

Memo



To: Terri Beam, Co-chair, Distance Learning Committee
Meghan Chen, Dean, Library and Learning Resources

From: Priya Chaplot, Educational Research Assessment Analyst
Research and Institutional Effectiveness Office

Based on previous work completed by Maria Tsai, Research Analyst (2006) and Marc Beam, Educational Research Assessment Analyst (2004)

Date: Wednesday, January 21, 2009

Subject: Retention and Success Rates: Regular vs. Online vs. Hybrid courses
FALL 2001 through SPRING 2008

When you are referring to the data from this report, please remember to acknowledge that it was done through the Research and Institutional Effectiveness Office.

This report compares the retention and success rates of online, hybrid, and regular classes from fall 2001 through spring 2008. The study compared equivalent classes offered via distance learning with traditional on-campus classes offered in the same term. Traditional courses are considered regular (i.e., on-campus, in a classroom setting). Online courses deliver the majority of content via the Internet, while hybrid courses utilize a combination of in-class and online instruction.

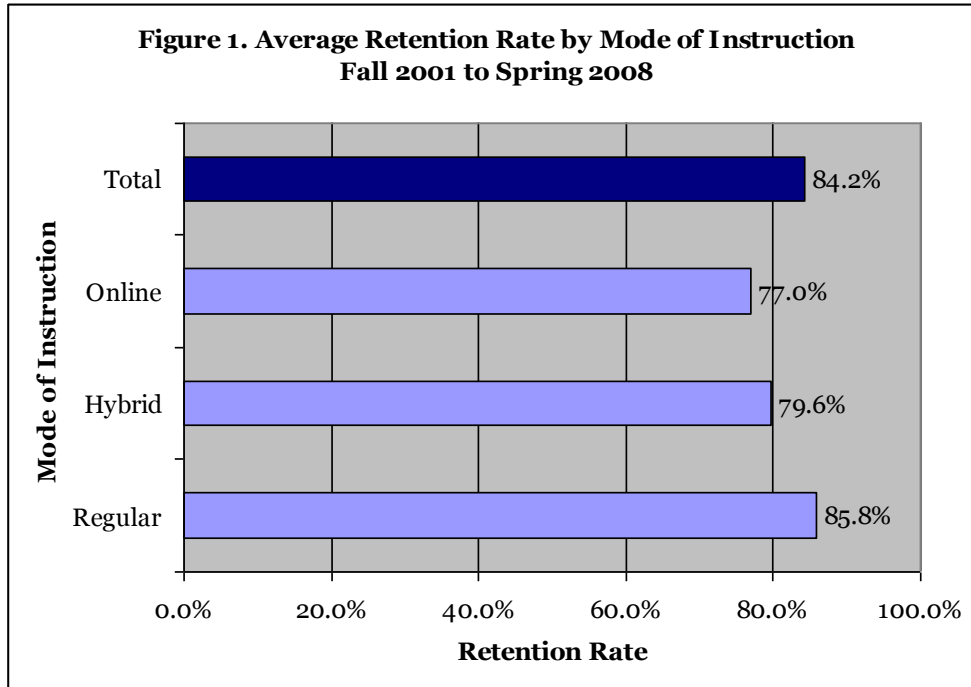
Data for this study were compiled from ICCIS via the data warehouse for fall 2001 to spring 2008. Courses that had at least one hybrid and/or online section were selected for the analyses and then, compared to equivalent courses offered on campus in the same term. Regular courses were included only for the terms when an equivalent distance learning course was offered. Retention and success rates were calculated by course type (method of instruction) for all terms.

Details regarding retention and success rates and counts in addition to course and term comparisons have been compiled in an Excel workbook, which has also been provided.

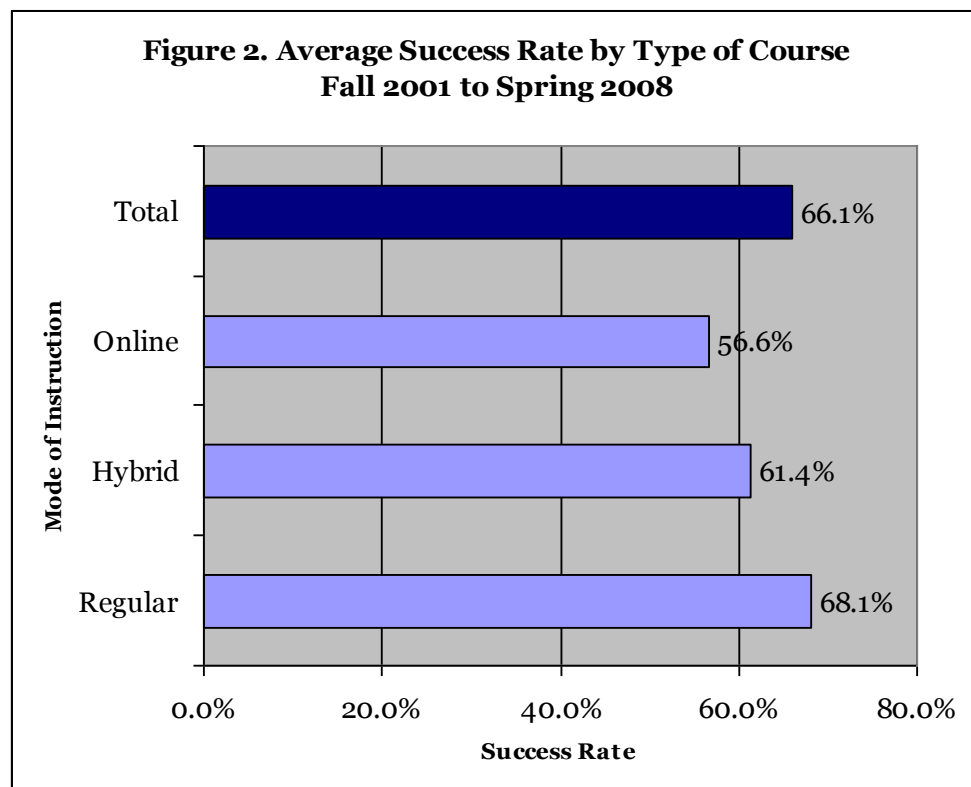
Overall Trends

Overall, regular courses have the highest retention¹ rates, while online courses have the lowest (see Figure 1). The average retention rate for all courses in this study is 84.2%.

¹ Retention rate (course completion) is the percent of students that end the course with a final grade other than "W".



A similar pattern is found for course success² rates (see Figure 2). The average success rate for all courses in this study is 66.1%.



² Success rate is the percent of students that end the course with a final grade of “A”, “B”, “C”, or “CR”.

Longitudinal Trends

A term-by-term analysis of retention and success yields essentially the same findings (see Table 1). Table 2 reorganizes the same information by type of term (spring, summer, fall, winter). Regular courses were found to have higher retention and success rates than online courses in all terms studied. In most terms, regular courses have higher retention and success rates than hybrid courses. Hybrid courses offered in summer have slightly higher retention and success than equivalent courses taught on campus.

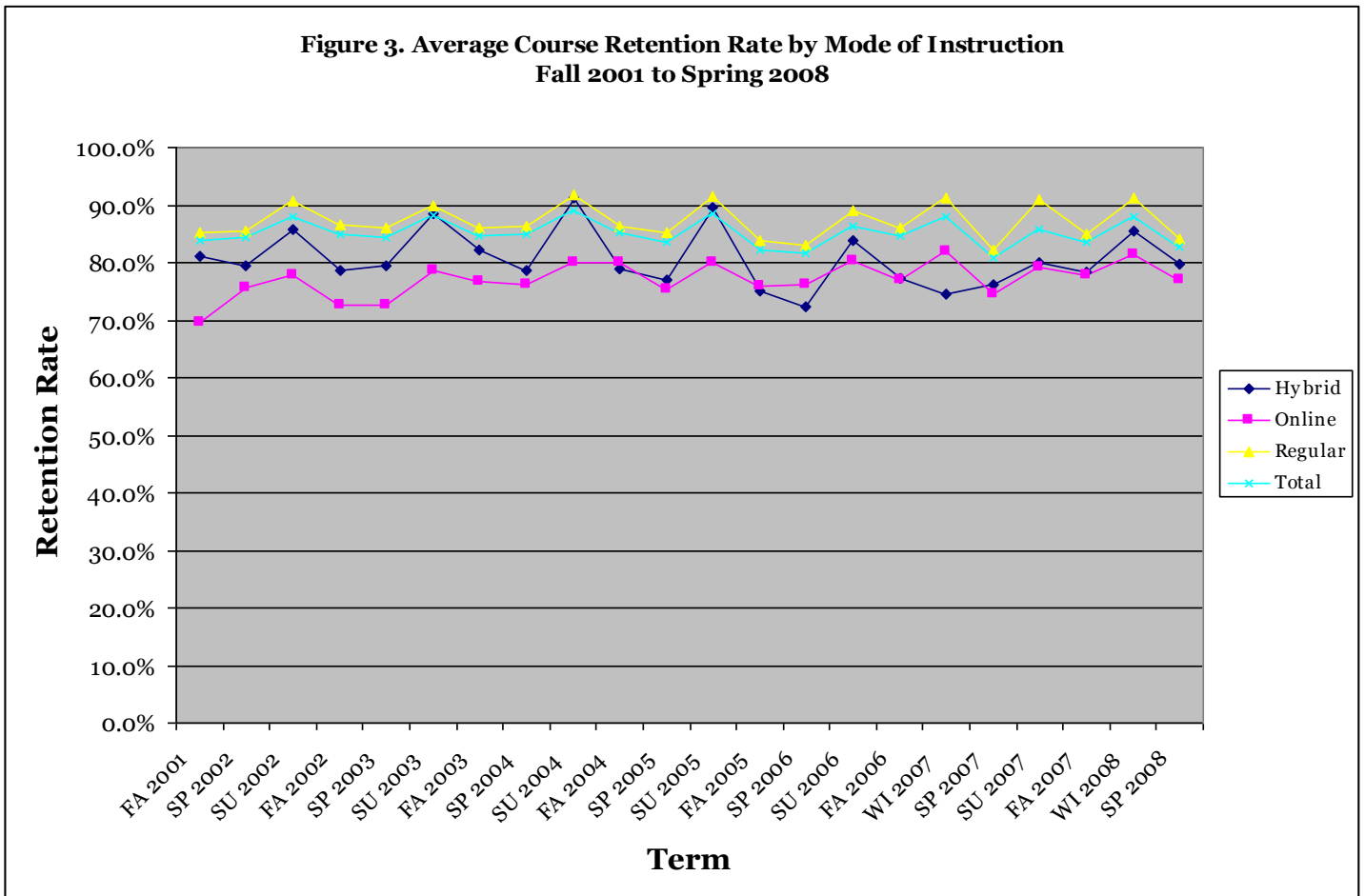
Table 1. Retention and Success Rates by Course Type and by Term

Mode of Instruction	HYBRID		ONLINE		REGULAR		TOTAL	
	Ret	Succ	Ret	Succ	Ret	Succ	Ret	Succ
FA 2001	81.0%	57.0%	69.6%	46.1%	85.1%	65.8%	83.8%	64.0%
SP 2002	79.6%	59.1%	75.6%	54.1%	85.5%	65.5%	84.5%	64.4%
SU 2002	85.7%	70.3%	77.8%	55.6%	90.6%	79.4%	87.8%	74.3%
FA 2002	78.6%	59.5%	72.7%	50.8%	86.6%	70.1%	84.9%	67.8%
SP 2003	79.4%	62.2%	72.7%	52.8%	86.1%	69.8%	84.3%	67.5%
SU 2003	88.4%	76.9%	78.7%	62.9%	89.8%	80.0%	88.1%	77.3%
FA 2003	82.2%	65.2%	76.8%	54.3%	86.0%	68.1%	84.7%	66.3%
SP 2004	78.6%	56.3%	76.2%	56.2%	86.4%	69.4%	84.8%	67.2%
SU 2004	91.3%	80.9%	79.9%	60.0%	91.7%	82.2%	89.1%	77.3%
FA 2004	79.0%	58.8%	79.9%	54.8%	86.2%	68.5%	85.1%	66.3%
SP 2005	77.1%	57.9%	75.5%	54.4%	85.2%	67.1%	83.5%	64.9%
SU 2005	89.7%	82.5%	80.1%	63.4%	91.5%	80.7%	88.5%	76.4%
FA 2005	75.0%	51.7%	75.9%	55.2%	83.9%	63.4%	82.3%	61.6%
SP 2006	72.2%	49.8%	76.0%	57.1%	83.0%	63.8%	81.6%	62.3%
SU 2006	83.9%	69.2%	80.4%	62.8%	89.1%	78.0%	86.3%	73.2%
FA 2006	77.2%	54.4%	77.1%	55.7%	86.0%	65.7%	84.6%	64.0%
WI 2007	74.4%	59.8%	81.9%	68.2%	91.2%	80.2%	87.9%	76.1%
SP 2007	76.1%	54.9%	74.6%	52.3%	82.1%	63.9%	80.8%	61.9%
SU 2007	80.1%	64.1%	79.2%	64.1%	90.9%	80.2%	85.9%	73.2%
FA 2007	78.4%	62.4%	77.8%	54.3%	85.0%	64.7%	83.6%	63.2%
WI 2008	85.4%	72.8%	81.4%	65.6%	91.3%	80.5%	87.9%	75.4%
SP 2008	79.9%	62.2%	77.0%	55.5%	84.2%	65.5%	82.8%	63.8%
TOTAL	79.6%	61.4%	77.0%	56.6%	85.8%	68.1%	84.2%	66.1%

Table 2. Retention and Success Rates by Type of Term (spring, summer, fall, winter)

Mode of Instruction	HYBRID		ONLINE		REGULAR		TOTAL	
	Ret	Succ	Ret	Succ	Ret	Succ	Ret	Succ
TOTAL	79.6%	61.4%	77.0%	56.6%	85.8%	68.1%	84.2%	66.1%
FA 2001	81.0%	57.0%	69.6%	46.1%	85.1%	65.8%	83.8%	64.0%
FA 2002	78.6%	59.5%	72.7%	50.8%	86.6%	70.1%	84.9%	67.8%
FA 2003	82.2%	65.2%	76.8%	54.3%	86.0%	68.1%	84.7%	66.3%
FA 2004	79.0%	58.8%	79.9%	54.8%	86.2%	68.5%	85.1%	66.3%
FA 2005	75.0%	51.7%	75.9%	55.2%	83.9%	63.4%	82.3%	61.6%
FA 2006	77.2%	54.4%	77.1%	55.7%	86.0%	65.7%	84.6%	64.0%
FA 2007	78.4%	62.4%	77.8%	54.3%	85.0%	64.7%	83.6%	63.2%
SP 2002	79.6%	59.1%	75.6%	54.1%	85.5%	65.5%	84.5%	64.4%
SP 2003	79.4%	62.2%	72.7%	52.8%	86.1%	69.8%	84.3%	67.5%
SP 2004	78.6%	56.3%	76.2%	56.2%	86.4%	69.4%	84.8%	67.2%
SP 2005	77.1%	57.9%	75.5%	54.4%	85.2%	67.1%	83.5%	64.9%
SP 2006	72.2%	49.8%	76.0%	57.1%	83.0%	63.8%	81.6%	62.3%
SP 2007	76.1%	54.9%	74.6%	52.3%	82.1%	63.9%	80.8%	61.9%
SP 2008	79.9%	62.2%	77.0%	55.5%	84.2%	65.5%	82.8%	63.8%
SU 2002	85.7%	70.3%	77.8%	55.6%	90.6%	79.4%	87.8%	74.3%
SU 2003	88.4%	76.9%	78.7%	62.9%	89.8%	80.0%	88.1%	77.3%
SU 2004	91.3%	80.9%	79.9%	60.0%	91.7%	82.2%	89.1%	77.3%
SU 2005	89.7%	82.5%	80.1%	63.4%	91.5%	80.7%	88.5%	76.4%
SU 2006	83.9%	69.2%	80.4%	62.8%	89.1%	78.0%	86.3%	73.2%
SU 2007	80.1%	64.1%	79.2%	64.1%	90.9%	80.2%	85.9%	73.2%
WI 2007	74.4%	59.8%	81.9%	68.2%	91.2%	80.2%	87.9%	76.1%
WI 2008	85.4%	72.8%	81.4%	65.6%	91.3%	80.5%	87.9%	75.4%

The following graphs compare the average course retention and success rates for each type of class by term for the fall 2001 to spring 2008 terms (see Figures 3 and 4). Summer courses have higher success rates for all types of courses.



**Figure 4. Average Course Success Rate by Mode of Instruction
Fall 2001 to Spring 2008**

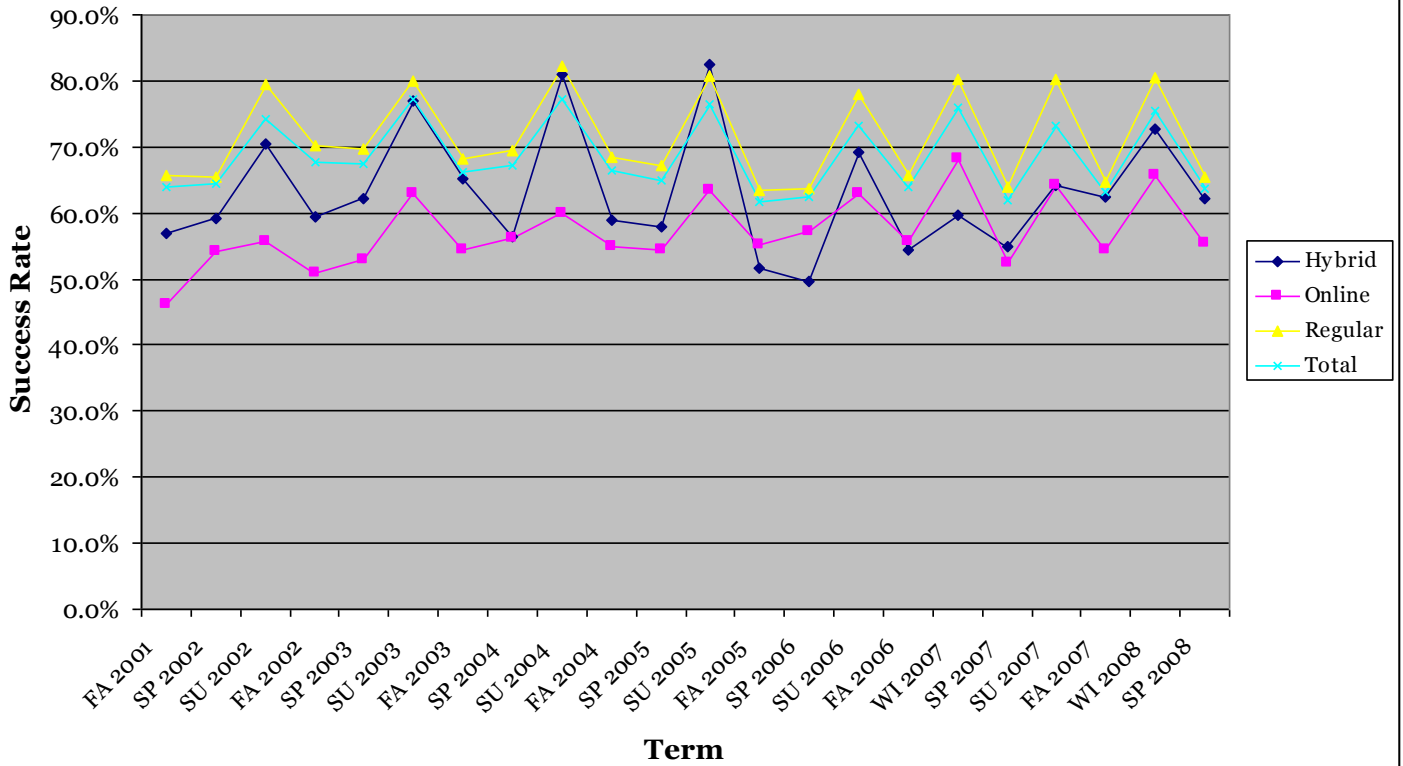


Table 3 shows the 81 courses included in this study. Some courses may have changed course IDs and preserved the course title; the list below reflects both course IDs.

Table 3. HYBRID/ONLINE COURSES OFFERED FALL 2001 - SPRING 2008			
AHIS1	BUSM66	COMP16	MEDI90
AMLA55	BUSO5	COUN5	NF 10
ANTH1	BUSO96A	EDT 24	PHIL12
ANTH22	BUSR50	ENGL1A	PHIL15
ARTA1	BUSS36	ENGL1C	PHIL20A
ASTR5	CHEM2A	ENGL8A	PHIL20B
BIOL1	CHLD10	ENGL8B	PHIL3
BIOL5	CIS 10A	HRM 51	PHIL5
BUSA11	CISB11	HRM 52	PHIL8
BUSA68	CISB15	HRM 53	PHIL9
BUSA7	CISD21	HRM 56	PSYC1A
BUSA8	CISD31	HRM 57	PSYC5
BUSC1A	CISN11	HRM 61	SOC 1
BUSC1B	CISN24	HRM 64	SOC 14
BUSL18	CISN51	HRM 66	SOC 15
BUSL19	CISP11	HRM 70	SOC 2
BUSM20	CISP21	JOUR2	SOC 20
BUSM51	CISP41	LERN74	SOC 5
BUSM52	CISW11	MATH130	STDY85
BUSM61	COMP14	MATH140	STDY85C
BUSM62			

Conclusion

A summary of major findings of this study show the following:

- Online and hybrid classes yield lower retention and success rates than regular classes. Hybrid classes yield higher retention and course success rates than online classes. The retention rates for regular, hybrid, and online classes are 85.8%, 79.6%, and 77.0% respectively. The success rates for regular, hybrid, and online classes are 68.1%, 61.4%, and 56.6% respectively.
- Summer and winter terms yield higher retention and course success rates than their fall and spring counterparts. This can be attributed to a combination of factors including student profiles, varying motivators, course and mode of instruction offerings, etc.
- Although there are wide differences between the retention and success rates of specific courses included in this study, overall distance learning courses show no substantial

increase in retention or success rates over time. (Course-specific information on retention and success rates is located in the accompanying Excel workbook.) It is important to note that hybrid classes offered during the fall and spring terms during the last three years have yielded retention and success rates that have been steadily increasing. In the same vein, the summer term has seen decreased retention and success rates in the last three years (See Table 2).