COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE ONLINE PRE-COURSE ORIENTATION FOR
SUPPLEMENTAL ONLINE STUDENTS.

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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College of Education and Human Services Professions

By

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Abstract

This research study explores which components of a student pre-course orientation contributed most to the student’s successful completion of their online course, specifically focusing on high school supplemental online programs. An online survey was conducted of a sample group of students taking one or more online supplemental courses through the INFINITY Online program. Students were asked to rank the variables in terms of effectiveness to their overall success. Survey results indicated that the components offered in the online program’s pre-course orientation are effective in preparing supplemental students for success as they begin their online course experience.

Specific components such as expectations and traits of successful online students, communication, progress and program guidelines, and targeted dynamic learning activities were reported as most helpful unit overall.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Janie enrolled in Mandarin Chinese, Biotechnology, and Marine Biology during her senior year. While this in itself is not extraordinary, it was an opportunity that Janie would not have had five years ago. As a student enrolled in a school district with an entire K-12 population of 150 students, she was faced with few options. Her school district, struggling with declining enrollment and continued funding woes, could not offer a comprehensive array of courses. Then they made the decision to expand student opportunities through the use of online learning. Now, the door to the world has been opened for Janie, providing her with the same opportunities as students from all over the country.

Online learning is fairly new in K-12 and continues to experience explosive growth. The education market has seen the development of many new online experiences, created and hosted by an array of new online content providers. School districts continue to face increasing demand from students and parents to provide access to these expanded online opportunities. In the quest to meet this demand, school districts have looked carefully at how to best implement online programming.

In Minnesota, an open enrollment-school choice state, students have the opportunity to enroll in any school district or approved academic program. In the past, unless a student physically moved into another district, there was actually little choice in what school a student attended. With online learning this geographic barrier no longer exists. A student from northern Minnesota can now take classes offered by an online program in any other part of the state and vice versa. This has created a scenario of both challenge and opportunity for students and school districts alike.
From the student perspective, online learning may contain challenges as well as opportunities. On one hand, online courses provide the flexibility, variety, and alternatives that many students are in search of. On the other, online courses also come with time management, organization, and personal motivation expectations that may be challenging to students used to a more structured bricks and mortar environment. Herbert (2006) found that many students taking online courses experienced difficulty with personal time management skills and self-motivation ability.

From a school district perspective, balancing online educational opportunities for students along with the realities of funding a school district has always been a delicate balancing act. In Minnesota, when a student elects to take an online class, whether full or part time, funding provided by the state to educate the student flows to the online provider; thereby reducing the general education aid to the local school district. Many school district functions are fixed, such as buildings and transportation, and continue regardless of whether the school district loses aid when a student chooses to enroll in a full-time online program. These funding challenges, along with the school choice options available to students, have prodded many Minnesota school districts to contract with area online programs to provide supplemental online courses. A supplemental program is defined as a provider utilized by school districts to augment the education program provided by the eligible school district (Colorado Department of Education, 2008). By contracting with a supplemental provider, districts retained their full state funding, with a small tuition outlay to the supplemental provider, allowing districts to continue to offer the opportunities that students such as Janie are seeking.

The U.S. Department of Education report (2008) points out that the growth and expansion of K-12 online learning coupled with the lack of existing research make it imperative
that programs conduct evaluations of online learning to ensure that it improves student learning. Identifying key requirements and focusing on indicators of success can assist school districts in making informed decision as to the program that best fits the needs of their particular school district and students.

**Background**

To evaluate the effectiveness and value of online learning, studies have measured key variables such as learner performance, course completion, retention rate, and student satisfaction, along with course/program revenue and cost. One measurement, course completion rate, is often reported as significantly lower than that for traditional classrooms. There does not yet exist a common metric to measure or calculate completion rates (Barbour & Hawkins, 2009). In some programs, simply remaining in a course is considered successful completion regardless of final grade. Most programs, however, report successful completion as completing a course in a specified timeframe with a passing grade of 60% or higher.

Lynch (2001) reported student dropout rates of 35%-50% for online learners, while traditional instruction students had a dropout rate of 14%. Additional studies supported this finding; reporting higher course drop out and failure rates among distance learners (Carnevale, 2000; Carr, 2000; Scalese, 2001).

In an effort to increase student course completion rates, many programs and schools have taken a critical look at their online support services to reassess how best to improve student preparedness and readiness. Student support is defined as the assistance and guidance offered above and beyond the learning materials. (LaPadula, 2003).

One support service method implemented to improve completion rates by many online programs was the pre-course orientation. An online pre-course orientation may encompass
outlining course and instructor expectations, describing additional support services available, introducing effective online learning characteristics, and providing instruction on the technical aspects of the course. (Carnevale, 2000; Carr, 2000; Chyung, 2001).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine which components of a student pre-course orientation contributed most to the student's successful completion of their online course, specifically focusing on high school supplemental online programs.

**Research Questions**

Although there is considerable research outlining overall factors for successful course completion, there is relatively little identifying specific components of effective online student support services, much less within the high school supplemental student sector (Visser & Visser, 2000). This research study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. Do supplemental online students who complete an online pre-course orientation successfully complete their online course?
2. If the supplemental online student was successful, which specific components of the pre-course orientation were most helpful?

**Scope of the Study**

While there are many factors that must be assessed to determine the value and effectiveness of an online program, this study focused solely on student readiness and the online orientation. A systematic understanding of all factors must be considered prior to determining the true value and quality of an online program.
In conclusion, Chapter 1 identified a gap in the literature when studying the relationship between student success, as measured through successful completion rates, and student support services for high school online supplemental students. This study seeks to determine which pre-course orientation components contribute most to the student's successful completion of the online course; thereby identifying critical components to ensure their inclusion in a comprehensive support system. Chapter 2, the literature review, will provide additional insight into the relationship between online support systems, student needs, and the value and effectiveness of online learning.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Growth of Online Learning

Online enrollment has seen substantial growth over the last decade. The number of high school students taking an online course has increased 47% since 2005, and it is predicted that over 50% of all courses will be online by the year 2019 (Picciano & Seaman, 2008). A 2008 survey conducted by the Sloan Consortium reported that the number of K-12 students engaged in online courses in 2007-2008 increased 47% over 2005-2006. The fifth annual report on the state of online learning, Online Nation: Five Years of Growth in Online Learning (Allen & Seaman, 2007), found that 3.5 million students nationwide, from kindergarten through post-secondary, took at least one online course during 2006; an approximate 10 percent increase over 2005. The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL), focusing solely on K-12 students, reported an estimated 1.5 million students participating in online learning in 2010. On an individual school district level, Picciano and Seaman (2007) found that in 2005, 57.9% of K-12 school districts had at least one student who had taken an online course, a 20% increase from 2002. With this explosive growth, an estimated $300 million market has emerged, growing annually at a pace of about 30% (Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning 2009).

Researchers cite many different reasons for the existence and growth of online learning in K-12. Cavanaugh (2004) argues that online educational programs provide access to educational resources in underserved areas. Setzer and Lewis (2005) found that schools often provide online courses when that course is not offered in the traditional bricks and mortar classroom. In one study, over 50% of school districts surveyed stated that they offered online learning to provide students the opportunity to take Advanced Placement and college level courses (Setzer & Lewis,
2005). Schedule conflicts, course options and availability, and credit recovery are also commonly cited reasons for online learning programming (NCREL, 2004; Picciano & Seaman, 2007). While there are programming opportunities for middle and elementary school students, it is important to note that the majority of K-12 online students are high school level students (NCREL, 2004; Picciano & Seaman, 2007).

Online learning at the secondary school level is still fairly new. The first online high school, Concord Virtual High School, was established in 1996 (NCREL, 2002) and its first courses were offered in 1997. During that first year, Concord had 500 students take online courses. In 2000, Concord (now known as Virtual High School) had over 2,500 students taking online courses through their program. Florida Virtual School is another example of an early adopter. Florida Virtual School began its inaugural year in 1997 serving 77 students. In 2005, this online school offered over 80 courses serving 13,000 students (USDE, 2008).

In 2009, over 8,000 Minnesota students enrolled full time in online programs while 5,000 students enrolled in supplemental online programs. Online course enrollment, defined as each individual course a student is enrolled in, increased by 47% from 2008 to 2009 (Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning 2009, Minnesota).

To support this growth in enrollment, new and existing online programs continue to expand; with 39 states offering state sponsored online learning schools or programs (Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning, 2009). Although Minnesota does not offer a state sponsored online school, the Department of Education has certified twenty-four online providers in 2010 that are authorized to provide online courses, full time and supplemental, to Minnesota public school students.
Based upon this substantial increase, programs are now devoting more resources to the development of online learning. According to the Online Nation report (Allen & Seaman, 2007), 74% of post secondary institutions indicate online education as being critical to the long term strategy of their institutions. The National Center for Education Statistics (2002) reported that between 1995 and 1998 the number of institutions offering online courses tripled.

The expansion of online programming, and the resources required, will necessitate institutions to critically examine the effectiveness and efficiency of such programs (Chernish, Dooley, Lindner & Schott, 2003). Metrics to be measured should include enrollment, retention and attrition, completion rates, student evaluations, impact on student need, impact on teacher instruction, as well as program revenue and cost.

This literature review will focus on research conducted into the design of effective online student orientations and their influence on student retention and satisfaction.

Implication of Need

Early online orientations focused on an introduction to the technology (Volchock, 2002) and included very few support services (LaPadula, 2003). In many distance education programs, there was little support and coordination. In some cases, programs offered no online orientation whatsoever. Students taking online courses felt isolated, disengaged, and were not satisfied with the services they were receiving (LaPadula, 2003; McVay Lynch, 2001; Volchock, 2002). LaPadula (2003) reported that the lack of adequate student services for online students was discouraging and contributed to failure.

It stands to reason that online orientations need to provide the same information and opportunities to distance students as those attending classes in person. Many post secondary institutions, however, felt it was not feasible, nor effective, to provide the same services that
face-to-face students received, in an online format (Volchock, 2002). Yet, in a recent study conducted by McVay Lynch (2001) at the University of North Carolina, 89% of students that completed the comprehensive orientation course demonstrated a significant increase in their technology skills, 74% indicated an increase in their self-directed learning, and 95% demonstrated an ability to use web-based tools effectively. Most importantly, the attrition rate for online students was reduced to 15%.

There is much literature, however, establishing factors that play a part in the student’s overall successful online learning experience. Berge and Huang (2004) identified three categories of variables important to retention: personal variables, institutional variables, and circumstantial variables. Personal variables included such things as age, gender, academic ability, as well as individual motivation and commitment. Institutional variables included academic and bureaucratic variables, whereas circumstantial variables were the socio-economic variables encompassing social and life conditions. Soong, Hock, Boon, and Koah (2001) conducted a study that found that the critical success factors were instructor engagement, technical support, student readiness, learning style, communication and collaboration, and course or student management system. They commented that all of the success factors are intertwined and must be incorporated together for success. In a study conducted by Selim (2005), eight key factors affect the success of the online student. These factors included instructor attitude and technology expertise, student technology expertise, course structure and content, course platform, and student support services. Several other studies cite technology comfort level, experience with any prior online courses, along with academic and administrative support services to be crucial to student success (Volery & Lord, 2000; Muse, 2003). Rice (2006) identified variables that created successful learning environments and had a transformative effect
on the learner experience. She categorized the variables into learner characteristics, learner supports, and course/program structure.

A review of literature seems to indicate a connection between increased retention and orientation programs, thus supporting the need for institutions to offer a fully online, comprehensive orientation seminar (Volchock, 2002; LaPadula, 2003; McVay Lynch, 2001).

Goals of an Orientation Course

Common goals throughout many orientation seminars include enhancing enrollment and decreasing attrition. (Volchock, 2002; LaPadula, 2003; Scagnoli, 2001; McVay Lynch, 2001). Obviously, knowledge and use of technology must be considered a primary goal; however it is not enough to focus solely on technology (McVay Lynch, 2001).

The economics of retention and enrollment are important factors to any post secondary institution. However, LaPadula (2003) noted that it is just as important to provide a well-rounded program designed to meet individual needs. Orientations should cover a wide range of information including institutional history, services, and support, as well as academic expectations (Volchock, 2002). Condray (2007) stated that an orientation course should provide online students with the foundation with which to build on their knowledge.

Key Components

In response to the expansive goals set forth for online orientations, specific key components have been cited in literature. A familiarity with the technology was a commonly cited element. Another frequently mentioned component highlighted the importance of communication and interaction between and amongst teachers and students (Scagnoli, 2001; McVay Lynch, 2001; Knowles-Harrigan, 2003; Bozarth, Chapman, & LaMonica, 2004).
Achieving a sense of community connectedness has been shown to positively affect retention, completion, and student satisfaction (LaPadula, 2003).

In addition to technology and communication, time commitment and self-motivation skills were highlighted as key components. Herbert (2006) found that many students taking online courses found difficulty with personal time management skills and self-motivation ability. Bozarth, Chapman, & LaMonica, (2004) found that the success of online students was directly related to strong time management skills. Faculty surveys in the Knowles-Harrigan study (2003) indicated the need to incorporate time management skills, self-motivation techniques, and the ability to adhere to deadlines.

In keeping with the focus on specific learner traits, Lampner & Morosko (2007) developed an online seminar paying specific attention to student preparedness and an understanding of online learning expectations. McVay Lynch (2001) maintained that an orientation should also address varied learning styles.

Lastly, an online orientation course should mirror the format of the student’s academic course including time and location (LaPadula, 2003; Hutchinson & Jugdev, 2004). For example, if a student is taking their course online and can work on the course any day of the week and at any time of the day, then their orientation should also be conducted online and be available within those same time parameters.

Methods of Analysis

Methods used to determine need and potential effectiveness of the online orientations varied from study to study, however, one almost universally used method was student and teacher feedback (Knowles-Harrigan, 2003; Bozarth, Chapman, & LaMonica, 2004; Condray, 2007; Lampner & Morosko, 2007). Lampner & Morosko (2007) conducted student evaluations
focused on the individual student’s perception of their online readiness as well as monitored overall persistence reports on student retention. Volchock (2002) used profiles of successful online students to create learning style inventories and self-assessment pretests.

**Conclusion**

A review of the literature supports the need for an online orientation incorporating a variety of critical components. A comprehensive, well designed orientation should include, but not be limited to, technical support and training, time management and organization skill instruction, community building experiences and frequent communication. Not only can a quality online orientation impact student success, it can be a useful measurement to include when evaluating overall program effectiveness and efficiency.
CHAPTER THREE

Research Design

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to collect data to determine the pre-course online orientation variables significant in affecting student success. This data would assist the researcher in answering the following questions:

1. Do supplemental online students who complete an online pre-course orientation successfully complete their online course?

2. If the supplemental online student was successful, which specific components of the pre-course orientation were most helpful?

An online survey was conducted of a sample group of students taking one or more online supplemental courses through the INFINITY Online program. Students were asked to rank the variables in terms of effectiveness to their overall success.

Population and Sample

The target population encompassed students of Minnesota school districts, grades 9 - 12, taking a supplemental online course. The sample group consisted of students taking one or more supplemental course from INFINITY Online, a consortium of 45 school districts in northern and central Minnesota. To ensure a broad representation, the sample group included both male and female students from large and small rural school districts. A rural district was defined as: 1) districts that do not contain cities with populations of 50,000 or more, 2) districts that have city populations of less than 2,500 or more outside urbanized areas, and 3) districts with less than 100,000 total central county populations.
Instrument

Using an online survey service, Survey Monkey, students were asked to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section included questions regarding demographic information such as age, gender, school district, number of online courses taken in the past, and number of online courses currently taking. The second section identified each component currently offered through the INFINITY Online’s pre-course orientation and asked participants to rank each component on the survey. This cross-sectional survey used a continuous rating scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree, as to whether the particular component was helpful to the successful completion of their online class.

This survey was designed specifically for this research project. Prior to administering the survey to the respondent group, the initial survey instrument was tested for content validity, using several volunteer students. The pilot group provided feedback on improving the test questions for clarity of purpose. The survey instrument was then revised based upon this input. As this survey was administered online, it was consistently delivered to all survey respondents.

Data Collection and Analysis

This survey was conducted at the end of spring semester 2011. An invitation to participate was sent by email to the sample of students described earlier. The email included information about the study as well as the URL to the Survey Monkey survey.

The participants responded to the survey anonymously, and the data was stored in the hosted online survey service. Using the data analysis tools provided by the Survey Monkey
survey site student response to each component was summarized using frequencies and percentages.

Chapter 3 reviewed the survey design and data collection method. Chapter 4 will summarize the results of the data collected through the survey.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Survey Data Results

The online survey was conducted in April and May of 2011. As students in the survey sample completed their online course, they were invited to participate in an online survey. The survey was distributed to 300 students, with 71 students responding, a 23.7% response rate. As indicated in Table 1, of those that responded 77% were female and 23% were male.

Table 1
Student response by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>Overall response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In comparison, the INFINITY Online program’s student gender distribution was 66% female and 34% male in the 2010-2011 school year. As shown in Table 2, data from the Minnesota Department of Education’s website (2010) indicated that the gender demographic of public school students in all Minnesota school districts was 48% female and 52% male. The breakdown of male and female respondents in this survey more closely aligned to those of the INFINITY Online program demographics, which also has a higher female population, than to Minnesota school districts in general.
Table 2

Student demographics by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>% in Online Program</th>
<th>% in Minnesota School Districts</th>
<th>% in Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 3 shows that the highest response was from students attending small districts (76.1%) of less than 2,000 students. The next largest group of respondents, with 22.5% completing the survey, was students attending districts with a student body population between 2,000 and 5,000. One student respondent was from a district population of over 5,000 students.

Table 3

Student response by school district size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District Size</th>
<th># of survey respondents</th>
<th>% of survey respondents</th>
<th>% of students in Minnesota school districts</th>
<th>% of students in INFINITY program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smaller than 2,000</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 2,000 - 5,000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 5,000 - 10,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Minnesota, 29% of school districts have total enrollments less than 2,000 students and over 56% of districts have enrollments higher than 5,000 students. The majority of students who responded to the survey were from small enrollment districts. While the school district size demographic of survey respondents did not correspond to the overall state district size
demographic, it was closely aligned with the district size demographic as reported by the INFINITY Online program.

The average age of student respondents was 16.6 years of age, with the median age being 17 years. Student respondents ranged from 15 - 19 years of age.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th># of student respondents</th>
<th>% of student respondents</th>
<th>% of INFINITY Online students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the INFINITY Online program, 3% of students were 15 years age or younger, 28% were 16 years old, 52% were 17 years old, and 16% were 18 years or older. Survey respondents younger than 17 participated at a higher rate than the general age distribution of INFINITY Online students in that age group. Additionally, a higher proportion of students 18 and older participated, while students in the age 17 category responded at a lower rate.

Student respondents were pretty evenly split on their experience in taking online courses. 36 students indicated that this was their first experience in taking an online course, whereas 35 students had taken at least one online course before. In the INFINITY Online program over 50% of students are also returning students, having taken online classes previously. The percentage of
survey respondents having online experience is similar to that of the overall population of INFINITY Online students.

Table 5

*Student online experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Experience</th>
<th># of student respondents</th>
<th>% of student respondents</th>
<th>% of students in INFINITY Online program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First online course</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have taken online course(s) before</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student responses regarding the reasons for taking online courses varied. Table 7 shows that 28% of respondents indicated that the course they took online was not offered at their local school. A scheduling conflict was noted as the reason in 29.5% of respondents. 22.5% indicated they just wanted to take an online course, with an additional 14% choosing an alternative environment as their reason. Less than 1% of respondents chose credit recovery or advanced coursework as their reason for taking an online course. In the 2010-2011 school year INFINITY Online reported 40% of students taking a course for scheduling conflicts, 23% due to the course not being offered at their school, 25% looking for a different learning environment, and 12% for credit recovery. The sample respondent group was slightly higher in the percentage of students reporting their reason for taking a course due to schedule conflicts and much lower in those taking a course due to credit recovery.
Table 6

*Student reason for taking an online course*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for taking an online course</th>
<th># of survey respondents</th>
<th>% of survey respondents</th>
<th>% of students in INFINITY Online program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course not offered</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling conflict</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit recovery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative environment</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Online course more challenging or preparing me for college (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Just wanted to take an online course (16)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remainder of the survey focused on specific elements of the existing pre-course orientation currently in use by the INFINITY online consortium of schools. INFINITY’S pre-course orientation is divided into a series of units incorporating program information, course tools tutorials, plagiarism and web source tutorials, and specific course assignments interspersed throughout the orientation.
The first unit, called the Orientation Seminar, is designed to introduce students to not only the INFINITY Online program and its policies, but also to the expectations, challenges, and rewards of being an online student.

The Orientation Seminar begins with a Voicethread video/audio interactive. The Voicethread highlights a range of topics including a short overview of the INFINITY Online program, expectations of students when taking an online course, hardware and software requirements, communication and progress guidelines, as well as grading and reporting deadlines. Students are directed to read through a short article entitled “Is Online Learning For Me?” by the Illinois Online Institute and take a short self-assessment quiz, “Am I Ready For Online Learning” by the Illinois Online Network.

To complete the introductory unit, students were to watch a short tutorial on how to take a quiz online and take a short quiz assessing their understanding of the expectations of online learning. Additionally, by taking the online quiz in the orientation seminar, students had the
opportunity to familiarize themselves with the quiz feature prior to beginning their regular online course.

Figure 2. Unit 1 - Orientation seminar curriculum example

As part of the survey, students were asked whether the introductory voicethread interactive component of the Orientation Seminar was helpful.

Figure 3. Unit 1 - Introductory voicethread interactive

Slightly over 83% of students agreed that it was helpful or extremely helpful. 14% reported that it was only slightly helpful and 2% reported it was not helpful at all.
Table 7

Student response for introductory voicethread interactive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction to INFINITY</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>% of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voicethread</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Helpful</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Helpful</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Helpful At All</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students reporting that the introduction video was only slightly helpful or not helpful (16%) had the following comments:

- "The learning interface is set up intelligently, and because I have grown up with the internet and am very experienced in finding my way around websites, the video/audio was simply redundant and boring. I would make it optional."
- "I would keep the video, but for me it was not very helpful because I like to figure things out on my own and experiment with new programs."
- "I would suggest that you would shorten it due to the fact that most of the time I was just skimming and didn't really care what it was saying."
- "It was a little too long, in my opinion."
- "Have options instead of watching these videos if you know the information already."
- "It would help if you could scroll over something, lets say the "Dropbox", and in the scroll text it would tell you what it is."

When asked whether the “Is Online Learning Right For Me” article was helpful, over 91% found it either extremely helpful or helpful.
Table 8

Student response for Is Online Learning Right For Me? article

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is Online Learning Right For Me? Article</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>% of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Helpful</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Helpful</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Helpful At All</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students reporting that the article was only slightly helpful or not helpful (8%) had the following comments:

- “According to the answers I gave, I was perfect for online learning, but it turned out very difficult and I almost dropped the class. I do not believe that all you need to be a good online student is time management and being responsible for getting work in. It also depends upon what other classes you are taking and also needing to be tech savvy.”
- “I was taking the class regardless of what the article said.”
- “I would have taken my online class anyways, whether or not an article told me if I wasn't good. I'm just a good student and math (my online class) is my easiest subject.”

In surveying whether the online self-assessment titled, “Am I Ready for Online Learning” was helpful, 90% found it either extremely helpful or helpful.
Table 9

Student response for Am I Ready for Online Learning Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Am I Ready for Online Learning Self-Assessment</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>% of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Helpful</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Helpful</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Helpful At All</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students reporting that the self-assessment was only slightly helpful or not helpful (10%) had the following comments:

- “I just had a hard time with the quiz.”
- “I would say that it was completely unnecessary due to the fact either way if they said I was good or not I would have tried anyway.”
- “Same as my statement above, there is more needed than time management and being responsible.”

Throughout units two through six students were introduced to various tools, using a Voicethread video/audio interactive, within the Desire2Learn student management system utilized by INFINITY Online - Dropbox, Content, Locker, Discussions, Email, Calendar, Classlist, and Grades.
The event/calendar tool tutorial was found to be extremely helpful or helpful to 69% of respondents, however 22% found the tool tutorials only slightly helpful, and 8% found them not helpful at all.
Table 10

Student response for VoiceThread video Desire2Learn tutorials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VoiceThread Video/Audio Desire2Learn Tool Tutorials</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>% of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Helpful</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Helpful</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Helpful At All</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students reporting that they found the video tool tutorials slightly helpful or not helpful at all (31%) provided the following comments:

- “Everyone should be able to read, we don't need to hear it also. ”
- “If you are more hands on, this does not help at all. If you like to do things yourself the video doesn't help unless you need to know the answers to some of the quiz's questions. ”
- “The video and audio didn't work. Also, it's easier just to start the course and figure it out as you go. If a kid had any questions, then they can take the introduction to INFINITY. That would be better. It was very long and boring. ”
- “They explained things awkwardly. The way they presented it, they explained everything, not just the stuff you would use the most. ”

Unit 7 reviewed the topics of plagiarism and citing sources linking two short video interactive tutorials from Vaughan Library at Acadia University.
The interactive tutorials were reported to be helpful or extremely helpful to 79% of respondents.

Table 11

Student response for Plagiarism and Web tutorials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plagiarism and Citing Sources Tutorials</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>% of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Helpful</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Helpful</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Helpful At All</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students who found the tutorials only slightly helpful or not helpful at all (21%) provided the following comments:

- “Already knew it! ”
- “How many times have we heard this. Do we really need to hear it again? ”
- “I already knew everything that was covered. ”
- “I already knew the information it gave. ”
“I don't think you really need this because most kids learn about this stuff in regular school.”

“I knew most of it, maybe you don’t have to go such in depth. Just review.”

“I wasn’t taking a class that included research. I think the orientation should be class specific.”

“It was still kind of hard to still tell the difference between plagiarism and not. I don’t really have any ideas for changing this.”

“make this stuff quicker”

“Many of us already know what these things are, and to avoid them, but it was alright to refresh them, just time consuming. Maybe make it shorter. Have a quiz at the beginning about the subjects, then if you pass you don't have to do it.”

“Repetitious - we’ve had all this before and I know what to do.”

“ Took time to do something our english teachers already go over with us.”

As part of Unit 3, students were directed to complete a series of questions, using a word processor, and then upload the answers to the dropbox, saving their file as either an .rtf or .doc file.

Figure 7. Example of a dropbox folder where students upload an assignment.
Out of all survey respondents, 93% of the students found that this dropbox activity was helpful or extremely helpful. Additionally, 31% of students found this activity extremely helpful, the highest percentage of any activity in the orientation seminar. Only 7% indicated that this activity was only slightly helpful or not helpful at all.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dropbox Assignment</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>% of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Helpful</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Helpful</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Helpful At All</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student comments from this section included the following:

- “just saying ‘This is where you turn in assignments. You can upload files from your computer, from your Locker, or from a Shared Locker.’ done. that's it. no more needs to be said.”

- “The module was nice but I already knew how to use a dropbox and where to expect it to be located and all of that stuff.”

- “I liked this assignment.”

As part of Unit 4, students were directed to participate in an introductory discussion board assignment, which asked students to answer the following prompt: Please introduce yourself, include your name, school you attend and let us know a famous person you have met or one you would like to meet.
This discussion board assignment was helpful or extremely helpful for over 88% of student respondents. Students that reported the discussion board assignment as slightly helpful or not helpful at all provided comments such as:

- “could be more interesting questions than that”
- “This component doesn't do anything for me except feel bothersome. It is just a place where one has to post lots of truly meaningless words.”
- “More work to do.”

Table 13

Student response for discussion board assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Board Assignment</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>% of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Helpful</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Helpful</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Helpful At All</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the conclusion of the student orientation, students took a final quiz. Students could take this quiz as many times as possible.

Once the student achieved a score of 90% or higher, access to their regular online course was then activated. This quiz assignment was found helpful or extremely helpful for 88% of respondents.

Table 14

Student response for final quiz assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quiz Assignment</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>% of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Helpful</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Helpful</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Helpful At All</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9. Example of a final quiz question
Respondent comments from this portion of the survey included:

- “Good to try the quiz before you had to do it for real”

- “If you are not ready for online learning, then don’t waste your time.”

- “It helps you to understand further what an online class is like. If the student is unsatisfied with their choice in taking an online they do have two weeks to drop it and make another class decision.”

- “It turned out that I was not ready for online learning, so my quiz answers were wrong.”

- “Seemed redundant again”

- “stuff I already knew”

Students were asked to choose how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the following statement, “Completing the pre-course orientation prepared me to begin working in my regular online course.” Respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement 87% of the time. Only 12% disagreed with this statement and no students strongly disagreed.

Table 15

Student response for preparation question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>% of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were given the opportunity to share their thoughts regarding whether the course prepared them for the online course. Comments were as follows:
• “I don’t think that the pre-course stuff should have been graded- what if we had no idea as to how to do this, at first, and needed a helping hand at first by a teacher? ”

• “I was going good in the beginning but it never warned you for how hard online classes are.”

• “It didn't prep me for anything it just frustrated me. ”

• “It was so boring that i just turned it on but didn't listen, and then taught myself later. ”

• “Twas too long. ”

• “The orientation had a lot of good information, but it also had information that I didn’t ever use like the quizzes - my teacher didn’t use quizzes, she had us do projects instead and I used the dropbox for that.”

• “Don't make the orientation so long and boring. ”

• “I just think more class specificity because I am taking a math class and was given a lesson on the plagiarism of research?”

• “I really thought that if given the choice i wish that there was maybe like once a month or a at least once that the students and professors could have come together and met and maybe worked out problems. ”

• “I think if the orientation was more simplified (maybe with a longer version for those who want it), would help. ”

• “I think the orientation is very helpful in most cases, but after doing it several times, it can get old and tedious to the online-school kids that do it all the time. ”

• “Just give them the choice to do it. If they don't want to don't make them. If they are going to fail it's not your job to keep them in the class. ”
• “The orientation is fine just as it is”.

• “Make a written copy of all the segments of the videos so that if we need to review the information we can just reread instead of listen to the whole thing again.”

• “Really stress that students will need to be self-disciplined to keep up with the reading and assignments, and also that procrastinating is not a good idea.”

• “The orientation did help me be ready for when my class started.”

• “The student orientation was helpful but I mostly just got help from one of my friends that took online courses so she told me exactly what to do.”

As part of the survey, students were asked to report their final grade. Respondents who earned an A comprised 46.5%; respondents who earned a B comprised 35.2%; respondents who earned a C comprised 15.5%; respondents who earned a D comprised 1.4%; and respondents who earned a failing grade comprised 1.4%. INFINITY Online reports that 88% of students successfully completed their online course in 2011.

Table 16

*Student final grade*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Grade</th>
<th># of student respondents</th>
<th>% of student respondents</th>
<th>% of students in INFINITY Online program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>88% (A-D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Passing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ratings for the eight component categories (introduction video, quiz assignment, policies review, discussion board assignment, dropbox assignment, plagiarism interactive, expectations self-assessment, and successful traits article) were averaged to develop a comparison between perceived usefulness of orientation components and final grade.

Over 75% of respondents who earned an A reported that the components were helpful or extremely helpful. Students who earned a B found the components helpful or extremely helpful 72% of the time. Students who earned a C reported a 55% overall component usefulness rating. As only one student who earned a D and one student who earned a failing grade completed the survey, there was not enough statistical data in these two categories to draw any conclusions about the data.

The data suggests that students earning a better grade also report finding the components of the orientation most helpful in their preparation for success in their online course.

Table 17

*Student average component rating by final grade*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component rating</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Not Passing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4 presented a summary of the data collected from the student surveys. This data identified specific components offered in the INFINITY Online pre-course orientation that were helpful in preparing students for success as they began their online course experience. Chapter 5 will discuss and interpret the results and explore recommendations for further research.
Interpretation of Results

A study of the data presented above indicates the components offered in INFINITY Online’s pre-course orientation are effective in preparing supplemental students for success as they begin their online course experience. The majority of students agreed (86%) with the statement that completing the pre-course orientation assisted in their preparation in becoming an online student.

The introductory activities unit, which introduced students to the INFINITY Online program, expectations and traits of successful online students, communication and progress guidelines, as well as grading and reporting deadlines, was reported as the most helpful unit overall. Students, on average, rated the activities contained in the introductory unit as helpful or very helpful 88% of the time.

The individual tool tutorials, interspersed throughout Units 2 - 6, earned the lowest helpful rating at 69%. The assignment activities (dropbox, discussion, and quiz) woven into Units 2 - 6, however, scored much higher, averaging almost a 90% helpful rating. This would seem to indicate that students found it helpful to understand how to use the tools prior to beginning their regular online course, but preferred to use the activity to learn instead of listen/watch how to use the activity. A review of the anecdotal responses supported this assertion with one student noting, “It was so boring that i just turned it on but didn't listen, and then taught myself later”, and another sharing, “I think if the orientation was more simplified (maybe with a longer version for those who want it), would help.”
Potential areas for improvement within the student orientation course, based upon the data presented and student responses would be in the area of pre-unit assessments, increased hands-on activities, and clarifying objectives. Developing pre-unit assessments would allow students to move through the orientation at a faster pace if they already are familiar with the tool(s). Increased hands-on activities, which were the highest rated helpful components of the orientation, may alleviate students feeling the orientation was long and boring or too much reading. Clarifying the objectives of each unit would help to justify their inclusion in the orientation and perhaps weed out those portions that aren’t absolutely necessary to prepare a student for success in their online course.

**Limitations**

As the author of this study is the director for the INFINITY online program as well as a passionate advocate for online learning, objectivity could potentially be a limitation; however, the sample of students was selected as randomly as possible in order to help maintain the validity of the study’s findings.

Another potential limitation to this study was the small sample size as only 71 students actually completed the survey. Additionally, although the sample attempted to include an equal representation of male and female along with large and small local school districts, the students that actually completed surveys did not maintain this equal distribution.

Lastly, only 1% of students that did not pass their online class responded to the survey. As INFINITY Online reported that 12% of their student enrollments do not successfully pass their online course, the survey could have benefited from the feedback of more students that were not successful.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

As this study included data from students taking supplemental courses from only one online program, it would be interesting to see whether the components offered through other
online programs in Minnesota are similar and whether their students report similar results in
terms of preparedness and success in their online courses.

Another area for future research would be to compare the orientation components offered
to students enrolling in full or supplemental online programs as well as their respective success
rates.

Furthermore, analyzing specific reason groups (scheduling conflict, credit recovery, etc.)
may yield additional insights as to specific components that may be helpful to different types of
learners or learner needs.

**Conclusion**

This study sought to categorize the orientation components currently offered to
supplemental online students and determine which of these components contributed most to the
student's successful completion of the online course. The literature review identified, and data
collected and presented here supported, the need for an online orientation incorporating a variety
of critical components. A comprehensive, well-designed orientation should include information
about program expectations and guidelines, success indicators, technical support and training,
time management and organization skill instruction, community building experiences and
frequent communication. By incorporating these elements into a quality online pre-course
orientation, programs can have a positive impact on student readiness, preparedness, and success.
References


Appendix A: Invitation Letter to Students

Dear Student,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Education at the University of Minnesota - Duluth conducting a research study as part of the requirements for my Master’s in Education degree.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. I am studying the effective components of a pre-course orientation. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a short survey ranking the components of the orientation you completed prior to starting your online class through INFINITY Online. The information gained from this study will help the INFINITY Online program improve their orientation seminar. Additionally, the information regarding which components were most effective may be published for other online programs to also learn from. This is your opportunity to make a difference for future online students (and yourself if you decide to take future online courses)!

Participation is confidential and your identity will not be revealed to teachers or administrators at your school. Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to participate if you don’t want to. Participation or non-participation will not affect your grades in any way.

Please share this email with your parent or guardian and ask for their permission for you to participate. I would be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at 218-244-4428 or my faculty advisor, Dr. Hyman (218-726-8505), if you have any questions or problems. If you would like to participate, please follow the survey link http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NPPPHHS to complete. Surveys must be complete within the next two weeks, so please do not delay.

Sincerely,

Jo McClure

puddi001@d.umn.edu
Components of an Effective Online Pre-Course Orientation

1.

The information gained from this study will help the INFINITY Online program improve their orientation seminar. Additionally, the information regarding which components were most effective may be published for other online programs to also learn from.

The INFINITY Student Orientation course has been reopened for all students, so if you would like to refer back to any portion, please login to review.

Before you start the survey, the following consent statements will be presented. You must check your agreement to participate in the study:

1. I have read the information contained in the email invitation about the study, which describes what I will be asked to do if I decide to participate.
   - I agree

2. My parent/guardian has given me permission to participate. I have been told that the decision is up to me, and that I do not have to participate, even if my parent/guardian says that it is okay. I have been told that I can stop participating at any time I choose, and no one will be mad at me.
   - I agree

2. Demographic Information

1. Age:

2. Gender:
   - Female
   - Male

3. School District Size:
   - School District smaller than 1,000 students
   - School District between 1,000 and 2,000 students
   - School District between 2,000 and 5,000 students
   - School District between 5,000 and 10,000 students
   - School District larger than 10,000 students
   - Don’t know my school district size (indicate school district name and we will gather this info for you)
Components of an Effective Online Pre-Course Orientation

3. General Information

1. Reason for taking an online course:
   - The course I am taking was not offered at my school.
   - I had a scheduling conflict with classes at my school and taking an online class solved the issue.
   - I am taking an online class as an alternative to attending my school, either part or full time.
   - I just wanted to take an online course.
   - Other (please specify)

2. Check one:
   - I have taken an online course before.
   - This is my first online course.

3. If I have course-related questions about my online course, I will usually seek an answer from: (check all that apply)
   - INFINITY Online Teacher
   - Teacher At My School
   - Online Coordinator or Counselor At My School
   - INFINITY Online Help Desk Discussion Board
   - INFINITY Technical Support Toll-Free Number
   - INFINITY Program Office
   - Other (please specify)

4. Who would you check with first for course-related questions?

5. If I have a technical-related question about my online course, I will usually seek an answer from: (check all that apply)
   - INFINITY Online Teacher
   - Teacher At My School
   - Online Coordinator or Counselor At My School
   - INFINITY Online Help Desk Discussion Board
   - INFINITY Technical Support Toll-Free Number
   - INFINITY Program Office
   - Other (please specify)
### Components of an Effective Online Pre-Course Orientation

#### 4. Orientation Questions

1. Did you complete the student orientation...:
   - [ ] in one day
   - [ ] over a couple of days
   - [ ] over a couple of weeks

2. How long did the orientation take you to complete?
   - [ ] less than 1 hour
   - [ ] 1 – 2 hours
   - [ ] 2 – 3 hours
   - [ ] 3 – 4 hours
   - [ ] 4 – 5 hours
   - [ ] more than 5 hours

#### 5. Online Orientation Components

Rate whether each of the specific orientation components in the following list was helpful or not in preparing you for your regular online course.

1. Choice #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extremely Helpful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Slightly Helpful</th>
<th>Not Helpful At All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to INFINITY video/audio</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you chose "slightly helpful" or "not helpful at all" from the statement above, what would you change/add/remove from this component of the orientation course that would make this more helpful?

[Text Box]

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### COMPONENTS OF AN ONLINE PRE-COURSE ORIENTATION

#### 2. Choice #2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely Helpful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Slightly Helpful</th>
<th>Not Helpful At All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is Online Learning Right for Me Article</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you chose "slightly helpful" or "not helpful at all" from the statement above, what would you change/add/remove from this component of the orientation course that would make this more helpful?

#### 3. Choice #3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely Helpful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Slightly Helpful</th>
<th>Not Helpful At All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Am I Ready for Online Learning?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Quiz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you chose "slightly helpful" or "not helpful at all" from the statement above, what would you change/add/remove from this component of the orientation course that would make this more helpful?

#### 4. Choice #4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely Helpful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Slightly Helpful</th>
<th>Not Helpful At All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voicethread Video/Audio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorials introducing Desire2Learn tools (such as my home, my course home, content, dropbox, quizzes, classlist, email, discussions, or pager)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you chose "slightly helpful" or "not helpful at all" from the statement above, what would you change/add/remove from this component of the orientation course that would make this more helpful?

#### 5. Choice #5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely Helpful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Slightly Helpful</th>
<th>Not Helpful At All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism, Web Search, and Citing Sources tutorials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you chose "slightly helpful" or "not helpful at all" from the statement above, what would you change/add/remove from this component of the orientation course that would make this more helpful?
6. Choice #6:
Dropbox assignments
If you chose "slightly helpful" or "not helpful at all" from the statement above, what would you change/add/remove from this component of the orientation course that would make this more helpful?

7. Choice #7:
Discussion Board assignment
If you chose "slightly helpful" or "not helpful at all" from the statement above, what would you change/add/remove from this component of the orientation course that would make this more helpful?

8. Choice #8:
Review of INFINITY Policies – Attendance, Academic Integrity, and Acceptable Use
If you chose "slightly helpful" or "not helpful at all" from the statement above, what would you change/add/remove from this component of the orientation course that would make this more helpful?

9. Choice #9:
Final Quiz - Am I Ready for Online Learning?
If you chose "slightly helpful" or "not helpful at all" from the statement above, what would you change/add/remove from this component of the orientation course that would make this more helpful?
Components of an Effective Online Pre-Course Orientation

6. Final Questions

1. Statement #1:
   Completing the pre-course orientation prepared me to begin working in my regular online course.
   If you chose “disagree” or “strongly disagree” from the statement above, what was missing in the orientation course that would have helped you be more prepared?

2. Statement #2:
   My current grade in my online class is.

3. Anything else you would like to share that would help us improve the student orientation course to better prepare students for success in their online class?

Thank you for participating in the student orientation survey!