Students' Perceptions of Online Courses in a Graduate Adolescence Education Program

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Abstract

Online learning has become a critical concern in higher education. The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of graduate students relative to online courses in their program of study. Forty-one graduate students completed a survey about their perceptions of online courses. Results indicate that traditional students may harbor misgivings about the social aspects involved in online courses, that online students have had positive experiences – though the online courses are not always up to their expectations, and that both traditional learners and online learners perceive online learning as convenient though not necessarily conducive to their learning. As online learning continues to grow, institutions of higher education need to monitor the impact of online courses on their programs.

Keywords: student perceptions, online vs. face-to-face, graduate education, teacher education, adolescence education

Introduction

Online learning has morphed from the late 19th century when distance learning was in the form of correspondence courses. Society is becoming more technologically driven and that technology is spilling into the American higher education system, where offering online courses is currently a trend. Today, not only are online courses an option, there are fully online degree programs available. According to the 2011 *Sloan Survey of Online Learning* (Allen & Seaman, 2011), the number of students taking at least one online course during the Fall 2010 semester surpassed 6.1 million. This is up from 3.94 million in Fall 2007 and 5.6 million in Fall 2009. Online learning has become such an integral part of higher education that 65% of institutions of higher education include online learning as a critical part of their long-term strategy (Allen & Seaman, 2011).

Literature Review

The trend of students opting to take online courses over traditional face-to-face (F2F) classes has led to an increase in the literature related to online learning. Most of the current research around online learning focuses on student learning, student satisfaction, students' preferences for online courses, and improving engagement or social situations online.

Since the turn of the millennium, when O'Malley and McGraw (1999) reported that students do not initially feel they learn as much in online courses as they do in traditional, F2F courses, current research has emerged that supports a view that students can learn equally well in both formats (Bernard et al., 2004; LaPointe & Reisetter, 2008; Navarro & Shoemaker, 2000; Neuhauser, 2002). Neuhauser looked at two sections of the same course, one online and one F2F, and reported that online students found the course to be as effective or more effective to their learning than typical F2F courses. These results were comparable to those found by Wyatt (2005) regarding the high academic demands of online courses and to Braun (2008) finding that most participants believed that the quality of online instruction was equal to that of traditional instruction. This is further supported by Kirtman (2009), who found in her study of elementary or middle school teachers in a master's research methods course that similar learning outcomes, measured by exam grades, a literature review, short paper, and an anonymous survey of

course satisfaction, occurred whether the course was taught traditionally or online. Her findings were based on the importance of the factors of student interaction and instructor interaction.

According to Lao and Gonzales (2005), learning in an online environment through the use of web-based platforms can be a rewarding and rich experience for learners and teachers, especially if the tool used to conduct a class is effectively utilized. Online learning can be successful if the courses are developed for instruction, conducted similarly and yield similar results as direct instruction (Legutko, 2007). Results from Yang and Durrington (2010) revealed that students perceived the quality of online learning to be the prominent component of online course quality. Other important components included online teaching, online course structure, and online student support, though these were not as prominent. This finding suggests that while the convenience of online courses attracts students, they are still interested in the learning opportunities associated with an online course.

Student learning can be a direct result of student satisfaction (Kirtman, 2009; Young & Norgard, 2006). Kirtman's students' survey answers were so overwhelmingly positive that the issue of student satisfaction could not be ignored in her findings. In fact, positive student attitudes can lead to increased motivation and enhanced learning. Similarly, Young and Norgard found that developing a strong online community with student–student interaction, timely interaction between students and instructors, and technical support are all critical to satisfaction with online courses. In addition, the overall support in the findings that students appreciate an online delivery mode because it enables them to pursue previously unattainable educational goals (Bickle & Carroll, 2003; Cooper, 2001; LaPointe & Reisetter, 2008; Navarro & Shoemaker, 2000; Perreault, Waldman, & Zhao, 2002) and the fact that online learning provides a good fit with other roles and responsibilities (Braun, 2008; Northrup, 2002; Swan et al., 2000) cannot be overlooked.

Learning communities are also a facet of online learning that is just beginning to be explored. As in traditional courses, learners in online courses should be able to learn not only from their instructor but also from their peers. Peer-interactions are an important element in developing online learning communities and have a great effect on students' online learning experiences (McGreal & Elliott, 2004; Palloff & Pratt, 1999). Kirtman's (2009) students reported that the most important aspect of learning online was the small and large group discussions.

In addition to student–student (peer) interactions, Moore (1989) identified two other types of interactions characteristic of online courses: student–content and student–instructor. Thus, online learning is indeed a social activity supported by Holmberg's (2007) theory that personal relationships promote student motivation and learning.

The purpose of the present study was to examine graduate adolescence education students' perceptions of online learning in their program and to determine the perceived need for online courses in this program. The information gained will be used to further the research on perceptions of online learning at the graduate level, to assess approaches to online teaching and to develop relevant curriculum. In addition, the information will be used to assist understanding of online learning, attract new students, retain current students and remain competitive with other institutions of higher education. The research question is: How do graduate students in an adolescence education program perceive their experiences with online learning? This question will be examined through a) online learners' perceptions, b) F2F-only learners' perceptions, and c) a comparison of the two groups' perceptions of online learning using a descriptive survey research design. This design was chosen because "the fundamental purpose of survey research is to describe the characteristics or variables in populations by directly examining samples" (Smith & Glass, 1987, p. 226).

Methods

Participants

Ninety-three students enrolled in the Graduate Adolescence Education program offered by a private, religiously affiliated college in Western New York were invited to take part in a survey examining perceptions of online courses in their program. These students comprised a sample of convenience and represented the initial cohorts of students who had been offered a choice of online or traditional, F2F instruction in approximately one third of the courses in the newly redesigned Graduate Adolescence Education program. Data were collected late in the Fall 2011 semester from recruited students who started the program in the semesters of Summer 2009, Fall 2009, Spring 2010, Summer 2010, and Fall 2010. At the time of the survey, these students had completed the program or completed the coursework

of the program and were student teaching. The population included male (46%) and female (54%) students from the United States (74%) and Canada (26%).

Of these 93 students, 41 completed the survey (voluntarily and with no compensation) for a response rate of 47%. The respondents were primarily female (70%) and American (82.5%). Approximately two thirds of the respondents indicated that they had completed at least one online course in the Graduate Adolescence Education program: 37% only one online course, 15% two online courses, 12% all three online courses (the maximum offered).

Survey Instrument

A review of the literature on surveys indicates the potential for a lower response rate when relying solely on a web-based survey rather than including a traditional method. For this reason, a mixed-mode approach combining web-based and (postal) mail surveys was used (Converse, Wolfe, Huang, & Oswald, 2008; Truell & Goss, 2002). The online version of the survey was developed using Checkbox, an online survey tool supported through the College. Participants were informed that individual privacy would be maintained and that the surveys were anonymous. Aside from the opportunity to voice their opinions, no compensation was provided to participants. The survey was designed to guide respondents to questions that were relevant based on previous answers given. For example, if students indicated that they had not taken any online courses, they were directed to questions dealing only with traditional F2F format classes. Questions on the survey related to demographics of candidates, factors that influenced their decision of whether or not to take online courses, and their course experiences. Questions were designed as multiple choice and most questions allowed for a free-response option to provide the respondents an opportunity to clarify a response (see Appendix A, modified to include questions for only one of the online classes).

In developing the survey, drafts of questions were presented to an advisory board of eight colleagues from the School of Education and Human Services at the College to determine the best way to solicit the needed information. Several iterations were attempted before finalizing the survey. To establish instrument reliability, the survey was pilot tested with students from another program. These students were instructed to answer the questions as if they were taking the survey and to note any problems with the wording of the questions or instructions. Information received from the pilot study was incorporated to make the necessary modifications.

Procedures

A list of all students who started the Graduate Adolescence Education program in the selected five sequential semesters, including Summer, Fall, and Spring starters, was obtained from the registrar at the College. An e-mail was sent to each of these 93 potential participants instructing them to click on a link to complete the survey. In addition, a paper copy of the survey was mailed through the U.S. Postal Service to provide an alternative survey format for participants' convenience and to, hopefully, improve the response rate. A reminder e-mail and postcard were sent two weeks later. Telephone calls were also made to the potential participants by a graduate student to verify that the survey had been received and as a reminder to complete the survey. Approximately three quarters of the returned surveys were completed online.

Data Collection

All respondents completed questions about demographics and a comparison of experiences/perceptions of online and traditional F2F classes. Those respondents who did not choose to take any online courses in their program were asked to choose the reason(s) why they chose all traditional F2F courses and to elaborate on their choices. Respondents choosing one, two, or three (maximum) online courses were directed to questions about the courses they completed online. These questions dealt with their experiences in the online course format in areas such as why they chose the online format for the class, whether the course was what was expected, and their overall evaluation of the online course. In addition, they also responded to which courses they thought should be offered in an online format.

Other questions on the survey asked about the delivery of the course, the instructor, technology, and the sense of community in an online course. Responses to these questions about particular courses were for internal use to improve online course offerings for the program and are not presented here.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data focused on the two populations addressed in the data collection: F2F-only learners and online learners. Descriptive statistics and qualitative means were used to present data in response to the question, "Why did you choose to take all of your courses in the traditional F2F format rather than as online courses?" for the traditional group. Descriptive statistics were also used to analyze data from the online learners for the questions "Why did you choose to take this class in the online format?" and "Was this online course what you expected?" as well as their overall views of the online course(s) they completed and what courses they felt should be offered in an online format. A series of chi-squared tests were performed ($p < .05$) to determine significance between groups (online and traditional F2F) on the comparison of experiences/perceptions of online and F2F classes. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19 was used to perform the statistical analysis.

Results and Discussion

Face-to-Face-Only Learners

F2F learners comprised approximately one third of the total respondents to the survey. Results for the F2F group were based on inductive content analysis where two themes emerged: social aspects of learning and discipline. The majority of respondents chose to take all of their courses in the traditional F2F format rather than as an online course because they preferred to be in a classroom setting (93%), and they felt more connected to the program by attending F2F classes (64%). Twenty-one percent felt that they would not be disciplined enough to complete an online course, and 7% felt that they did not know enough about online courses at the time they were doing their course selections, but if they had to choose now, they would consider an online course.

These participants were asked to comment on their reasoning for choosing traditional F2F formatted classes. The comments given ranged from *"opposed to online learning"* to "*willing to give online learning a try."* A respondent opposed to online learning commented, *"I believe that learning and academic study is a social activity that requires development of all aspects of literacy – reading, writing, listening and speaking."* Another respondent indicated that she felt *"more connected to the program by attending face-to-face classes."*

One participant who had not taken any online courses in this program explained that she had taken online classes before but felt she needed to take courses in this program as F2F:

> *"I have taken online classes as an undergraduate, but starting out my first semester as a graduate, I felt it was more beneficial that I take the classes face-to-face. I feel that I learn more in the traditional format. With my previous experience taking online classes, I felt that I was just trying to get the work done and that's it. Whereas, in the traditional setting, the discussions really helped me understand the material."*

Another participant indicated that he felt he *"would not be disciplined enough to complete an online course."*

However, not all respondents were totally against online classes but were cautious about choosing them. A respondent remarked: *"if a class was only offered online and I wanted to take it, I would consider it. Otherwise, I've always learned in a traditional environment."*

Online Learners

Online learners completed at least one online course in the program. Questions were presented to the online learners based upon the courses they had taken in an online format. Multiple sections of three courses, *Strategies and Assessment*, *Learning and Cognition*, and *Foundations of Education* were offered during these semesters, and at least one was offered in each of the formats, F2F and online. The *Strategies and Assessment* course in the revised program was a newly designed course that was a compilation of two previously offered courses, one in teaching strategies and the other in assessment. The instructor for this new course had previously taught the assessment course and then designed the *Strategies and Assessment* course and presented it in both formats throughout the semesters focused on in the present study.

Similarly, the *Learning and Cognition* course for the new program was also a compilation of two previously taught courses. The instructors of those two previously taught courses collaborated on the design and curriculum of the new course and one taught the online section and the other, the F2F section

during the semesters included in this study. The third class, *Foundations of Education*, was not newly developed and continued to be offered in both formats by professors who had been teaching it for some time and continued in their respective formats during this time period.

More than half of the responses from the online group in each of the courses indicated the following reasons for choosing to take a course in an online format: "time constraints made me look to online classes" (54%, 58%, and 65%, respectively), "unable to take the traditional face-to-face class" (38%, 33%, and 29%), and "I prefer online courses" (38%, 17%, and 24%).

Responses to the question "Was this online course what you expected?" were very interesting. In the *Strategies and Assessment* course, 54% believed that the course lived up to high expectations, 15% expressed that the course lived up to moderate expectations, and 30% indicated that it was worse than expected. The *Learning and Cognition* course also had about a third of responses indicating that it was worse than expected. However, in this course, the other two thirds of the responses were divided with 25% believing it lived up to high expectations, and 42% up to modest expectations. The *Foundations of Education* course had only 6% of responses for worse than expected, 35% for high expectations, and 59% for modest expectations.

Overall, online students looked favorably on the experiences they had as recorded using a Likert scale for a question addressing online course satisfaction. Responses did differ by course (for a summary of the survey data, see Table 1). For the *Foundations of Education* course, most agreed with the statement, "If I had to do it over, I would take this class online again" (88%) and would recommend the online format of this course to other students (82%). Forty-one percent of the students disagreed that "the content of this course would be better presented as a hybrid class (part online and part delivered traditionally)," while 47% were neutral on that point. Only 12% of the *Foundations of Education* course respondents disagreed that the course inspired them to take more classes online. Responses for the other two courses were mixed with 62% of the *Strategies and Assessment* course respondents and 58% of the *Learning and Cognition* course respondents agreeing that they would take this course online again if they had to do it over. Sixty-nine percent of the *Strategies and Assessment* course respondents and 50% of the *Learning and Cognition* course respondents would recommend the online format for the courses and approximately one third from each group disagreed that they were inspired to take more classes online.

Table 1. *Online course respondents' perceptions of courses they took*

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1. If I had to do it over, I would take this class online again.			
Strategies and Assessment	62%	7%	31%
Learning and Cognition	58%	0%	42%
Foundations of Education	88%	0%	12%
2. The content of this course would be better presented as a hybrid class (part online and part delivered traditionally).			
Strategies and Assessment	38%	31%	31%
Learning and Cognition	25%	42%	33%
Foundations of Education	12%	47%	41%
3. This class should be only offered in a traditional face-to-face setting.			
Strategies and Assessment	15%	8%	77%
Learning and Cognition	17%	16%	67%
Foundations of Education	6%	23%	71%
4. I would recommend the online format of this course to other students.			
Strategies and Assessment	69%	8%	23%
Learning and Cognition	50%	17%	33%
Foundations of Education	82%	18%	0%
5. This class inspired me to take more classes online.			
Strategies and Assessment	54%	15%	31%
Learning and Cognition	25%	42%	33%
Foundations of Education	41%	47%	12%

The last question, asked of the online learners only, was "Looking back over the courses in the Graduate Adolescence Education program, which courses should be offered in an online format?" Anecdotally, it

was heard that students preferred online courses and would be interested in taking all their courses online. Contrary to this hearsay, the results of the survey indicated that only 20% of the students taking online courses believed that all the courses should be available as online courses. Twelve percent indicated that online courses should not be offered at all (each of these respondents had taken only one online class). The highest percentages were in the courses already offered: 48% *Strategies and Assessment*, 60% *Learning and Cognition*, and 56% *Foundations of Education*. One additional class received a similar rating; respondents thought that an inclusive strategies class would be a good option for an online course (48%).

All Respondents

All respondents were asked to select from online, both (formats) equally, or traditional for the following prompts: "I learn best in this format"; "this format is most demanding of my time"; "this format allows me to use my time wisely"; "this format is most academically challenging"; "I enjoy this format the most"; "this format is most convenient"; "this format is most conducive to my learning style"; and "this format is most conducive to learning the class material." A chi-squared analysis was utilized to determine if there was a statistical significance between the groups, traditional F2F-only and online learners, on each of the factors. Significant results were found for three of the factors: *this format allows me to use my time wisely* ($\chi^2(2, N = 39) = 7.6, p = .02$); *this format is most convenient* ($\chi^2(2, N = 39) = 7.3, p = .03$); and *this format is most conducive to learning the class material* ($\chi^2(2, N = 39) = 8.36, p = .02$).

The first factor, *this format allows me to use my time wisely*, indicated that a similar large percentage (86% for traditional learners, and 84% for online learners) selected either the option of taking a course in their selected/preferred format or the option "both formats, equally" to enable them to use their time wisely. The traditional learners leaned more heavily toward being able to use their time wisely when taking a class in a traditional format (57%) versus the "both formats, equally" options (29%), while the online learners were evenly split between their views of using their time wisely as they took an online course (44%) or "both formats, equally" (40%). When looked at holistically, the percentages for each choice (online, both, traditional) were very evenly split indicating that students felt they could use their time wisely in their preferred format or in both formats.

The second factor, *this format is most convenient*, was also statistically significant. Students who took online courses overwhelmingly chose online courses as being the most convenient format. Students who had not taken online courses were distributed among the choices for being most convenient (43% online; 36% both formats, equally; and 21% traditional) with double the number believing online was more convenient than those believing traditional was more convenient.

The third factor, *this format is most conducive to learning the class material*, was quite interesting. Of the students taking only traditional F2F courses, 86% thought that the traditional style was most conducive. However, of the students taking online courses, only 8% indicated that online classes were conducive to their learning style. Forty percent of these students felt that traditional classes were more conducive to their learning style, and 52% selected "both formats, equally."

Limitations of the Study

As with any study, there were limitations that may have affected the outcomes of this research. The response rate of 47%, from a small population to begin with, and the self-selection of students responding to the survey were two major limiting factors. A larger sample size would have been needed to further analyze the results based on demographics of the sample. Of the respondents, two thirds were students who had taken at least one online course leaving only one third of the respondents to represent the students who had not taken any online courses in the program.

Another possible limitation was that the courses that were taught in this program at the time of this research were newly developed courses. Some of the courses were being taught online for the first time and with instructors who were new to online course development and instruction. The instructors were involved in professional development workshops (including modules on the institution's learning management system, ANGEL, as well as other software applications such as Jing and Softchalk and Web 2.0 services/tools such as YouTube, podcasts, wikis, blogs, etc.) designed to support online teaching and were in various stages of this development when they began their online teaching. In an effort to ensure the quality of online courses and to meet the standards of effective online instruction, the department required the instructors to complete this professional development to allow them to remain instructors in this online format. Differences in presentation styles and with the material may have varied

throughout the semesters when these classes were taught as the instructors became more comfortable with the content and with the format in which they were teaching.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Results of the study indicate that traditional F2F students may have some misgivings about online courses. Some expressed that they felt that learning is a social activity and, therefore, must be held in a traditional format. It is likely that they have not experienced what online learning is purported to be today. Research has been conducted dealing with online communities and ways to engage students in multi-modal activities. Some studies suggest that activities conducted online may be as social as activities in traditional settings (Kirtman, 2009; McGreal & Elliott, 2004; Palloff & Pratt, 1999), but, at this time, these students are not in agreement.

Students in this program who took online courses indicated that scheduling was much more of a factor than the desire for them to take a course online. They indicated that they mostly perceived their online course experiences as being positive experiences. Their responses reflecting their perceptions of online courses living up to their expectations lead us to conclude that more research needs to be done in this area. Information on demographics including age groups, socioeconomic status, working mothers, graduate students pursuing a degree while also working, relative proximity to campus, etc. could be an area for future research providing a better picture of the population of online learners and their perceptions of online learning relative to their station in life. Further investigation should look at why students preferred certain online courses more than others. Perhaps the delivery of the material, the chosen learning management system, level of student engagement, support from and access to the course instructor, and the online community aspects are large components of satisfaction levels for online classes.

Overall it is interesting to note that, in this study, most students, whether they had taken online courses or not, perceived online courses to be most convenient and traditional courses to be most conducive to their learning style. These findings reflect the findings of O'Malley and McGraw (1999) who found that students did not believe they learned more in online classes, but they wanted to take more online classes. The convenience of online courses outweighs the perceived reduced learning potential in online courses.

Recommendations arising from this study include the following suggestions for the program as well as suggestions for other programs struggling with the decision to offer online or traditional courses:

- *Continue to offer the courses in both formats to provide a choice for students.* There are students who have distinct preferences and not having a choice of format may lead them to not take the course at all or to look somewhere else to get their preference.

- *Continue to offer professional development so instructors can continue to offer quality courses in both online and F2F formats.* There continue to be many changes in the world of online learning. Instructors wishing to provide online learning in its best form should be encouraged to keep current in the rapidly changing field. Future research could center on how the courses are being presented in both traditional and online settings. Are the instructors up to date in each format? Are "best practices" being used for the type of learning?

- *Offer students an introduction to online learning to help them determine if online learning is a viable option for them.* This may help students to consider a class online, and they can then make an informed decision on their preferences.

To meet demands, institutions of higher education must continually assess approaches to teaching, curriculum development, and student retention methods to maintain a competitive edge with other institutions. This assessment must be made for both traditional and online learning. The offering of online classes may be an asset to some programs. Work must be done to assure that online learning and traditional F2F learning remain on par in all areas of student satisfaction and learning outcomes.

The world of online learning continues to grow, and with this growth lies opportunities for additional research. The focus of this study on students' perceptions of online learning based on their experiences raised many points that could be addressed in future studies. Areas for future study include: the format of online courses (including the technology tools that are used) in a comparison with the way a similar F2F course is delivered (including strategies and technology used) in that format; the nature of course topics and their suitability to the delivery as a F2F or an online learning experience; new trends in successful

online delivery as compared with "best practices" in F2F learning; and a continuation into researching the overall resistance to online learning in higher education.

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Appendix A: Survey Instrument

PURPOSE: You are invited to participate in research about graduate adolescence education students' perceptions about online courses in this program. This information is being collected anonymously and the results will be compiled and reported out in a manuscript for publication.

PROCEDURE: By agreeing to participate in this study, you will complete one survey that includes questions about your demographics and your experiences with online courses. If you have not taken online courses, we are interested in your reasons for choosing traditional courses over online courses.

COMMITMENT: Your participation in this project will take approximately 15 minutes to complete this survey.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are no known risks to participating in this research. Your participation does help the Adolescence Education Department to make future decisions about our online courses. All surveys will be answered anonymously.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. The surveys are anonymous.

Gender:

- Male
- Female

Nationality:

- American
- Canadian

Overall Graduate GPA:

Semester you first started the Graduate Adolescence Education program at XXX College:

- Summer 2009
- Fall 2009
- Spring 2010
- Summer 2010
- Fall 2010

Your concentration:

- Business
- English
- Mathematics
- Modern Languages
- Science
- Social Studies

1) Did you complete any courses in the Graduate Adolescence Education program as online courses? (Select one.)

- Yes – *If Yes, please go to Question 2*
- No – *If No, please go to Question 5*

2) Which course(s) did you take online?
Courses offered online were: Strategies and Assessment, Learning and Cognition, and Foundations of Education. (Check all that apply.)

- Strategies and Assessment – *If you check Strategies and Assessment, please go to the yellow sheets*
- Learning and Cognition – *If you check Learning and Cognition, please go to the blue sheets*
- Foundations of Education – *If you check Foundations of Education, please go to the green* sheets

After responding to the questions on whichever sheets apply, please continue with Question 3.

Please answer the following questions in reference to the online course XXX.

a) Why did you choose to take this class in the online format? (Select all that apply.)

- I was unable to take the traditional face-to-face class
- Time constraints made me look to online
- I prefer online courses
- This online course was recommended to me
- This online instructor was recommended
- I heard the online class was easier
- Other – *Please explain:*

b) What grade did you receive in this course?

c) Which of the following were used to determine your grade? (Select all that apply.)

- Discussion board responses
- Quizzes
- Tests
- Reflection papers
- Written assignments
- Projects
- Other – *Please explain:*

d) Was this the grade you expected? (Select one.)

- Yes
- No – *Please explain:*

e) How was the content of this course delivered? (Select all that apply.)

- Podcasts
- Skype
- Jing
- PowerPoint
- YouTube

- Discussion Boards
- Wiki
- Other – *Please specify:*

f) (Select one per row.)

Did you work in groups with your classmates?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Did you feel a sense of community with your classmates?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Was the instructor prompt with feedback?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Did the instructor provide constructive feedback?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Did the instructor use guided discussion boards?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Was the instructor available to you when you had questions?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Were grades readily available?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
How often was this class "teacher centered"?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
How often was this class "student centered"?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Did the instructor offer to give feedback on assignments before they were turned in for a grade?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never

g) How did your instructor prepare you for using the technology necessary for this course? (Select all that apply.)

- Provided tutorials
- Provided links to tutorials
- Provided links to support
- Didn't need to provide because technology used was only basic
- Offered no assistance
- Was unable to offer assistance when asked for help
- Other – *Please explain:*

h) When you encountered problems with technology, where did you seek help? (Select all that apply.)

- Consulted with my professor
- Consulted with others in the online course
- Consulted with other students in my program
- Consulted with the helpdesk
- Figured it out on my own
- Gave up
- I did not encounter any problems with technology
- Other – *Please explain:*

i) Was this online course what you expected? (Select one.)

- Yes, it lived up to my high expectations
- Yes, it met my modest expectations
- Yes, although my expectations were very low
- No, it was much better than I expected
- No, it was worse than my expectations

j)　(Select one per row.)

	Strongly Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Disagree
If I had to do it over, I would take this class online again.	1	2	3	4	5
The content of this course would be better presented as a hybrid class (part online and part delivered traditionally).	1	2	3	4	5
This class should be only offered in a traditional face-to-face setting.	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend the online format of this course to other students.	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend this instructor in the online format to other students.	1	2	3	4	5
This class inspired me to take more classes online.	1	2	3	4	5

3)　Looking back over the courses in the Graduate Adolescence Education program, which courses should be offered in an online format? (Select all that apply.)

- All
- Foundations of Literacy
- Literacy in Secondary Education
- Strategies and Assessment
- Learning and Human Development
- Differentiating Instruction for Diverse Learners
- Advanced Methods
- Methods
- Foundations of Education
- Human Growth and Development in Middle Childhood (Business Majors or Extension)
- Cognition, Learning & Assessment (Business Majors or Extension)
- Contemporary Issues (for Master's students)
- Research Methods (for Master's students)
- None

4)　What suggestions do you have for improving online courses in the Graduate Adolescence Education Program?

5)　For the following prompts, use the given scale to compare your experiences with online and traditional, face-to-face classes. (Select one per row.)

	Online	Both Formats, Equally	Traditional
I learn best in this format.	1	2	3
This format is most demanding of my time.	1	2	3
This format allows me to use my time wisely.	1	2	3
This format is most academically challenging.	1	2	3
I enjoy this format the most.	1	2	3
This format is most convenient.	1	2	3
This format is most conducive to my learning style.	1	2	3
This format is most conducive to learning the class material.	1	2	3

If you have completed online courses in the Graduate Adolescence Education Program, the survey is now complete. Thank you for taking the time to help us learn more about your perceptions of the online courses in our program.

If you haven't completed online courses in the Graduate Adolescence Education Program, please complete Questions 6 and 7 below. Thank you for taking the time to learn more about your perceptions of the online courses in our program.

6) Why did you choose to take all of your courses in the traditional face-to-face format rather than as online courses?

- I tried to register for online but the class was closed
- I would have taken online courses if I had access to the appropriate technology needed
- I felt I would not be disciplined enough to complete an online course
- I am not technologically savvy
- I prefer to be in a classroom setting
- I feel more connected to the program by attending face-to-face classes
- At the time, I didn't know enough about online courses but If I had to choose now, I'd consider online
- Other – *Please explain:*

7) Please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions related to this survey: