

Faculty Survey on Instructional Technology 2001: Methodology and Preliminary Findings

*Nana Lowell and Debbie E. McGhee
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INTRODUCTION

Computing and communications technologies are becoming increasingly central to our everyday lives and particularly to the way we at the University of Washington (UW) carry out our educational mission. A variety of programs and initiatives have been created to assist teaching faculty at the University who wish to incorporate technology in their teaching, but little has been known about how such technologies are actually being used. To provide preliminary information in this area, a survey of UW faculty was carried out in winter 2001. The survey was sponsored by the Provost's Office, the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council on Educational Technology. It was underwritten by the Program for Educational Transformation Through Technology (PETTT) and carried out by the Office of Educational Assessment (OEA). This report describes the survey methodology and provides a limited set of preliminary findings. Additional analyses will be carried out to support decision-making at various levels throughout the University.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

In order to obtain comprehensive information on the current use of technology in instruction at the UW, all individuals (faculty, teaching assistants and others) were included who were listed as instructor of record for at least one class during winter, spring or autumn quarter in 2000. A total of 6,495 names were selected. Of these, 410 were removed due to a lack of contact information (either campus address or email), and another 300 were reserved for a separate study. Four faculty were added to the sample who hadn't been included originally. The total number surveyed was 5,789.

Instrument

The survey was developed after extensive consultations with various interested groups, in particular the Faculty Council on Educational Technology (FCET), the Arts and Sciences Deans office and the learning sciences research staff of PETTT. Although the survey included a few questions about demographics, it focused primarily on how faculty were currently using technology in the classroom, what they would like to use but couldn't, and what kind of additional support they needed. Most questions were in closed format (such as multiple-choice or rating scale), but a set of open-ended questions asked what the University could do to improve products and services, and about the relationship between students' technical skills and their overall education. In addition, participants were asked whether they would be interested or willing to participate in future focus groups to examine more closely some of the issues identified.

The questionnaire was prepared in both hardcopy (six-page, back-to-back booklet) and online formats.

[Hardcopy survey](#)

[Online survey](#)

Procedures

It was anticipated that the response rate to the survey would be fairly low given the length of the questionnaire and the workload of instructional faculty. A variety of strategies and methods were used to encourage response. Early winter quarter was selected as the time in which instructors might have most time available to respond. In the second week of January, the UW staff newspaper published an article by the FCET chair emphasizing the importance of faculty participation in a discussion of instructional uses of technology. At the same time, the first of several emails was sent to participants, providing the web address of the online version of the questionnaire. This was followed one week later by a mailing of the hardcopy version, a second email after ten days, and a second hardcopy mailing. Participants were provided with a four-digit 'alias' with which to identify themselves if they wished to participate in future focus groups on the use of technology to support teaching and learning, and respondents to the online version of the survey were required to login with their UW username. In order to maintain anonymity of response, identification numbers were not retained with the key-entered or online data. The specific timeline is outlined in Table 1. Each mailing was sent only to those participants who had not as yet responded.

Table 1. Survey timeline

Date	Item		Number sent ¹
January 11	University Week article (see "Faculty Senate")		
January 11	First email	Text	3,780
January 19	First mailing	Cover letter Participant ID form	5,588
February 1	Second email	Text	2,908
February 14	Second mailing	Cover letter	3,898

¹ Note that email addresses were not necessarily available for all participants for whom we had campus addresses, and vice versa, resulting in the varied numbers for the several mailings.

Response Rate

A total of 1,879 instructors returned completed questionnaires. This constituted an overall return rate of 35.8% based on a reduced sample size of 5,246. (Participants were removed from the sample if their addresses were unusable, or if they were no longer employed at the UW, were on-leave, or were

deceased.) Although both hardcopy and online versions were equally available, instructors were twice as likely to respond on paper (68%) as online (32%).

Table 2. Number of respondents by academic status

Status	Frequency	Percent
Full Professor	546	29.3
Assoc Professor	341	18.3
Assist Professor	235	12.6
Instructor	63	3.4
Lecturer	228	12.3
TA	310	16.7
Other	138	7.4
Total	1861	100.0

RESULTS

A preliminary view of the survey results is provided by the overall frequencies of response to each of the closed items.

Overall Response Frequencies

Arts & Sciences	Arts & Sciences - Arts	Arts & Sciences - Humanities	Arts & Sciences - Natural Sciences	Arts & Sciences - Social Sciences
Architecture	Business	Dentistry	Education	Engineering
Forest Resources	Information School	Law	Medicine	Nursing
Ocean & Fishery	Pharmacy	Public Affairs	Public Health	Social Work
Tacoma	UW Libraries			