

# WHAT DO UNSUCCESSFUL ONLINE STUDENTS WANT US TO KNOW?

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## ABSTRACT

Over the past twelve years, Monroe Community College (MCC), in Rochester, NY, has administered three surveys to non-successful online students to ask about their perceptions of online learning and to learn about student perceived barriers in the online environment. For these surveys, non-successful students were defined as those students who received a grade of F or W in an MCC online course. Typically, these particular students do not share their perceptions of online learning with the college because they rarely participate in end of the year student satisfaction surveys. Thus, their perceptions are often invisible and unknown to institutions. In the MCC surveys, students were asked to: share their perspectives on why they felt that were not successful in their online class; comment on their expectations for online classes; and share the advice that they would give to a student who was considering taking an online MCC class. The students' responses to these questions were fairly consistent over the course of time that the surveys were conducted, 2000-2001, 2005-2006, and 2009-2010. The combined responses for the three surveys indicated that the number one reason why students felt that they were not successful in their online course was because they "got behind and couldn't catch up." Although online student satisfaction surveys provide insights into the perceptions of online students, the voluntary respondents to these surveys are those students who typically did well in the course. A review of the results of the responses from unsuccessful online students broadens the scope of the voice of the students and brings to the forefront the perspectives of students who were not successful. These data can help to inform the types of student services support that unsuccessful online MCC students feel are needed.

## KEYWORDS

Online retention, online student needs, online student perceptions

## I. INTRODUCTION

Monroe Community College was founded in Rochester, NY in 1961 as a part of the State University of New York (SUNY) system. Today, the college serves approximately 37,000 students annually, and it is the largest college in terms of enrollment of the 16 Rochester area colleges. MCC joined the SUNY Learning Network (SLN) in 1997 offering four online courses to 31 students. MCC's current online enrollment represents approximately 17% of the total enrollment of the college. Of these online students, 48% are first time online students [1].

Concerns about the retention rates of online students as compared to students in matched course sections taught in a traditional on-campus method began to be recognized in 1999-2000. In 2000-2001, the college developed a survey to be given to unsuccessful online students—unsuccessful online students are those defined as students who received a grade of F or W in an online MCC course.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Online Student Retention Rates

*"The problem of dropout rates in eLearning Programmes has been argued over at length without any consistent conclusions about the magnitude of the problem, or a clear understanding of what can be done about it" [2, p. 1].*

In a 2000 article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Carr [3, p.A39] reported that retention rates of students in online courses were generally 10% to 20% lower than those of traditional campus-based

courses. Subsequent studies of online student retention rates confirm that many institutions have lower rates of online student retention in programs and courses when compared to their face-to-face counterparts [4-8]. The referenced studies approached the review of online student retention from different perspectives, but all agreed that when compared to face-to-face instruction, online student retention rates were lower. These retention studies were conducted at both two-year and four-year institutions, and they each indicated that the lower student retention rates for online college students is an important issue that needs to be addressed.

In September 2011, the Distance Education (DE) Report included in its “Monthly Metric” section, retention data from The Survey of Distance Learning Programs in Higher Education, 2010 edition. The report aggregated semester to semester retention rates for more than 50 institutions that had distance learning programs. These institutions ranged from community colleges to Ph.D. granting institutions. For all institutions, the mean semester to semester retention rate (program retention) ranged from a minimum of 52% to a maximum of 98%. For junior and community colleges only, the semester to semester retention rate (program retention) ranged from a minimum of 60% to a maximum of 95% [p. 3, 9].

The SUNY Learning Network (SLN) that supports MCC’s online courses, reports persistence data from 12 SLN community colleges that voluntarily share their online persistence data. MCC is one of the institutions that participates in this effort. The SLN Successful Persistence Data Report provides information on the percentage of SLN students who persist, using three metrics: Start to Census Date, Start to Completion, and Census to Completion. In 2010, the Census to Completion rate for the 12 SLN community colleges was 67%; in 2009, the rate was 66% [10-11]. Of the three metrics reported, the Census to Completion rate metric is preferred by MCC because MCC’s retention grade outcomes are reported from Census date to Completion (final course grade).

Although many institutions have lower online student retention rates when compared to on-campus retention rates, others do not. A 2009 issue of the *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks* [12] presented studies with effective practices from five institutions that had achieved an 80% or greater online student retention rate. These effective practices ranged from activities to be completed before the students entered online courses as well as those services provided during online courses, i.e., course design strategies, technical and help desk support, online faculty professional development, and online classroom management techniques, among others. These practices could prove instructive to those institutions aiming to improve online retention rates.

Students who are not retained in online courses can get behind in their academic programs, become discouraged and may decide to withdraw from higher education. Some online students are falling through the cracks for a variety of student, academic and institutional reasons that are interrelated, but no one factor accounts for the difference between on-campus and online student retention rates. Despite MCC’s efforts to provide support services to online students, the online student retention rate—particularly for first time online students—remains lower than the rate for campus-based students.

### **III. ONLINE LEARNING AT MCC**

Monroe Community College began offering courses in an online, web-based format in 1997 by offering four courses to 31 students. MCC joined other institutions in New York State that partnered with the SUNY Learning Network (SLN)—the online learning program for SUNY. SLN hosts the Angel (A New Generation of E-Learning) course management system (CMS), provides centralized help desk support to online students and faculty, provides web-based services for faculty and students, provides online support to students and faculty, and provided the professional development model for online faculty. In Fall 2011, the percentage of MCC students taking at least one online course was 16.9% [13]. In the Spring 2012 semester, MCC offered 125 different courses in 231 multiple sections online.

The first MCC online student retention survey was conducted in 2000-2001. In 2003, Moore et al. [7] compared student outcomes in campus-based courses with students in online courses. In summary, the findings showed that the success (defined as a grade of C or better) “of full-time students was almost 14 percentage points lower in online courses than in traditional courses, and the difference between part-time and full-time students in online course success was almost 18 percentage points” [7, p. 112]. The success

rates for first time online MCC students were even lower. “First time, full-time students were the least likely to successfully complete online courses; the success rate difference between online and on-campus courses for this subgroup was 32%” [p. 112, 7].

MCC has put a number of student support services initiatives into place to try to improve online student retention (course retention) for all online students. Some of these efforts included voluntary student interventions before the students started their online class and some were focused on professional development for faculty and staff. Other strategies addressed improving course design through the voluntary use of the Quality Matters© online course rubric [14], through faculty class management strategies, and via a number of academic and student support services. MCC’s efforts to address online student course retention by providing additional student support services has had mixed results. Overall, the retention rate for students in online courses is between five percent to 10% lower than for students in traditional face-to-face classes at MCC. Although this shows some improvement over the 2003 numbers, there is much work to do to increase the online student retention rates at MCC.

## IV. SURVEY OF UNSUCCESSFUL ONLINE STUDENTS

### A. Survey Information

The MCC survey for unsuccessful MCC online students consists of a 45 question survey that was conducted over the telephone. The survey instrument was developed using the framework from M. Garland’s work, *Student Perceptions of the Situational, Institutional, Dispositional and Epistemological Barriers to Persistence* [15]. The survey instrument was tested for reliability and validity by MCC faculty, online students, and staff and administrators including instructional designers, research office staff, and academic and educational technology staff members. Note: If other institutions wish to replicate the survey, the MCC online retention survey instrument is provided in the Appendix.

MCC’s Institutional Research Office pulled the names and contact information of unsuccessful online students and provided the information to members of the MCC Educational Technology Services staff who administered the survey. The total number of students who fully responded to the combined three surveys totaled only 438. The overall response rate was very poor, 14%. When the student spoke directly on the telephone to the data collectors, 32% of unsuccessful students agreed to participate in the survey.

When compared to MCC’s total online student population, the sample population was overrepresented by males and by 20-24 year olds, and it was underrepresented by blacks and “other” ethnicities, and by first time online students.

### B. Student reasons for non-success in their online course

Given the empirical findings from 2003 that almost 1/3 of first time online MCC students were not successful, two additional surveys of non-retained MCC online students were conducted in 2005-2006 and 2009-2010. The students from the three combined telephone surveys reported that they did not know what to expect in their online course, they were not sure where to go for help and didn’t realize the time commitment and organizational skills needed to succeed in an online course.

Data from the three combined MCC online student retention surveys indicated that the unsuccessful students’ reasons for non-success in their online course have remained stable over the ten years that the surveys were administered. When asked to select from twenty-two statements of why they felt they weren’t successful in their online course, the top ranked choice in each survey was, I got behind and it was too hard to catch up [16]. Among the “A to V” (22) potential reasons for non-success, the top ten ranked reasons from the combined data from the three surveys was:

1. 19.7% - I got behind and it was too hard to catch up (M)
2. 14.2% - I had personal problems (health, job, child care) (C)
3. 13.7% - I couldn’t handle combined study plus work or family responsibilities (B)
4. 7.3% - I didn’t like the online format (S)
5. 7.3% - I didn’t like the instructor’s teaching style (U)
6. 6.8% - I experienced too many technical difficulties (G)

- 7. 6.2% - The course was taking too much time (L)
- 8. 5.0% - I lacked motivation (E)
- 9. 4.3% - I signed up for too many courses and had to cut down on my course load (Q)
- 10. 3.0% - The course was too difficult (A) [16].

It is important to note that the top three reasons for non-success—from the three combined surveys—accounted for 47.6% of the student reported reasons for not being successful. The top ten reasons accounted for 87.5% of the unsuccessful online student reasons for not being successful in the online course.

### C. Student likelihood to take another online course

When the unsuccessful student respondents were asked about their likelihood to take another online class, 31.3% of the students indicated that there was no chance, or that it was not likely, that they would take another online course, see Figure 1 below.

Likelihood to take another online class	Frequency	Percent
Not a chance	85	19.4%
Not likely	52	11.9%
It's possible	71	16.2%
Somewhat likely	59	13.5%
Very likely	171	39.0%
Total	438	100.00%

**Figure 1: MCC non-successful online student responses to their likelihood to take another online course [16]**

When the combined data from the three surveys were initially analyzed, there was concern that almost 1/3 of students who had enrolled in an online course, and had not been successful, most likely would not sign up for another online MCC course. After further reflection, this was seen as a positive result for the students since the unsuccessful students realized that their learning style or lifestyle was not suited for online learning. This result prompted discussions on the timing of the voluntary online student orientations. It was suggested that the orientations be offered a few weeks earlier before the start of a semester to allow students to participate in the orientation, and if they determined that online learning was not right for them, the student still would have time to drop their online class and sign up for a campus-based or hybrid class.

### D. Advice to potential online students from unsuccessful online students

The survey findings that were of particular interest with regard to student support services included the responses to the question, “What advice would you give to students who are considering registering for an online course?” These results were considered as surrogate data to help to determine the types of student support services that unsuccessful online students felt that they needed. They also helped to inform the topics that should be considered as part of an online student orientation to overcome some of the student perceived barriers to online learning. The top thirteen pieces of advice that unsuccessful online students would give to students who were considering an online course included:

- 1. Stay up with the course activities—don’t get behind
- 2. Use good time management skills
- 3. Use good organizational skills
- 4. Set aside specific times during each week for your online class

5. Know how to get technical help
6. A lot of online writing is required
7. There is a lot of reading in the textbook and in online discussions—be prepared
8. Regular online communications are needed
9. Ask the professor if you have questions
10. Carefully read the course syllabus
11. Be sure you understand the requirements of the online course discussions
12. Understand how much each online activity is worth toward your grade
13. Go to the online student orientation, if possible [16].

Although one of these items (item 5) refers specifically to how to get technical help, it is important to note that the majority of the advice given by unsuccessful online students refers to the soft skills that students need to successfully complete their online course. Many online student orientations focus on the technical aspects of online learning. These survey findings suggest that MCC (and perhaps other institutions) should consider spending some meaningful time during the orientation sessions on the soft skills that are needed to make students successful in the online learning environment.

#### **D. Other study findings**

Other archival data gathering that was conducted along with the online student surveys suggested that the following factors impacted the performance outcomes for MCC online students:

- The age and time of registration are each significant contributors to grade performance of MCC's online students (>25 years of age or above increases performance).
- The best chance of an online student getting a grade of C or better occurs when they register five or more weeks before the start of the semester.
- The greater the number of prior higher education credit hours earned increases the chances of getting a C or better in the students' online course [16].

With regard to some unexpected survey findings, within three to six months after the end of the semester, over 1/3 of unsuccessful online student telephone contact information in MCC's Banner system was incorrect. This may be due to the transient nature of community college students, but it is a severe limitation when the institution would like to contact these students.

Another unexpected finding was that when asked if the students' expectation was that they could start their course at any time during the semester (rather than on a specific date) only 56.8% of students reported that they were aware that they had to start their online course on a particular date [16]. This finding suggests that the students do not know what to expect in their online courses, and that this topic needs to be covered not only in the orientation for online students, but should be emphasized by counselors, advisors, and online faculty members when interacting with potential and newly enrolled online students.

Some areas of concern from the survey results suggested that issues related to non-success of online students at MCC manifest themselves at the beginning of, and just prior to, the beginning of the course. This suggests that MCC should focus some additional student support services on e-readiness of online students, particularly for the first time online students. Based on the survey findings, some topics that need to be reinforced with first time online students include student expectations of the online environment, and how to access student support services needed specifically for first time online students. MCC currently offers a voluntary face-to-face orientation for online students and also provides an online voluntary student orientation. Research conducted on the existing MCC face-to-face online student orientation suggested that a mandatory online orientation is needed to effectively communicate learner expectations to first time online students. Based upon this research and the results of the unsuccessful online student surveys, MCC's Office of Online Learning is exploring how best to implement an online orientation in the Angel Course Management System. Additionally, the office is in discussions with key stakeholders regarding the implementation of a mandatory online orientation for all first time online MCC students.

## **E. Pros and Cons of Conducting Surveys of Unsuccessful Online Students**

The pros and cons of administering surveys to unsuccessful online students are numerous, but a few factors experienced by MCC's survey administrations are included below.

### **Pros:**

- The voice of the student is heard, and the institution can gather data directly from unsuccessful online students, many of whom are invisible to the institution once they are unsuccessful in their online course.
- The institution can compare unsuccessful online student survey findings to online student satisfaction surveys to identify any trends.
- Personal contact with the unsuccessful students may offer support to students who may be discouraged after being unsuccessful in their online course.
- The survey demonstrates to students that the institution values their opinion.
- Other student contact methods (online surveys) should be considered given the proliferation of free online survey tools that now are available.
- The student survey findings can inform the institution of some student support services that need to be enhanced, or provide information on services that currently are not offered.

### **Cons:**

- It is difficult to reach the unsuccessful students.
- Students who were unsuccessful may feel embarrassed to discuss their reasons for non-success.
- Institutional contact data may be out-of-date within several months of the previous semester.
- It is time consuming to collect the data.
- A single site study is not generalizable.

## **V. SUMMARY**

The findings of the three combined online retention surveys conducted at MCC provided the institution with the perspectives of unsuccessful online students whose voice had been missing from the online learning and student support services conversation. Prior to the development and administration of these surveys, the college relied on student satisfaction surveys from online students to provide student input on the college's online courses and programs. These data presented the perspectives of students who typically did well in their online courses, but the full picture was not known since the unsuccessful online students (Grade of F or W) rarely responded to these surveys.

The findings from MCC's unsuccessful online student surveys are being used to assist the college in the enhancement, development, and assessment of online student support services, in an effort to support the success of all online students. Next steps include aggregating the SLN student satisfaction survey responses with the responses from the MCC unsuccessful online student surveys to more formally determine motivators and barriers to online student success at Monroe Community College.

## **VI. ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Marie Fetzner is an adjunct instructor for Monroe Community College (MCC) in Rochester, NY. She retired from the role of the MCC Assistant to the Vice President, Educational Technology after 25 years of service. As an advocate for the use of appropriate technologies to support student success, she served as a founding member of the Monroe Model team that in 1997 brought together representatives from various MCC divisions in an effort to comprehensively support online students and faculty. For three years, she also served as the MCC Banner Project Manager. Marie has coordinated online faculty training, has been developing and teaching online courses for more than a decade, and her research interests are focused on online student retention. Marie earned her Bachelor of Music (B.M.) degree from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester, she earned her Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) degree at the State University of New York at Brockport, and her Ed.D. was earned at the Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development at the University of Rochester.

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## APPENDIX: MCC ONLINE STUDENT RETENTION SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Institutions are welcome to use the MCC Online Retention Survey Instrument. If the survey is replicated by your institution, please note in the study documentation that the survey instrument was developed by Monroe Community College, and send the summary study findings to:

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**MONROE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
SUNY LEARNING NETWORK  
ONLINE COURSE RETENTION SURVEY**

***TELEPHONE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL***

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student "M" Number: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Hello may I please speak with \_\_\_\_\_ [STUDENT'S NAME]?

If student is not there: Is there another time when I may call back to speak with \_\_\_\_\_?

(Record other date/times here): \_\_\_\_\_.

[WHEN STUDENT IS ON THE LINE:]

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from the Distance Learning Office at Monroe Community College.

We're conducting a research project to learn about students' experiences with online courses offered through the SUNY Learning Network, and we'd like to ask for about 10 minutes of your time to answer a few questions. Your participation is important to help us design better courses and improve our services to students.

[PROCEED IF THEY AGREE]

Students who withdrew from or received a grade of "F" or "W" in at least one online course during the \_\_\_\_\_ semester are being asked to complete this survey. Please answer these questions in regard to your experiences with the most recent SUNY Learning Network online course that you enrolled in but did not complete successfully.



**Was this your first experience with an online course?**

- Y. Yes
- N. No

**2. Did you choose to take this online course yourself, or were you placed into the course by a counselor or advisor?**

- 1. Chose the online course myself.
- 2. Placed into the course by a counselor or advisor.

**In the next few questions, we would like to find out about your level of satisfaction with different aspects of the online course. I will read the question, and you can provide a rating on the following 5-point scale:**

- 1 means you were Extremely Satisfied with that aspect of the course,
- 2 means you were Somewhat Satisfied,
- 3 means you had Mixed Feelings,
- 4 means you were Somewhat Dissatisfied, and
- 5 means you were Extremely Dissatisfied with that aspect of the course.
- 6 means that you are not sure or have no opinion

[REPEAT SCALE AFTER FIRST FEW QUESTIONS, AND CONTINUE IF NECESSARY.]

**3. Directions to get started**

- 1. Extremely satisfied
- 2. Somewhat satisfied
- 3. Mixed feelings
- 4. Somewhat dissatisfied
- 5. Extremely dissatisfied
- 6. Not sure/ No opinion

**4. Registration and orientation process for the course**

- 1. Extremely satisfied
- 2. Somewhat satisfied
- 3. Mixed feelings
- 4. Somewhat dissatisfied
- 5. Extremely dissatisfied
- 6. Not sure/ No opinion

**5. Directions provided by the faculty**

- 1. Extremely satisfied
- 2. Somewhat satisfied
- 3. Mixed feelings
- 4. Somewhat dissatisfied
- 5. Extremely dissatisfied
- 6. Not sure/ No opinion

**6. Interaction with the faculty**

- 1. Extremely satisfied
- 2. Somewhat satisfied
- 3. Mixed feelings

4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Extremely dissatisfied
6. Not sure/ No opinion

**7. Interaction with other students**

1. Extremely satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Mixed feelings
4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Extremely dissatisfied
6. Not sure/ No opinion

**8. The content of the course**

1. Extremely satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Mixed feelings
4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Extremely dissatisfied
6. Not sure/ No opinion

**9. Technical help with the course**

1. Extremely satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Mixed feelings
4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Extremely dissatisfied
6. Not sure/ No opinion

**10. Your own performance in the course**

1. Extremely satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Mixed feelings
4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Extremely dissatisfied
6. Not sure/ No opinion

**11. The SUNY Learning Network in general**

1. Extremely satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Mixed feelings
4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Extremely dissatisfied
6. Not sure/ No opinion

For the next series of questions, we would like you to tell us about your expectations when you registered for an online course. I will read the question, and you can provide a rating on the following scale:

- 1 means that this was Definitely what you expected,
- 2 means that this was Sort Of what you expected,
- 3 means that this was Not At All what you expected, and
- 4 means you Had No Idea what to expect regarding this.

[REPEAT SCALE AFTER FIRST FEW QUESTIONS, AND CONTINUE AS NECESSARY.]

**12. I expected an online course to be easier than an on-campus course.**

1. Definitely what I expected
2. Sort of what I expected
3. Not at all what I expected
4. Had no idea what to expect

**13. I expected less homework than in an on-campus course.**

1. Definitely what I expected
2. Sort of what I expected
3. Not at all what I expected
4. Had no idea what to expect

**14. I thought that homework would not have deadlines.**

1. Definitely what I expected
2. Sort of what I expected
3. Not at all what I expected
4. Had no idea what to expect

**15. I thought I could begin the course anytime during the semester.**

1. Definitely what I expected
2. Sort of what I expected
3. Not at all what I expected
4. Had no idea what to expect

**16. I expected I would need to have basic computer skills.**

1. Definitely what I expected
2. Sort of what I expected
3. Not at all what I expected
4. Had no idea what to expect

**17. I expected that interaction with faculty would be required.**

1. Definitely what I expected
2. Sort of what I expected
3. Not at all what I expected
4. Had no idea what to expect

**18. I expected that I would participate independently without being required to interact with other students.**

1. Definitely what I expected
2. Sort of what I expected
3. Not at all what I expected
4. Had no idea what to expect

Next, please think about the reasons why you did not successfully complete this SLN online course. As I read through the list of reasons, tell me how important each one was in explaining why you did not successfully complete the course. Was this factor Very Important, Somewhat Important, or Not At All Important?

[REPEAT SCALE AFTER FIRST FEW QUESTIONS, AND CONTINUE AS NECESSARY.]

**19. A. The course was too difficult.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**20. B. I couldn't handle the combined study plus work or family responsibilities.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**21. C. I had personal problems (health, job, child care).**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**22. D. I had financial problems.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**23. E. I lacked motivation.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**24. F. I lacked access to a computer.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**25. G. I experienced too many technical difficulties.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**26. H. I lacked basic computer skills.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**27. I. I lacked basic typing skills.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**28. J. The course required too much reading and writing.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important

3. Not at all important

**29. K. I felt too alone, not part of a class.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**30. L. The course was taking too much time.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**31. M. I got behind and it was too hard to catch up.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**32. N. I didn't realize when I registered that it was an online course.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**33. O. Space opened up in a regular section of the same course.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**34. P. I was able to add another course I wanted more.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**35. Q. I signed up for too many courses and had to cut down my course load.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**36. R. The online course was too unstructured for me.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**37. S. I didn't like the online format.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**38. T. I didn't know where to go for help.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important

3. Not at all important

**39. U. I didn't like the instructor's teaching style.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**40. V. I was not interested in the subject matter.**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not at all important

**41. Overall, what do you feel was the most significant reason you were not able to successfully complete this online course?**

**42. Was your *most* significant reason for not successfully completing the course included in the previous question?** [If yes, enter letter code from list below.] \_\_\_\_\_

- A. The course was too difficult.
- B. I couldn't handle the combined study plus work or family responsibilities.
- C. I had personal problems (health, job, child care).
- D. I had financial problems.
- E. I lacked motivation.
- F. I lacked access to a computer.
- G. I experienced too many technical difficulties.
- H. I lacked basic computer skills.
- I. I lacked basic typing skills.
- J. The course required too much reading and writing.
- K. I felt too alone, not part of a class.
- L. The course was taking too much time.
- M. I got behind and it was too hard to catch up.
- N. I didn't realize when I registered that it was an online course.
- O. Space opened up in a regular section of the same course.
- P. I was able to add another course I wanted more.
- Q. I signed up for too many courses and had to cut down my course load.
- R. The online course was too unstructured for me.
- S. I didn't like the online format.
- T. I didn't know where to go for help.
- U. I didn't like the instructor's teaching style.
- V. I was not interested in the subject matter.

**43. If your most significant reason was NOT mentioned in the previous question, please describe it.**  
[enter verbatim answer]

**44. How likely are you to register for another online course? Would you say... ?**

1. Very likely
2. Somewhat likely
3. It's possible
4. Not likely
5. Not a chance

**45. What advice would you give to students who are considering registering for an online course?**

[enter verbatim answer]

**Thank you very much for completing this survey!**