Retention and Success of Online and Hybrid Classes

Fall 1999 through Summer 2001
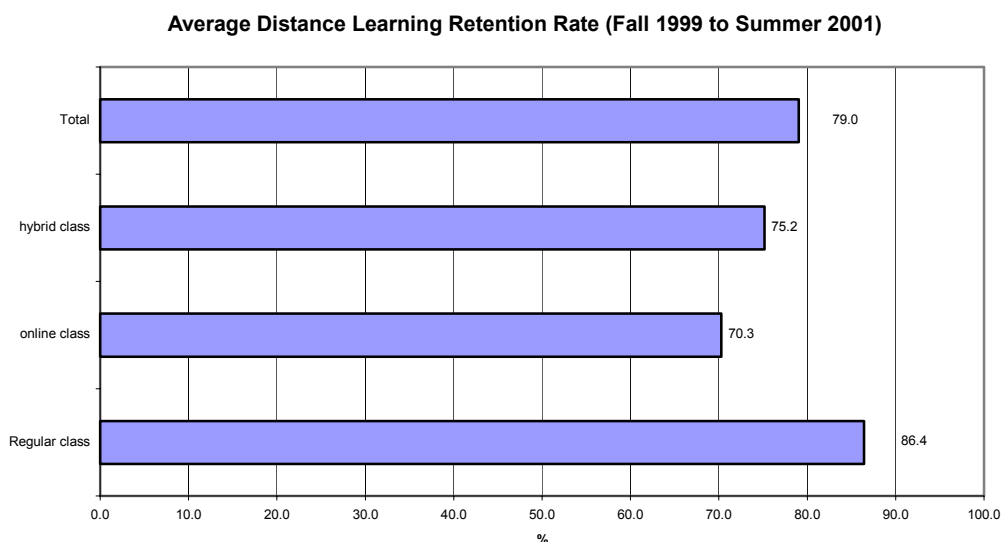
July 15, 2002

Summary

In order to determine the retention[1] and success[2] rate of online[3] versus hybrid[4] courses, data were examined from fall 1999 through summer 2001[5]. If the course was also taught as a regular class[6], then it was also included in the analyses.

Overall, the data for this study are sparse and thus analyses and conclusion are limited. Data from this study were collected from a summarized report, thus minimizing most statistical analyses. It is recommended that this project be directed to the Research and Institutional Effectiveness team for their higher-level data extraction, analyses and recommendations.

The retention rates are displayed in the following graph. Regular classes have the highest retention rate and online classes the lowest.

Average Distance Learning Retention Rate (Fall 1999 to Summer 2001)

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[1] Retention rate is the percentage of students who are enrolled in the course after the deadline to drop the course without a "W" (end of 4th week) and those students who remain enrolled at the end of the course.

[2] Success rate is the percentage of students who are enrolled in the course after the deadline to drop the course without a "W" (end of 4th week) and those students who remain enrolled in the course and at the end of the course obtain a grade of "A", "B" or "C".
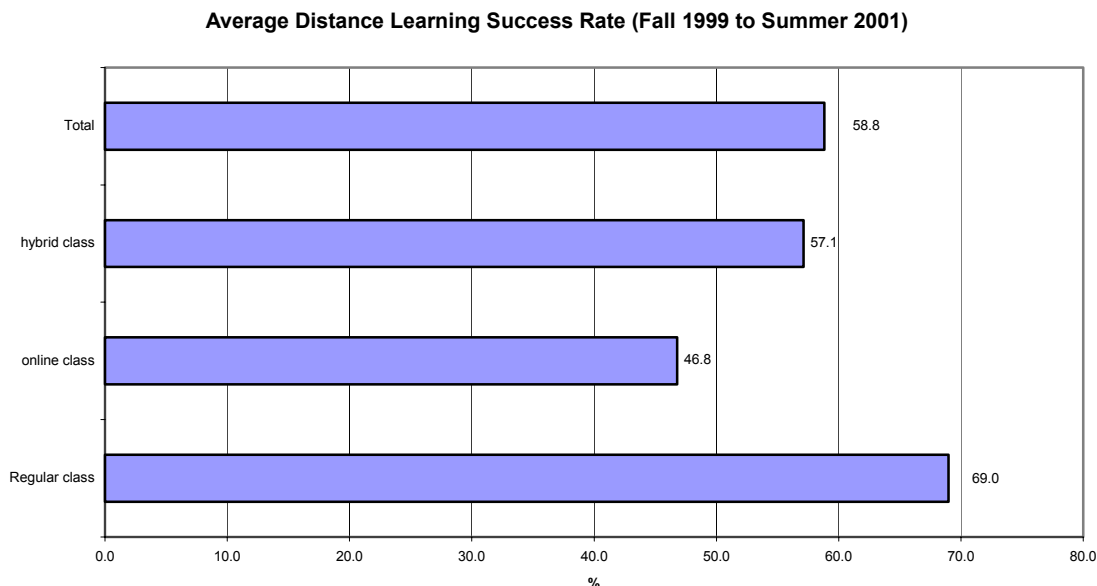
[3] Online classes deliver most of their course components in an online mode, with only an initial mandatory meeting and exams held on campus.

[4] Hybrid classes have a significant portion of their course delivered in an online mode, but these classes meet on campus several times during the term.

[5] Data were transcribed from the ICCIS Grade Reports (STS340B1)

[6] Regular classes are traditional on-campus classes.

The success rates of these courses are displayed in the next graph. The data indicates a similar pattern as seen in the retention data – that is, the regular classes have a higher success rate and the online classes have the lowest success rate.

Average Distance Learning Success Rate (Fall 1999 to Summer 2001)

Questions and Preliminary Answers

Retention

Question: Is there a difference in the retention rate of students in online or hybrid courses than those in regular courses?

Answer: Based on the data obtained from the Grade Reports, yes there is a difference. Overall, regular classes tend to have a higher retention rate than online or hybrid courses. From statistical point-of-view, regular classes have a <u>significantly</u> higher retention rate than do the online classes. There are no statistically significant differences in retention rates between regular classes and hybrid classes.

Question: Is there a difference in the retention rate of students in hybrid classes than those in online classes?

Answer: Overall, there <u>does not</u> appear to be a <u>significant statistical</u> difference between hybrid and online classes, although more data needs to be collected to verify this trend.

Question: Is there a difference in the retention rate of students in courses in which that course is offered in all three formats – regular, online and hybrid?

Answer: Few courses were offered in this format each term. Retention rate is usually higher for the hybrid classes than the online classes. More data is needed to make further conclusions.

Question: Is there a difference in the retention rate of students in longer term online or hybrid classes than the retention of students in shorter term (i.e., summer) online or hybrid classes?

Answer: More data is needed to answer this question.

Success

Question: Is there a difference in the success rate of students in online or hybrid classes than in regular on-campus classes?

Answer: Yes. Overall, regular courses tend to have a higher success rate than online or hybrid courses. From a <u>statistical</u> point-of-view, regular classes have a <u>significantly</u> higher success rate than do the online classes. There very few statistically significant differences in success rates between regular classes and hybrid classes.

Question: Is there a difference in the success rate of students in hybrid classes versus online classes?

Answer: Overall, there <u>does not</u> appear to be a <u>significant statistical</u> difference between hybrid versus online classes, although more data needs to be collected to verify this trend..

Question: Is there a difference in the success rate of students in courses in which that course is offered in all three formats – regular, online and hybrid?

Answer: Few courses were offered in this format each term. More data is needed to make conclusions.

Question: Is there a difference in the success rate of students in longer term online or hybrid classes than those in shorter term (i.e., summer) online or hybrid classes?

Answer: More data is needed to make conclusions.