

Study examines online, face-to-face courses

August 20 2014

A new study by NDSU communication faculty gives an interesting look at students' perceptions of online versus face-to-face courses.

The findings of the study by Carrie Anne Platt, associate professor of communication; Nan Yu, assistant professor of communication; and Amber Raile, assistant professor of business at Montana State University, were reported in the article, "Student perceptions of the equivalence of online classes to face-to-face classes," in the Journal of Online Learning and Teaching.

According to Platt, some might assume [students](#) take online classes because they see them as easier than face-to-face classes. However, there's not much hard research on students' general [perception](#) of the different teaching methods.

Platt and her colleagues conducted an online survey of 289 NDSU students, and found most students' perceptions are opposite of the conventional wisdom.

"The study reveals students actually see online classes as more challenging," Platt said. "Part of that is the students have to do more to manage their own time and schedule because online [courses](#) do not meet at a set point each week and some self-paced courses don't have regular deadlines."

Students also perceived online classes as having less interaction than face-to-face [classes](#), which Platt said could make the course more challenging

for students who rely on extra help from their instructor or their peers.

"The main reason the students took online courses was the flexibility of scheduling," Platt said, noting online courses don't conflict with scheduled courses in the classroom. "Online courses also can fit in if a student has a part-time job."

In the survey, students were asked to share their perceptions of online courses and face-to-face courses in terms of challenge, knowledge gained, flexibility and level of interaction with the instructor and other students.

Provided by North Dakota State University

Citation: Study examines online, face-to-face courses (2014, August 20) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-08-online-face-to-face-courses.html>

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