

Student Engagement in Online Instruction in Sport Management

Frank Butts, University of West Georgia

Leigh Ann Bussell, University of West Georgia

**Professional preparation
Abstract 2013-198**

**Saturday, June 1, 2013
9:20 AM**

**Poster
(Ballroom)**

As more students trend toward online course work, universities are trying to keep up with the growing demand for internet based classes (Allen & Seaman, 2010) and evaluate the value of this delivery format. Student online enrollment increased 17 percent from 2009 to 2010 alone, while traditional student enrollment only increased 1.2 percent (Allen & Seaman, 2010). With initiation of the Massive Open Online Course initiative in 2012, it appears that the most prestigious universities are leading a new, international online instruction movement. Recent studies addressing online learning and online learner satisfaction have focused on several themes including student characteristics, student interaction, course design and instruction, student assessment, and technology. Going forward, new variables, such as engagement, merit study as we explode into online instruction. Student characteristics have been common factors examined in evaluating the online learner. For example, demographics have been examined extensively. In a recent study (Pontes, Hasit, Pontes, Lewis, & Siefiring, 2010), found that students who preferred enrolling in online classes were typically married or living with children in their household, had a mobility limiting disabilities, or were working in addition to their online learning. Other predictors for online interest included living distance from campus. Student interaction has been a focal point when investigating online learning and is tied closely to developing a sense of community in the class. Lao and Gonzales(2005) suggested development of a learning community as an important attribute to online learning. However, sense of community and connectedness are found to be a challenge to students in online learning (Song, Singleton, Hill, & Koh, 2004; Ritter, Polnick, Fink, & Oescher, 2010). Lapointe and Reisetter (2008) discovered mixed results as to the added value of learning communities. According to Banks and Faul (2007), there was no significant difference in knowledge gained in different instructional delivery modes. As evidence of the ambiguity, Ferguson and Tryjankowski (2009) found students enrolled in face-to-face classes scored better on assessments than students enrolled in online classes. Student knowledge and perception of technology can shape student satisfaction or success in online learning (Sahin & Shelley, 2008). Walker and Kelly (2007) found students considered technology glitches as a significant “pet peeve” in online learning. Recent studies of online instruction have tended to focus on the common themes of student satisfaction, characteristics, interactions, course design, instruction and assessment. A new variable gaining attention in the study of online instruction is student engagement, the focus of this study. Axelson and Flick (2011) defined engagement as a description of how involved or interested students appear to be in their learning and how connected they are to their classes, institutions and to each other. This particular study examined Sport Management students perception of engagement contrasting two distinct delivery methods, 100% online and face-to-face, traditional lecture.

The participants in this study were undergraduate Sport Management majors enrolled in a three-hour required class. One class was 100 percent online in the fall, 2012 and one was a traditional lecture in the fall, 2011. The instructor was the same for both classes. The online class involved only asynchronous instruction. All students had a minimum of a 2.5 grade point average. The subject university is a comprehensive, regional, public university accredited by both the SACS and NCATE. The online class (n=24) was comprised of 15 modules. The course was asynchronous in nature and students were expected to complete one module a week. The instructor used written, audio, and video announcement through the learning management system to communicate updates to the students. Students had the ability to call or email the instructor for assistance. The face to face class (n=26) consisted of 30 days of instruction, approximately 75 minutes per class, over one semester class. There were 15 modules in this delivery as well. Students had the ability to call or email the instructor for assistance in addition to the face to face class meeting interactions. To measure engagement among students in both groups and to determine if there was a significant difference in the student’s feeling of engagement when contrasting face-to-face versus online instruction in Sport Management, Dixson’s (2010) measure of Student Online Engagement was utilized. Dixson determined that the instrument had a 0.95 reliability coefficient. The data were collected using Survey Monkey. The data were analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis Test to determine if there was a significant difference in the perceived level of student engagement between the students in the two instructional delivery modes. Each of the 39 variables in the survey instrument was examined independently. Only one of the variables examined showed a significant difference

2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2013)

using the Mann-Whitney, non-parametric test for significance, alpha 0.05 level of confidence. The results of the study may influence the instructional delivery method in the Sport Management curriculum as the thought that traditional lecture classes generate a higher level of student engagement was not found to be accurate in this study.