



E-learning Not Yet Leading to Improvements in Quality, Satisfaction

September 8, 2011, Toronto – Students learn more in classes without online components than in those that feature e-learning, the first major study of e-learning in Canada reveals.

Only 18% of students in classes with advanced e-learning components, such as video streams of lectures, reported learning more in those classes than in others. By comparison, 27% of students in courses with minimal levels of online resources, such as online course notes and grades, reported learning more than in other classes. Moreover, students reported higher levels of satisfaction in classes with no e-resources.

“E-learning resources do not appear to offer the quality or productivity gains that are expected of them, at least not yet,” said Alex Usher, President of Higher Education Strategy Associates and report co-author. “Universities simply may not have found the right technology to enhance the in-class experience.”

Somewhat paradoxically, students report a desire for more e-resources, particularly with regard to course materials such as handouts, lecture notes, readings and recordings of classes. They were less keen to see live, in-person classes replaced by online streams or discussion forums. Only 18% of students said they preferred electronic texts to hard copies of course materials.

“Students currently see e-learning resources as a way of supplementing their time in class, especially if they allow them to catch up on missed lectures,” said report co-author and HESA Research Associate Jason Rogers. “This is not quite the portrait of the so-called ‘digital natives’ the technophiles have led us to expect.”

The survey was conducted among the 1,289 members of the CanEd Student Research Panel in April 2011. The report, *The State of E-Learning in Canadian Universities, 2011: If Students Are Digital Natives, Why Don't They Like E-Learning?*, is available online at www.higheredstrategy.com.

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