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Rethinking the Way We Teach: A Look at Online Classes

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The purpose of this research project was to find out if creating online classes for existing standing classes is useful for patrons. The goal was to determine:

- Who is using the classes?
- What are their perceived needs?
- What can be done to improve their experiences?

An online survey was used to capture data for this research study. In order to maximize responses the survey was:

- placed directly on the online class pages (December 9, 2010)
- sent out via monthly emails to faculty (January 14, 2011)

In addition, statistics were gathered using Google Analytics.

Although it is unclear who is accessing the online classes, the statistics show that they are getting used. Anecdotal evidence from chatting with face to face drop in class participants showed interest in having materials available after class. Patrons have been referred to the online classes to assist in answering email reference questions, during consultations, and during other face to face classes. The benefits of online classes as alternatives or supplements to face-to-face instruction create blended learning opportunities, making them worth creating in the future.