

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

ONLINE STUDENT RATINGS: INCREASING RESPONSE RATES

BY

DENISE LOUISE NELSON

A thesis submitted to the

Athabasca University Governing Council in partial fulfillment

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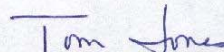
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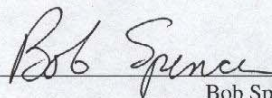
April, 2006

**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY**

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Athabasca University Governing Council for acceptance a thesis "ONLINE STUDENT RATINGS: INCREASING RESPONSE RATES" submitted by DENISE LOUISE NELSON in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF DISTANCE EDUCATION.



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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Kelly Nelson, and our children, Eric, Mitchell, and Andrea, whose generous love, understanding and support encouraged and sustained me throughout this program. By example, my parents, Betty and Leon Crow, instilled in me their values of education and dedication. I hope that my children will also cherish these values.

## ABSTRACT

Most institutions offering distance education can identify with the problem of low response rates of online evaluation, but few have systematically investigated the issue. The purpose of this two-phase, sequential mixed method study was to first explore and generate themes about student online evaluation response motivation and practice using interviews conducted via email. Based on these themes, Phase 2 used a Web-based cross-sectional survey of undergraduate and graduate online nursing students to identify preferred strategies to maximize response rates.

Perceived *value* represented the key theme that emerged from the qualitative narrative. Faculty members tend to *value* online student completed course evaluations and use student feedback for their ongoing course revisions. Students want evidence that the faculty and institution *value* their feedback. They expect to receive feedback from their institution regarding course changes and improvements.

Survey results confirm and extend literature findings. Respondents identified rewards, risk and trust as general means to increase response rates. In particular, participants rated the relative effectiveness of administrative factors (i.e., reminders, motivators, best time for completing, and best location for posting results) and the face validity of course evaluations to measure important aspects of instruction.

Online nursing student respondents rated the following reminders to complete the online course evaluation form: email message, faculty facilitator, course schedule, WebCT

course calendar, Campus Pipeline homepage, and welcome letter. With a mean response level of 1.29, the *Email Message* reflected the most effective reminder with nearly three fourths of students ranking it as very effective. *Faculty Facilitator* and *Course Schedule* reminders also reflected very strong positive responses.

The students also responded positively to factors motivating them to complete the course evaluation form. Briefly, the motivators included bonus mark for evaluation, draw for a prize, improvement/change from feedback, faculty facilitator encouragement, requirement to receive grade and comparison with other student ratings. The *Bonus Mark* for each course evaluated with a mean response level of 1.48 reflected an extremely effective motivator with approximately 70% of students ranking it as very effective. Further, *Draw for a Prize* and *Notice of Course Improvement or Change resulting from Feedback* also reflected very strong positive responses.

Respondents clearly indicated the best time to complete course evaluations, the location for posting the results, and whether or not course evaluation addresses the important aspects of instruction. The best time to complete the online course evaluation forms seemed to be the end of the course with a mean response level of 1.29 with 78% of students ranking it as very effective. Most respondents (88.8%) indicated that results should be posted on Campus Pipeline (Intranet) rather than the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) Web site (Internet). In their open-ended responses, students asserted the need for SIAST to post course evaluation to show value for student feedback and institutional accountability and quality assurance. Finally,

students confirmed that the course evaluation addresses the most important aspects of instruction (83.6% of respondents).

This study has implications for educational institutions striving to maximize student response rates. First, it is fundamental that institutions show value for the student feedback by reporting evaluation results including course changes/improvements. Second, institutions should take advantage of incorporating motivators and reminders, appropriate for their organizational culture, to maximize response rates to online course evaluation.

Finally, the researcher achieved a 70% response rate to the Web-based survey by employing strategies identified in the literature to maximize response rates.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This thesis was developed and completed with the assistance of a number of individuals to whom I express my heartfelt gratitude:

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Research Questions.....	4
Definition of Terms.....	6
Limitations and Delimitations.....	7
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
Overview of Distance Higher Education.....	8
Distance Education and Evaluation.....	9
Adult Student Evaluation of Course in Context of ISD.....	10
Student Ratings in General.....	12
Research Literature Specific to Online Student Ratings and Strategies to Increase Response Rates.....	13
Response Behaviors in Web-Based Surveys.....	13
Online Student Ratings of Instruction.....	13
Strategies to Increase Response Rates.....	16
Further Research.....	18
Summary.....	20
Contribution to Distance Education.....	20
CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY.....	22
Background to the Study.....	22



Significance of the Study.....	23
Synopsis of the Study.....	24
Characteristics of Mixed Method Research.....	25
Visual Model and Procedures of the Design.....	25
Participants.....	26
Draft Instruments.....	27
Validity Procedures.....	27
Phase 1 Qualitative Interview.....	29
Design.....	29
Instruments.....	30
Data Collection Procedure.....	30
Data Analysis.....	30
Phase 2 Quantitative Survey.....	30
Research Questions.....	30
Design.....	31
Instrument.....	31
Distribution of the Survey.....	32
Data Collection Procedure.....	32
Data Analysis.....	33
Summary.....	33
CHAPTER IV – RESULTS.....	35
Purpose of and Participation in the Study .....	35
Phase 1 Qualitative Interview.....	36

Faculty 1 Qualitative Narrative.....	36
Student Qualitative Narrative.....	37
Summary.....	43
Phase 2 Quantitative Survey.....	44
Administration – Reminders.....	45
Administration – Motivators.....	47
Administration – Best Time to Complete Online Course Evaluation Form.....	49
Administration – Location for Posting Results.....	51
Content of the Course Evaluation Form.....	52
Background Information.....	53
Summary.....	54
CHAPTER V – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	56
Purpose of the Study.....	56
Research Questions.....	56
Discussion of Results.....	57
Perspectives toward Online Course Evaluation.....	57
Proposed Strategies to Maximize Response Rates.....	57
Student Rankings of Strategies.....	57
Computer Technical Ability of the SIAST Online Nursing Student.....	58
Role of Previous Student Experience with Online Course Evaluation.....	58
Findings Congruent with the Literature.....	58
Implications of Results.....	59

Recommendations for Future Research.....	60
Summary.....	63
REFERENCES.....	65
APPENDIX A.....	72
EMAIL TO DEAN OF NURSING REGARDING FIRST CONTACT	
EMAIL.....	72
APPENDIX B.....	73
DEAN OF NURSING EMAIL MESSAGE TO STUDENTS AND	
FACULTY.....	73
APPENDIX C.....	74
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE.....	74
APPENDIX D.....	76
CONSENT FORM FOR FACULTY PARTICIPATION.....	76
APPENDIX E.....	77
CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION.....	77
APPENDIX F.....	78
PHASE 1 STUDENT INTERVIEW RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND	
PROTOCOL.....	78
APPENDIX G.....	81
PHASE 1 FACULTY INTERVIEW RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND	
PROTOCOL.....	81

APPENDIX H.....	83
SAMPLE EMAIL TO FACULTY FACILITATORS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENT PARTICIPATION.....	83
APPENDIX I.....	84
SAMPLE OF FOLLOW-UP INVITATION TO STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY.....	84
APPENDIX J.....	86
WEB-BASED SURVEY.....	86
APPENDIX K.....	89
WEB-BASED ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION.....	89

## LIST OF TABLES

	<u>PAGE</u>
1. Research Questions for Two-Phase Sequential Mixed Methods Study.....	4
2. Institutional and Student Strategies to Increase Student Ratings Response Rates.....	17
3. Further Research Related to Online Student Ratings of Instruction.....	18
4. Research Question Cross-Referenced to Items on the Survey.....	29
5. Phase 2 Research Questions.....	31
6. Phase 2 Data Collection Procedure.....	33
7. Faculty Perspectives Related to Online Course Evaluations and Associated Student Response Rates.....	36
8. Student Perspectives Related to Online Course Evaluations and Associated Student Response Rates.....	38
9. Modes, Means and Standard Deviations of Reminders.....	47
10. Modes, Means and Standard Deviations of Motivators.....	49
11. Modes, Means and Standard Deviations of Best Time to Complete Online Course Evaluation Forms.....	51

## LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>PAGE</u>
1. SIAST Online Course Evaluation Response Rates September to December 2003.....	3
2. Literature Map of the Research.....	14
3. Visual Model of Mixed Method Research.....	26
4. Mean Level of Response for Each Reminder Factor.....	46
5. Mean Level of Response for Each Motivation Factor.....	48
6. Mean Level of Response for Each Evaluation Time.....	50
7. Yes Distribution of Each Location for Posting Results (D1. N = 59; D2. N = 57).....	52
8. Percentage of Students who Think Evaluation Form Addresses Important Instruction (N = 55).....	53
9. Number of Online Courses Completed (N = 58).....	54
10. Completing the Feedback Cycle.....	60

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Most institutions offering distance education identify with the problem of low response rates of online evaluation, but few have systematically investigated the issue. Ratings provide faculty with feedback on their teaching, strengths and weaknesses of the course, and suggestions for course improvement. Administrators use this information for making decisions about courses, programs, faculty assignments, and sometimes for faculty review and promotion purposes. Other community and government stakeholders often rely on such quality assurance reports for funding and recruitment. Thus, evaluation of teaching and learning constitutes a core element of quality assurance processes and provides an invaluable opportunity to reflect on teaching practice and ways to support students' achievement of educational goals. But what is at the heart of the response rate problem? Phase 1 of this two-stage mixed method study examines the problem of low response rates and explores strategies to maximize online evaluation response rates. Phase 2 investigates the importance of these strategies to student response rates.

Evidence supporting the timeliness and importance of this study include increasing demand for online education, increasing online collection and reporting of student evaluation data, increasing calls for accountability by funders and consumer groups, and the prevailing issue of low response rates. First, Moe and Blodget (2000) predict that there could be 45 million online students worldwide by 2025, because of the increasing demand and limited access to high quality postsecondary education. Second, many educational institutions are implementing Web-based systems for both collecting

and reporting student evaluation data (Ballantyne, 2003; Hoffman, 2003; Johnson, 2003). Hoffman (2003) found an increase of approximately 8% since 2000 in the use of the Internet as a primary means of collecting student feedback. Third, low response rates represent a significant obstacle to implementation of online student ratings (Johnson, 2003; Ballantyne, 2003). Such evidence informs this study, which explores the issue of maximizing response rates to support improvement of online instructional programs.

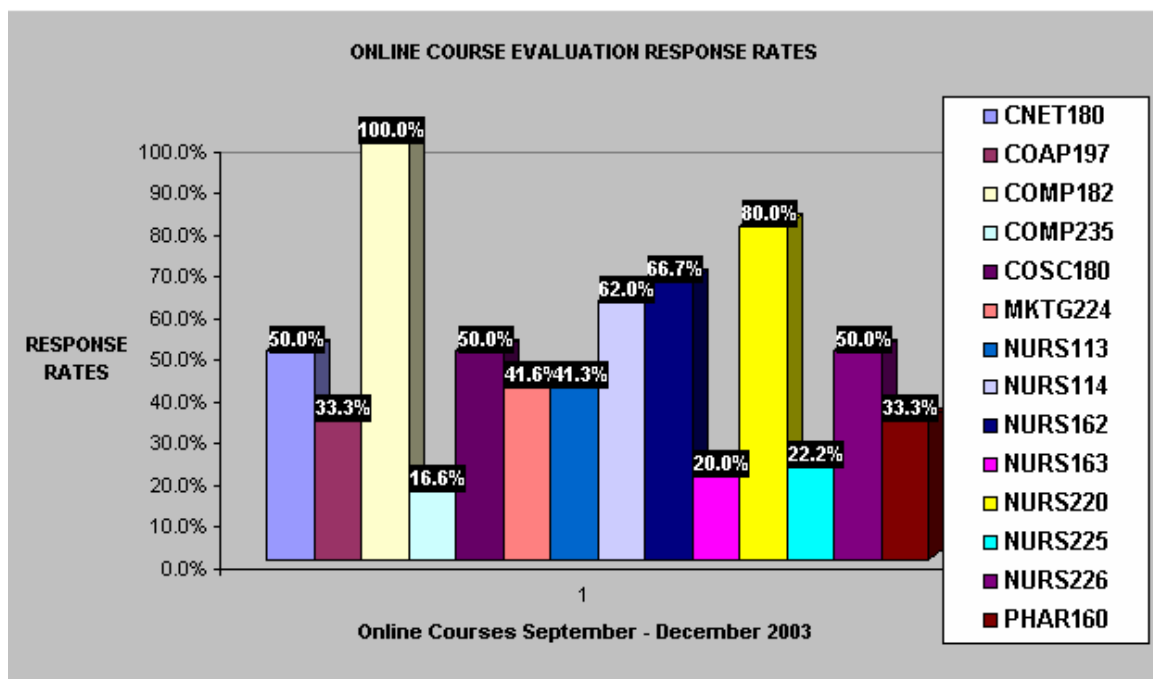
Literature regarding online evaluation typically includes comparison research (i.e., online vs. paper survey results), evaluation types (formative vs. summative), practice perspectives and surrounding issues. Only a relative handful of studies have specifically examined strategies for maximizing response rates of online evaluation (Ballantyne, 2000; Cummings, Ballantyne, & Fowler, 2000; Johnson, 2003; University of South Australia, 2003). These studies reflect only a university context. The college sector remains to be explored. By replicating or building upon these findings, the researcher expected to identify methods that will significantly increase college population response rates.

This study also examines the prioritization of strategies that influence response rates as identified in the literature (Cummings et al., 2000; Johnson, 2003; University of South Australia, 2003). This study uses Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) as a case example. A dual mode post-secondary Canadian college, SIAST began offering online courses in the fall semester 2000. Since that time, the college recognized the need to evaluate online evaluation processes in an effort toward continuous quality improvement. The evaluation system lacked meaningful reporting of response rates and strategies to maximize them. Figure 1 illustrates a bar graph of online



student rating response rates for the courses delivered from September to December 2003. Note that it provides the percentage of respondents, but not the total enrolments, which would provide more complete analysis. Based on the variation of the data below, exploring online evaluation and strategies for maximizing response rates seems warranted.

Figure 1 . SIAST Online Course Evaluation Response Rates September to December 2003



### Statement of the Problem

Whereas there is a tendency for low response rates with online evaluation of courses, and whereas low response rates suggest the possibility of bias in the results, this study will explore strategies to maximize online evaluation response rates. Maximizing response rates supports quality assurance processes of academic institutions.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this two-phase, sequential mixed methods study was to first explore and generate themes about student online evaluation response motivation and practice using interviews conducted via email. Five SIAST online nursing students and three nursing faculty participated in this phase. Based on these themes, Phase 2 led to the development of a survey instrument with online nursing students surveyed as to preferred strategies to maximize their response rates. Babbie (1990) argues that the purpose of survey research is to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made about some characteristic, attitude, or behavior of this population. A survey of student perceptions was developed after a preliminary exploration of student response to online evaluation that solicited personal and institutional reasons and incentives. Achieving the greatest number of student responses for a particular course evaluation defined maximizing response rates.

### Research Questions

To achieve its stated purpose, this study examined the following research questions that have been chronologically sequenced in Table 1. The process for conducting Phase 2 was based on data analysis and findings of Phase 1. The survey was developed as a result of strategies identified in the literature or by students and faculty interviews.

Table 1. Research Questions for Two-phase Sequential Mixed Methods Study

Two-Phase Sequential Mixed Method Study	
Phase 1 Qualitative	
Central questions	Associated subquestion pool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the attitudes/opinions of SIAST nursing students and faculty toward</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do SIAST nursing students describe their decision to respond to online course</li></ul>

<p>online course evaluation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strategies may SIAST use to support/encourage nursing students to respond to online course evaluation?</li> </ul>	<p>evaluation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What contributes to low response rates for online evaluation?</li> <li>• What reasons do SIAST nursing students give for not completing or responding to online course evaluation, if this is the case?</li> <li>• How can online evaluation response rates be increased?</li> <li>• What contributes to students responding to online course evaluation?</li> <li>• How do student, faculty and manager attitudes and behaviors influence online student feedback response rates?</li> <li>• How may online nursing faculty value student feedback of courses?</li> <li>• What do nursing students think about faculty's use of student feedback?</li> <li>• What do nursing students think about the best time and approach for course feedback?</li> <li>• How do faculty, course designers, and administrators use the student feedback? (i.e., to support reflection and subsequent improvement of course processes and outcomes)</li> <li>• What are nursing students' opinions about SIAST/faculty making resultant course changes?</li> <li>• Does SIAST administration value reporting of student results to students?</li> <li>• Are there additional student incentives that could be developed to increase student response rates?</li> </ul>
<p>Phase 2 Quantitative</p>	
<p>Descriptive Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the nursing students rate strategies to maximize online evaluation response rates?</li> <li>• What is the computer technical ability of the SIAST nursing student?</li> <li>• What is the role of previous experience of the SIAST nursing student with online course evaluation?</li> </ul>	

## Definition of Terms

The following terms are operationally defined for this study:

Pilot testing: a trial test of a questionnaire or procedure (i.e., interview) prior to full-scale implementation

Response rate: the number of students who responded to the instrument (i.e., survey) divided by the number of students enrolled in the class

Online evaluation or online student ratings: the process of students providing feedback of online courses, completed via Web-based surveys

Faculty: a professional nursing instructor who facilitates online nursing courses at SIAST.

Complete responders: "those respondents who view all questions and answer all questions" (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2001).

Nonresponders: those individuals who do not participate in the survey, due to technical problems or purposeful withdrawal (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2001)

Answering drop-outs: individuals who provide answers to those questions displayed, but quit before completing the survey (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2001)

Lurkers: those who view all of the questions in the survey, but do not answer any of the questions (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2001)

Lurking drop-outs: participants who view some of the questions without answering, but also quit the survey before reaching the end (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2001)

Item nonresponders: those who view the entire questionnaire, but only answer some of the questions (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2001)

Item non-responding drop-outs: individuals who view some of the questions, answer some, but not all of the questions viewed, and also quit before the end of the survey (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2001)

### Limitations and Delimitations

The study participants consisted of SIAST faculty and students involved in online course evaluations. The strategy for analyzing the data included distribution of the ratings and the mean of those individual responses.

While course evaluations provide one useful method for analyzing course effectiveness, the results should be considered with an appreciation of their limitations. Possible effects on the outcomes of the study include the willingness of the aforementioned stakeholders to respond at all, to respond in a timely fashion, and to respond accurately (Mauch & Birch, 1998). Web-based survey response pattern typology should also be considered (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2001): complete responders; nonresponders; answering drop-outs; lurkers; lurking drop-outs; item nonresponders; and item non-responding drop-outs. In addition, the sample for Phase 1 of the study (n = 5) of undergraduate and post-diploma nursing students and faculty members (n=3) was a convenience sample and does not allow for generalization.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter provides an overview of distance higher education and reports on the literature and research associated with distance education and evaluation, adult student evaluation in the context of instructional systems design (ISD), student ratings in general, response behaviors in Web-based surveys, online student ratings of instruction, and strategies to increase response rates. Lastly, the researcher discusses the need for further research and this study's contribution to distance education.

This discussion is limited to student evaluation for the purpose of improvement of courses, curriculum and instructor's pedagogical efforts, rather than its use as a component of faculty review.

#### Overview of Distance Higher Education

The use of the Internet continues to expand in higher education. Not only has there been a dramatic increase in the number of online courses and programs, but there has also been an increase in frequency with which online components are incorporated into on-campus courses (McGhee & Lowell, 2003). Moe and Blodget (2000) predict that there could be 45 million online students worldwide by 2025, given the increasing demand and limited access to high quality postsecondary education.

This new century, therefore, finds several interesting developments. First, the convergence of distance education and traditional education brings at once the educational community's most exciting possibility (increased access, new pedagogical approaches powered by technology) and its biggest challenge (melding innovation with

entrenched tradition) (Thompson & Irele, 2003). Second, global expansion of distance education results in the urgency of quality assurance (Cavanaugh, 2002; Sherry, 2003). Distance education providers vary extensively in the methods they use to establish quality criteria, ensure that they meet the criteria, and communicate their quality assurance measures to students. Students, in turn, may use this information to select high quality courses (Cavanaugh, 2002). Third, there is increased emphasis on consumer demands for quality education experiences in an online era that provides alternatives. Fourth, reduced government funding has resulted in institutions competing for students, and thus, the collection of information from students and graduates reporting institutional strengths becomes paramount (Ballantyne, 2000). Finally, many educational institutions are implementing Web-based systems for both collecting and reporting student evaluation data (Ballantyne, 2003; Hoffman, 2003; Johnson, 2003). Hoffman (2003) found an increase of approximately 8% since 2000 in the use of the Internet as a primary means of collecting student feedback.

Distance Education and Evaluation. While there is a plethora of research conducted on evaluation of traditional post-secondary education, and indeed distance education in general, there is less so for online distance education or the integration of the two. As the global educational context rapidly changes, distance education moves into the mainstream of institutional education, resulting in a new image and increased prominence for distance education and related evaluation (Thompson & Irele, 2003). It is no longer an alternative primarily for nontraditional students, but is being incorporated into programs serving traditional campus-based students as well. In the past, evaluation efforts were defensively focused on presenting data that would allow distance education's continued

existence. Today, the increasing demand for online education calls for increased, often impatient demands for evaluation information. Concerns are raised that it is the demand rather than sound pedagogy that is shaping expansion (Sherry, 2003). Now, more than ever, evaluation provides a crucial source of information necessary for its intentional and directed transformation (Thompson & Irele, 2003). Common purposes of evaluation include justifying the investment of resources, examining issues of quality and effectiveness, measuring progress toward program goals, guiding improvement of processes and outcomes, measuring performance, usability, reliability and compatibility of technologies, and providing a basis for strategic decision making (Hallet & Essex, 2002; Thompson & Irele, 2003).

Adult Student Evaluation of Courses in Context of ISD. Although evaluation is a fundamental component of instructional design systems, researchers do not typically factor student evaluation of courses in the popular ISD models. Within the ADDIE model of instructional design, for example, there are feedback pathways from **E**valuation to each of other components, **A**nalyze, **D**esign, **D**evelop and **I**mplement (Gagné, Wager, Golas, & Keller, 2005). Summative evaluation within the *Systems Approach Model for Designing Instruction* (Dick & Carey, 2005, p. 8) refers to the culminating evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction. It occurs after the instruction has been formatively evaluated and revised to meet the specified standards. The field trial phase of the summative evaluation involves evaluating the instruction for its effectiveness with the target group in the intended setting.

In addition to formative and summative evaluation, Morrison, Ross and Kemp (2004) specify *confirmative evaluation*. It is based on the rationale that evaluation of



instruction needs to be ongoing and therefore extends beyond summative evaluation. It relies on multiple data-gathering instruments, such as questionnaires, interviews, performance assessments, self-reports and knowledge tests. As this evaluation often occurs in the actual performance environment, it assumes adult students play a role in evaluation.

Kirkpatrick's (Gagné et al., 2005, p. 348) levels of evaluation refer to evaluating the outcomes of training and are used most frequently in contexts of employee education. Level 1—learner reactions consist of student attitude questionnaires that are administered following a learning event. They range from simple measures of how well the students enjoyed the learning event to detailed questionnaires that probe effectiveness and efficiency of the instructor, materials and environment. Again given the context, adult students are inferred as part of the evaluation process.

Learner reaction evaluations (aka student course evaluations) are widely used by colleges and universities for both formative and summative purposes despite criticisms by professors as to their reliability and validity. They are used for sensing problems, formative feedback, and summative decisions about the acceptability of a course or instructor. With respect to validity, research has shown that students tend to be objective critics of the courses that they take (Gagné et al., 2005). Centra (1993) argues that student evaluation can be designed and implemented to provide valid and useful results. Due to widely varying results in the research, it is prudent to combine student evaluations with other indicators when making comprehensive judgments about teaching effectiveness (Kulik, 2001).

While ISD models often do not factor adult student evaluation, this type of evaluation is common practice across higher education, and indeed online education. Highly complex, the ISD process can not be reduced to a single structural, logical, or dynamic representation (Gagné et al., 2005, p. 41). While the ADDIE model has become the prototypical representation of the process, instructional designers and organizations adapt the representation to fit with their nomenclature, roles, and tasks to best meet the needs of the ISD requirements. It is time to bring to the fore the significance of adult student evaluation of courses by designation within the ISD framework.

Student Ratings in General. More than 25 years of published research evidence suggests that there is a reasonable association between student ratings and student learning. In particular, student ratings of general instructional skill are valid measures of instructor-mediated learning in students (d'Apollina & Abrami, 1997). Some of the factors driving student evaluations over the years include accountability (aggregate form as evidence of performance indicators), curriculum and teaching improvement, legal considerations and budget concerns (Ory, 2000). As a result of extensive research of student ratings, the literature clearly demonstrates that student rating forms that are psychometrically sound, are reliable, valid, relatively free from bias, and useful in improving teaching (Ali & Sell, 1998; Braskamp, 1994; Cashin, 1999; Centra, 1993). Many researchers argue that student ratings are the single most valid source of data on teaching effectiveness (Marsh & Roche, 1997; d'Apollina & Abrami, 1997; Greenwald & Gillmore, 1997; McKeachie, 1997). Due to the complexity of teaching, however, students' evaluations of teaching effectiveness are challenging to validate. Even though student ratings of instruction do a satisfactory job measuring general instructional skill,

the instructor's rank, experience, and autonomy, the class size, and the instructor's grading practices are all factors that work to diminish the validity of the ratings (d'Apollonia & Abrami;1997). Further, class average evaluations are found to be reliable, as indicated by correlations which range from 0.95 for averages of 50 students to 0.60 for averages of 5 students (Marsh & Roche, 1997).

In addition to emphasizing the importance of student ratings, Theall (2002) suggests guidelines for the entire evaluation process, and McKeachie (1997) suggests the use of a variety of student rating forms to account for the differences between the different modes of teaching occurring today (i.e., increasing use of technology, virtual universities, cooperative learning).

#### Research Literature Specific to Online Student

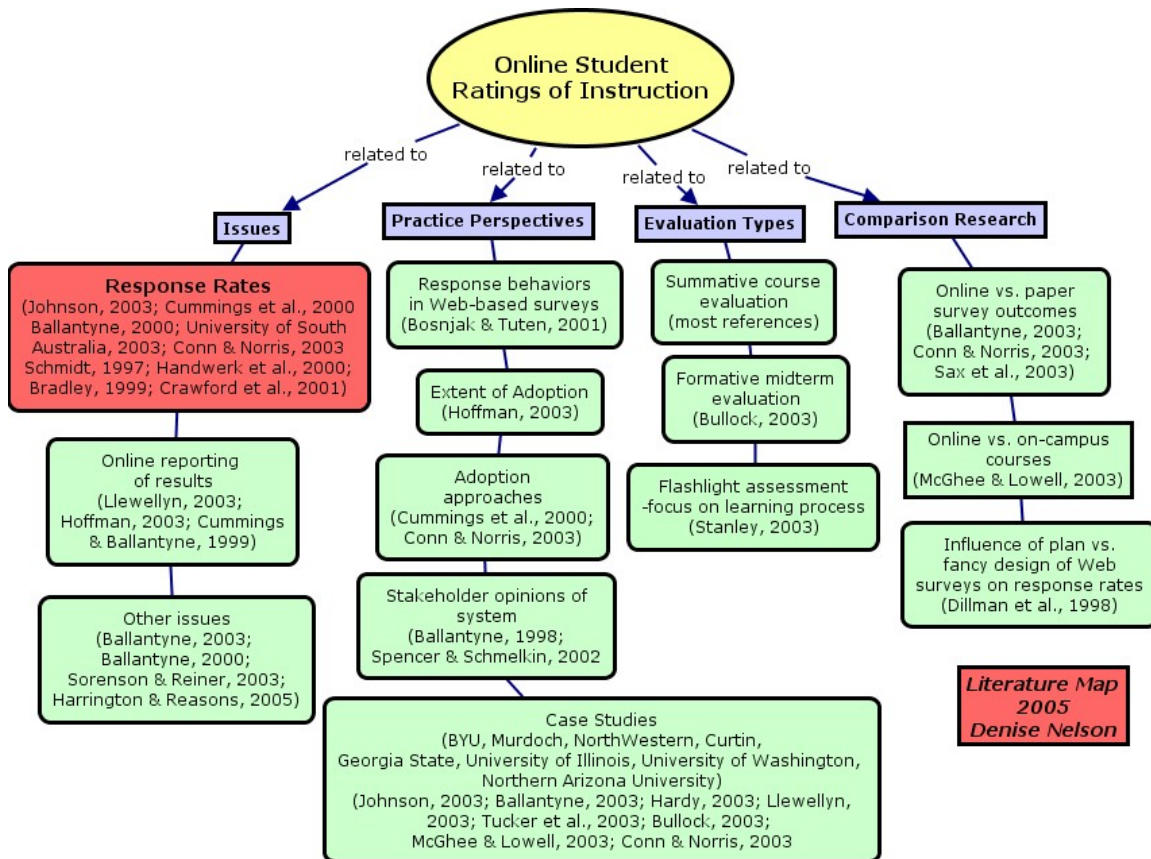
#### Ratings and Strategies to Increase Response Rates

Response Behaviors in Web-based Surveys. Web-based surveys afford automatic tracing of the respondent's answering process. Rather than the traditional three generic behaviors described in classic survey modes (unit non response, item nonresponse and complete response), Bosnjak and Tuten (2001) have classified seven response behaviors: complete responders; unit nonresponders; answering drop-outs; lurkers; lurking drop-outs; item nonresponders; and item non-responding drop-outs. They suggest that this typology is of practical and theoretical relevance to those seeking to increase response and to minimize non response bias.

Online Student Ratings of Instruction. A visual representation of the existing literature about this topic is illustrated in Figure 1. The brief discussion that follows is limited to

use by post-secondary education institutions, benefits of online ratings, and predominant issues.

Figure 2. Literature Map of the Research



Online student ratings of instruction have received increasing attention over the past few years (Hoffman, 2003; Conn & Norris, 2003). A Web search (Clark cited in Johnson, 2003) revealed more than sixty universities using online student ratings for some courses and eleven universities using them exclusively. Some of the educational institutions purporting use of online ratings include Murdoch University, Western Australia; Brigham Young University (BYU), Utah; Polytechnic University, New York; Northwestern University and University of Illinois, Illinois; University of PEI; Memorial University of

Newfoundland; Georgia State Institute of Technology; Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia; and Northern Arizona University (Ballantyne, 2003; Bullock, 2003; Hardy, 2003; Llewellyn, 2003; Sorenson & Reiner, 2003; Tucker, Jones, Straker, & Cole, 2003; Conn & Norris, 2003). *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* dedicated the winter 2003 issue to online student ratings.

Briefly, the benefits of an online evaluation system include lower instructional and support costs; more class time for teaching; ease of administration; more flexible design options; greater accessibility for students; more complete data collection; increased quantity and quality of student responses; reduced turnaround time; more accurate data collection and reporting; reduced staff time for processing; more detailed, user-friendly reports; environmentally friendly alternative; alignment with the institution's use of technology; and greater ease in responding to students to close the feedback loop (Ballantyne, 2003; Bullock, 2003; Cummings et al., 2000; Hardy, 2003; Hoffman, 2003; Johnson, 2003; Llewellyn, 2003; McGhee & Lowell, 2003; Sorenson & Reiner, 2003; Tucker et al., 2003; Conn & Norris, 2003). Furthermore, longitudinal analysis of course or instructor specific data tends to be conducted more easily as electronic data are readily available, and the reporting is faster, more flexible and customizable (Harrington & Reasons, 2005).

Low response rates remain the most notable obstacle to implementation of online student ratings (Johnson, 2003; Conn & Norris, 2003). Success of such a system relies heavily on the support of academics and the extent to which students participate and feel ownership of the process (Tucker et al., 2003).

Several limitations have been identified in the literature related to low response rates for online delivered survey instruments. These include technical problems with the survey tool (Schmidt, 1997), difficulty accessing computers, and students' technological illiteracy (Handwerk, Carson, & Blackwell, 2000). In addition, students' multiple email addresses, frequent changing of email addresses (Bradley, 1999) and slow connection rates (Crawford, Couper & Lamais, 2001) may decrease response rates.

In addition, there are a host of logistical and organizational challenges to meet when implementing online evaluation systems. Harrington and Reasons (2005) comment on the dedication and cooperation required to coordinate the work, to establish and to test the evaluation items, to determine access permissions to the evaluation data, to assign responsibility for process details, to upload course enrollment data into the survey software, to provide technical support to students and faculty, and finally to collect and to report the findings. Other student rating issues include lack of effective reporting mechanisms to students about resultant course and program changes, compliance with open-records legislation, access rights, reliance on technology and anonymity of student responses (Ballantyne, 2000; Llewellyn, 2003).

Despite the aforementioned issues, student ratings of instruction are well accepted by both researchers and practitioners (Spencer & Schmelkin, 2002). According to Cummings et al. (2000), online surveys will probably show their greatest potential in providing feedback highly customized to the individual learner, faculty, and program unit.

Strategies to Increase Response Rates. Many institutions have used a variety of strategies to increase response rates with some success. Anderson and Kanuka (2002)

describe rewards, risks and trust as general means to increase response rates. Briefly, rewards may be achieved by tangible incentives and respondent's perceived value; reduced risk may be achieved through privacy and confidentiality, and estimation of respondent commitment; and trust may be achieved by personal and/or institutional credibility. Table 2 highlights specific strategies, including those identified by students, in order of frequency (Cummings et al., 2000; Johnson, 2003; University of South Australia, 2003; Conn & Norris, 2003).

Table 2. Institutional and Student Strategies to Increase Student Rating Response Rates

Institutional Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty encourage students to complete rating forms</li> <li>• Help students understand the importance of their feedback and its subsequent use</li> <li>• Provide detailed information to students and faculty about the online rating system</li> <li>• Advertise institutional responses to previous feedback (i.e., post a summary of last evaluation data and the action that arose from that information on course homepage)</li> <li>• Send clear email communication to faculty and students (i.e., about rating system, importance of student ratings, uses of student ratings, reminders)</li> <li>• Offer incentive for students who have completed the forms (i.e., draw for prize)</li> <li>• Publicize online student ratings through campus banners, posters and newspaper advertisements</li> <li>• Post evaluation announcements in multiple locations—initial announcements via online discussion boards and course management Web sites</li> <li>• Timing of evaluation announcements associated with response rates—2-3 weeks prior to end of the semester</li> <li>• Post information on student Web site dedicated to online student ratings</li> <li>• Share online student rating system information with students' association</li> <li>• Present information session during new-student orientations</li> <li>• Build evaluation into the online course materials</li> <li>• Send the URL and dates of evaluation availability to the students via email</li> <li>• Get students into the computer pool and ask them to do the online evaluation</li> <li>• Make the online evaluation available for a longer period of time</li> <li>• Assure students that their responses to online evaluations are anonymous</li> <li>• Include the approximate length of time required to complete the survey</li> <li>• Involve students in the evaluation process by letting them write some of the items or discuss the evaluation items with students prior to releasing the evaluation</li> <li>• Evaluate more often—formative, not just summative (formative allows students to see the full evaluation cycle, including results and actions)</li> <li>• Explain the value of the course evaluation process and student feedback</li> <li>• Offer rewards (i.e., book voucher to a randomly selected student, provided response</li> </ul>

<p>rate was over 50%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use stable and accessible online platform to administer course evaluations</li> </ul>
<p>Student Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withhold students' early access to grades until they log onto the system</li> <li>• Provide extra credit to students completing forms</li> <li>• Provide education and instructions regarding the online rating system</li> <li>• Encourage instructors to show a personal interest in students completing the forms</li> <li>• Provide positive incentives</li> <li>• Provide greater student access to computers</li> </ul>

Further Research. Table 3 highlights community of practice researchers' identified needs for further research related to online student ratings of instruction.

Table 3. Further Research Related to Online Student Ratings of Instruction

Research area	Details	Researcher
Online evaluation systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing research, discussion and refinement of online evaluation systems to make them more viable and effective</li> <li>• Online student ratings are in their infancy and invite a great deal of study and improvement. Under what conditions might higher response rates be achieved? Which is more valid and useful, evaluations from a greater number of students or collecting evaluation from fewer students who provide more written feedback?</li> <li>• Investigating online student surveys of teaching</li> </ul>	<p>(Llewellyn, 2003)</p> <p>(Hardy, 2003)</p> <p>(Cummings et al., 2000)</p>
Student opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few systematic studies carried out on student reactions to online courses vs. traditional classroom courses</li> <li>• Vast literature on instruments and staff perceptions of usage, but little evidence of student opinion</li> <li>• Need to study what faculty can do to help students become more sophisticated raters</li> <li>• Ask students their general attitudes toward the evaluation</li> <li>• Importance of student opinion (Ballantyne, 1998; Miron &amp; Segal, 1986; Tapp, 1985; Wulff et al., 1985)</li> </ul>	<p>(McGhee &amp; Lowell, 2003)</p> <p>(Ballantyne, 1998)</p> <p>(McKeachie, 1997)</p> <p>(Spencer &amp; Schmelkin, 2002)</p> <p>(Spencer &amp; Schmelkin, 2002)</p>
Faculty and administrator perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of student opinion and use of formative and summative evaluation</li> </ul>	<p>(Spencer &amp; Schmelkin, 2002)</p>



Research area	Details	Researcher
Deficits of online rating systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible deficits of online rating systems – response rates, development costs, response bias, confidentiality and anonymity issues</li> </ul>	(Ballantyne, 2003)
Reporting results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends of sharing student rating results with students using the Internet</li> <li>• "...Ways of communicating the results of student evaluations to improve the quality of their use" (p. 1223).</li> </ul>	(Hoffman, 2003) (Ali & Sell, 1998)
Impact of the publication of student rating information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The degree to which problems might occur appears to be related more to the specifics of the publication process than to publication in general</li> </ul>	(Ali & Sell, 1998)
Professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to train members of personnel committees to be better evaluators</li> </ul>	(McKeachie, 1997)
Improving quality distance education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do institutions consider ways to nurture balanced lives for administrators, faculty, staff and learners given the prevalence of 24/7 time frames and the technology intensiveness of online learning environments?</li> </ul>	(Sherry, 2003)
Online collection of midterm student feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the usefulness of results from online midterm evaluations</li> <li>• Response rates for online midterm student feedback</li> <li>• Timing for administering evaluations</li> <li>• The use of survey results to improve teaching and learning</li> <li>• Larger multi-institutional studies clearly needed</li> </ul>	(Bullock, 2003)
Response behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "understanding the underlying psychology of response" (p. 9 of 13)</li> <li>• differences in the effectiveness of strategies designed to increase response rates among the seven response behaviors</li> <li>• "the effect of nonresponse bias and techniques for estimating and correcting for nonresponse bias" (p. 9 of 13)</li> </ul>	(Bosnjak & Tuten, 2001)
Response rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "What factors affect the response rate in relation to the number of items on the rating form?"(p. 57)</li> <li>• "levels of response rates and online ratings" (p. 58)</li> <li>• Can the results of the BYU study be replicated</li> </ul>	(Johnson, 2003) (Johnson, 2003)

Research area	Details	Researcher
	<p>and generalized?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “If low online response rates have little effect on course rating means, can low response rates be accepted as valid? What might explain the lack of correlation between response rates and online rating rates (0.09 and 0.10), especially compared with paper-pencil ratings where there is a significant correlation between the response rates and course student-rating means (.41)?” (p. 58)</li> </ul>	

### Summary

More and more institutions of higher education are implementing online student ratings for online and/or on-campus courses. These ratings of instruction provide one critical source of information for the improvement of courses, curriculum, and instructors’ pedagogical efforts. While the criteria for and processes of its implementation vary across the globe, **low response rates** remain the major concern. Research has revealed a number of strategies that may be effective in increasing response rates with many researchers attempting to establish consistent findings. Reporting of online student rating results is also gaining some interest as institutions investigate the best means to demonstrate to students that their feedback is valued.

### Contribution to Distance Education

As the article, *Charting the Uncharted Seas of Online Student Ratings of Instruction* (Sorenson & Reiner 2003) suggests, online student ratings of instruction is a burgeoning facet in distance education. The move to Web-based technology has the potential to improve both the appropriateness and efficiency of student surveys of teaching (Cummings et al., 2000). The purpose of the study was to explore ways to

increase online student rating response rates. Can the proposed study situated in a dual mode Canadian college replicate or extend the related research of other universities (i.e., BYU, Murdoch University)? BYU and Murdoch University achieve response rates ranging from approximately 50-70% (Johnson, 2003; Ballantyne, 2003). What level of response is acceptable to the stakeholders in the evaluation process? Student feedback is seen as essential to the process of quality improvement (Brown et al., as cited in Tucker et al., 2003), and institutions require a timely and efficient mechanism that responds to student feedback, facilitates course and program changes, and helps demonstrate accountability (Tucker et al., 2003). This evaluation process facilitates stakeholders' (i.e., students, faculty, instructional designers, administrators, support service personnel) reflection as they strive to improve online courses, programs and support services.

In short, the potential benefits of online student ratings continue to attract increasing numbers of educational institutions worldwide. Institutions that are currently using or intending to use online course ratings can benefit from the experience and research of others (Sorenson & Reiner, 2003) as they strive to improve the quality of their instructional programs.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter provides a background to the study, and the significance and synopsis of the study. In addition, the researcher discusses the characteristics of mixed method research, participants, draft instruments, and validity procedures. The design, data collection, processing and analysis are organized according to Phase 1 (qualitative) and Phase 2 (quantitative).

#### Background to the Study

This study is set within the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), a dual mode Canadian college. SIAST is a nationally recognized, pre-eminent provider of skills and technical training, known for its graduate employment rate consistently over 90%. More than 12,000 students are enrolled in programs and SIAST draws approximately 29,000 additional individual registrations. About half of the students come directly from high school or other post-secondary institutions and half come from the workplace. SIAST (<http://www.siastr.sk.ca>) has four campuses situated throughout the province: Wascana in Regina, Palliser in Moose Jaw, Kelsey in Saskatoon, and Woodland in Prince Albert. The researcher works as an instructional designer with the Virtual Campus which was launched in 2000.

Situated in Wascana Campus, the researcher's perceptions about post-secondary education, evaluation, and motivation to respond to online evaluation stem from personal experiences serving as a SIAST academic since 1977: faculty of dental health science programs (1977-1998), consultant in program planning, research and development unit

(1998-2000), and course designer of predominantly nursing courses in the Virtual Campus (2000-2006).

Due to previous experiences working closely with students, faculty, administration and other stakeholders, the researcher brings certain biases to this study. Although every effort will be made to ensure objectivity, these biases may shape perceptions and interpretations. To begin, the researcher believes that the effective use of online course evaluation provides an excellent opportunity for faculty, administrators and instructional designers to reflect upon and improve their practices. Second, the researcher believes that SIAST should consistently inform students of changes resulting from previous online course evaluation to express value of students' feedback, to show evidence of continuous quality improvement, and to exemplify action research. Finally, SIAST would benefit from increased planning and attention to online education evaluation.

### Significance of the Study

With the dramatic expansion of online education, there is a corresponding need for online evaluation of courses. Online course evaluation provides an invaluable opportunity for faculty and other stakeholders to reflect upon current practices and to examine how to further assist and motivate students to achieve their desired goals. Although there is no single answer to the question of what is an acceptable response rate for online evaluations, Dillman (1999) posits that achieving consistent response rates of at least 70% enables effective evaluation outcomes and subsequent generalizations.

This mixed method study builds upon existing research findings (in particular Cummings et al., 2000; Johnson, 2003; University of South Australia, 2003; Conn &

Norris, 2003) relating to maximizing response rates of online course evaluation. The researcher provides detailed insight into the response rate problem through the use of a planned implementation and range of strategies to maximize response rates, within the context of SIAST.

### Synopsis of the Study

In response to Mauch and Birch's (1998, p. 123) series of guiding questions to select the most appropriate methodology (i.e., "Will the method yield the data needed to make an intelligent and useful response to the problem statement?"), the researcher integrated opinion polling, evaluation and case study methods. Phase 1 *opinion polling* involved determining, reporting and interpreting the behavior, beliefs, or intentions of the nursing students and faculty regarding online course evaluations and associated response rates. Phase 2 *evaluation* focused on strategies employed to maximize the nursing students' response rates. Finally, the research was set in the context of SIAST, a Canadian college. In this *case study*, the researcher explored in depth the process of online course evaluations completed by nursing students during the 2004-2005 academic year.

The purpose of this two-phase, sequential mixed methods study was to better understand the circumstances that influence students to complete online course evaluations. The study had two broad objectives. The first objective was to explore and generate themes about student online evaluation response motivation and practice. The second objective was to identify students preferred strategies to maximize their response rates. This study used interviews conducted via email to satisfy the first objective and a Web-based survey to explore the second objective. Further, the purpose of the survey research was to generalize from the nursing sample to a population so that inferences can

be made about some characteristic, attitude, or behavior of this population (Babbie, 1990).

### Characteristics of Mixed Method Research

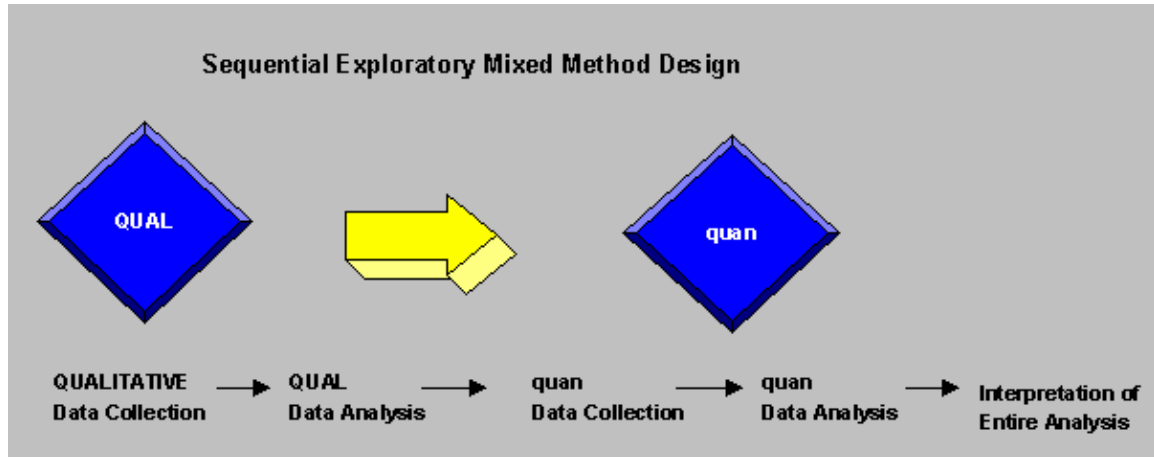
The mixed method approach focuses on collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study. This approach lends itself to knowledge claims based on practicality (Creswell, 2003, p. 210) and triangulation of data sources. In this case, Phase 1 began with qualitative exploration that informed Phase 2, the quantitative method. Phase 2 uses a larger sample; these results may support generalization to a population.

In this study the data was collected sequentially, qualitative then quantitative, to best understand the research problem of low response rates. First, the researcher interviewed a small convenience sample of nursing students and faculty to explore their opinions of the process and outcomes of online evaluation. Second, the interview results then informed the development of a Web-based cross-sectional survey administered to all online nursing students to help determine strategies to maximize online evaluation response rates. The online survey affords economy of design, rapid turnaround of data collection (Creswell, 2003), familiar medium, and convenience. In contrast, several technological challenges tend to be inherent in Web-based design (e.g., accessibility issues, varied transmission time, platform issues). In short, the qualitative method informed the quantitative method, providing evidence based research.

Visual Model and Procedures of the Design. Figure 3 illustrates a visual model of the aforementioned sequential exploratory strategy (Creswell, 2003, p. 213). Priority is given to the qualitative aspect of the study, which is illustrated by capitalization. Data

collection and analysis follow each phase, and the findings are integrated during the interpretation phase.

Figure 3. Visual Model of Mixed Method Research



### Participants

The subjects for this study included faculty and students involved in SIAST online nursing courses, in the roles of facilitator and learner respectively. They were drawn from the 2004-2005 academic year nursing division online nursing student enrolments and faculty facilitator roster. To fulfill ethics requirements, the Administrative Assistant to the Dean of Nursing initially contacted the subjects. She emailed 96 students the invitation letter (Appendix C) to participate in the research. Twelve emails returned undelivered. There were 4 responders to the first email. Upon encouragement from one faculty facilitator, one more student responded, totaling 5 participants for the interview phase of the research. The researcher adopted a more personalized strategy for obtaining participants for Phase 2. She solicited online faculty facilitators' support in forwarding to their respective students subsequent invitations to complete the survey. Of the 84 students, 59 responded to the survey for a response rate of 70%.



Interview subjects comprised 5 students and 4 faculty, one of which was involved in the pilot test of the interview process. The researcher was not privy to the list of students that were emailed the invitation to participate. The researcher, however, was familiar with the faculty who received the invitation to participate, as she collaborated with some of them to develop online courses. Four out of 12 faculty facilitators responded to the invitation to participate in the interview. This satisfied the researcher's proposal to interview 3 faculty to gain their perspective.

### Draft Instruments

Draft interview and survey questions were prepared for Phase 1 and 2 respectively. Research conducted by Brigham Young University provided a useful starting point for developing these instruments. T. Johnson (personal communication, September 30, 2004) shared related research copies of focus group and survey questions. Johnson (2003) had conducted similar research in the university context. Furthermore, the student and faculty interview results provided a preliminary list of strategies (to maximize online evaluation response rates) to be used in the draft survey instrument.

### Validity Procedures

The researcher sought validity of procedures primarily through verification. This was accomplished by peer debriefing, rich, thick description to convey findings, validation of findings through member-checking, and use of an external auditor (Creswell, 2003, p. 196).

The draft interview questions and survey form were critiqued and pilot-tested to establish content validity of the instruments. Intended to improve questions (appropriate

language and grammar; plain language; bias free, direct items), format, and the continuous scales, the comments were incorporated into the final instrument revisions. The researcher relied on peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account. At least three peers (with experience as students, educators and research consultants) reviewed the questions and queried the qualitative processes.

Steps taken to check for the accuracy and credibility of the interview findings included return of typed responses to participants and follow-up clarification questions and responses. Participants responded at a time convenient to them. Familiar with the online learning environment and course evaluations, the interview participants contributed to an authentic list of strategies to maximize response rates for inclusion in the survey. Thus, the email interview format afforded accuracy of rich thick descriptions and flexibility to accommodate participants' schedules.

To ensure *content* validity of the Phase 2 questionnaire, experts (Anderson & Jones, Thesis committee members, personal communications, spring 2005) compared the content of the various items to the instrument outcomes (i.e., strategies to maximize response rates). Furthermore, the researcher cross-referenced the questions and particular survey items as illustrated in the following table. Notably, the interview and survey design also allowed for open comments or "other" responses, enabling respondents to add strategies and additional rich descriptions.

Table 4. Research Question Cross-Referenced to Items on the Survey

Research Question	Items on Survey
How do the nursing students rate strategies to maximize online evaluation response rates?	Strategy categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reminders</li> <li>• Motivators</li> <li>• Best time</li> </ul>
What is the computer technical ability of the SIAST nursing student? What is the role of previous experience of the SIAST nursing student with online course evaluation?	How many online courses have you completed?

Finally, an external auditor, new to the project, provided an assessment of the project at the conclusion of the study.

Several threats to validity raise potential issues about the researcher’s ability to conclude that the strategies affect the response rate. A threat to *external validity* may arise if the researcher and/or SIAST draws incorrect inferences from the sample population of online nursing students to students in other program areas. A threat to *statistical conclusion validity* may arise if the researcher draws incorrect inferences from the data because of insufficient statistical power based on the low sample size or the violation of statistical assumptions. A threat to *construct validity* may arise if the researcher uses inappropriate definitions and measures of variables (Creswell, 2003, p. 171). In short, the researcher took concerted efforts to avoid inadequate inferences as she was becoming increasingly aware of the various threats to validity.

#### Phase 1 Qualitative Interview

Design. Preliminary data collection was conducted through interviews via email with 3 SIAST nursing faculty (who facilitate online learning) and 5 students taking online

nursing courses. These data were analysed through the use of Atlas.ti (version 5) software.

Instruments. Acting as the primary instrument in data collection for Phase 1, the researcher conducted the interviews (Appendices F and G) using SIAST Campus Pipeline or personal email accounts. This online data collection served as a likely setting for online participants. The interview process followed guidelines used in the nursing curriculum, (Potter & Perry, 2001; Varcarolis, 2002) and thus, was familiar to both nursing students and faculty. The interview protocol facilitated data reporting because the interview opening statements, key and probing questions and interviewer comments were text documented.

Data Collection Procedure. Qualitative data collection procedures included conducting an open-ended electronic interview (See Table 1 for typical central and probing questions), taking interview and reflective notes, and collecting email or electronic messages.

Data Analysis. Data from the interviews were imported into ATLAS.ti, scientific software. Each interview was organized as a primary document. Within each primary document the researcher selected quotes and created codes and memos.

### Phase 2 Quantitative Survey

Research Questions. To achieve its stated purpose, Phase 2 of the study examined the research questions outlined in Table 5.

Table 5. Phase 2 Research Questions

Phase 2 Quantitative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do the nursing students rate strategies to maximize online evaluation response rates?</li><li>• What is the computer technical ability of the SIAST nursing student?</li><li>• What is the role of previous experience of the SIAST nursing student with online course evaluation?</li></ul>

Design. Based on Phase 1 analysis, the researcher built a survey instrument, which was completed by 59 students taking online courses from undergraduate and graduate nursing programs. The researcher pilot tested and revised both interview and questionnaire instruments and processes. The survey data were analyzed (to provide descriptive statistics as well as explore possible associations) through the use of Perseus and SPSS software.

These research questions were designed to describe a particular case of distance education practice, namely student and faculty attitudes and actions regarding online course evaluations and response rates. Though the results of this study may not be generalizable beyond the case examined, this study survey was fairly consistent with research by Johnson (2003, p.59). His study revealed the following strategies that may be effective in increasing response rates: student access to computers, communication to faculty and students regarding the online evaluation system, communication to students about the uses of rating results, and faculty and student support of the online evaluation system. The results from this survey highlighted these strategies with the exception of access to computers.

Instrument. The tool for gathering quantitative data consisted of a Web-based survey (Appendix J). The survey was designed to gather data in response to three research questions:

1. How do the nursing students rate strategies to maximize online evaluation response rates?
2. What is the computer technical ability of the SIAST nursing student?
3. What is the role of previous experience of the SIAST nursing student with online course evaluation?

Distribution of the Survey. The Web-based survey (Appendix J) was housed on the SIAST server. Participants received the link in their email following their consent to participate. While Perseus solutions software assures confidentiality of the respondent's identities, participants wishing to enter their names for the participation draw for 50 dollars were assured confidentiality. An individual other than the researcher managed the input and output of Perseus data, and he also electronically conducted the random participation draw.

The cover letter and letter of invitation, along with copies of the consent form to participate (Appendices B, C, and E respectively), were sent to each nursing student via email.

Data Collection Procedure. Quantitative data collection involved the use of a Web-based self-administered questionnaire. The data collection was designed and administered in a manner that protected the rights of the survey respondents, while encouraging high response rates. The researcher used several National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, n.d.) guidelines for achieving acceptable response rates and

Anderson and Kanuka's (2002) tips for email surveys. Table 6 illustrates some of the key data collection procedures/guidelines for Phase 2.

Table 6. Phase 2 Data Collection Procedure

- ✓ November 1, 2004 - Gained support from Dean of Nursing for her office to send first contact recruitment email to protect student privacy in recruiting participants for research (researcher was not privy to the participants' contact information unless they provided it in response to invitation).
- ✓ November 1-8, 2004 - Communicated with Registrar and Program Planning and Development units to secure list of online nursing students to be forwarded to Dean of Nursing office to enable distribution of invitations to participate in research
- ✓ November 9, 2004 Dean of Nursing emailed invitation to participate in a research project to online nursing faculty (attachments included Dean's message, project invitation, consent form)—response requested by November 19, 2004
- ✓ November 22, 2004 Administrative Assistant to Academic Director of Planning, Research and Development Unit forwarded to Dean of Nursing internal and external online nursing students from 2003-2004
- ✓ November 23, 2004 Executive Assistant to the Dean of Nursing emailed the invitation to participate and consent form to 96 online nursing students.
- ✓ December 2, 2004 Executive Assistant to the Dean of Nursing emailed for the **second** time the invitation to participate and consent form to 96 online nursing students.
- ✓ November, 2004 - March, 2005 Conducted interviews with faculty and students
- ✓ March - April, 2005 Designed and piloted survey instrument
- ✓ April, 2005 Instituted personalized approach of online faculty member inviting students to participate in Phase 2 and included a draw to win \$50 as incentive.
- ✓ April - May, 2005 Requested that **faculty** send a reminder to students to complete online survey—use known sender (Anderson & Kanuka, 2002)
- ✓ Followed up with nonrespondents to achieve desirable response rates – include replacement survey (Futrell and Lamb, 1981; Anderson & Kanuka, 2003)
- ✓ Used attention grabbing email subject line (Anderson & Kanuka, 2002)
- ✓ Provided privacy and confidentiality assurances (NCES)
- ✓ Minimized respondent burden (NCES)—survey pretested for interpretability and clarity of questions, ease of navigation and reasonable length
- ✓ Used plain questionnaire with minimal color and html tables, therefore less transmission time (Dillman et al., 1998)
- ✓ Contained reasonable length (NCES) [See Appendix J] – Note: Issue salience has more influence on response rate than survey length (Heberlein and Baumgartner, 1978).

Data Analysis. As a strategy for data analysis, the researcher used frequency distribution and means through the use of bar graphs. Perseus, SPSS and Microsoft Excel software applications supported data analysis and presentation.

## Summary

Set within a dual mode Canadian college, this study builds upon existing research related to maximizing student response rates of online course evaluation. The purpose of this two-phase sequential mixed method study was to better understand the circumstances that influence students to complete online course evaluations. The researcher first interviewed a small convenience sample of nursing students and faculty to explore their opinions; then based on results, developed and conducted a Web-based cross-sectional survey to all online nursing students. The researcher followed a plan which implemented draft interview and survey instruments and predominantly verification validity procedures. The qualitative data collection involved an open-ended electronic interview with data analysis using ATLAS.ti scientific software. Quantitative data collection involved the use of a Web-based self-administered questionnaire designed and administered to protect the rights of survey respondents and to encourage high response rates. The latter strategy for analysis consisted of frequency distribution and means using Perseus, SPSS and Microsoft Excel applications.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Purpose of and Participation in the Study

The purpose of this two-phase, sequential mixed method study was to explore and generate themes about student online evaluation response motivation and practice using interviews conducted via email. The interviews comprised central questions addressing the attitudes/opinions of the SIAST nursing students and faculty toward online course evaluation and strategies that may be used to support/encourage nursing students to respond to online course evaluation. Five online nursing students and three nursing faculty participated in this phase.

Based on these themes, Phase 2 used a Web-based cross-sectional survey of undergraduate and graduate online nursing students to identify preferred strategies to maximize response rates. In particular, participants rated the relative effectiveness of administrative factors (i.e., reminders, motivators, best time for completing, and best location for posting results) and the validity of course evaluations to measure the most important aspects of instruction. Of the 84 students, 59 responded to the survey for a response rate of 70%.

Results of Phase 1 Qualitative Interview and Phase 2 Quantitative Survey follow and are organized according to faculty and student narratives, and survey elements respectively.

Phase 1 Qualitative Interview

Faculty Qualitative Narrative. All three faculty respondents valued online student completed course evaluations and used student feedback for their course revisions. Two of the three respondents believed that a 70% response rate is feasible within SIAST. The other faculty respondent stated that 70% would be desirable; however, response is a matter of students' choice. Table 7 highlights strategies identified by faculty to improve the evaluation system and to increase student response rates. Briefly, faculty suggested increasing awareness of course evaluation, giving reminders, showing value by noting importance and providing feedback to students, and instituting compulsory completion of course evaluations. Quotations are provided for added authenticity of narrative and may include discrepant information that runs counter to the themes.

Table 7. Faculty Perspectives Related to Online Course Evaluations and Associated Student Response Rates

Faculty Perspective	Strategies to increase response rates	Strategy to improve the online course evaluation system	Value of summative online student completed course evaluations
#1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request that students complete evaluations.</li> <li>• Note importance of evaluation feedback.</li> <li>• Make completion of evaluation compulsory (no marks until evaluation submitted).</li> <li>• Discuss the concept of “constructive feedback” and its value.</li> </ul>	<i>I am quite happy with the system, but would make it compulsory.</i>	<i>I find the information I get very valuable as it assists me in making changes based on feedback when revising the course for the following year. To date they have also made me feel very good about the course itself and my involvement in facilitating it as the feedback has been very positive and constructive in nature.</i>

Faculty Perspective	Strategies to increase response rates	Strategy to improve the online course evaluation system	Value of summative online student completed course evaluations
#2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind students in the letter that they receive at the beginning of the course.</li> <li>• Provide a copy of the summative evaluation up front so students are aware of what is being evaluated and can do it throughout the course.</li> </ul>	<p><i>It is important to have the online evaluation somewhere in Week 13 so to let students know that it exists and that it should be completed.</i></p>	<p><i>Valuable as it assists in helping with the planning of the course for the future. One piece of feedback provided stated that the last week of the course was heavy with two discussions and the final wrap-up. Therefore, acting on this feedback, the discussions have been reduced to one.</i></p>
#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind students to complete.</li> <li>• Have students pilot test the evaluation surveys (at home and reimburse the students for their time).</li> <li>• Provide evaluation feedback to students to demonstrate how SIAST uses their feedback to improve the program.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Tabulation of the data. Poorly done and not timely. When the course is over I need an electronic copy that is suitable to put within my printed yearend reports.</i></p>	<p><i>It is very valuable, but the electronic layout [results reporting] is not great. I need to take that data and reformat it so I can use if (sic) for annual reporting.</i></p>

Student Qualitative Narrative. All five student respondents stated that they complete the online course evaluation surveys. Four of five students emphasized the need to receive feedback from SIAST regarding course changes to show value for student feedback. When asked about challenges or obstacles in completing the online course evaluations, students cited time constraints, unclear questions, and uncertainty of feedback value. As to the best time for course feedback, students' responses ranged from

midterm to immediately following course completion. Generally, students liked the electronic questionnaire as a delivery method of course feedback.

Students emphasized the following strategies to maximize student response rates: incentives, reminders, course change notifications, faculty expressed value, and evaluation appearance as a course requirement. Three of the five students argued that their motivation for completing course evaluations related to making course changes/improvements; three students concluded that their motivation resulted from faculty valuing or acknowledging their feedback. Two students suggested bonus mark incentives for completing course evaluations. Two students proposed reminders, with one specifying email or a reminder on the SIAST personal Intranet homepage. Two students stated that they completed the course evaluation because it was presented as part of the course, and thus, appeared as a course requirement. Table 8 highlights strategies identified by students to improve the evaluation system and/or increase student response rates. Quotations are provided for added authenticity of narrative.

Table 8. Student Perspectives Related to Online Course Evaluations and Associated Student Response Rates

Student	Motivation to complete online course evaluation forms	Beliefs about online course evaluations	Strategies to increase response rates	Thoughts about what happens to student feedback
#1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I find emailing easier than doing a mail-in evaluation. It is much more convenient. Also, being able to help provide some ideas to bring about</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I found them to be concise and easy to answer.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>offer an incentive</li> <li>email reminder</li> <li>reminder on the homepage of your personal account in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I have felt that comments made on evaluations didn't make a difference. I have felt that why would it matter to fill these out, because nothing has changed in the past so what would change now. In previous courses, other</i></li> </ul>

Student	Motivation to complete online course evaluation forms	Beliefs about online course evaluations	Strategies to increase response rates	Thoughts about what happens to student feedback
	<p><i>change to areas that I had difficulty in.</i></p>		<p>the SIAST Web site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• add a 1% bonus to the mark</li> </ul>	<p><i>classmates have stated the same. If we had received some feedback as to why it was changed or not changed that would help encourage myself and others to complete the evaluations. I did feel 'outside' the course during the online course. The instructor was great. She was available, supportive and informative. But not attending a class format where you can see everyone everyday was hard to get used to as this was my first online course. I did find myself having to make myself study, read, and make notes. On the other hand, I really enjoyed the freedom it gave me of not being set to a schedule and being able to work when I needed to.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>This course they [faculty] did thank me for participating and filling it out.</i></li> <li>• <i>I believe that they [faculty] are using it to change e programs, it is hard to make many changes quickly, but if the same comments keep appearing, then things will change.</i></li> </ul>

Student	Motivation to complete online course evaluation forms	Beliefs about online course evaluations	Strategies to increase response rates	Thoughts about what happens to student feedback
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Let them [students] know that changes are being looked at. Letting people know that you valued the time and effort they put into legitimate thought for changes will encourage them to keep speaking out and evaluating how things are done.</i></li> </ul>
#2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I want more online courses to be available so I'm hoping to encourage use.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Don't take too long, pretty basic.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give an incentive to do it</li> <li>- extra mark</li> <li>- have a draw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>We wonder whether these [course evaluations] are worthwhile and is there really anonymity....</i></li> <li>• <i>don't know [how faculty use student feedback]</i></li> <li>• <i>the comment that is made most often will be taken into consideration.</i></li> <li>• <i>[student feedback] should all be read and maybe some of the better ideas used</i></li> </ul>
#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I am hoping that by my taking the time to offer constructive, first hand feedback that positive changes will be made to the on-line courses now being offered.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Electronic questionnaire [is the best approach for course feedback from students.]</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Leave a completion time of up to two weeks past course finals for submission, or leave submission times open until the class is removed from "My Courses" on Campus</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I have not had any indication from three instructors in three different courses discuss their value of student feedback, only that they would like the students to complete the evaluations.</i></li> <li>• <i>There should be some type of yearly process of posting information regarding past changes implemented based on student feedback and future goals. Technology is always</i></li> </ul>

Student	Motivation to complete online course evaluation forms	Beliefs about online course evaluations	Strategies to increase response rates	Thoughts about what happens to student feedback
			<p>Pipeline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• friendly, computer generated email</li> <li>• Make the evaluation less generic and more about the class you are evaluating.</li> <li>• yearly process of posting information regarding past changes implemented based on student feedback and future goals</li> </ul>	<p><i>changing; therefore the on-line courses should be evolving with the technology.</i></p>
#4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I just did as I was instructed. It was presented as something that had to be done. In the conclusion it would ask if you did the following items related to that learning week. The evaluation</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online questionnaires are best.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present evaluation in a manner that it appears to be required.</li> <li>• Notified of changes resulting from feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>By acknowledging my feedback in a positive manner, i.e., by saying they are looking into it, how it will be remedied or if it cannot be remedied why not. I would recognize that they [faculty] valued my feedback if I was ever able to see changes made or if they [faculty] emailed me or in some</i></li> </ul>

Student	Motivation to complete online course evaluation forms	Beliefs about online course evaluations	Strategies to increase response rates	Thoughts about what happens to student feedback
	<p><i>was presented as something that had to be done, so I did it...if I am very unhappy with certain aspects of the course I certainly want to point it out so that perhaps it can be improved.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty express value for student feedback</li> </ul>	<p><i>other way notified me that my input had made a difference.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I have no experience or knowledge of faculty using the feedback so cannot answer this question.</i></li> <li>• <i>Unsure. In theory it should be evaluated and then appropriate changes made. It would also be nice if after a midterm evaluation the student were emailed with a summary and proposed changes or actions being taken to address the students (sic) concerns.</i></li> <li>• <i>It would be helpful to see immediate changes and receive timely responses to the evaluation. I know this is not possible when it is done at the end of the course however then I receive no feedback and do not feel my comments are of any value. It certainly does not help me if there are changes made in the course in the future, unless I am unfortunate enough to have failed and take the course again. Therefore the student filling in the</i></li> </ul>



Student	Motivation to complete online course evaluation forms	Beliefs about online course evaluations	Strategies to increase response rates	Thoughts about what happens to student feedback
				<i>evaluation does not perceive any value or gain or recognition for themselves and then does not feel motivated to take the time to do the evaluation.</i>
#5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>It is part of the course - tells the instructor how I felt - usually it is positive.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I liked the computer forms that are easy to submit.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reminder on last screen of course</li> <li>Send reminders (a second time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I think the instructors use the positive and negative feedback to try and improve the course for next time.</i></li> <li><i>I think it [course feedback] should be judged and used if appropriately deemed more effective.</i></li> </ul>

### Summary

Overall, student and faculty respondents responded positively about online course evaluation. Both groups stressed the importance of course evaluation and of feedback to students regarding course improvements. Both groups suggested the use of reminders to complete course evaluations. Finally, both groups seemed to favor the online compared to paper-based method, with students commenting that the evaluations were concise, easy to complete and submit, and not too long.

Students and faculty suggested numerous strategies to encourage completion of online course evaluations. Emphasized strategies entailed demonstrating the value of course evaluations, including feedback to students regarding course changes/improvements, using reminders and incentives (i.e., draw prize, bonus marks),

and instituting/implying compulsory completion. Other strategies related to increasing the quality of course evaluations (i.e., pilot testing, increasing relevance to course), extending the completion period, and providing an advance copy of the evaluation to students. Finally, students responded that the best time to complete course evaluations ranged from midterm to immediately following course completion.

In terms of challenges or obstacles in completing the online course evaluations, students cited time constraints, unclear questions, and uncertainty of feedback value.

### Phase 2 Quantitative Survey

The researcher used means as an analysis strategy. Perseus, SPSS, and Microsoft Excel software applications were used to carry out data analyses and to generate graphs. This survey produced three groups of data: administration of the online course evaluation form, content of the form, and background information. The administration component included effective ways to remind and motivate students to complete the course evaluation form. It also queried the best time to complete the course evaluation form and the location to post student results. The content contained a yes/no question to determine whether students perceived that the items on the course evaluation form addressed the most important aspects of instruction. Finally, the relevant background information referred to the number of online courses the students have completed (0, 1, 2 >2). This provides some insight into their computer technical experience. The following bar charts and subsequent associated tables illustrate the data analyses for each of these groups of data.

The administration group survey data was constructed with a 5-point Likert scale (1 very effective; 2 somewhat effective; 3 neutral; 4 not very effective; 5 not effective).

The researcher calculated means for this categorical data. This allowed convenient comparison of strengths of responses for each of the questions. Furthermore, this allowed for the ranking of questions by importance.

Administration – Reminders. Figure 4 shows the mean level of response for each of the reminder factors to complete the online course evaluation form. These responses have been ordered to show ranking of effectiveness from most effective to least effective. *A7 Email Message* with a mean response level of 1.29 reflects an extremely effective reminder with nearly three fourths of students ranking email as very effective. *A6 [Reminder from your] Faculty Facilitator* and *A4 [Reminder in the] Course Schedule* also reflects very strong positive responses. In fact, six of the seven responses are positive, which suggests that reminders are useful. (These positive responses have values less than the scale mid-point of 3.00.)

Figure 4. Mean Level of Response for Each Reminder Factor

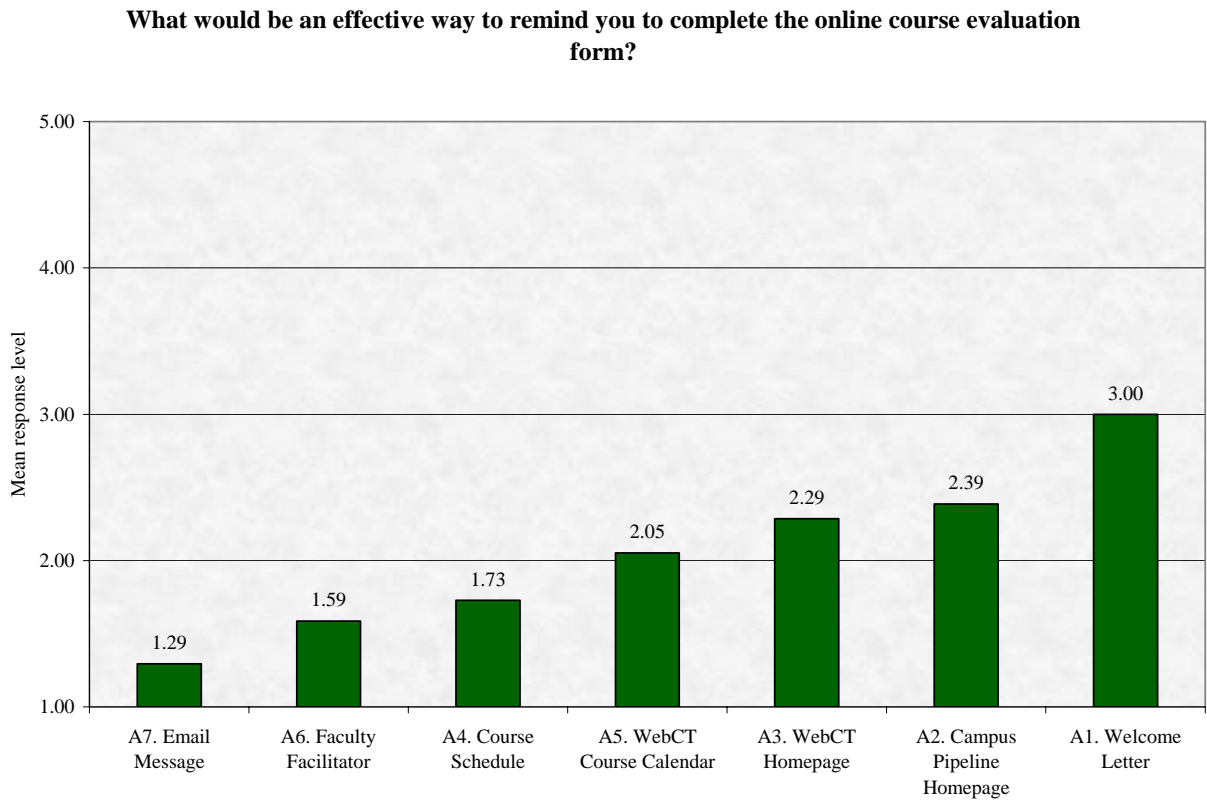


Table 9 illustrates the mode, mean and standard deviation of the each of the reminders.

The Email Message reminder presents the least variance; however, there is low variance across all reminders.

Table 9. Modes, Means and Standard Deviations of Reminders

Administration - Reminders	N	Mode	Mean	SD
A7. Email Message	58	1.00	1.29	0.496
A6. Faculty Facilitator	58	1.00	1.59	0.879
A4. Course Schedule	59	1.00	1.73	0.887
A5. WebCT Course Calendar	58	1.00	2.05	1.099
A3. WebCT Homepage	56	2.00	2.29	0.909
A2. Campus Pipeline Homepage	57	2.00	2.39	1.114
A1. Welcome Letter	58	3.00	3.00	1.185

Note: Response levels 1.00-5.00 correspond to the following Likert scale: very effective, somewhat effective, neutral, not very effective and not effective.

Administration – Motivators. Figure 5 shows the mean level of response for each of the motivational factors to complete the online course evaluation form. These responses have been ordered to show ranking from most effective to least effective. *B2 Bonus Mark* for each course evaluated with a mean response level of 1.48 demonstrates an extremely effective motivator with approximately 70% of students ranking it as very effective. *B3 Draw for a Prize* and *B4 Notice of Course Improvement or Change resulting from Feedback* also demonstrate very strong positive responses. In fact, all seven responses are positive, which suggests that all motivators are useful. (These positive responses correspondingly have values less than the scale mid-point of 3.00.)

Figure 5. Mean Level of Response for Each Motivation Factor

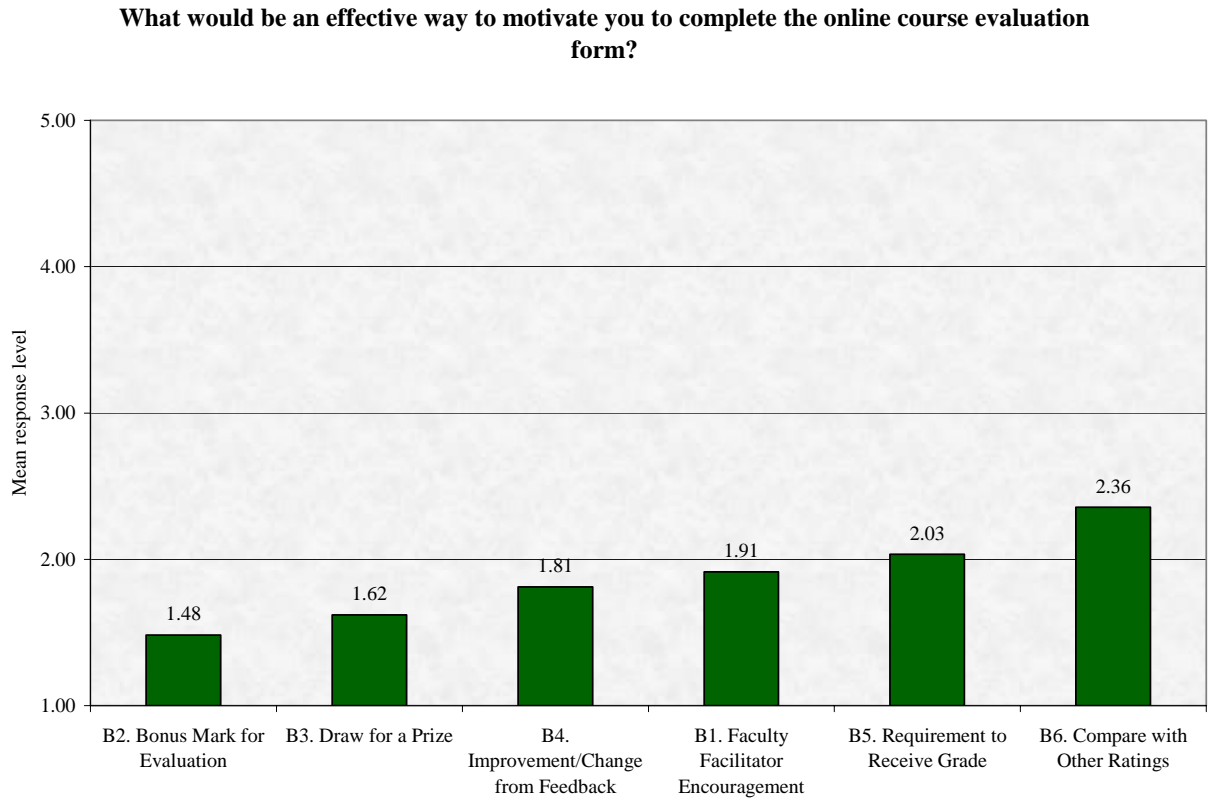


Table 10 illustrates the mode, mean and standard deviation of each of the motivators, with the latter demonstrating low variance.

Table 10. Modes, Means and Standard Deviations of Motivators

Administration - Motivators	N	Mode	Mean	SD
B2. Bonus Mark for Evaluation	58	1.00	1.48	0.863
B3. Draw for a Prize	58	1.00	1.62	0.768
B4. Improvement/Change from Feedback	58	1.00	1.81	0.868
B1. Faculty Facilitator Encouragement	58	1.00	1.91	1.064
B5. Requirement to Receive Grade	59	1.00	2.03	1.389
B6. Compare with Other Ratings	59	1 and 3	2.36	1.110

Note: Response levels 1.00-5.00 correspond to the following Likert scale: very effective, somewhat effective, neutral, not very effective and not effective.

Administration - Best Time to Complete Online Course Evaluation Forms. Figure 6

shows the mean level of response for each of the best time factors to complete the online course evaluation form. These responses have been ordered to show ranking from most effective to least effective. *C3 End of Course* with a mean response level of 1.29 clearly demonstrates an extremely effective time with 78% of students ranking it as very effective. The remaining best time responses are also positive, which suggests that all evaluation times are useful. (These positive responses correspondingly have values less than the scale mid-point of 3.00.)

Figure 6. Mean Level of Response for each Evaluation Time

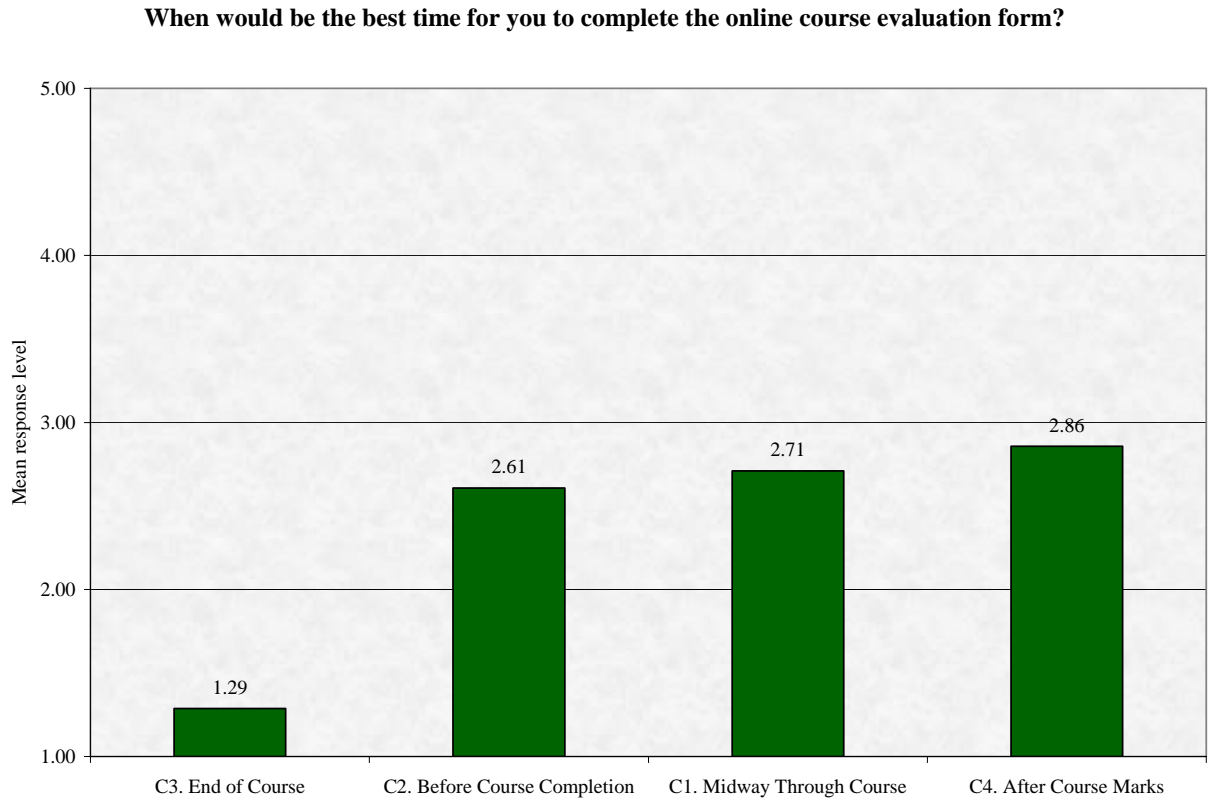


Table 11 shows the mode, mean and standard deviation of each of the times to complete online course evaluations. *C3 End of Course* time presents the least variance; however, there is low variance across all evaluation times.



Table 11. Modes, Means and Standard Deviations of Best Time to Complete Online

Course Evaluation Forms

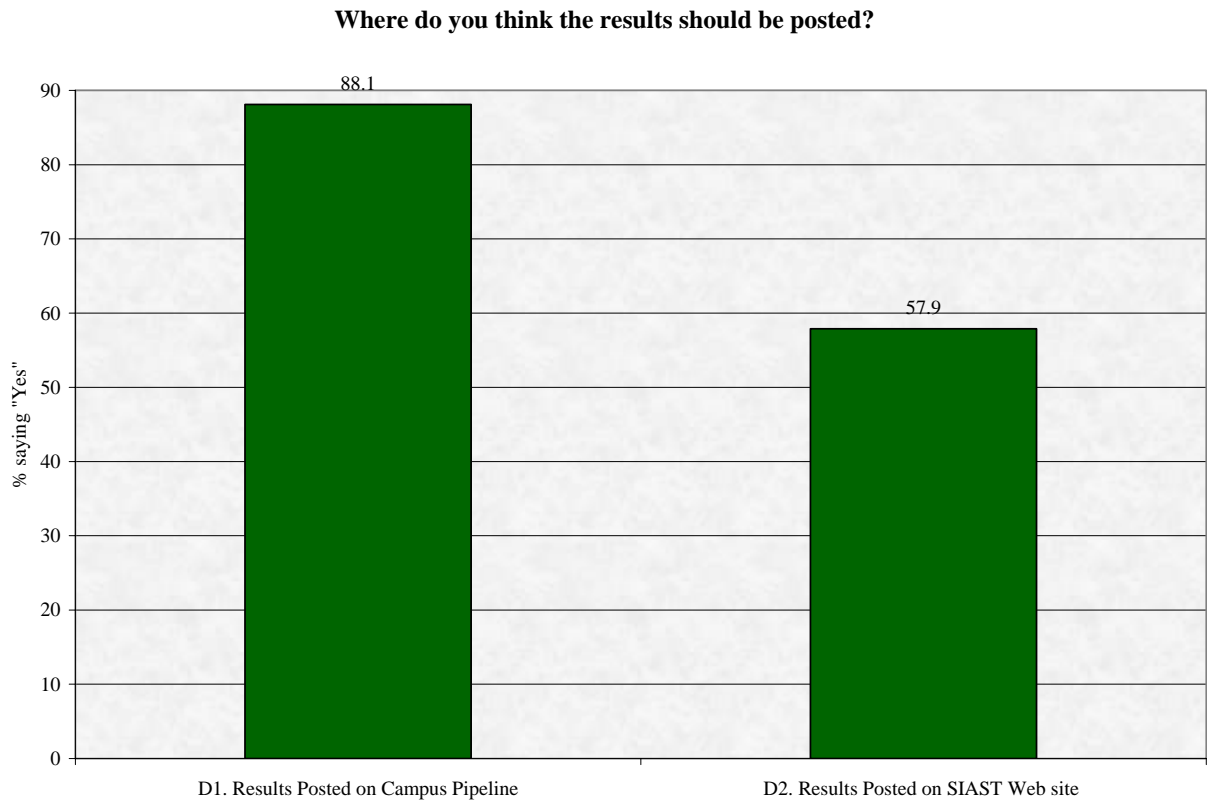
Best Time to Complete Online Course Evaluation Forms	N	Mode	Mean	SD
C3. End of Course	59	1.00	1.29	0.589
C2. Before Course Completion	56	2.00	2.61	1.139
C1. Midway Through Course	55	2.00	2.71	1.181
C4. After Course Marks	56	3.00	2.86	1.299

Note: Response levels 1.00-5.00 correspond to the following Likert scale: very effective, somewhat effective, neutral, not very effective and not effective.

Administration - Location for Posting Results. Requiring a yes/no response, this survey question addresses posting of evaluation results and the location for this posting. As illustrated in Figure 7, 88.1% of respondents preferred Campus Pipeline (Intranet) over the SIAST Web site (Internet). Of particular significance, over half of the respondents provided a written response to the follow-up why or why not questions. Some open-ended responses related specifically to the location where results would be posted, but most related to the importance of receiving results. Several of the latter responses suggested that posting results showed value for student feedback by acting on concerns/changes. Other responses revealed student interest in reviewing and comparing other students' course evaluation feedback. Still others believed it was their "right" to see the results. Furthermore, students argued that posting results would demonstrate an "ongoing quality assurance program" and that posting results is "good publicity". And

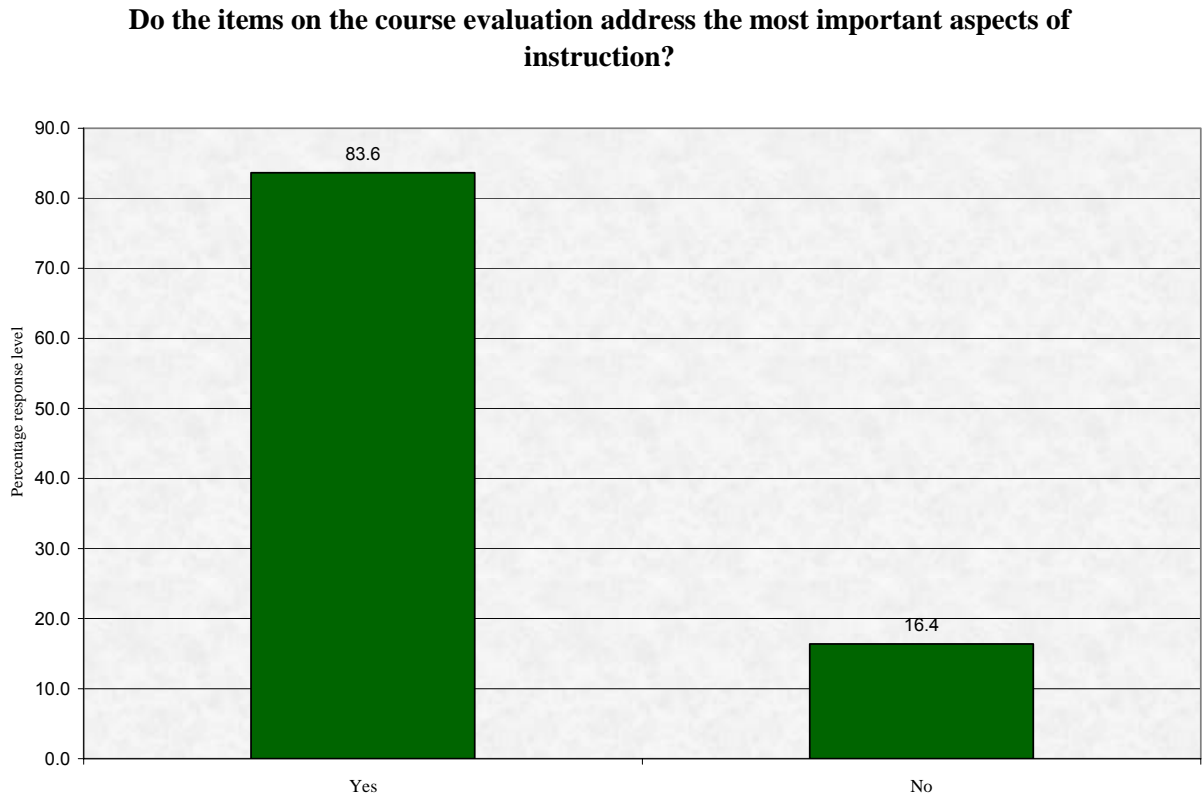
finally, most students believed that the results were more relevant to them than they would be for prospective students.

Figure 7. Yes Distribution of Each Location for Posting Results (D1. N = 59; D2. N = 57)



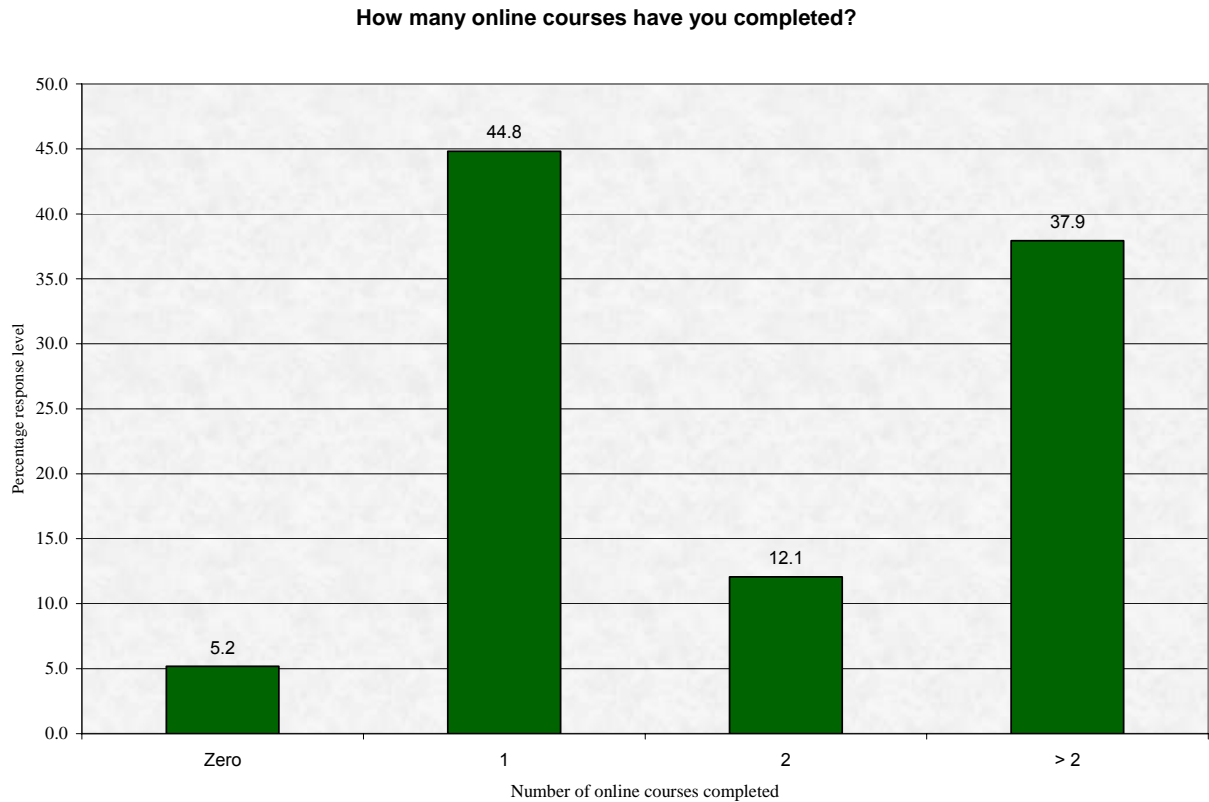
Content of the Course Evaluation Form. As illustrated in Figure 8, an overwhelming majority of students stated that the content on the course evaluation form addressed the most important aspects of instruction (83.6%). In addition, students expressed two common themes in the open comments section following the radio button responses. These include the need for evaluation items to be written to apply more specifically to the class and use of text areas to type subjective comments instead of “only ticking off a box” (student response).

Figure 8. Percentage of Students who Think Evaluation Form Addresses Important Instruction (N = 55)



Background Information. The background information pertained to the program and the online course(s) in which the student is enrolled. Students also selected the number of online courses completed. Figure 9 illustrates the percentage of students who have completed 0, 1, 2 or >2 online courses.

Figure 9. Number of Online Courses Completed (N = 58)



Over 90% of respondents had completed at least one online course; therefore, they had some experience with computer technology.

### Summary

The Phase 2 quantitative survey yielded strong trends regarding reminders, motivators, best time to complete course evaluations, location to post course evaluation results, the validity of the evaluation content, and the respondents' computer experience. The *Email Message* demonstrated to be the most effective reminder with nearly three fourths of students ranking email as very effective. Reminders from the *Faculty Facilitator* and in the *Course Schedule* also demonstrate very strong positive responses. Respondents favored the *Bonus Mark* for each course evaluated to be the most effective

motivator with *Draw for a Prize* and *Notice of Course Improvement or Change resulting from Feedback* also showing very strong positive responses. The majority of students ranked the *End of Course* to be the best time to complete online course evaluation forms. The majority of respondents also preferred the posting of evaluation results on Campus Pipeline (Intranet) over the SIAST Web site (Internet). Their open-ended responses stressed the importance of receiving course evaluation results. Overwhelmingly, students perceived that the content on the course evaluation form addressed the most important aspects of instruction. Finally, the majority of respondents had some experience with computer technology.

# CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this two-phase, sequential mixed method study was to explore and generate themes about student online evaluation response motivation and practice. Based on these themes, Phase 2 was to identify online nursing students' preferred strategies to maximize their response rates.

### Research Questions

To achieve its stated purpose, this study examined the following research questions that have been chronologically sequenced:

#### Phase 1

1. What are the attitudes/opinions of SIAST nursing students and faculty toward online course evaluation?
2. What strategies may SIAST use to support/encourage nursing students to respond to online course evaluation?

#### Phase 2

1. How do the nursing students rate strategies to maximize online evaluation response rates?
2. What is the computer technical ability of the SIAST nursing student?
3. What is the role of previous experience of the SIAST nursing student with online course evaluation?

## Discussion of Results

A summary of the results from this study are discussed here, ordered by the research questions for Phases 1 and 2 respectively.

Perspectives toward Online Course Evaluation. Overall, student and faculty respondents communicated positively about online course evaluation. Both groups stressed the importance of course evaluation and of feedback to students regarding course improvements. They also seemed to favor the online compared to print evaluation delivery method. Students commented that the evaluations were concise, easy to complete and submit, and not too long. Individual faculty proposed compulsory course evaluation completion, advance notification of evaluation surveys, and the need for a more useable presentation of data output to accommodate administrative reporting.

Proposed Strategies to Maximize Response Rates. Students and faculty suggested numerous strategies to encourage completion of online course evaluations. Emphasized strategies entailed demonstrating the value of course evaluations, including feedback to students regarding course changes/improvements, using reminders and incentives (i.e., draw prize, bonus marks), and instituting/implying compulsory completion. Other strategies related to increasing the quality of course evaluations (i.e., pilot testing, increasing relevance to course), extending the completion period, and providing an advance copy of the evaluation to students. Finally, students responded that the best time to complete course evaluations ranged from midterm to immediately following course completion.

Student Ranking of Strategies. The Phase 2 quantitative survey yielded homogeneous positive results regarding reminders, motivators, best time to complete

course evaluations, and location to post course evaluation results. The single most effective reminder appears to be the email message. Reminders from the faculty facilitator and in the course schedule also seem very useful. Incentives such as bonus marks or draw for a prize tend to motivate students to complete course evaluations. In addition, students appreciate receiving notice of course improvement or change resulting from their feedback. The best time to complete online course evaluation forms seems to be the end of the course. Students also tend to prefer the posting of evaluation results on the Intranet rather than the Internet.

Computer Technical Ability of the SIAST Online Nursing Student. The vast majority of respondents (see Figure 9) possessed substantial experience with computer technology, having completed at least one online course.

Role of Previous Student Experience with Online Course Evaluation. These student respondents appear to complete online course evaluations consistently. A likely reason is that an overwhelming majority of them perceived that the content on the course evaluation form addressed the most important aspects of instruction.

#### Findings Congruent with the Literature

The researcher found several consistencies with the literature in terms of Web-based surveys and response rates. First and foremost by using strategies identified in the literature, the researcher achieved a 70% response rate (Cummings et al., 2000; Johnson, 2003; University of South Australia, 2003; Conn & Norris, 2003). Instituting a draw for a cash prize, for example, seemed to motivate students to complete the Part 2 survey. Second, the researcher experienced many of the benefits of Web-based survey including ease of administration, more detailed, user-friendly reports, accurate data collection,

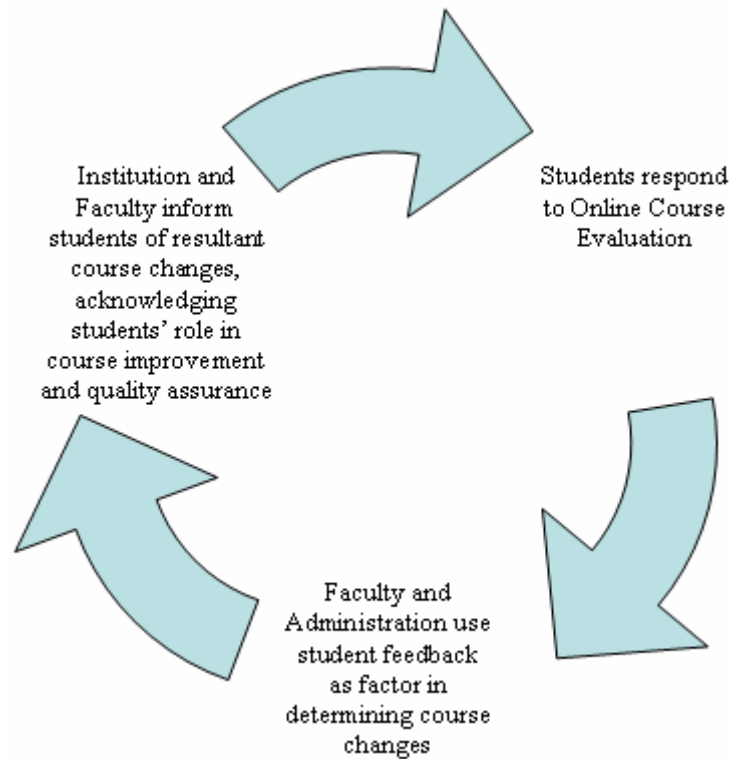


reduced time for processing, environmentally friendly alternative, and alignment with SIAST's use of technology (Ballantyne, 2003; Bullock, 2003; Cummings et al., 2000; Hardy, 2003; Hoffman, 2003; Johnson, 2003; Llewellyn, 2003; McGhee & Lowell, 2003; Sorenson & Reiner, 2003; Tucker et al., 2003; Conn & Norris, 2003). Students also commented on the ease of completing and submitting Web-based surveys. The researcher did not receive any feedback from respondents regarding challenges or limitations in using the technology. Third, the findings were congruent with Anderson and Kanuka's (2002) position in terms of rewards and trust as general means to increase response rates. Student respondents tended to focus on tangible incentives and perceived value; they also expected the institution to show accountability by providing feedback regarding course improvements.

### Implications of Results

The most significant implication of this study relates to completing the feedback cycle and to institutional accountability measures. To maximize student response rates, it is fundamental that the participating institution show value for the student feedback by reporting evaluation results including course changes/improvements. The precise nature of reporting results rests with institutional policies; however, students expect institutions to demonstrate this accountability. Figure 10 illustrates the elements of the feedback cycle relating to this research.

Figure 10. Completing the Feedback Cycle



The second implication relates to motivators and reminders as strategies to maximize student response rates. This study revealed that students respond positively to a variety of motivators and reminders. No student ranked any of the strategies as ineffective. This would suggest that institutions should take advantage of incorporating motivators and reminders, appropriate for their organizational culture, to maximize response rates to online course evaluation. The researcher experienced this first-hand by mindfully selecting strategies (i.e., personalized approach, instituting draw for a cash prize) to increase student response rates.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

This study concludes with six recommendations for further study. Some of these recommendations are general; others are specific.

First, faculty and students clearly stress the importance of communicating the results of student evaluations. SIAST has not instituted a formal mechanism for reporting feedback to students regarding online course changes and improvements. Although students seem to prefer the posting of results on the SIAST Intranet, the specific method used warrants investigation. Further, reporting results requires administration's support. Studying the impact (i.e., costs, academic ramifications) of reporting results would be beneficial to seeking administration approval. Hoffman (2003) and Ali & Sell (1998) also identify reporting results as an area for further research.

The second recommendation concerns faculty and administrator attitudes toward a comprehensive online evaluation system. As with many dual mode higher education institutions, SIAST manages both paper-based and online course evaluation systems. In addition to perspectives, SIAST may find it useful to study the possible impact of moving toward the online system. For example, what supports will be required to establish and maintain a comprehensive online evaluation system and what are the issues when (or if) changing to such a system?

The third recommendation concerns investigation into the online course evaluation itself. It also relates to training better evaluators. Student respondents commented that the evaluation needs to be specific to the course content. As a starting point, it may be beneficial to study the perspectives of administrators and evaluation consultants to determine the evaluation design process that meets institutional needs over time and provides relevant feedback for specific course improvement. Another dimension of obtaining the needed course feedback is to provide training for students in completing evaluations and for academics in constructing evaluation instruments. As McKeachie

(1997), the researcher proposes further research to identify ways to train professionals and students to become better evaluators.

Fourth, as mentioned in the literature review, adult student evaluation of courses requires explicit designation within ISD if the conceptual model is to represent common evaluation practice across higher education, and indeed online education. The author challenges researchers to proactively research ways in which adult student evaluation may be factored within the ISD model to accurately reflect practice. How is this dimension of the evaluation complex best represented?

Fifth, correlations between the strategies used to increase response rates and factors such as age, sex, educational experience, and technology level, bear investigation. Are motivations for responding to course evaluations different from one group to another (i.e., sequential vs. non-sequential students)? What factors influence their response rates? From an institutional administration context, which strategies will bring the greatest return on investment?

The sixth recommendation deals with understanding response behavior patterns in Web-based surveys. Bosnjak and Tuten (2001) argue that there are seven response behaviors including complete responders, nonresponders, drop-outs, lurkers, lurking drop-outs, item nonresponders, and item non-responding drop-outs. Although this study did not include analysis of these behaviors due to institutional limitations, researchers seeking to increase response and to minimize nonresponse bias benefit from studying them.

## Summary

Evaluators attend to high response rates and many higher education institutions struggle with choosing approaches that will best achieve high response rates and return on investment. In short, they want value. The higher the student response rate, the more accurately the course evaluation results reflect the opinions of the target population. Sound use of this feedback, in turn, supports increased education quality.

Not surprisingly, this concept of value extends to the students' motivation for completing online course evaluations. They too must see the benefits or rewards over the costs of engaging in the behavior. For many students this means validating their efforts by institutional reporting of evaluation results and/or personally experiencing course improvements.

For the most part, students and faculty positively view evaluation and strategies to maximize response rates. Institutions may leverage these results to more effectively acquire student feedback and to enhance education quality.

Finally, the researcher makes several recommendations for future research. Similar to Hoffman (2003) and Ali & Sell (1998), she proposes further study reporting evaluation results. Studying the use and impact (i.e., costs, academic ramifications) of reporting results will be a useful preliminary step in obtaining administration's approval to report results to students. The second recommendation concerns the transformation of a two tier paper and online evaluation system to a comprehensive online evaluation system. The researcher advises studying the potential impact of the change and respective faculty and administrator attitudes. The third recommendation relates to constructing relevant online course evaluation surveys and training better evaluators. McKeachie

(1997) argues that further research is needed in how to train professionals and students to become better evaluators. Student respondents in this study commented that the evaluation needs to be specific to the course content. How to create relevant evaluation surveys and how to effectively train academics and students to become better evaluators bears investigation. The fourth recommendation concerns explicit designation of adult student evaluation of courses within ISD models to represent common evaluation practice across higher education. The fifth recommendation deals with investigating correlations between the strategies used to increase response rates and factors such as age, sex, educational experience, and technology level. Finally, consistent with Bosnjak and Tuten (2001), the researcher proposes further study of response behavior patterns in Web-based surveys for the purpose of increasing response and minimizing nonresponse bias. The aforementioned proposed research will bring to the fore the importance of evaluation and the transformation to online evaluation to ultimately improve the evaluation system and learning.

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## APPENDIX A

### EMAIL TO DEAN OF NURSING REGARDING FIRST CONTACT

#### EMAIL

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Nelson, Denise

**Sent:** Monday, November 08, 2004 8:27 AM

**To:** Davidson Dick, Diana

**Cc:** Cybulski, Sharon

**Subject:** Nelson Research - Draft memo to online students and faculty facilitators

Thanks again Diana for sending the first contact email to online nursing students and faculty facilitators. The attached draft is for your consideration. Also attached are the invitation and consents to be attached to the first contact email.

Note: Consents are different for faculty and students. Online faculty facilitators receive invitation plus faculty consent, **and** online students receive invitation plus student consent.

<< File: Dean Email Message.doc >> << File: Invitation.doc >> << File: Consent Form Student Participation.doc >> << File: Consent Form Faculty Participation.doc >>

Looking forward to your reply,  
Denise

*It is not the technology that matters, but how we choose to design learning through the technology. (G. Miller)*

*Denise Nelson*

Course Designer, SIAST Virtual Campus

4500 Wascana Parkway

Wascana Campus, Regina, SK S4P 3A3

Phone: (306) 798-0142

Fax: (306) 798-0196

<mailto:nelsond@siast.sk.ca>

<http://www.siastr.sk.ca>

## APPENDIX B

### DEAN OF NURSING EMAIL MESSAGE

#### TO STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Dear **online** students and facilitators,

Denise Nelson, course designer, SIAST Virtual Campus and student in the Master of Distance Education Program, Athabasca University, is looking for students taking and faculty facilitating online courses to volunteer to participate in her research project, which she is undertaking to meet the thesis requirements of the program. In her study, *Online Student Ratings: Increasing Response Rates*, Denise is exploring what motivates students to respond to online course evaluations, and subsequently, what institutional strategies could be used to increase the number of student responders.

This research is intended to improve students' learning by enhancing SIAST's evaluation system to increasingly respond to course evaluation feedback.

If you choose to participate, you may be asked to participate in a virtual interview (~ 40 minutes) about your experience with online course evaluations, and students will be asked to complete an online survey (~20 minutes) prioritizing strategies to increase student response rates for online course evaluations.

If you are interested in volunteering to participate in the study, please contact Denise at [nelsond@siast.sk.ca](mailto:nelsond@siast.sk.ca).

Diana Davidson Dick  
Dean of Nursing

## APPENDIX C

### INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

November 8, 2004

Dear Student and Faculty,

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled, *Online Student Ratings: Increasing Response Rates*. As a graduate student in the Master of Distance Education degree program at Athabasca University and a course designer at SIAST Virtual Campus, I am conducting a study of student online course evaluation response rates. The purpose of this two-phase study is to first explore and generate themes about student online evaluation response motivation and practice, and second to determine the conditions under which students are more likely to respond to online course evaluations. As you are an online nursing student or facilitator, your agreeing to contribute to this research would be very much appreciated.

SIAST online nursing courses were sampled for participation in this study. The research procedures used in the project have been cleared through the research ethics review of Athabasca University. The data collection procedures are as follows:

- In the first phase of data collection, five students and three faculty will be selected to participate in an interview. The interview questions will be provided to you electronically with a request for a one-day turn around time for your responses and exchange with me (Responding to the questions will take approximately 40 minutes). Letters of information and informed consent forms will be emailed to you. This initial data collection will occur before December 04.
- In the second phase of data collection, all online students are asked to complete an online survey just after course completion. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and will be accessed through your WebCT course.

All data provided will be treated in accordance with the guidelines established by the Athabasca Research Ethics Board. As a participant in this research, please be assured that your anonymity will be protected. All information will be held confidential, except when legislation or a professional code of conduct requires that it be reported. All data gathered during the course of this research will be stored securely and shredded/deleted upon completion of the study.

Your participation is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to participate in any way. You also have the right to withdraw from the study without prejudice at any time. Should you choose to withdraw, you have the right to withdraw data provided during your participation.

My thesis supervisor is Dr. Tom Jones of the Centre for Distance Education, Athabasca University, Athabasca, Alberta. He can be contacted by phone at 1-866-514-6233 or by email at [tom\\_jones@shaw.ca](mailto:tom_jones@shaw.ca)

SIAST approves this research. Mr. Claude Naud, Vice-President, Programs, is the contact person for my research. He can be reached as follows:

Mr. Claude Naud



Vice-President, Programs  
Administrative Offices  
400 – 119 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Saskatoon, SK S7K 5X2  
Phone: (306) 933-7331  
Fax: (306) 933-7334

Your assistance with this research will be very much appreciated. Once you have read and understood the letter, please refer to the attached letter of consent for instructions regarding email reply to [nelsond@siast.sk.ca](mailto:nelsond@siast.sk.ca). If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me as indicated below.

I will contact you in approximately five days to follow up on my request for your participation in this research.

Sincerely,

Denise Nelson  
Course Designer  
SIAST Virtual Campus  
Wascana Campus  
Box 556  
Regina, SK S4P 3A3  
Phone: (306) 798-0142 (work)  
(306) 584-2562 (home)  
Email: [nelsond@siast.sk.ca](mailto:nelsond@siast.sk.ca)

## APPENDIX D

### CONSENT FORM FOR FACULTY PARTICIPATION

I hereby consent to participate in the research project entitled, *Online Student Ratings: Increasing Response Rates*. This research will be conducted by Denise Nelson of SIAST (graduate student of the Master of Distance Education degree program of Athabasca University) under the supervision of Dr. Tom Jones and with the support of the thesis committee members, Dr. Terry Anderson and Dr. Bob Spencer. The Research Ethics Review Committee of Athabasca University approves the research procedures to be used in this project. SIAST also approves this research.

The research project is expected to further understanding of the conditions under which students respond to online course evaluations. Moreover, SIAST may benefit by employing strategies that increase these student response rates and ultimately improve learning for students.

I understand that my participation in the study will involve one computer-mediated interview. I understand all data, with all names and personal identifiers removed, will be archived for further analysis.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary.

The general plan of this study has been outlined to me (in the letter of request), including my rights as a participant.

I understand that the results of this research may be published or reported, but my name will not be associated in any way with the results. A copy of the study results will be made available to you in the form of an electronic file should you request it.

I understand that all information will be held confidential, except when legislation or a professional code of conduct requires that it be reported. I also understand that my participation will not be associated with any performance review.

**To accept or decline participation please reply by copying and pasting your choice of the statements below in the subject line of your email to [nelsond@siast.sk.ca](mailto:nelsond@siast.sk.ca):**

Choice 1. *I consent to participate fully in research project interview*

Choice 2. *I do not consent to participate in research project*

---

Date

---

Name

## APPENDIX E

### CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

I hereby consent to participate in the research project entitled, *Online Student Ratings: Increasing Response Rates*. This research will be conducted by Denise Nelson of SIAST (graduate student of the Master of Distance Education degree program of Athabasca University) under the supervision of Dr. Tom Jones and with the support of the thesis committee members, Dr. Terry Anderson and Dr. Bob Spencer. The Research Ethics Review Committee of Athabasca University approves the research procedures to be used in this project. SIAST also approves this research.

The research project is expected to further understanding of the conditions under which students respond to online course evaluations. Moreover, SIAST may benefit by employing strategies that increase these student response rates and ultimately improve learning for students.

I understand that my participation in the study will involve the completion of one questionnaire and may include an upfront interview. I understand all data, with all names and personal identifiers removed, will be archived for further analysis.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary.

The general plan of this study has been outlined to me (in the letter of request), including my rights as a participant.

I understand that the results of this research may be published or reported, but my name will not be associated in any way with the results. A copy of the study results will be made available to you in the form of an electronic file should you request it.

I understand that all information will be held confidential, except when legislation or a professional code of conduct requires that it be reported. I also understand that my participation will not be associated in any way with grades or other student assessments.

**To accept or decline participation please reply by copying and pasting your choice of the statements below in the subject line of your email to [nelsond@siast.sk.ca](mailto:nelsond@siast.sk.ca):**

Choice 1. *I consent to participate fully in research project including interview and survey*

Choice 2. *I consent to participate in research project by completing survey only*

Choice 3. *I do not consent to participate in research project*

---

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F

### PHASE 1 STUDENT INTERVIEW RESEARCH

#### INSTRUMENT AND PROTOCOL

##### Phase 1 Student Interview

This online interview is being conducted to gather information to help the researcher better understand students' motivation in responding to online course evaluation forms. Your feedback is also very important in assisting SIAST to improve the online course evaluation system, in particular to increase the number of students who respond to online course evaluation forms.

Your responses to the questions in the interview are confidential, and this interview will be conducted according to the guidelines established by the Athabasca University Ethics Research Board. Please answer the following questions as completely and freely as possible. Feel free to take as much space as you need to enter your responses.

##### Background Information

Your Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Your course(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a computer? Yes  No

Have you taken a course online before? Yes  No

If yes, how many online courses have you completed? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, did this include...

check all that apply - copy and paste checkmark or type yes beside the following options)

Email only

Online conferences

Examinations

Face-to-face meetings

##### Questions

1. Tell me about your experience of online course evaluations?

2. Do you complete online course evaluation forms?

3. What motivates you to complete online course evaluation forms?
4. If you do not complete evaluations, please describe your reasons.
5. What challenges or obstacles do you experience in completing the online course evaluations?
6. What do you believe SIAST can do to support you to complete the online evaluation forms?
7. What would be an effective way to remind you to complete the online course evaluation forms?
8. What do you think may contribute to low response rates for online evaluation?
9. How can online evaluation response rates be increased?
10. How do student, faculty and program head attitudes and behaviors influence online student feedback responses?
11. How may online nursing faculty indicate that they value student feedback of courses?
12. What do you think about faculty's use of student feedback?
13. When is the best time for course feedback from students?

14. What is the best approach for course feedback from students?

15. What do you think happens with student course feedback?

16. What do you think should happen with course feedback from students?

17. Do you have any further comments that you want to add before ending this interview? If yes, please comment.

# APPENDIX G

## PHASE 1 FACULTY INTERVIEW RESEARCH

### INSTRUMENT AND PROTOCOL

#### Phase 1 Faculty Interview Questions

This online interview is being conducted to gather information to help the researcher better understand students' motivation in responding to online course evaluation forms. Your feedback is also very important in assisting SIAST to improve the online course evaluation system, in particular to increase the number of students who respond to online course evaluation forms.

Your responses to the questions in the interview are confidential, and this interview will be conducted according to the guidelines established by the Athabasca University Ethics Research Board. Please answer the following questions as completely and freely as possible.

#### Background Information

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Online course(s) that you facilitate: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you facilitated a course online before?    Yes        No   

If yes, how many online courses have you facilitated? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, did this include...

check all that apply - copy and paste checkmark or type yes beside the following options)

Email only

Online conferences

Examinations

Face-to-face meetings

#### Questions

1. Tell me about your experience of students completing online course evaluations?
2. How valuable is it to you to receive **summative** online student completed course evaluations on the courses you facilitate? Please explain.  
  
Very valuable  
Valuable  
Somewhat valuable  
Not valuable
3. How valuable is it to you to receive **formative** online student completed course evaluations on the courses you facilitate? Please explain.

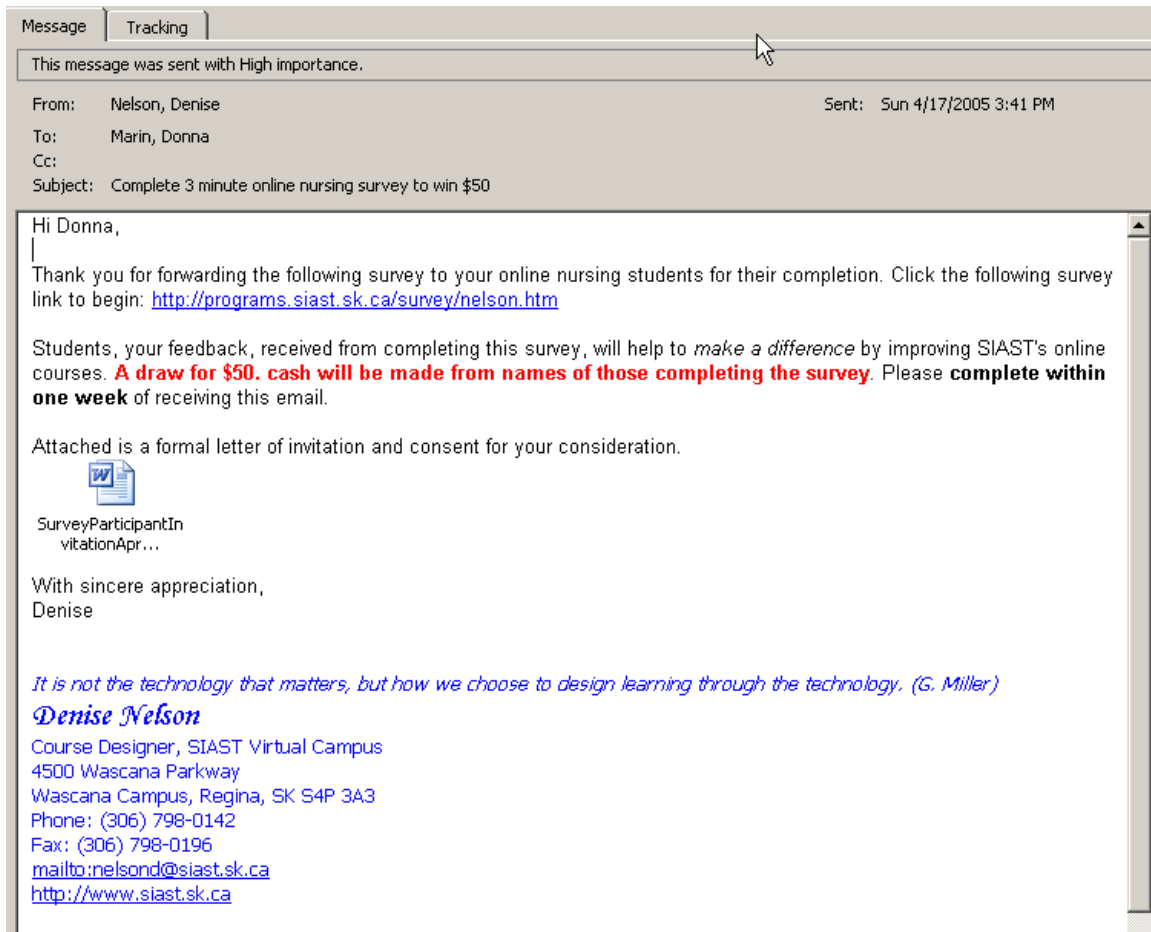
Very valuable  
Valuable  
Somewhat valuable  
Not valuable

4. Tell me if you receive the student course feedback and if so, what you do with it as a result.
5. Do you think it is feasible to expect a 70% response rate?
6. What obstacles do you see to achieving a 70% response rate? How might these obstacles be overcome?
7. Explain how you would improve the online course evaluation system.
8. What strategies do you use to get students to complete the online evaluation forms?
9. What strategies could SIAST use to get students to complete the online evaluation forms?
10. How do student, faculty and program head attitudes and behaviors influence online student feedback responses?
11. Please provide any comments that you have on the contents of the online course evaluation forms.
12. Do you have any further comments that you want to add before ending this interview? If yes, please comment.



## APPENDIX H

### SAMPLE EMAIL TO FACULTY FACILITATORS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENT PARTICIPATION



## APPENDIX I

### SAMPLE OF FOLLOW-UP INVITATION TO STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY

April 17, 2005

Dear Nursing Student,

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled, *Online Student Ratings: Increasing Response Rates*. As a graduate student in the Master of Distance Education degree program at Athabasca University and a course designer at SIAST Virtual Campus, I am conducting a study of student online course evaluation response rates. The purpose of this two-phase study is to first explore and generate themes about student online evaluation response motivation and practice, and second to determine the conditions under which students are more likely to respond to online course evaluations. As you are an online nursing student, your agreeing to contribute to this research would be very much appreciated.

SIAST online nursing courses were sampled for participation in this study. The research procedures used in the project have been cleared through the research ethics review of Athabasca University. This phase of data collection invites **all online students to complete an online survey, which will take approximately 3 minutes to complete. Students who complete the survey will have their names entered for a draw to win \$50 cash.**

All data provided will be treated in accordance with the guidelines established by the Athabasca Research Ethics Board. As a participant in this research, please be assured that your anonymity will be protected. All information will be held confidential, except when legislation or a professional code of conduct requires that it be reported. All data gathered during the course of this research will be stored securely and shredded/deleted upon completion of the study.

Your participation is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to participate in any way. You also have the right to withdraw from the study without prejudice at any time. Should you choose to withdraw, you have the right to withdraw data provided during your participation.

My thesis supervisor is Dr. Tom Jones of the Centre for Distance Education, Athabasca University, Athabasca, Alberta. He can be contacted by phone at 1-866-514-6233 or by email at [tom\\_jones@shaw.ca](mailto:tom_jones@shaw.ca)

SIAST approves this research. Mr. Claude Naud, Vice-President, Programs, is the contact person for my research. He can be reached as follows:

Mr. Claude Naud  
Vice-President, Programs  
Administrative Offices  
400 – 119 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Saskatoon, SK S7K 5X2  
Phone: (306) 933-7331  
Fax: (306) 933-7334

Your assistance with this research will be very much appreciated. **Once you have read and understood the letter, your submission of the [survey](#) (opens new window) will verify your consent to participate.** If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me as indicated below.

I will contact you in approximately one week to follow up on my request for your participation in this research.

Sincerely,

Denise Nelson  
Course Designer  
SIAST Virtual Campus  
Wascana Campus  
Box 556  
Regina, SK S4P 3A3  
Phone: (306) 798-0142 (work)  
(306) 584-2562 (home)  
Email: [nelsond@siast.sk.ca](mailto:nelsond@siast.sk.ca)

# APPENDIX J

## WEB-BASED SURVEY

There are two options for viewing the Web-based survey:

1. hyperlink survey ...[survey](#) (opens new window)
2. screen capture images that follow (magnify for easy reading)

### Student Survey

All SIAST online nursing students are invited to complete this survey pertaining to online course evaluation. Your responses to the questions in the survey are confidential. Your feedback is very important in helping SIAST to support you in completing the course evaluation form and to show value of your feedback in improving courses and learning.

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions:

#### Administration of the online course evaluation form

What would be an effective way to **remind** you to complete the online course evaluation form?

	very effective	somewhat effective	neutral	not very effective	not effective
	1	2	3	4	5
in the SIAST Virtual Campus welcome letter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a prompt or link on Campus Pipeline homepage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a prompt or link on the WebCT homepage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in the course schedule	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in WebCT course calendar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
from your faculty facilitator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
an email message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are there any other **reminders** that you think would be effective?

What would be an effective way to **motivate** you to complete the online course evaluation form?

	very effective	somewhat effective	neutral	not very effective	not effective
	1	2	3	4	5
encouragement from your faculty facilitator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
bonus mark for each course you evaluate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
entry in a draw for a prize	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
notice of course improvements or changes resulting from feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
course requirement before receiving grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
receive feedback that compares your rating with other students' ratings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are there any other **motivators** that you think would be effective?

When would be the **best time** for you to complete the online course evaluation form?

	very effective	somewhat effective	neutral	not very effective	not effective
	1	2	3	4	5
midway through the course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
before the completion of the course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
at the end of the course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
after you have received course marks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are there any other **times** that you think would be effective?

Do you **think** the results should be posted on:

**Campus Pipeline** (students, faculty, staff)?

- Yes
- No

Why or why not?

**SIAST Website** (prospective students, general public)

- Yes
- No

Why or why not?

### Content of the online course evaluation form

Do the items on the course evaluation form address the **most important aspects** of instruction?

- Yes
- No

If no, what's missing?

## Background information



Your program:

Online Course(s) that you are presently taking:

How many online courses have you completed?

The following optional information will only be used for a participation draw for \$50.00. It will not become a component of the survey.

Name

Address

Phone

**Thank You**

## APPENDIX K

### WEB-BASED ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION

The following screen capture images depict SIAST's 2005 Web-based course evaluation form (uses Perseus Web survey software), incorporated in all online courses.

## Course Evaluation

Instructor

Last Name

Course

Course Code (eg. phar160) & CRN (eg. 3990):

Midterm or Final evaluation

- Midterm
- Final

What type of computer connection do you have to the Internet?

- Dial up 56K
- High Speed (DSL or Cable Modem)

Before enrolling in this course, I was advised about: (check all that apply)

- Self-Motivation and commitment required to learn at a distance
- Minimum computer requirements
- Admission requirements
- Tuition and fees
- Books and supplies
- Proctoring requirements
- Student support services

Interaction/Communication

	Too Little	About Right	Too Much
Student-to-facilitator interaction/communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student-to-student interaction/communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time spent working with instructional materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time allowed for completion of assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adequate opportunity to practice knowledge/skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructor feedback on exercises and assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Course

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Course content is accurate (free of errors).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course content is free of cultural, racial & gender bias.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course content was related to learning outcomes/intents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about course outcomes was provided	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning activities were related to learning outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The learning activities enhanced my learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessments were related to learning outcomes/intents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessments were explained at the start of the course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

WebCT Experience

	Yes	No
Is this your first time using WebCT?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is this your first WebCT course at SIAST?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Would you recommend this course to a friend?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Would you take another online course?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Media

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The amount of information on each screen was appropriate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graphic images were useful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Audio clips were useful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video clips were useful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was easy to navigate through the course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The time to download data was acceptable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The hyperlinks worked well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Which features in WebCT were useful?

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	Never used it	I don't know what it is
Start Here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Glossary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Calendar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FAQ	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My Progress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My Grades	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compile Notes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Technical Information

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I received assistance from the Helpdesk when needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support services (i.e. counseling, etc.) were satisfactory.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Library services were satisfactory.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Orientation to WebCT is adequate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>


If Support or Library Services were unsatisfactory, please explain...

What did you like best about this online course?

What did you like least about this online course?

What could we do to make your online experience better?  
(access, assistance, support, orientation, content delivery, etc.)

The following **optional** information will only be used for participation draws.  
It is not a component of the survey. Your name and your responses will remain anonymous.

 Name

Address 1

Address 2

Phone

RSU2005

**Thank You**