



Shasta College

Office of Research and
Institutional Effectiveness

Shasta College Online Student Learning Survey: Key Findings

Fall 2016



Jenna Barry Highfield

Research Analyst

Fall 2016 Shasta College Online Student Learning

Survey: Key Findings

Background

The Shasta College Online Student Learning Survey is administered to all Shasta College students every two years to assess the effectiveness and overall sense of satisfaction with the College's online and hybrid learning programs and services. Students are asked about their online class interactions, use of Canvas to support their online learning, opinions regarding hybrid and online courses, reasons for dropping an online or hybrid course, use of technical, or tech, support for an issue with an online course, and two open-ended questions asking for suggestions and comments for improving online and/or hybrid courses. Student responses to the survey are presented in this report.

Methodology

Procedure

The survey was administered online using the online survey software, Survey Monkey. Shasta College Library staff provided the Office of Research and Institutional Effectiveness with a list of e-mail addresses of 9,055 active Shasta College students, to whom the survey was distributed on October 11, 2016. The survey was open for students to complete for approximately three weeks. The survey instrument and analyses are discussed below.

Survey Instrument

The Online Student Learning Survey is presented to students at the end of the Library Survey. Students were "opted in" to the survey by responding to the question asking if they had taken an online or hybrid class at Shasta College by answering "I have taken hybrid classes," "I have taken online classes," or "I have taken both online and hybrid classes."

The survey included a variety of questions related to online and hybrid courses, with questions focusing on online or hybrid class interactions, which features were most supportive of online or hybrid learning, reasons why online or hybrid courses were dropped, and use of tech support for issues with the online learning tool, Canvas. Students were asked to respond to survey questions using a variety of response options, including rating their frequency of an activity (i.e., always, often, sometimes, etc.), rating their level of agreement (i.e., strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), or by simply checking a box to indicate the occurrence of an activity. Open-ended questions were also included to allow respondents to note any comments in relation to their online or hybrid courses. Additionally, there were six demographic questions included at the conclusion of the survey, asking respondents to report their age, sex, zip code of residence, employment status, race/ethnicity, and the primary location at which they take courses.

Analysis

The overall level of agreement is calculated for each item, where appropriate, by summing the responses of “agree” and “strongly agree” for each item, and dividing that number by the total number of students responding to that item. Items measured in frequency (i.e., always, often, sometimes, etc.) are presented by taking the sum of the responses of “always” and “often” to represent the general frequency with which a person engages in an activity. Qualitative comments are summarized in tables and overall themes are reported.

Participants

There was an overall response rate of 4.8% (437 responses of 9,055 e-mails sent). However, of the 437 responses, 28 (6.4%) were under the age of 18 and therefore excluded from analyses. Of the 409 students (4.5% adjusted response rate) 18 and over who responded to the survey, 310 (75.8%) responded to the question asking if they had taken an online or hybrid course. Of these students, 16.5% ($n = 51$) reported having taken a hybrid course, 25.2% ($n = 78$) reported taking an online course, and 33.2% ($n = 103$) had taken both an online and hybrid course. A little over 25% ($n = 78$) of the students responding to this question had not taken an online or hybrid course at Shasta College. Thus, these students are not included in any of the below analyses, resulting in a total of 232 students in the remaining analyses.

Student Age and Gender

Students on average were 32 years old ($SD = 12.68$, range = 18 to 62), with the most common ages of students to be 19 and 20. Females were on average 33 years of age compared to males, who reported being 30 years old on average. See Table 1 below for all student age characteristics by gender.

Thirty-four students who reported taking an online or hybrid class did not respond to the question asking them to report their gender. Of the 198 students who did report their gender, 141 (or 71.2%) students indicated they were female, 26.8% ($n = 53$) were male, and 4 were an undeclared gender.

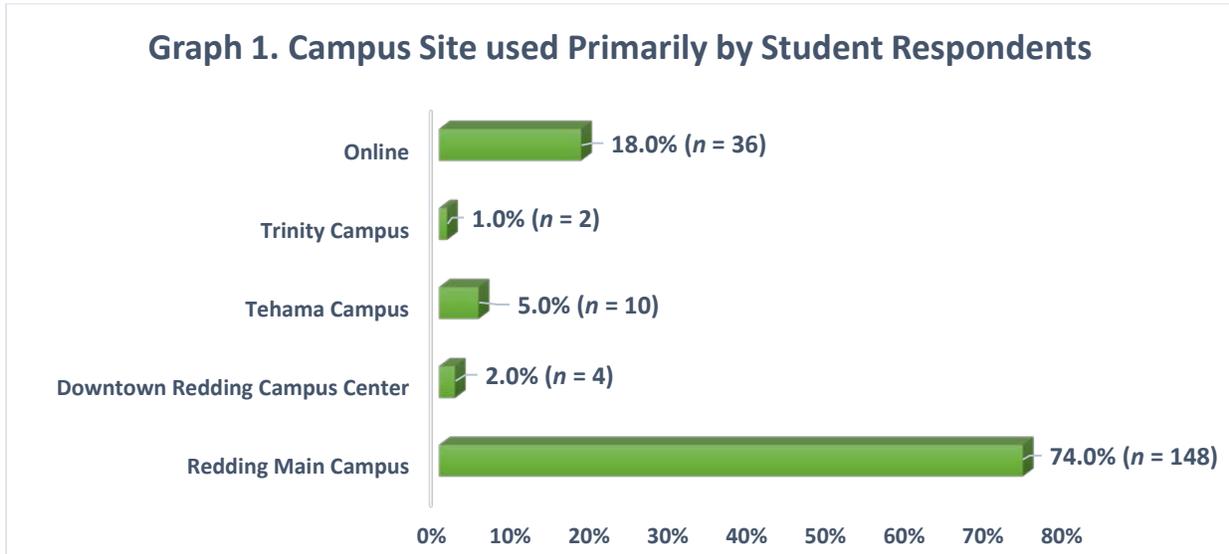
Table 1. Student Age Characteristics by Gender

<i>Student Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Undeclared	4	26.00	4.97	20	31
Female	138	33.07	13.03	18	62
Male	52	30.29	11.93	18	62
Total	194	32.18	12.68	18	62

NOTE. One male student and 3 female students did not report their age, resulting in a total of 26.8% male, 71.2% female, and 2% undeclared.

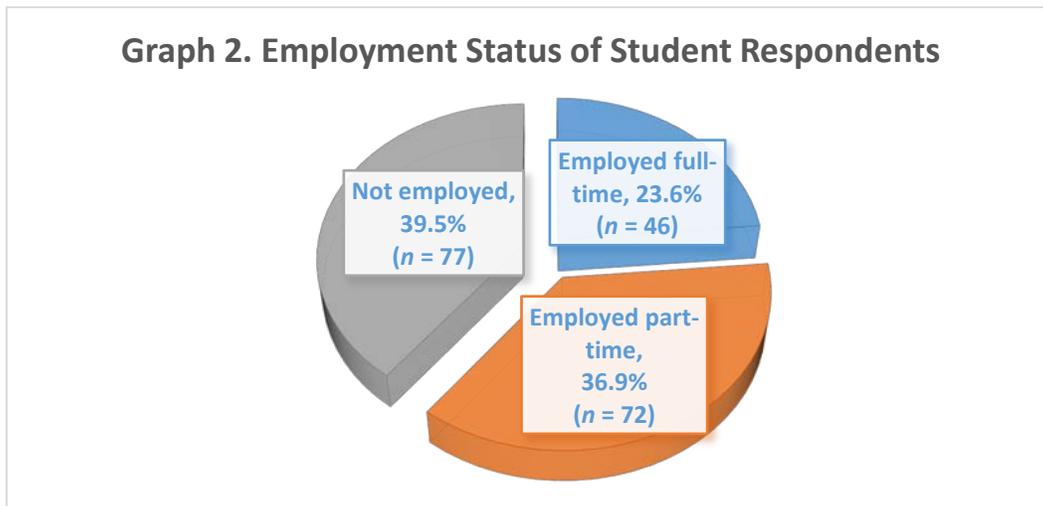
Primary Campus Site used by Student Respondents

Of the 200 students who responded to the question asking about the location where the majority of their classes were held, most students indicated they took the majority of their classes at the main Redding campus ($n = 148$, 74%), with 18% of students indicating most of their classes were online. See Graph 1 for all percentages of student enrollment by Shasta College campus location.



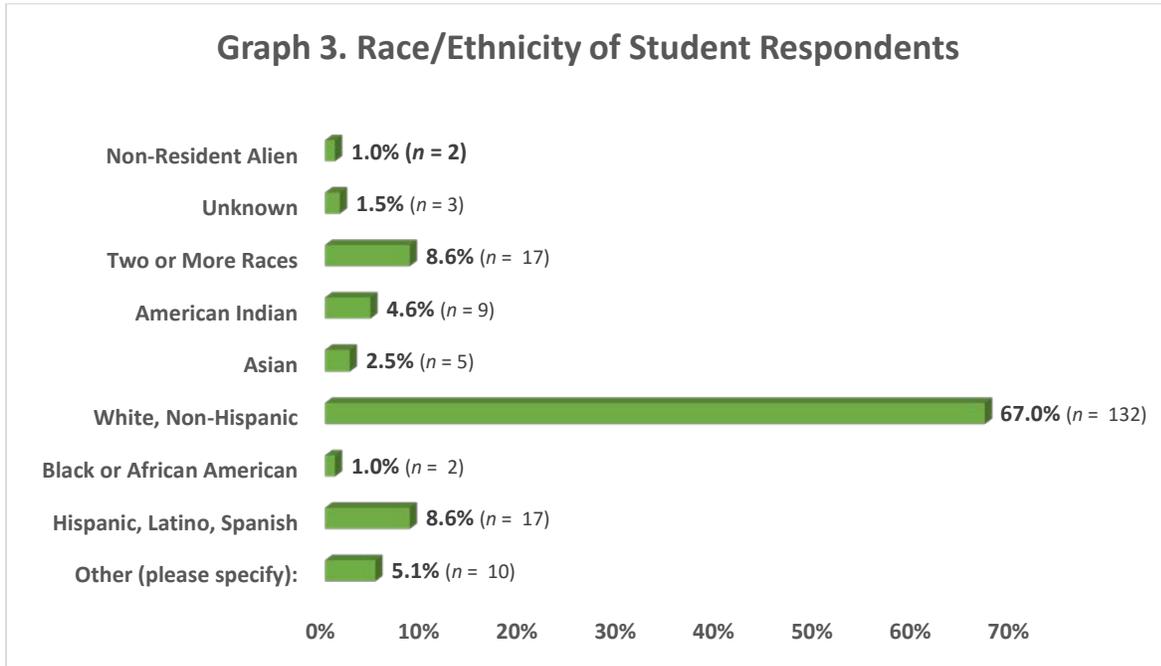
Student Employment Status

Students were also asked about their employment status. Of the students who responded ($n = 195$, 37 skipped), 23.6% ($n = 46$) reported they were employed full-time, 36.9% ($n = 72$) were employed part-time, and 39.5% ($n = 77$) were not employed. See Graph 2 below.



Student Race/Ethnicity

Over two-thirds (67%, $n = 132$) of respondents were White, with Hispanic/Latino/Spanish the next most common race/ethnicity at 8.6%, and students identifying as two or more races also represented at 8.6%. See Graph 3 for all percentages of race/ethnicities of student respondents indicating they had taken an online or hybrid course at Shasta College.

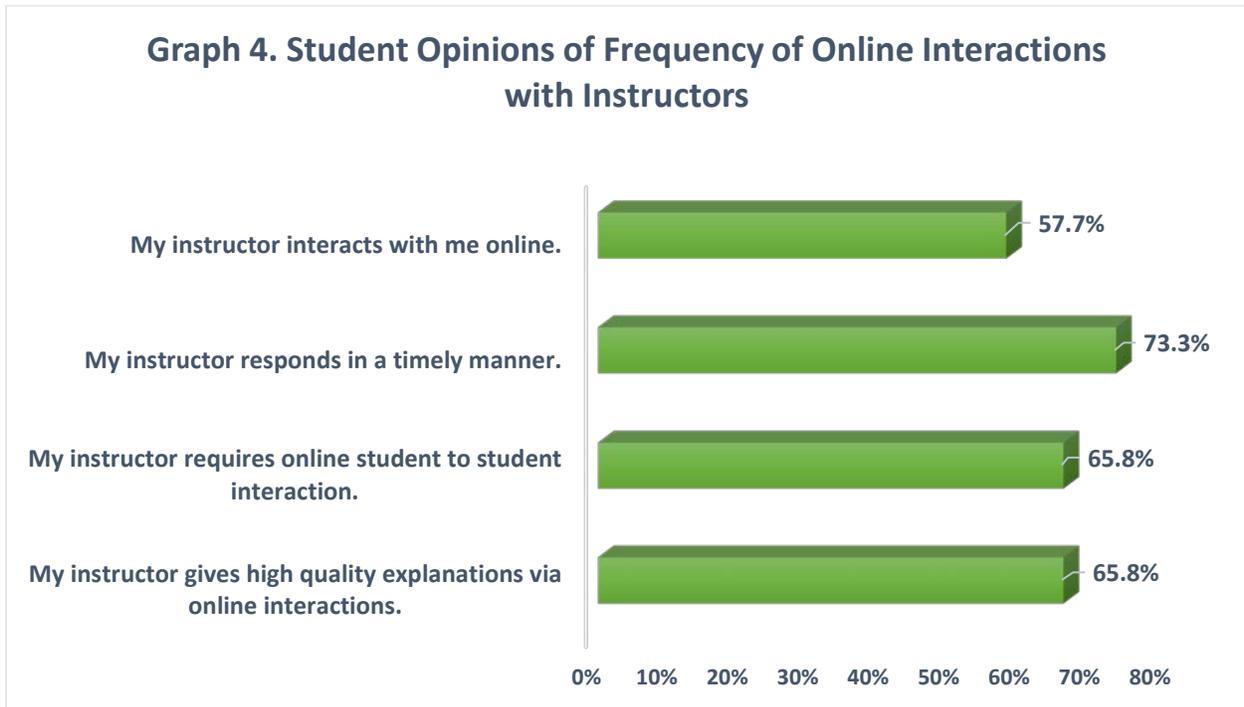


Results

Online Interactions between Instructors and Students

Students were asked to respond to statements regarding the frequency of specific online class interactions that may occur between the student and the instructor. The frequency of these interactions was measured with the response options of “always,” “often,” “sometimes,” “rarely,” and “not at all.” Responses of “always” and “often” were combined in the percentages below to represent frequency of interactions. The statements to which students were asked to respond are presented in Graph 4 below.

Overall, the majority of students (73.3%) indicated that instructors “always” or “often” respond in a timely manner. Over two-thirds of students who responded indicated that instructors always or often require *online student to student interaction* (65.8%). Additionally, 65.8% of students also indicated that instructors always or often provide *high quality explanations via online interactions*. Finally, 57.7% of students indicated that their *instructor interacts with me online*. See Graph 4 below for all statements and percentages.

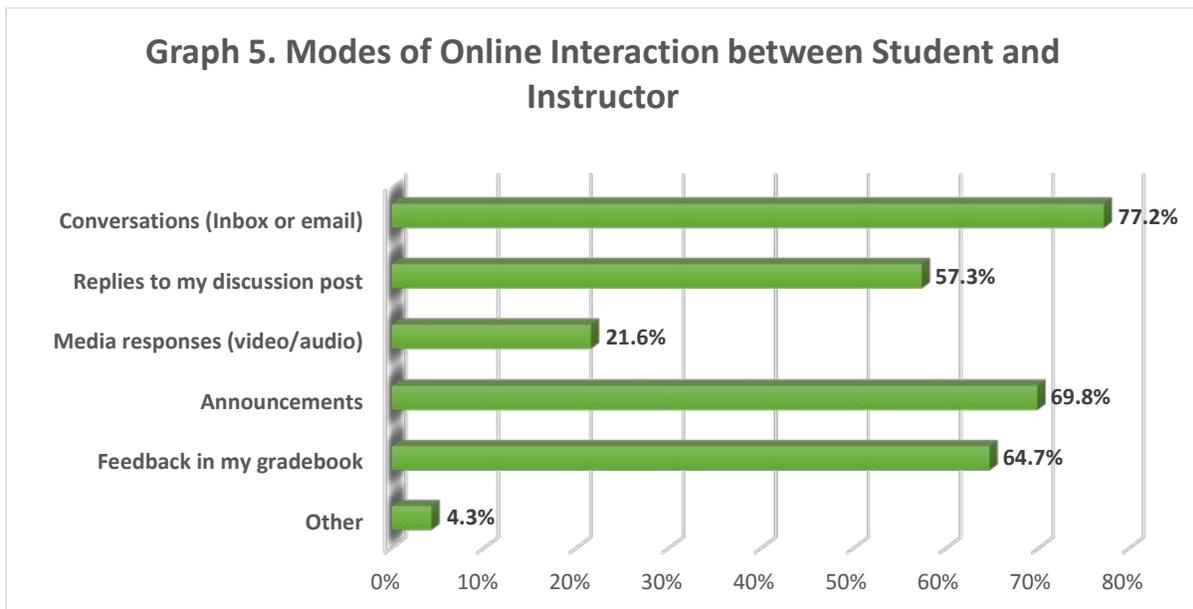


NOTE. Percentages are calculated by summing the responses of “always” and “often” and dividing that number by the total number of responses to that item.

Modes of Online Interactions

Students were asked to identify the various modes of online interaction utilized between them and their instructors by indicating whether they used each mode of communication or not. The percentage is calculated by taking the number of students indicating that they interact with their instructor in the way described divided by the total number of student respondents.

The majority of students (77.2%) indicated that they interact with their instructor through conversations via email or their inbox. Additionally, 69.8% said that they interact with their instructors through announcements, with 64.7% indicating that feedback in the gradebook is how they interact with their instructor. A little over 57% of students indicated that instructors interact with them by replying to discussion posts, and finally only 21.6% indicated that the interaction with their instructors occurs through media responses. See Graph 5 below for all modes of interactions between students and instructors and percentages.



NOTE. Percentage is calculated by taking the number of students indicating that they interact with their instructor in the way described divided by the total number of student respondents.

Modes of Online Interactions: *Other* Responses

There were 10 responses of “other” (4.3%) where students identified additional ways of interaction between them and their instructors. One student indicated that an instructor runs a chat during office hours where another student reported that their instructor uses Facebook for feedback. See Table 2 below for all comments to the response option of “other” for this statement.

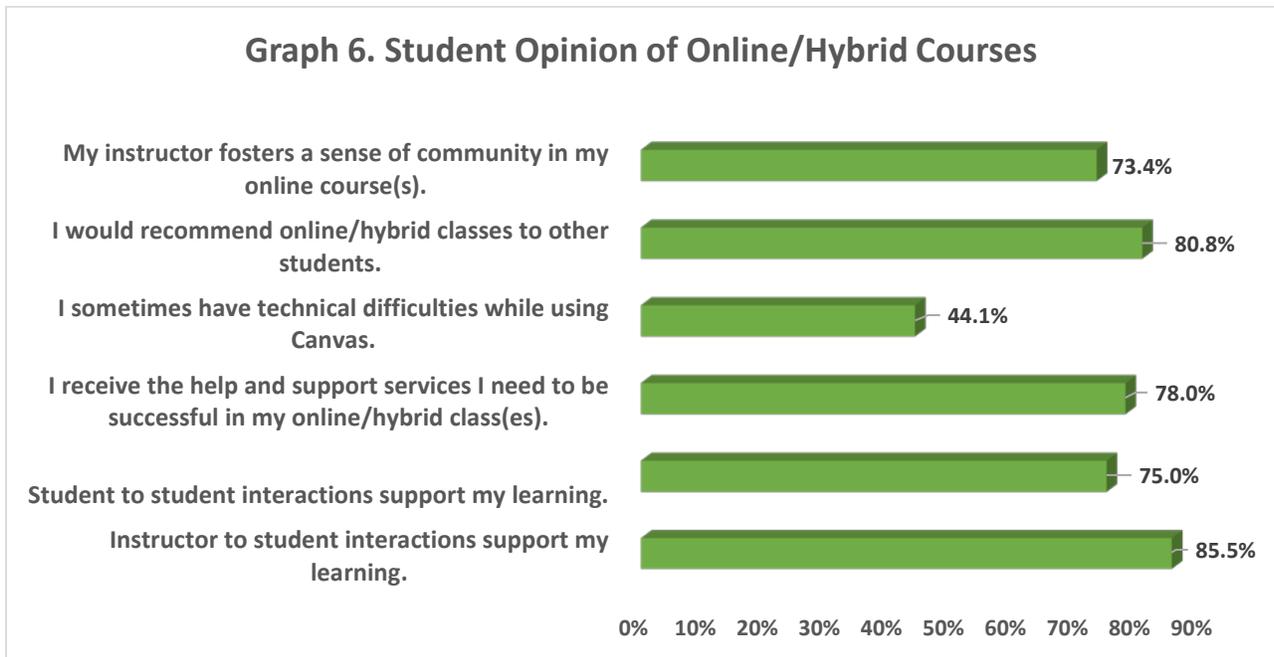
Table 2. Responses to “Other” for Statement: *My instructor interacts with me online through...*

“Other” Responses to Statement: <i>My instructor interacts with me online through...</i>	
1.	in class
2.	he runs a chat during office hours.
3.	Announced
4.	Varies by teacher
5.	Texts
6.	*
7.	I have had several teachers during the past 1.5 years and a few are worthless. About three have been really good.
8.	Email
9.	Facebook
10.	U
11.	Professor “X” responds to every single student individually on our essay assignments, discussion posts, non-graded topic, etc. Wonderful professor !!
12.	Questions on homework. "Ask teacher" button

NOTE. Comments are displayed exactly as typed by students, except any identifying information (i.e., names of professors or programs) was omitted and replaced with “X.”

Student Opinions of Online/Hybrid Courses

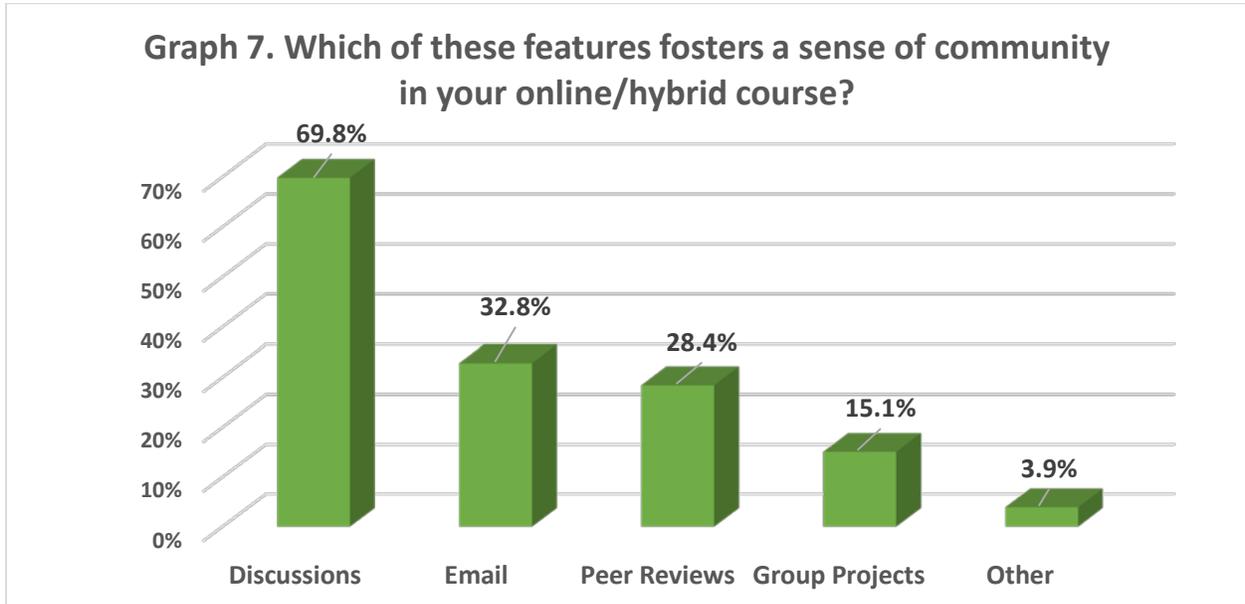
Students were presented with six items focusing on a variety of opinions related to their online/hybrid courses, and were asked to rate their overall level of agreement to each item. Most students were in agreement that instructor to student interactions support their learning, with 85.5% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing to this item. Similarly, 73.4% of students were agreeable that their *instructor fosters a sense of community in my online course(s)*. Other supports that students indicated were helpful to their learning included that of student to student interactions, with 75% of students agreeing that these interactions were helpful to their learning. Seventy-eight percent of students agreed that they *receive the help and support services I need to be successful in my online/hybrid class(es)*. Finally, nearly 81% of students agreed that they would recommend an online or hybrid course to another student. See Graph 6 below for all statements presented to students and percentage of overall agreement.



NOTE. Percentages are calculated by combining the total number of responses of “strongly agree” and “agree” and dividing that number by the total number of responses to that item.

Sense of Community within Online/Hybrid Courses

Students were asked which features of Canvas foster a sense of community in their online/hybrid courses. Nearly 70% of students indicated that discussions fostered a sense of community, with only 32.8% of students indicating that email did the same thing. See Graph 7 below for all student responses to features fostering a sense of community.



NOTE. Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of students who indicated that the feature was supportive of their learning by the total number of students who took an online/hybrid course.

Sense of Community within Online/Hybrid Courses: *Other* Responses

Nine students answered “other” to this question. One student indicated a desire for organized classroom interactions “like the old days” whereas another student stated that “I take online classes so I don’t have to interact with other students.” Additionally, other students indicated that online communities do not have a sense of community, or they do not need to feel a sense of community because it is an online class. See Table 3 below for all responses of “other” features that foster a sense of community for students.

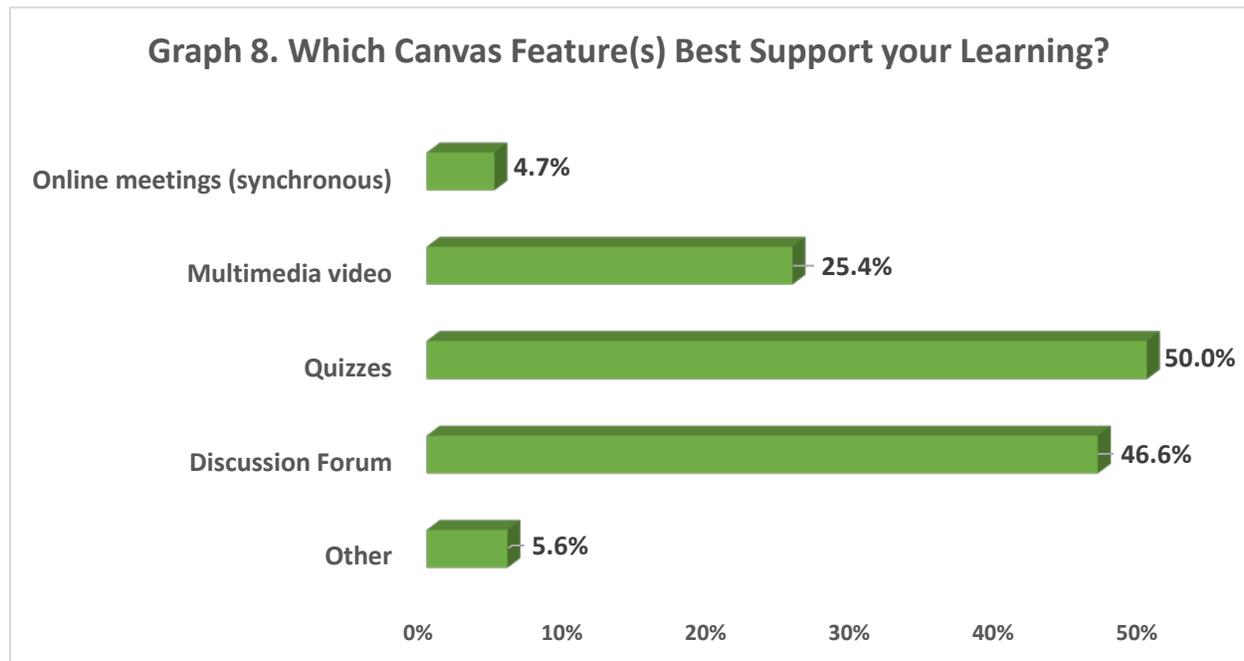
Table 3. Responses of “Other” for Question: *Which of these features fosters a sense of community in your online/hybrid course?*

Responses of “Other” to question: <i>Which of these features fosters a sense of community in your online/hybrid course?</i>	
1.	*
2.	Haven't had one of these classes in years.
3.	not sure how to answer this question
4.	None of the classes ever did.
5.	Unfortunately, when someone leaves a message in Discussions, it is not connected to everyones e-mail so you don't know when they are asking a question. I rarely take the time to look there and now it has been very silent. I feel like I am the only one in an empty classroom which is my computer room. Wish we could all come together in classrooms, where we could ask questions like the old days.
6.	I take online classes so I don't have to interact with other students
7.	there is no sense of community online.
8.	I dont need a sense of community in an online class. It's an online class.
9.	More community could be improved by requiring an original post at beginning of week, then post responses by a second then third date. It would evolve into a more back and forth conversation.

NOTE. Comments are displayed exactly as typed by students.

Canvas Features Supportive of Student Learning

Students were asked which feature(s) of Canvas provide(s) the most support to their learning. Overall, 50% of students indicated that quizzes were supportive of their learning, with 46.6% stating that discussion forums also provide support to their learning. Additional features mentioned were multimedia videos (25.4% of students indicated these were supportive to their learning) and synchronous online meetings (4.7% of students said these were supportive to their learning). See Graph 8 below for all percentages of Canvas features supportive to students' learning.



Canvas Features Supportive of Student Learning: *Other* Responses

Thirteen students answered “other” to this question. Two of these students identified “modules” as a helpful feature in Canvas, another student stated “feedback/comments from instructor” was helpful, while another two students identified “quizzes” and “testing” as helpful components. One student identified “posted work/examples” as a helpful feature. One student described Canvas as “complicated and confusing. Tired of being forced to learn canvas and then it just updates and changes again.” Other students did not find any Canvas features as supportive to their learning, or they identified themselves as learning best in the classroom. See Table 4 below for all student responses of “other” to additional Canvas features supporting their learning.

Table 4. Responses of “Other” to Question: *Which Canvas feature(s) best support your learning?*

Responses of “Other” to the Question: <i>Which Canvas feature(s) best support your learning?</i>	
1.	the whole thing is just a posting place for assignments, and awkward bare minimum replies. It is all very forced, and there is no real "community" though not for lack of Teacher effort. Many students are not used to bonding over assignments, and school ordered correspondence.
2.	Quizzes
3.	posted work/examples.
4.	I learn best in the classroom
5.	H
6.	None of it. I would have learned more by buying a Dvd on the course and taught myself.
7.	Feedback/comments from instructor
8.	Canvas is complicated and confusing. Tired of being forced to learn canvas and then it just updates and changes again. I'm not trying to be negative just completely honest. Canvas "sucks"
9.	I learn by getting it wrong and then trying to figure out why. Sometimes I do, and sometimes I just have to accept it the way it is.
10.	Testing
11.	modules
12.	I hate canvas
13.	Modules
14.	Posting of Grades based on turned in assignments
15.	None

NOTE. Comments are displayed exactly as typed by students.

Dropping Online/Hybrid Courses

The current question asks students if they have ever received a grade of D or F in an online or hybrid course, or if they had ever dropped an online or hybrid course while attending Shasta College. Because the question is asking students to report on three different activities simultaneously (earning a D, earning a F, and dropping a course), it is not completely clear to which activity they are referring when indicating that they did or did not engage in one of the stated activities. Therefore, this initial question should be interpreted with caution and more weight should be placed on the interpretation of questions asking students the type of course they dropped (hybrid and/or online), and finally, the question asking students to identify reasons why they had dropped the course.

Of the students who responded to this question ($n = 209$), 76.6% indicated that they had never received a grade of D or F or dropped an online or hybrid course at Shasta College, whereas 23.4% indicated that they had done one of these activities. There were 23 students who skipped this question and were therefore omitted from analyses. The above percentages are taken out of the students who responded to this question ($n = 209$) and not out of the total number of students who responded to the survey ($n = 232$).

Students indicating they had dropped a course were asked to identify the type of course(s) they had dropped, and were allowed multiple responses if they had dropped both an online and a hybrid course. Of the students responding to the survey, 37, or 15.9%, reported dropping an online course, whereas 16, or 6.9%, reported dropping a hybrid course.

There were 47 students who reported reasons for dropping a course. The two most common reasons students identified for dropping courses were due to employment commitments (16.3% of students, or $n = 8$) and difficulty understanding how to navigate the course (16.3% of students, or $n = 8$). A little over 10%, or 5 students, reported family as the reason for dropping, with another 10.2%, or 5, students indicating that they dropped the course because of the instructor. Four students indicated personal medical illness/condition to be the primary reason for dropping, with additional themed reasons students identified for dropping to be “course” ($n = 3$), “difficult” ($n = 3$), and “subject” ($n = 3$). More specifically, students indicated that course content was sometimes too difficult to complete online, other students mentioned not liking the subject or struggling in the course. Two students identified technical issues as the primary reason for dropping. See Graph 9 below for a distribution of reasons for dropping a course, and Figure 1 for a visual representation of themes identified from the responses in the “other” category. Table 5 lists all “other” reasons students reported for dropping an online or hybrid course.

Graph 9. Primary Reasons Students Dropped an Online/Hybrid Course

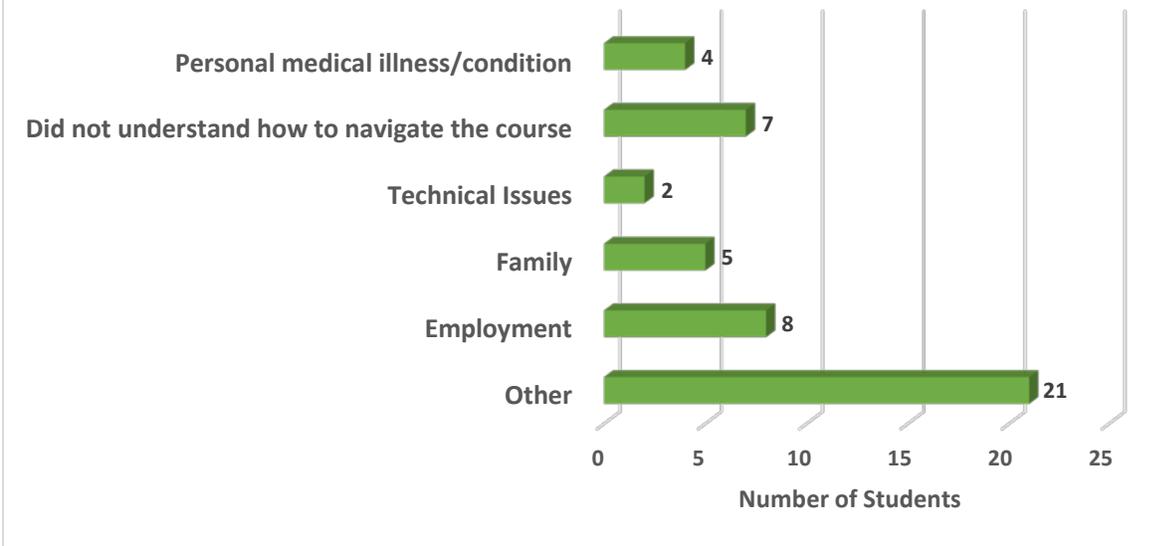


Figure 1. “Other” Reasons Students indicated they dropped an Online or Hybrid Course

Q26 Please indicate the primary reason you dropped the course:

Answered: 49 Skipped: 388

Subject Drop Course Assignments
 Instructor Interaction Difficult

NOTE. Instructor was mentioned 5 times; Course, 3 times; Difficult, 3 times; Subject, 3 times; Assignments, 2 times; Drop, 2 times; Interaction, 2 times.

Table 5. “Other” Reasons Students Dropped an Online or Hybrid Course

Student Responses to the “Other” Category for Reasons they Dropped an Online or Hybrid Course
1. Class was boring
2. Did not receive materials and missed first assignments which set me back for the entire course. NO extra credit was available. The course seemed very sterile.
3. Didn’t feel like I learned anything
4. didn’t like the subject
5. I brought in a question from online math problems. Instructor “X” showed me how to do it on board. I wrote it down on paper step by step, then took it back to online problems and it was wrong. Very frustrating.
6. I couldn’t afford the course material and got behind early and had trouble catching up
7. I didn’t drop I got a D
8. I forgot about it
9. Instructor was not helpful, font size too small to read, could not adjust size.
10. Issues with the teacher
11. Online classes are just not for me, I need human interaction.
12. Personal reasons
13. Statistics class was difficult need to have an instructor to work one on one with
14. Subject and instructor difficult to understand follow. Testing difficulty.
15. subject matter
16. Teacher’s quizzes and assignments were confusing and he was not available to answer questions through email
17. the course was to difficult and did not like not have to go to class and I felt isolated from peer interaction.
18. The instructor was rude.
19. Though I completed almost every other assignment, I did not complete 1 of the 2 essays required to get a c in the class, though my total percentage in the class was a b-
20. To many classes
21. Wasn’t online for the drop one

NOTE. Comments are displayed exactly as typed by students, except any identifying information (i.e., names of professors or programs) was omitted and replaced with “X.”

Use of Technical Support

Students were asked if they had ever needed to contact technical, or tech, support for an issue related to an online, hybrid, or web-enhanced course. Of the 205 students who responded to this question, 26.8% ($n = 55$) indicated that they had contacted tech support for an issue related to an online, hybrid, or web-enhanced course. Of the students who indicated having had contacted tech support, 37, or 67.3% agreed or strongly agreed that their issue was resolved promptly, whereas 9.3% of students ($n = 5$) strongly disagreed that their issue was resolved promptly.

Of the students who responded to the question asking about methods of contacting tech support, 50.9% of students indicated they contacted tech support via email compared to 39.6% who used the phone. Three students who identified “other” methods of contact indicated that they used both methods to contact tech support. The other two students choosing “other” indicated that their high school instructor and instructor, respectively, contacted tech support for them.

Additional Comments/Experiences with Tech Support

An additional question asked students to share any other comments regarding their experience(s) with tech support. Eleven students shared their responses to this question, and the overall themes are displayed below in Figure 2. Four students reported having difficulty due to instructors “not knowing” how to use Canvas or because “the instructor has done something wrong”. See Table 6 below for all comments from students regarding their experience with tech support.

Figure 2. Primary Themes Identified from Additional Comments from Students about their experiences with Tech Support



NOTE. Tech Support was mentioned 3 times; Canvas, 3 times; Teachers, 3 times; Instructor, 2 times; Courses, 2 times.

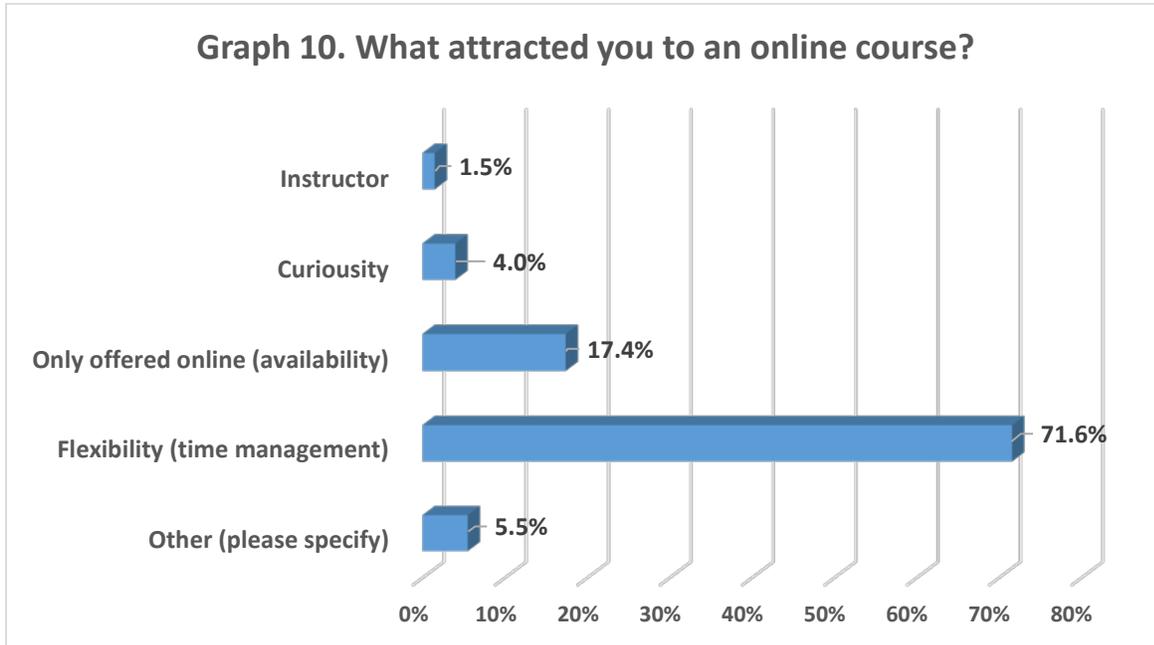
Table 6. Additional Student Comments Shared about Experience(s) with Tech Support

Additional Student Comments Shared Regarding their Experience with Tech Support
1. Canvas is good with most teachers. Some, however, do not know how to set it up and it makes it difficult to move around, especially when one has a slow computer. I would rather contact the teachers through e-mail rather than canvas because it takes so long. Some refuse to use e-mail and others refuse to use canvas.
2. Canvas is not compatible with someone who is using a ""Dish"" satellite internet connection.
3. Every issue I have had has been because the instructor has done something wrong.
4. I brought the I of a glitch in the iOS app that wasn't in the online PC version. The online tech dismissed my glitch as ""not a feature"" and that I should ""send my request to another department"" instead of forwarding the information themselves. I included detailed descriptions and screen shots.
5. I really enjoy online courses at Shasta College, always have and always will!
6. I think some of the teachers need to learn how to use the professor settings a little better. Or for those who don't have online classes how to post grades via the semester on how a student is doing so we don't have to keep asking the teacher.
7. Last semester when I had problem with my "X" Class, My instructor and the tech support did not help me at all. The assignments or other homeworks supposed to due every Sunday but the instructor closed it on Friday without gave me the information. I almost drop off that class. Thanks to my counsellour who helped me out with my problems.
8. More workshops on how to access the library resources and how to use internet/hybrid courses to students' best advantage for learning.
9. Tech support rocks
10. The problems I had might have been due to the fact Canvas was fairly new at the time and still kinks to work out. I don't think the problems were a negative reflection of the system as a whole. I actually like online classes a lot. They work really good for some classes and not so good for others. It really depends on the teacher and the subject.
11. This contact with tech support was related to the font size on the website.

NOTE. Comments are displayed exactly as typed by students, except any identifying information (i.e., names of professors or programs) was omitted and replaced with "X."

Reasons Students Enrolled in an Online Course

Nearly 72% of students indicated that they were primarily attracted to online courses because of flexibility and time management. A little over 17% of students indicated that they took an online course because it was only offered online. Additional reasons that attracted students to an online course include the *instructor* (1.5%), *curiosity* (4%), and *other* reasons (5.5%). See Graph 10 below.



Reasons Students Enrolled in an Online Course: *Other* Reasons

Of the 11 students who indicated “other” reasons for enrolling in an online course, 3 students indicated that they did not have a choice when it came to enrolling in online courses, though two were not specific, and the other indicated that there is “only one class with one instructor for the program I am in. Only been able to do in the classroom one semester out of five.” One student enrolled online because the course was only available online at that time. Another student indicated that s/he does not have reliable transportation, therefore making online courses an easy and convenient way to attend college. See Table 7 for all “other” reasons students enrolled in an online course.

Table 7. “Other” Reasons Students Enrolled in an Online Course

“Other” Reasons Students Enrolled in an Online Course
1. Class requirement
2. Class was only available online at the time
3. Had no choice
4. I did not have a choice, only one class with one instructor for the program I am in. Only been able to do in the classroom one semester out of five.
5. I do not have reliable transportation so the online classes are a great option, although they require much more work than an on campus class.
6. I'm pregnant and due in Nov
7. just ended up that way
8. My surface tablet does not interact we with the programs. My tablet does not work with all the segments if study areas.
9. My teacher got hurt and i was forced to online course.
10. Only offered as hybrid
11. Time

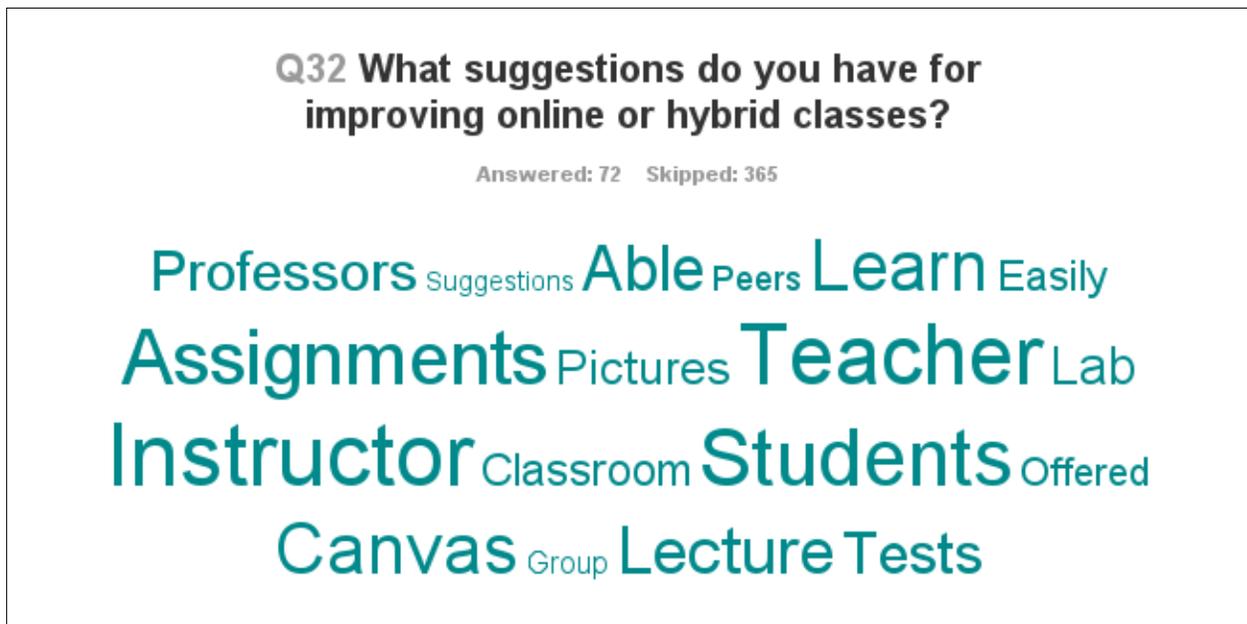
NOTE. Comments are displayed exactly as typed by students.

Suggestions for Improving Online or Hybrid Classes

Students were asked to offer suggestions for improving online and/or hybrid courses. There were 72 students who responded to this question. Main themes are presented below in Figure 3. Overall, the words “Instructor,” “Teacher,” and “Professor” were mentioned a combined total of 31 times, with “assignments” mentioned 10 times. In general, several students suggested that instructors vary their use of multimedia techniques, and that instructors also increase their interactions with students, with one student even suggesting monthly office hours be held. Some suggestions of having an interactive classroom, video lectures, or a group chatroom were made, while other students made note that they took an online course to avoid having to do “busy work in the forum... Lecture me on the material and let me take a test when im ready.” Several students mentioned that it would be better if instructors were easier to contact and if they responded to questions in a timelier manner.

One student made mention that communication classes should not be offered online as “instant feedback from instructor or talks with other students should be done face to face.” See Appendix A for all suggestions for improvement made by students.

Figure 3. Themes from Student Suggestions for Improving Online or Hybrid Classes



NOTE. *Instructor* mentioned 17 times; *Teacher*, 11 times; *Students*, 11 times; *Assignments*, 10 times; *Canvas*, 9 times; *Learn*, 5 times; *Lecture*, 5 times; *Able*, 4 times; *Tests*, 3 times; *Professors*, 3 times; *Lab*, 2 times; *Pictures*, 2 times; *Classroom*, 2 times; *Easily*, 2 times; *Offered*, 2 times; *Peers*, 2 times; *Group*, 2 times; *Suggestions*, 2 times.

Additional Comments about Online Learning Experiences

Overall, 52 students responded to the question asking for additional comments regarding online learning experiences. Figure 4 below presents all themes mentioned by students. One student stated: “You have a wonderful system for online learning. I highly recommend it to people I talk to who are looking for a flexible school schedule while also providing the same level of learning experience as public college. Excellent.” Another student indicated that “Canvas has many problems. Its quiz system is not good for science/math classes at all (that require numerical input of answers). An instructor of mine retired from teaching, at least partially because Canvas was not user friendly to her and she was not provided with assistance with it (I offered to assist her as a student but that was not allowed). On a couple occasions Canvas deleted my 400+ word forum posts and I had to completely rewrite them. It is better suited for humanities classes, but as a result, my STEM classes have suffered. Me and most of my instructors (as well as students I’ve talked to) all prefer Moodle.”

Finally, at least one student mentioned that it would be useful if the entire course was opened at the outset of the semester rather than intermittently throughout the semester. The student says it helps him/her with time management. See Appendix B for all additional comments regarding student online learning experiences.

Figure 4. Themes from Additional Student Comments about their Online Learning Experience



NOTE. Students mentioned 7 times; Course, 7 times; Instructor, 6 times; Learning, 6 times; Canvas, 5 times; Offered, 4 times; Experience, 4 times; Taken, 4 times; Teachers, 4 times; Semester, 2 times; Couple, 2 times; Overall, 2 times; Raise, 2 times.

Conclusions

The Online Learning Survey is conducted every two years to assess students' perceptions of learning services offered online through the library, and to encourage students to provide feedback on potential improvements and changes they would like to see in online learning programs and services. The results are shared College-wide, and are taken into account in the planning of service and program area outcomes.

Overall, the survey had a low response rate (4.5%, $n = 409$). There were significantly more females (71.2%) responding to the survey than males (26.8%), and students were older on average ($M_{age} = 32.18$) than typical Shasta College students (42.06% of Fall 2016 students were 19 years old or under; CCCCCO DataMart). Despite these factors, the results of this survey are considered to be valid.

Nearly 72% of students who responded to the question indicated that flexibility was the primary attraction for them in taking an online course. It was mentioned several times throughout the survey that instructor-student interaction provided students with more support in successfully completing the online courses. Regarding the dropping of an online or hybrid course, 47 respondents provided reasons for doing so. Most common reasons for dropping a course was due to employment reasons (16.3%) and difficulty understanding how to navigate the course (16.3%). Additional statements asked to students to rate their opinions of online/hybrid courses and to respond to open-ended questions about suggestions for improving online or hybrid courses.

Appendix A

Student Suggestions for Improvement to Online or Hybrid Courses

Student Suggestions for Improvement to Online or Hybrid Courses
1. The thing I can think of is maybe adding more in person lab time to some of the online science classes. I dropped an online "X" this semester because the lab class was canceled for some reason and I was confused with the materiel. If they would have kept the lab it would have helped a lot.
2. I think all classes should be hybrid. you need the ability to have face to face interaction with peers and the instructor even if its only once a week.
3. some people have crazy lives and can not meet deadlines of assignments and quizzes, there should be more time sometimes
4. not much to do about it. Maybe just clone professors
5. Auto-save for unfinished work when doing an assignment or discussion.
6. More help
7. I think the online classes are set up wonderfully if u have the right teacher. A teacher who works with you and doesn't constantly change the rules.
8. Softer rules on tests. (allow makeups if you are unable to take tests, more or forget)
9. Improve instructor to student communication online. For instructors, provide more engaging course material (videos are helpful). A lot gets lost in computer mediated communication and it's hard to be as good as a face-to-face lecture.
10. none.
11. NA
12. I think communication classes shouldn't be offered on line. Instant feedback from instructor or talks with other students should be done face to face.
13. being able to reach the instructor easier
14. Better Canvas platform on Android
15. N/a
16. I would suggest better online programs MindTap has had several technical issues however the teacher was always willing to work with the students and solve these problems with the technical support. Overall, I've had a better experience with Launch Pad.
17. Provide science courses like physiology, anatomy, and Micro with an online lecture and an in-person lab. Some people don't have 5+ hours to spend in class when they have jobs and kids. It would also increase the amount of students one professor is able to teach each semester.
18. N/A
19. Don't o my have lecture online, have at least 1lecture on camps
20. NA
21. Offer online classes on the ground, not just online ("X"). My best learning style is in the classroom setting. That online instructors use the same material that the classroom instructors use. It is frustrating when told that I will should buy a book for a future class ("X") and then not use that book for the future class. Because the teacher uses a free website to administer the class assignments.
22. Na
23. Better instructions on assignments and easier access to the instructor when neede
24. There is never any real sort of instruction from an online teacher. They'll give you an assignment and discussions but there'll be no sort of video lecture which would help me tremendously understand the course better.
25. N/a

26. Don't procrastinate
27. Instructions for assignment to be clearly written.
28. I do not like not being able to ask directly.
29. do it through Skype or net meeting in real time so that we can get real interaction with other students and the instructor.
30. possibly an interactive classroom similar to a group chat in google or skype.
31. I don't have any improvements specifically, however it might be nice if teachers could create more visual lectures. Other than that, no suggestions!
32. Canvas tends to crash.
33. Canvas is better than moodle. Keep it.
34. Be patient and willing to learn.
35. N/A
36. Need more in class time especially with difficult courses as the "X" and "X" courses. With online the teachers need to be present...at least responsive within 24 hours of a question. They do get paid...not to go off for days and then appear when they feel like it. It really makes learning more difficult when they are absent, because they don't seem to care whether the student learns or not. I use google, call doctor's offices, call other students, etc. to learn what the teacher should be instructing. Maybe they are not really qualified in their field of instruction.
37. Get rid of canvas! I navigsted through noodle easily and enjoyed online classes. I dread online classes now because I have to suffer through canvas
38. n/a
39. Give the option to make pictures in the tests larger and easier to see.
40. I like when teachers have all of the assignments Available to be read for the whole semester so I can plan ahead try to read for the next week if I have the time not wait for an assignment and then rush to get it done
41. Make the material easily accessible
42. Recommending that instructors set midnight due dates for the days of class which assignments are due online. It's hard for me to work, and turn in assignments at noon on Tuesday. That's why I took online classes. More flexibility in due times, let me work ahead in the class if I want. I shouldn't have to do busy work in the forum and write a minimum of 250 words about what I thought about other students posts. Lecture me on the material and let me take a test when im ready.
43. Let your students know where to get help if needed.
44. Teachers who are not tech savy need help. I had a teacher over summer who did not use canvas at all and his assignments and grading was confusing and disappointing.
45. the questions said "instructor" instead of "instructors". For an online class to be successful the instructor needs to be organized and respond in timely manners, not all of them do that.
46. Improving functionality and server stability with canvas.
47. If it is hybrid all tests and quiz, homework should be online
48. Clearer how to do its.
49. More classes online.
50. The teacher actually knows how to use the online platform.
51. Teach all instructors how to use Canvas!!!
52. update canvas
53. I have no suggestions as of now.

54. I have had instructors who refused to keep grades updated and did not reply to emails. The only sign of their existence was the opening of weekly assignments. During a recent "X" class, I completed the entire semester with no knowledge of any grades and had to guess at my progress. Consequently, the instructor graded all semester's assignments during the last week and I ended up with a B. I was hoping for an A but had no idea where my progress stood because of this.
55. Have the instructors open the entire course, rather than try to keep it to a in class schedule. I have limited time and would like to work at my own pace.
56. Better understand with canvas for student and teacher
57. Not sure
58. None
59. There are numerous problems with file uploads becoming corrupt immediately after sending to peers. File extension requirements should be clearly stated for problematic file extensions and operating systems.
60. I had an instructor who used the same materials year after year. Which would be okay if he reviewed them. Due dates were sometimes for years prior, links and videos in the lesson didn't work because they were expired, and some references were no longer available.
61. Updated faster
62. Stop making group projects

Stop making me reply to two people
63. Professors need to learn to use the calendar correctly
64. Have a stronger signal and no dead spots on campus
65. Better instructors who can properly instruct and interact with students to improve the sense of community and avid learning.
66. None
67. More classes need to be offered
68. n/a
69. It would be nice to be able to meet with the instructor once a month. I know some teachers may live farther away, It would be nice to be able to have a face to face session if at all possible.
70. I think that the professors should only direct students to download programs that are from the college. I had a previous class instructor put links to programs for cleaning your computer that ended up giving me a Trojan and multiple viruses on my computer. I had to have it cleaned and then restored and lost all my pictures due to the download not being a reputable program, and I was trusting my instructor.
71. None, I just don't personally enjoy them.
72. More instructor led multimedia

NOTE. Comments are displayed exactly as typed by students, except any identifying information (i.e., names of professors or programs) was omitted and replaced with "X."

Appendix B

Additional Student Comments about their Online Learning Experiences

Additional Student Comments about Online Learning Experience	
1.	No.
2.	I know now after taking 2 online classes that online classes are not for me. I wish there could always be a class offer on campus not just online.
3.	see # 27, and people have different learning styles, that should be taken into consideration.
4.	nah bruh, have a good night.
5.	Pretty simple and easy. Layout is also nice
6.	I love taking classes online. It allows me to be able to take the pace a littke bit slower which allows me to be able to learn things easier.00
7.	Um not really
8.	Canvas has many problems. Its quiz system is not good for science/math classes at all (that require numerical input of answers). An instructor of mine retired from teaching, at least partially because Canvas was not user friendly to her and she was not provided with assistance with it (I offered to assist her as a student but that was not allowed). On a couple occasions Canvas deleted my 400+ word forum posts and I had to completely rewrite them. It is better suited for humanities classes, but as a result, my STEM classes have suffered. Me and most of my instructors (as well as students I've talked to) all prefer Moodle.
9.	Canvas is great. I am familiar with Moodle and I don't like it as much.
10.	It was great!
11.	NA
12.	You have a wonderful system for online learning. I highly recommend it to people I talk to who are looking for a flexible school schedule while also providing the same level of learning experience as public college. Excellent.
13.	N/a
14.	It has proven to be more difficult than I initially thought it would be, so I ended up dropping a class since it was too overwhelming for me to be a full time online student.
15.	I really enjoy all the online classes I have taken.
16.	I have sucks experience when I took "X" class last semester.
17.	NA
18.	It is really hard to comprehend an instructor "teaching" when there is no real physical instruction. It is difficult to complete the online classes with unreliable internet access. Most of the classes I have taken have been clear to understand what the instructor is wanting us to do, others have not. Having the experience of one instructor tell me to go to the online tutor for help or to post a question on the discussion board. instead of him helping was frustrating. I thought the instructor was there to help.
19.	Maybe for some of the teaches to release the next assignment sooner and have till the end of week to complete instead on 2 days for us working students
20.	Was my first time and i was really upset with this instructor's she gave me and F after knowing the trouble i was having with the assignments and talk to her couple times about it and she still failed me
21.	I like the hybrid courses where they offer some parts online and instruction in class
22.	My hwsometimes doesn't send through iPad
23.	I will never take another course on line. Because of the over load of work demanded and the poor feed back/ interaction from other students. It has created an environment where students can be lazy in their answers or feed back. An example is where they are to read another students passage and respond to it. 75% of the student response is "good job." like they are all saying it independently in unison.
24.	Getting free-flowing interaction of connection with other students is definitely harder. Realy love the use of videos for lectures and how learning and lectures can be viewed at all times.

25. It's always been a pleasant experience!
26. The pandas are cool, puppies would be better. They're raise moral amongst the ranks.
27. Im still learning.
28. N/A
29. Yes. I feel that when teachers are suppose to have a class that they should not be trying to work a full time job and raise little children and take care of house and hubby while trying to teach a class. Guess who gets the left overs...the class. "X" is a good example of this. "... by contacting students from her "X" job to answer their questions. Does not seem right. Another teacher I had went to "X" and was trying to teach from their while "X" was on vacation. It is hard enough to get ahold of a teacher here...impossible from "X". I have had to literally teach myself this course, and I think I am doing very well, but it takes a huge amount of time and dedication.
30. n/a
31. N/a
32. I have taken two classes online at shasta. One of them was the easiest class I have ever taken and barely took an hour of work per week, and the other, was so consuming of my time that I had to miss assinments in other classes just because the mountains of work prevented me from doing anything else. Can I get a bit of normativity ? Does someone from the school actually take the course to see weather it teaches the material economically?
33. All other teachers I've had have been wonderful in canvas.
34. Online has been great but I currently have an instructor who takes weeks to grade, has yet to respond to a single email Ive sent her and her class is very unorganized on line. It's extremely frustrating.
35. Cengage Now has had many issues regarding submitting work and grading throughout the semester.
36. Fixes the announcements. Some teachers have them and others do not
37. The get to know each other isn't very helpful with academic success.
38. Several times students, myself included, have seen their grades punished because the professor didn't know how to use Canvas. Often times met with corrections but several times the instructor refused to learn or fix mistakes.
39. It's been great!
40. The flexibility of online courses is extremely helpful when it comes to time management.
41. Half my online teachers were not that interactive or helpful, but another half of my online instructors were outstanding. It's hard to rate them as an overall group. Professor "X" was the most outstanding online instructor I have ever had.
42. Same as above, open the entire course on day 1. How can I schedule my limited time if I cannot see how much work is due throughout the course.
43. No
44. It was great for me!
45. Classes that are not online or hybrid should not be so "web assisted" that using Canvas becomes a requirement, like many in class instructors have started doing.
46. Overall it has been good, out of all my experiences only my political science class was run effectively.
47. If my surface tablet would function correctly with the programs from home the hybrid courses would be stress free.
48. No
49. For parents who work and have children getting to campus for a required class that isn't offered can be hard, more classes should be offered.
50. n/a
51. I feel like you get a lot more homework with online classes. I manage, but it's a challenge sometimes.
52. Not particularity.

NOTE. Comments are displayed exactly as typed by students, except any identifying information (i.e., names of professors or programs) was omitted and replaced with "X."

Data Source: Internal survey analysis.

Prepared by Jenna Barry Highfield, Research Analyst,
Shasta College Office of Research & Institutional Effectiveness on April 26, 2017.

Contact Jenna at jhighfield@shastacollege.edu or research@shastacollege.edu

Cover photo by Emily Warren.