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TEACHING & LEARNING

Further Assessment of Online Learning: Perceptions of Business Students

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With the declining demographics of traditional college-age students, colleges and universities have continued to expand their education outreach to adults of all ages, and to extend their online teaching modalities to better serve these non-traditional students. Concomitant with the increased focus on online education is the expanded emphasis on higher education assessment measures—what are we teaching, how is it being received, does it meet the needs of our students and/or the needs of our management communities? Given the overwhelming number of potentially confounding variables, developing rich responses to these questions has been difficult.

Toward that goal, the Teaching & Learning section presents “Business Student Perceptions of Online Learning: Using Focus Groups for Richer Understanding of Student Perspectives,” by Justin D. Cochran, Hope M. Baker, Debbie Benson, and Wes Rhea. While recognizing the limitations of an admittedly small sample, the authors nevertheless demonstrate the richness of the qualitative focus-

group method by discerning several patterns in their student responses. These themes include the conveniences of learning in online courses, the need for consistency in course design across an online program, better use of certain time management tools, the importance of faculty presence, and students’ perceptions of certain activities as “busy work.” The authors noted that these themes pertained to the online program courses being assessed while also raising some new areas for discussion and review.

The Teaching & Learning editors encourage submissions such as this article that seek to improve our understanding of the multiple methods of development, delivery, and assessment of teaching and learning platforms and modalities. Both quantitative and qualitative research can provide markers for subsequent application and research, and we strongly encourage all submissions that can help further improve teaching and learning outcomes in higher education.