

RESEARCH BRIEF

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EVALUATION OF TELECOURSE INSTRUCTION

Are students who complete a credit course via telecourse prepared for the next course in the sequence taught on campus? As one method of answering the question, the grades of students enrolled in a telecourse were compared to the grades earned by the students in the subsequent course and to overall GPA. Grades of students enrolled during Fall 1989 in ENC 1101 and ECO 2013 were examined. These courses were selected because they are prerequisite courses for ENC 1102 and ECO 2023, respectively, which are taught only on campus.

Table 1 shows the grade distribution of students in ENC 1101, the number who enrolled in any course after the telecourse, and the grade distribution for those students who enrolled in the subsequent course (ENC 1102) compared to ENC 1101 grades earned. Table 2 shows the same information for ECO 2013.

TABLE 1
TELECOURSE GRADE COMPARISONS FOR ENC 1101

	A	B	C	D	F	W	I	X	Total
Student Grade Distribution in ENC 1101 by telecourse	12	31	19	5	0	64	3	1	135
Enrolled Any Course After Telecourse	11	24	12	4	0	41	3	1	96
Grades in ENC 1102 Based on Grades in ENC 1101									
A in ENC 1101		3				1			4
B in ENC 1101	5	1	1			1			8
C in ENC 1101	2	1	1			3			7
D in ENC 1101			1						1
Total by Grade in ENC 1102	7	5	3	0	0	5	0	0	20
Overall GPA	3.4	2.9	2.5	2.5	0	1.9	2.9	1.9	2.4

Of the 135 students who enrolled in ENC 1101, 64 (47%) withdrew from the class. Of the 67 students who passed ENC 1101 with an A, B, C, or D, 51 students (76%) enrolled in some other course after completing the telecourse. Only 20 students (30%), however, enrolled in ENC 1102 by the end of Fall 1990 and only 15 had completed ENC 1102. It is interesting that no student who received an A in ENC 1101 earned an A in ENC 1102, but five students who had received a B, and two students who had received a C, in ENC 1101 earned an A in ENC 1102.

TABLE 2
TELECOURSE GRADE COMPARISONS FOR ECO 2013

	A	B	C	D	F	W	I	X	Total
Student Grade Distribution in ECO 2013 by telecourse	7	19	17	9	5	31	1	2	91
Enrolled Any Course After Telecourse	6	16	14	7	5	24	1	2	75
Grades in ECO 2023 Based on Grades in ECO 2013									
A in ECO 2013	3								3
B in ECO 2013	1	6	3						10
C in ECO 2013		3	1	1					5
D in ECO 2013			1		1				2
Total by Grade in ECO 2023	4	9	5	1	1	0	0	0	20
Overall GPA	3.6	3.1	2.9	2.5	2.4	2.9	2.1	2.8	2.8

In ECO 2013, 31 of the 91 students who enrolled in Fall 1989 withdrew (34%). Of the 52 students who passed ECO 2013 with an A, B, C, or D, 43 students (83%) enrolled in some other course after completing the telecourse. Of the 20 students who enrolled in ECO 2023 by the end of Fall 1990, three who had earned an A in ECO 2013 and six who had earned a B in ECO 2013 earned the same grade in ECO 2023, one student who had earned a B in ECO 2013 earned an A in ECO 2023, and two of the five students who earned a C in ECO 2013 earned a B.

SURVEY OF FACULTY WHO TEACH A CAMPUS COURSE AND A TELECOURSE

A survey was administered to the seven faculty members who teach a course both on campus and through the telecourse program as a second method of determining whether students who complete telecourses were prepared for the next on-campus taught course.

- All seven of the faculty members felt the written skills demonstrated by telecourse students were equivalent to those demonstrated by campus students (1 superior to campus students, 6 about the same).
- Five of the seven felt the examinations given to telecourse students were about the same degree or more difficult than those given to campus students in the same course (1 more difficult, 2 slightly more difficult, 2 about the same).
- All seven felt the criteria used to award grades were on par or more rigorous than campus criteria (2 more rigorous, 5 on par), and all seven were somewhat or very comfortable and confident with the grades assigned to telecourse students (4 very, 3 somewhat).
- When asked if, in their opinion, telecourse students were as academically prepared after completing the class as students taking the same course on campus, two responded slightly better prepared, two responded just as prepared, and three responded slightly less prepared.
- The pattern of responses was similar when faculty were asked about the motivation of telecourse students to learn compared to campus students. Three felt telecourse students have a somewhat higher motivation, one felt there was no difference, and three felt telecourse students have somewhat less motivation.
- Three faculty members thought the program should be expanded while four thought it should remain the same.
- When asked about the amount of time they devoted to lesson preparation/student interaction, one responded that significantly more time was devoted to a telecourse compared to a campus class, two responded that the time was about equal, two responded that slightly less time was devoted, and two responded that significantly less time was devoted to a telecourse class.
- All seven felt the textbooks were up-to-date (4 very current, 3 generally), that the textbooks presented the basic concepts clearly and were easy to comprehend (2 all concepts, 5 most concepts), and adhered to the content of the telelesson (3 always, 4 usually). While all felt the textbook was adequate or excellent, five indicated it would not be their first choice. When asked about using the textbook in the campus classroom, five felt that, although it would not be their first choice, they would use the book with confidence. Six felt the study guide always (3) or usually (3) reinforces the telelesson.
- Six of the seven responded to questions about the telelessons. All felt the telelessons always (2) or usually (4) present basic concepts in a clear, concise manner. Four felt the telelessons always (2) or usually (2) provided examples that are relevant and assist student understanding, and five use the video portions of telelessons to some degree.

Although the sample was too small to produce tests of statistical significance, it appeared students who were enrolled in a prerequisite telecourse were prepared for the next course in the sequence taught on campus. Likewise, results of the faculty survey indicated that faculty who teach both on-campus courses and telecourses believe there is no significant difference between the two modes of instruction in terms of writing skills, degree of test difficulty, grading criteria, academic preparedness after the course, and student motivation.