 2.0</td>
<td>39.5000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.50757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39.6264</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>12.07352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had an online class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 - 3.5</td>
<td>61.1429</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.34606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.49 - 3.0</td>
<td>57.9000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.24544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.99 - 2.5</td>
<td>58.2000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.85302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.49 - 2.0</td>
<td>68.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59.3913</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16.10968</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work Hours

When comparing students who work over 30 hours a week and their perception of a quality online course, the students who work over 30 hours a week with no online course experience scored higher on their perception of quality (36.68) than students who work over 30 hours a week and have experience (52.63). However, when comparing the two groups, there was a consistently lower mean score between those who work over 30 hours a week and those who do not (36.68/52.63 vs. 40.68/63). This shows that those students who work more have higher perceptions of an online course (see Table 10).
Table 10

Work Over 30 Hours a Week and Perception of Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Do you currently work over 30 hours a week?</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no online class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>36.68</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>40.67</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>12.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39.51</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>11.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>had an online class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>52.63</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>63.00</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59.39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethnicity**

Ethnicity relates to a student’s view of a quality online course. Overall the same pattern of differences between the groups (online experience vs. no online experience) appears to be similar across the different ethnic groups with a range of 18-23 points’ difference between the two main groups. Consistently all ethnic groups with no on-line experience scored the 27 items higher than those with online course experience (39.51 vs. 59.39) (see Table 11).
Table 11

Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>had an online class</th>
<th>What is your ethnicity?</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no online class</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>39.8519</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>12.66601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>36.3333</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.46659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>32.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>45.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other</td>
<td>40.2500</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.02080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39.5104</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>11.95517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had an online class</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>62.0000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.44384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>53.0000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.71463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>50.0000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.65685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other</td>
<td>62.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59.3913</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16.10968</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Open ended Question Results**

Two open ended questions appeared at the end of the questionnaire. The first question asked if students would take an online course and why or why not.

**Rationale for Taking or Not Taking an Online Course**

Twenty-five students said they would, and 44 students said they would not. The biggest indicator was students stating they would not take an online course because of their learning style. Twenty-five of the 69 respondents who answered indicated that was the reason. Some examples of student statements are as follows: “learn better in the classroom,” “doesn’t work well with how I learn,” “too much of a procrastinator” (see Appendix F, Table 12).
Table 12
Rationale for Why a Student Would Not Take an Online Course (n = 25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Flexibility</th>
<th>Convenience</th>
<th>Learning Style</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Classroom Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Experience</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 25 students who indicated they would take an online course, the reasons were because of flexibility, convenience, their learning style, and scheduling and classroom interaction. Some examples that the students stated of why they would take an online course are: “fits in schedule a lot easier,” “I would, that way I could take additional courses,” “It is easy,” “Flexibility, convenience, and schedule” (see Table 13).

When comparing the students with online experience and those without, some of the students with online experience indicated they would not take another online course because they forget assignments and learn better in the classroom. Some students also said that the instructions were never clearly stated and that it was easy to fall behind. Students with experience said they would take an online course again because “they are nice because you can do them on your own time and listen to the instructors stuff more than once if needed.” Those without online course experience who indicated they would take an online course gave reasons such as, “I would because it would be on my time to complete,” and “I would love to take an online class because I am a commuter and it would save gas.” Another student indicated that it would work well because some
students learn faster than others and then they could work at their pace. Those students without experience gave reasons for not taking an online course such as “learn better in classroom,” and “Not as easy to interact with your professor and other students.”

Table 13

Rationale for Why a Student Would Take an Online Course (n = 45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Flexibility</th>
<th>Convenience</th>
<th>Learning Style</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Classroom Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Experience</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 14 and 15 show how students felt about the course management system used at the university that was surveyed. The question asked if it was easy to use, and why or why not. The majority of students said it was easy (N = 37) (see Table 14). Only four respondents of the 67 that answered thought it was difficult, and three did not respond at all (see Table 15). The questions were grouped into five categories: yes/easy; clear/straight-forward; helpful/useful; negative perspective; and no answer (see Appendix F).

Table 14

Was the Course Management System Easy to Use (n = 60)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes/Easy</th>
<th>Clear/Straight-forward</th>
<th>Helpful/useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15

Why the Course Management System Is Not Easy to Use (n = 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Perspective</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the results indicated that there were significant differences between students who have never had an online course, and those who have had one online course. There were no significant differences between students who never had an online course and those that had two or more.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore students’ perspective/experience about the quality of online courses using the Quality Matters standards for online course design. The results indicate that nearly all items on the Quality Matters standard were valuable to students in their view or experience of an online course. The differences shown were in the results of those students with experience and those students without experience. This chapter provides responses to each of the seven posed research questions.

Research Problem

Few studies have explored students’ perspectives on issues such as the quality of learning in online courses (Astani et al., 2010). This study described students' perception of a quality online course based on their experience. It also looked at relationships among age, gender, current credit hours enrolled, GPA, and work hours, and how it related to their view of a quality online course.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What role do students’ online course experiences have on their perceptions of a quality online course? A statistical significance was found between students who never had an online course and students who have had an online
course. The data showed that there was a higher mean score for students with online experience compared to those with no online experience, indicating that students with an online experience consistently perceived quality lower on the 27 items for the Quality Matters standards. This was not completely consistent with the literature, as Astani et al. (2010) stated, experienced students showed they were satisfied with online courses. Also, in comparing the students with experience in this study, some of the ones with experience said they would take another online course. A few examples of their statements are: “I would, because you can do the projects and any other requirements at your own time.” “They are nice because you can do them on your own time and listen to the instructors stuff more than once if needed.” “Flexibility, convenience, and schedule.”

These statements were also consistent with the literature. For example, Rice (2004) describes some advantages of an online course to include: technology revolutionizes learning, anytime, anywhere, anyone; cost savings from reduced travel expenses, just in time access to information; higher retention of content through learner-centered methods, improved collaboration and interactivity between students; being learner controlled; and self-paced.

Astani et al. (2010) showed in their study that students who had no experience with online courses were uncertain about an online course and did not know what to expect. When comparing the two groups, this literature was consistent with the some of the responses from students with no experience. Some of the statements are: “Do not know now.” “I prefer to learn in a classroom; it’s what I am used to. I am afraid if I take an online course I might not go to class at all,” “I would not take an online course out of fear that I would not keep up with my work.” In comparing some of the data from the
Quality Matters standards, the students with experience had a lower perception score in every category with the biggest differences among the categories relating to learner interaction and learner support. Quality Matters is about course design, and perhaps students did not feel they had a high quality learning experience due to a loss of teacher-student, and student-student interaction. To help with this problem, maybe the instructors need more training relating to quality online instruction. This topic also held true when comparing the reasons that students would not take an online course showing 25 of the 69 students that responded giving reasons such as; “I would not take an online course because I like classroom interaction,” “Wouldn’t, no face-to-face interaction on a regular basis, different learning environment,” “because socializing is a key part of education.”

There was not a significant difference between those that have never taken an online course and those that have taken two or more online courses. This was interesting considering there was significance between students who never took an online course and those who only took one. It could be related to a students’ experience in their initial exposure with an online course. For the students that took two or more online courses, it may be related to their expectations.

Research Question 2: How is the age of students related to their view of a quality online course? Students were asked to identify their age range with 80.5% of students under the age of 22 and having no online experience. In comparing age and a student’s view of a quality online course, student’s who have not had an online course had a more positive view than students who did have an online course regardless of their age. In the review of literature, one study done by Rydezewski, Eastman, and Boci (2010) looked at
the level of importance between demographic variables such as gender, age, years’ work experience and income. In their study, they found few differences among the demographic groups, consistent with these findings.

*Research Question 3:* How does gender relate to students’ view of a quality online course? There were 49 male respondents, and 73 female respondents. Males and females with no online experience were similar in their evaluation of a quality online course proving to have a more positive view. Between the males and females with online experience, males scored each standard lower than the females. This relates to the literature reviewed in this study as Rydezewski et al. (2010) found that women rated quality, length, and courses at a higher level of importance than men did in a study regarding important characteristics of an online program. In another study by Goldsmith et al. (2010), which looked at student’s perception of their online learning experience, gender was found to be a significant factor. The data showed that female students had statistically significant higher perceptions of their ability to use a word processor, keyboard, and participate effectively in an online discussion group. In the same study, the males had higher perceptions than the females in perceiving an online course was more motivating than a face-to-face course and that it would be easier to be discourteous in an online course.

*Research Question 4:* How do the current credit hours students are enrolled in relate to how they view a quality online course? Students were to respond to the number of credit hours that they were currently enrolled. One hundred and twenty-one students responded to this question, with the ranges as follows: 3 to 6 hours with (1.7%), 7-12
(30.6%), 13-18 (65.3%), and 19-21 (2.5%). In relation to credit hours enrolled and the student’s view of a quality online course, the students with no online course experience strongly agreed to the Quality Matters standards more than the students with online experience. This pattern was consistent across credit hours enrolled. In one study by Babb et al. (2010), they found that students who were more active in learning were less likely to withdraw from online courses and were more likely to be satisfied with their education. This showed consistency with the data when comparing students who were enrolled in the highest number of credit hours (19-21 credit hours), with these students not having experience, but having the higher perception of a quality online course.

Research Question 5: How does students’ GPA relate to how students view a quality online course? There were 21.6% of students with a GPA of 4.0-3.5, 31.9% with 3.49-3.0, 34.5% with 2.99-2.5, 8.6% with a 2.49-2.0, and 3.4% under a 2.0 GPA. In relation to a student’s GPA and online experience, students with no experience had higher standards of quality for an online course than students with experience.

Research Question 6: How do students who work over 30 hours a week relate to their view of a quality online course? Students who work more showed that they scored the Quality Matters standards higher. This also related to the literature, as stated Hannay and Newvine (2005), their data indicated that students strongly prefer distance education largely because it allows them to balance their other commitments more easily. This was consistent between the two groups, those with experience, and those without online experience. This statement is also consistent with some of the open-ended responses that the students wrote such as “I would take an online course because of flexibility and
convenience and it would allow me fulfill other obligations,” “I would because it works best with me balancing school and work,” “In order to accumulate more free time.”

Research Question 7: How does ethnicity relate to students’ perceptions of a quality online course? Consistently all ethnic groups with no on-line experience scored the 27 items higher than those with online course experience. The literature showed different results. In a study by Buzzetto-More (2008), minorities were less likely to be technological literate. Buzzetto-More (2008) also found that in respect to technology, inequalities of computer and internet access across socio-economic groups was prominent. Furthermore, the ways that the different ethnic groups have been exposed to technology facilitated education has been show to vary tremendously with minority students having less experience (Buzzetto-More, 2008). The study used for this research could have been skewed since 82% of the students who participated were white. If there was a more diverse population used, this study may have yielded different results.

Summary

The results showed that students with no online course experience consistently strongly agreed with the Quality Matters standards more than the students with online course experience. Certain categories on the Quality Matters standards showed consistently higher means between the groups. Learner interaction was one category that students with online experience consistently just agreed or were neutral in their responses. This shows that the students with experience may not have felt a strong level of student-to-student, instructor-to-student, or content-to-student interaction in their online experience. This was interesting considering that the students who responded to
the open-ended questions had the most concern for this category also. Many of the students stated that they would not take an online course because they like the classroom interaction or they like the classroom setting or student to teacher relationship.

This related to the literature, that learning theory suggests that learning is promoted or enhanced when students are actively involved in the learning, when assignments reflect real-life contexts, and when critical thinking or deep thinking are promoted through applied and reflective activities (Smart & Cappel, 2006). Chaney et al. (2007) also showed some common quality indicators of online learning to include student-to-student interaction. What perhaps many students do not understand is that there are many ways to make student-to-student interaction or instructor to student interaction present in the online classroom. There is an abundance of technology such as Elluminate, the virtual classroom, or Skype, all of which foster these types of interaction among the students and instructor. This type of interaction is possible, but instructors may not be aware that this type of technology is possible in the online course design.

All of the technologies listed above are available at the institution used in this study, and training is provided. It may benefit instructors to have more training prior to developing their online courses. Students also need to be open-minded to online courses for the future of higher education is moving toward this type of instruction. As stated by Barnard et al. (2007), an increasing number of students are already choosing online education programs to complete their higher education degrees.

Again, this research study compared the perceptions of students who have had experience with online and those who have not had any experience. There was a
significant difference between these two groups and their perceptions of online courses. After the pilot study the survey was split and those that never had experience were told to go to another portion of the survey where the survey questions were slightly reworded for that particular group. Therefore, the two survey experiences were slightly different and the wording was different for the students that had experience and did not have experience. Thus, the questions between the groups were different and this could be the reason that there was significance between the results of those that had experience, and those that did not. Therefore, the results of the study could be tainted.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should include students from other universities and populations. This would give a more diverse sample. More research is also needed on why students with no online experience more strongly agree with the Quality Matters standards for a quality online course compared to students who have had online course experience. With more universities moving to online courses, it would also be beneficial to understand how learning styles can impact a student’s view of a quality online course experience. Faculty and students may need more training for online course understanding relating to expectations and online course engagement. As in this research study, of the 69 participants that answered why or why not would they take an online class, 25 related it to their learning style, with many of their comments stating that it would not work well with how they learn. This was also an issue of concern for many students for fear that they would lose out on the classroom interaction if they took an online course. There has been such growth in mobile technologies such as the “ipad” by Apple which gives one
example of how technology is changing the way we interact with each other through equipment.

One positive finding in this study showed that the students liked using the Course Management System and that it was helpful and easy to navigate. At this particular university, the Course Management System would be the method of communication for online courses, indicating that students are comfortable with it and perhaps this would make the transition more easily adopted for students wanting to experience online courses at this university. Future researchers should examine and be strongly cautioned when comparing groups to maintain consistency relating to survey questions. Although significance was found between the groups in this study it could be skewed due to the fact that the subjects were asked different questions.

Conclusion

With the rapid growth worldwide of teaching and learning on the internet, more attention must be dedicated to the nature and quality of online higher education (McGorry, 2003). Faculty also might need more training on quality course design and student engagement. Online instruction in higher education is here to stay, and as predicted by Bates (2011) for the year 2014, over 3.55 million students will take all of their classes online.

Future research needs to be conducted to further validate the consistency and quality of online courses for students and faculty. With technology changing, there are many ways to enhance the pedagogical rigor of online courses. Maintaining sound curriculum design is vital in the future of online course development.
REFERENCES


Goldsmith, L., Snider, D., & Hamm, S. (2010). *Student perception of their online learning experience.* Retrieved from Connexions module website: http://cnx.org/content/m35740/latest/


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

PERMISSION TO USE QUALITY MATTERS RUBRIC

Kristina,

Yes, you are welcome to use the tables on those slides to draft your survey questions.

I’ll also add that this is an older version of my study. Newer versions of Powerpoints are available on SlideShare:

http://www.slideshare.net/qmr15/

Also, depending how deep you want to go and if you need lit review / justification for your survey items, these were all adapted from various versions of the Quality Matters rubric - latest version available from:

http://www.missouri.edu/Library/About%20the%20Library/Standards%20%26%20Rubrics.pdf

At the bottom of the same page you can get the Lit Review that led to rubric and an annotate matrix of rubric items.

Anyway, I hope you find this info helpful. I’m very passionate about quality of online courses and happy to see other interested in the same topic.

Please keep in touch. I'd be interested in learning more about your results.

Penny
Penny

Artino, Kristina A wrote:

/Dear Penny,/ 

/ / 

/ /My name is Kristina Artino and I am a Master Student in the College of Education at The University of Akron. I am working with Dr. Susan Olson, who is my Faculty advisor for my thesis project. Dr. Olson pulled a power-point from an article that you wrote about "What Makes a Quality Online Course: The Student Perspective." I found this power-point very interesting, and it fits in perfectly for my thesis topic which is "How do undergraduate students at a Midwestern Doctoral University perceive a quality online course, and what are the motivating factors." I would like to ask permission to use some of your themes and information from this power-point/article for my thesis./

/ / 

/ /I would be honored if you would grant me permission to use some of your expertise on quality online course information, and would notably mark your name in my work./

/ / 

/ /Please let me know via email if I am allowed to use some of your tables in my work to model my paper after. /

/ / 

/ /Thans,/ 

/ /Kristina Artino/ 

/ / 

/ / 

/ */Kristina A. Artino/* 

/ */Administrative Assistant /* 

/ */School of Communication/* 

/ */The University of Akron/* 

/ */Kolbe Hall Room 108/* 

/ */Akron, Oh 44325-1003/* 

/ */(P) 330-972-7600/* 

/ */(F) 330-972-8045/*
APPENDIX B

PILOT STUDY

Quality Online Course Survey

Directions: In order to describe how a sample of undergraduate students at an urban university constitute a quality online course, I am asking you to complete the following survey. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes. Please fill out the green bubble sheet and rate each answer on a scale of 1-5. Question number 35 is open ended; please just write this answer on the survey word document (not on the bubble sheet) under the number 35 question. No student names or identifying information is requested. After completing your survey, please turn it in the envelope placed in the front of the classroom. Thank you.

General Information

1. Number of online courses that you have taken?
   a. Never
   b. 1
   c. 2
   d. 3
   e. 4 or more

Course overview and introduction

2. The instructions for navigating the course were clear.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
3. The instructor introduced him or herself.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

4. The requirements for technology were clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

5. Netiquette/etiquette was clearly addressed.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
Learning Objectives

6. Learning outcomes are realistic.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

7. Instructions on how to meet the learning outcomes were clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

8. Specific outcomes for each module were stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

Assessment and Measurement

9. Grading policy is clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
10. Feedback was received in a timely manner.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

11. Assignments that were assigned were appropriate for the online course.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

12. The learning outcomes were consistent with the assignment activities.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

13. There were practice assignments available.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
Resources and Materials

14. The online materials were accessible and usable.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

15. The course materials were well organized.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

16. The materials presented were appropriate for the online course.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

17. The instructional materials were consistent with the learning outcomes.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
18. The resources and materials were referenced.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

**Learner Interaction**

19. The requirements for the course interaction were clearly listed.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

20. The instructor clearly stated his/her standards for response and availability.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

21. The activities fostered content to student interaction.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
22. The activities fostered instructor to student interaction.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

23. The activities fostered student to student interaction.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

**Course Technology**

24. Required technologies were easily downloaded.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

25. Instructions to offer online resources were clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
Learner Support

26. There were clear descriptions of technical support offered. 
   a. Strongly agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Neutral  
   d. Disagree  
   e. Strongly disagree

27. There were clear descriptions of academic support offered. 
   a. Strongly agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Neutral  
   d. Disagree  
   e. Strongly disagree

Accessibility

28. The course was accessible to people with disabilities. 
   a. Strongly agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Neutral  
   d. Disagree  
   e. Strongly disagree
Demographic Information

29. What is your Gender?
   a. Female
   b. Male

30. What is your age range?
   a. Under 22
   b. 23-32 years
   c. 33-42 years
   d. 43-52 years
   e. >53

31. What is your ethnicity?
   a. Caucasian
   b. African American
   c. Hispanic
   d. Asian American
   e. Other

32. Do you currently work over 30 hours a week?
   a. Yes
   b. No

33. How many credit hours are you enrolled in?
   a. 3-6
   b. 7-12
   c. 13-18
   d. 19-21
   e. >21
34. What is your current GPA?
   a. 4.0-3.5
   b. 3.49-3.0
   c. 2.99-2.5
   d. 2.49-2.0
   e. <2.0

35. Why or why not would you take an online course?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C

REVISED FINAL SURVEY

Quality Online Course Survey

Directions: In order to describe how a sample of undergraduate students constitutes a quality online course, I am asking you to complete the following survey. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes. Please fill out the green bubble sheet and rate each answer on a scale of 1-5. Questions 62 and 63 are open ended; please just write this answer on the survey word document (not on the bubble sheet) under the number. No student names or identifying information is requested, and completion of the survey is on a voluntary basis. After completing your survey, please turn it in the envelope placed in the front of the classroom. Thank you.

General Information

1. Number of online courses that you have taken?
   a. Never (If you answer “A” on this question go to question 29 on the survey).
   b. 1
   c. 2
   d. 3
   e. 4 or more

If you answered B-E on question number 1, please continue to answer questions 2-28, and 56-63. Thank you.

Course overview and introduction

2. The instructions for navigating the course were clear.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
3. The instructor introduced him or herself.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

4. The requirements for technology were clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

5. Netiquette/etiquette was clearly addressed.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
Learning Objectives

6. Learning outcomes are realistic.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

7. Instructions on how to meet the learning outcomes were clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

8. Specific outcomes for each module were stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
Assessment and Measurement

9. Grading policy is clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

10. Feedback was received in a timely manner.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neutral
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly disagree

11. Assignments that were assigned were appropriate for the online course.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neutral
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly disagree

12. The learning outcomes were consistent with the assignment activities.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neutral
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly disagree
13. There were practice assignments available.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

**Resources and Materials**

14. The online materials were accessible and usable.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

15. The course materials were well organized.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

16. The materials presented were appropriate for the online course.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
17. The instructional materials were consistent with the learning outcomes.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

18. The resources and materials were referenced.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

**Learner Interaction**

19. The requirements for the course interaction were clearly listed.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

20. The instructor clearly stated his/her standards for response and availability.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
21. The activities fostered content to student interaction.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

22. The activities fostered instructor to student interaction.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

23. The activities fostered student to student interaction.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
Course Technology

24. Required technologies were easily downloaded.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

25. Instructions to offer online resources were clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

Learner Support

26. There were clear descriptions of technical support offered.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

27. There were clear descriptions of academic support offered.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
Accessibility

28. The course was accessible to people with disabilities.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

Course overview and introduction

(Questions 29-55 are for students who have never taken a fully online course).

29. The instructions for navigating these courses should be clear.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

30. The instructor should introduce him or herself.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
31. The requirements for technology should be clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

32. Netiquette/etiquette should be clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

Learning Objectives

33. Learning outcomes should be realistic.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

34. Instructions on how to meet the learning outcomes should be clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
35. Specific outcomes for each module should be stated clearly.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

Assessment and Measurement

36. Grading policies should be stated and clear.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

37. Feedback should be received in a timely manner.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

38. Assignments should be appropriate for the online course.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
39. The learning outcomes should be consistent with the assignment activities.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

40. Practice assignments should be made available.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

Resources and Materials

41. Online materials should be accessible and usable.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

42. The course materials should be well organized.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
43. The materials presented should be appropriate for the online course.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

44. The instructional materials should be consistent with the learning outcomes.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

45. The resources and materials should be referenced.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

**Learner Interaction**

46. The requirements for the course interaction need to be clearly listed.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
47. The instructor should clearly state his/her standards for response and availability.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

48. The activities should include student interaction.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

49. The activities should include instructor to student interaction.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

50. The activities should include student to student interaction.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
Course Technology

51. Required technology should be easy to download.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

52. Instructions to offer online resources should be clearly stated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

Learner Support

53. Clear descriptions of technical support should be offered.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

54. Clear descriptions of academic support should be offered.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
Accessibility

55. The course should be accessible to people with disabilities.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

Demographic Information

56. What is your Gender?
   a. Female
   b. Male

57. What is your age range?
   a. Under 22
   b. 23-32 years
   c. 33-42 years
   d. 43-52 years
   e. >53

58. What is your ethnicity?
   a. Caucasian
   b. African American
   c. Hispanic
   d. Asian American
   e. Other

59. Do you currently work over 30 hours a week?
   a. Yes
   b. No
60. How many credit hours are you enrolled in?
   a. 3-6
   b. 7-12
   c. 13-18
   d. 19-21
   e. >21

61. What is your current GPA?
   a. 4.0-3.5
   b. 3.49-3.0
   c. 2.99-2.5
   d. 2.49-2.0
   e. <2.0

62. Why or why not would you take an online course?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

63. Is this universities course management system easy to navigate and understand? Why or Why not?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
Hello class:

My name is Kristina Artino, and I am a Master’s student in the College of Education. I am pursuing a degree in Post-Secondary Technical Education. I am interested in studying the differences in students’ perceptions of a quality online course based on their experiences if they have had a fully online course, than if they have not had a fully online course. I would greatly appreciate it if you would take 10-15 minutes to complete this Quality Online Course Survey. I have included green bubble sheets, and pencils for your use. Please note that on question number 1 I am interested in only fully online courses. Also, if you have taken more than one online course, please use your most effective or memorable online course experience to answer the rest of the questions below. Questions 62 and 63 are open-ended, so you can write directly on the survey. No personal identification is requested, and completion of this survey is voluntary.

Thank you,

Kristina
APPENDIX E

IRB APPROVAL

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

November 16, 2010

Kristine A. Artlip
2520 Colony Park Place, Apt. E
Stow, Ohio 44224

From: Sharon McWhorter, IRB Administrator
Re: IRB Number 20101112 "Master Thesis"

Thank you for submitting your Exemption Request for the referenced study. Your request was approved on November 16, 2010. The protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for exemptions:

☐ Exemption 1 - Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.
☐ Exemption 2 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.
☐ Exemption 3 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior not exempt under category 2, but subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.
☐ Exemption 4 - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.
☐ Exemption 5 - Research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine public programs or benefits.
☐ Exemption 6 - Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make changes to the study's design or procedures that increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, please contact me to discuss whether or not a new application must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. This office will hold your exemption application for a period of three years from the approval date. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit another Exemption Request. If the research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

☐ Approved consent form/s enclosed

Cc: Susan Olson - Advisor
Cc: Stephanie Woods - IRB Chair

Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Akron, OH 44325-2102
330-972-7866 • 330-972-5251 Fax
The University of Akron is an Equal Education and Employment Opportunity

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APPENDIX F
OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

Question 62: Why or why not would you take an online course?

Would Take (Grouped by category)

Flexibility

Had an online class

1. Flexibility, convenience and schedule.
2. I took it because it allowed me to take a fuller class load but not feel so overloaded with class meetings.

No online class

Convenience

Had an online class

3. They are nice because you can do them on your own time and listen to the instructors stuff more than once if needed.
4. I would, because you can do the projects and any other requirements at your own time.
5. Only in certain cases I will take online courses because it’s very convenient. Materials are easy to understand.

No online class

6. I would take an online course if it was a class I need and couldn’t take it during the regular semester in a classroom.
7. I would if I could work at my own pace and didn’t have to worry about deadlines.
8. I would because it works best with me balancing school and work
9. I would that way I can work more and be on campus less.
10. Why? Because it will allow me to take another class in my major.
11. In order to accumulate more free time

12. I feel like online course would be good for me because of working and other life obligations.

13. I would love to take an online course because I am a commuter and it would save gas.

14. I would because it would be on my time to complete

**Scheduling**

Had an online class

15. Fit in schedule a lot easier.

No online class

16. I would if I couldn’t make it to class.

17. I would take it if it was all I could fit into a schedule.

18. The actual class would not fit in my schedule and had previously heard that the class would be easy to take online.

19. My courses are offered here offline.

20. I would, that way I could take additional courses.

21. Would because it’s more flexible. Would not because it seems like I’d forget about assignments.

**Easy**

Had an online class

22. I had to when I was living out of state. They are usually easy and can be done at your leisure as long as you meet your deadlines

23. It is easy.

24. Make full time, some people work faster (slower) than others, earn an easy credit, simple, and utilize my expensive laptop more.

25. I would take an online course because it is more credits and you don’t have to take the time to go to class. It may be easier.
Would not take

Learning Style

Had an online class

26. It’s really easy to fall behind. You have to be extremely disciplined to make sure you get the work done on time.
27. The instructions were never clearly stated and the “instructor” was not helpful. It was very unclear as to when assignments were due
28. I wouldn’t want to take another online course only because sometimes I would forget about the assignments and I learn better in a classroom setting.

No online class

29. I wouldn’t just because it seems less like a class. I don’t want to pay for a garbage class.
30. Because I have not really wanted to and I don’t think I’d learn a lot.
31. Learn better in classroom.
32. Do not know now.
33. Might not be clear and easy to understand
34. Don’t like relying on an electronic system.
35. Too much of a procrastinator...I’ll finish this answer later.
36. I would not take it because it’s hard to get motivated.
37. I wouldn’t be able to discipline myself. I would rather just go to class.
38. I would not take an online course out of fear that I would not keep up with my work. I’m a professional procrastinator and a fully online class would bring out the worst in me.
39. I prefer to learn in a classroom it’s what I’m used to. I’m afraid if I take an online course I might not go to class at all.
40. Experience a different learning style.
41. Would not take an online course. I would not be motivated to keep up with the work if I didn’t to attend an actual class.
42. I would not because I would have to spend too much time reading.
43. Doesn’t work well with how I learn so no I would not take another online class.

44. Not online! Too much info to take in without further elaboration on issues. I have a great professor to teach this course it’s easier to understand after her explanations. If I’m not in a class I won’t pay attention.

45. I would not because I would forget to do a lot of things.

46. I would not take an online course because I feel like it’s a waste of money. I am paying to go to college to be taught not to teach myself.

47. I like clear directions. Online is open ended and sounds kind of unclear. Also if I do not have a teacher telling me what to do I might not do it.

48. I don’t know if I could find time to do the work on my own time. I’m not disciplined enough. I wouldn’t want to fail.

49. I’m a better learner when I’m inside the classroom. I feel that there are too many distractions when I take an online class.

50. If the class is a big size to take it online because you have the information in front of you and it would be easier to learn and understand.

Classroom Interaction/Engagement

Had an online class

51. I have taken an online course and I would not take one again. It is kind of difficult to keep up with the lectures and stuff. I would rather be in a classroom with students and a teacher.

52. It is not as easy to learn and understand without face-to-face interaction.

53. Not as easy to interact with your professor or other students.

No online class

54. I would like it if it was a class I did not feel like I would struggle in. I do better with face to face interaction.

55. I would not take one because I like classroom interaction.

56. Wouldn’t –No face to face interaction on a regular basis. Different learning environment.

57. I feel more engaged in a classroom, I concentrate and work harder. There’s more to class than just the information.
58. I like the personal interaction with other people too much to ever take an online course.

59. I have never actually thought about it. I like in person courses because I as they will help me learn better than online.

60. Because socializing is a key part of education.

61. I would not. I like the classroom setting and the student teacher relationship.

62. I would not because I need actual interaction with the professor and classmates to discuss assignments with.

63. I like personal interaction with my professor so, I would not.

64. I like interaction with the class and teacher and not used to the problems that might arise on an online course.

65. I would rather be in a classroom.

66. I’m a contact person.

*Easy*

No online class

67. Because it’s too easy.

68. Not as credible personally.

69. I would not take one because I feel as though it would not be as good of a quality as a normal course.

**Question 63:** Is this universities course management system easy to navigate and understand? Why or Why not?

**Why**

*Yes/Easy*

1. It was kind of easy after I figured out how to access the lectures through a link.

2. Yes because it is easy to follow and find the materials under the class title.

3. Yes. It’s pretty easy.

4. Yes.
5. Yes.

6. It’s extremely easy. 😊

7. Course Management System is phenomenal!! Easy to navigate!! Very simplistic.

8. Yes it is very easy.

9. IT is pretty easy. It could be better, it could be worse like a lot of things in the Milky Way.

10. Yes, because I have been using it for many years.

11. For the most part yes. I haven’t had any issues this year.

12. Easy because we are used to it.

13. Yes, very easy, it would take a complete idiot not to understand.

14. Yes, all the tools we need are there.

15. Yes

16. Course Management System is easy to use, that is when it’s working.

17. Course Management System is easy to deal with because it’s so easy. Not only do have the teachers to help you, Course Management System practically tells you what to do.

18. Yes, I know how to use all of the information. I just kind of explore and all of the buttons are there.

19. For the most part, yes. It keeps everything simple.

20. Yes, they had material to help you with it.

21. Yes, I’ve been using it for 3 years now.

22. Yes, I love it.

23. Yes, simply laid out.
24. Yes, for the most part. But some teachers don't use it often.

25. Sometimes it's easy for the most part.

26. Yes because it's well densed and easy after I got used to it.

27. Yes it is. I never had a problem with it.

28. Yes, everything is easy to find.

29. Yes.

30. Yes, I believe it is there are tutorials and such if you need them.

31. For the most part yes but a lot of times files do not download correctly.

32. Yes I love Course Management System it's nice to be able to know your grade.

33. Yes it is easy! Wish all teacher use it. Really helps 😊

34. Yes, it is easy to access.

35. Sometimes. It depends what you’re trying to find. There's a lot of information on Course Management System.

36. Yes, because I’ve used it before. It’s better to have because it’s easier to keep up with your grades.

37. Yes because everything is easily spaced out and easy to find.

Clear/Straight Forward

38. Yes, it is straight forward.
39. Yes! Everything at the top of the page means things dear how to reach what is needed.

40. Yes as long as the instructor set up the information clearly. If they put things where you
    need to take 10 steps to get somewhere then no it is not.

41. Yes everything is clearly stated and organized.

42. Yes. Everything is outlined exactly where it should be and is easy to locate and read.

43. Yes because everything is clearly presented and explained.

44. Yes. It’s very straight forward and my instructors have gone over it (beat that)

45. Yes, everything is labeled.

46. Yes, because I can find anything relatively quickly.

47. Yes because everything is stated clearly.

48. Yes, all instructions are clear and concise.

49. Yes. Clear links, logical.

50. Yes- everything is labeled clearly and in an organized manner.

51. Yes, the directions are obvious and clear.

52. Yes, because it is clearly laid out.

53. Yes, because it lists your classes and all the info you need. You don’t have to look very
    hard to find the info you need.

54. Yes, very self explanatory.

55. Yes! You’re able to see the breakdown of everything. Self explain.

56. Yes, it is very clear cut.
57. Yes, it’s set up and organized well.

Helpful/Useful
58. Yes, very helpful.
59. Yes, it is very helpful.
60. Yes, very useful.

Why Not
Negative perspective
61. It’s ok but I think it’s more a pain than anything.
62. No, because the instructions is not the same on content and the same links.
63. Sometimes I feel it could be better organized or more appealing to the eye.
64. No. It seems scattered and un-organized. I went to Kent before and they had a hard one to navigate but better than Akron’s.

No answer
65. No answer.
66. No answer
67. No answer