

Promoting Student Interaction in a Fully Online Program: Toward New Rules of Classroom Engagement

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EDLE Online Program

A fully online Master of Educational Administration (M.Ed.) program – Educational Leadership Program

- + Goal: To prepare students to become school and district leaders and administrators
- + Approach: Promote student interaction
- + Special Highlights:
 - multimedia technology integration
 - group activities and assignments
 - collaborate team project

College of EDUCATION  HUMAN DEVELOPMENT 



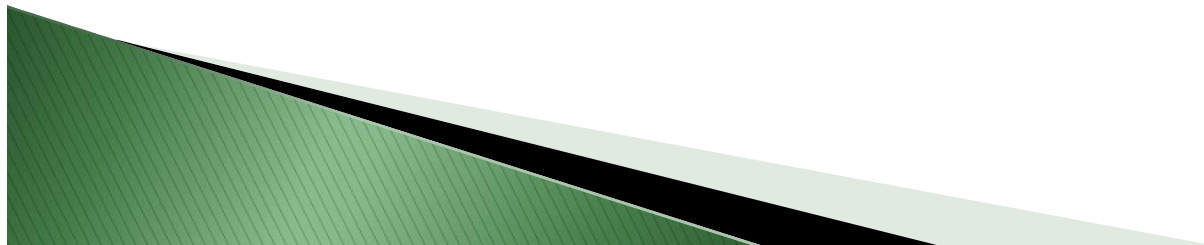
Promoting Learning  Development Across the Lifespan

Student Engagement

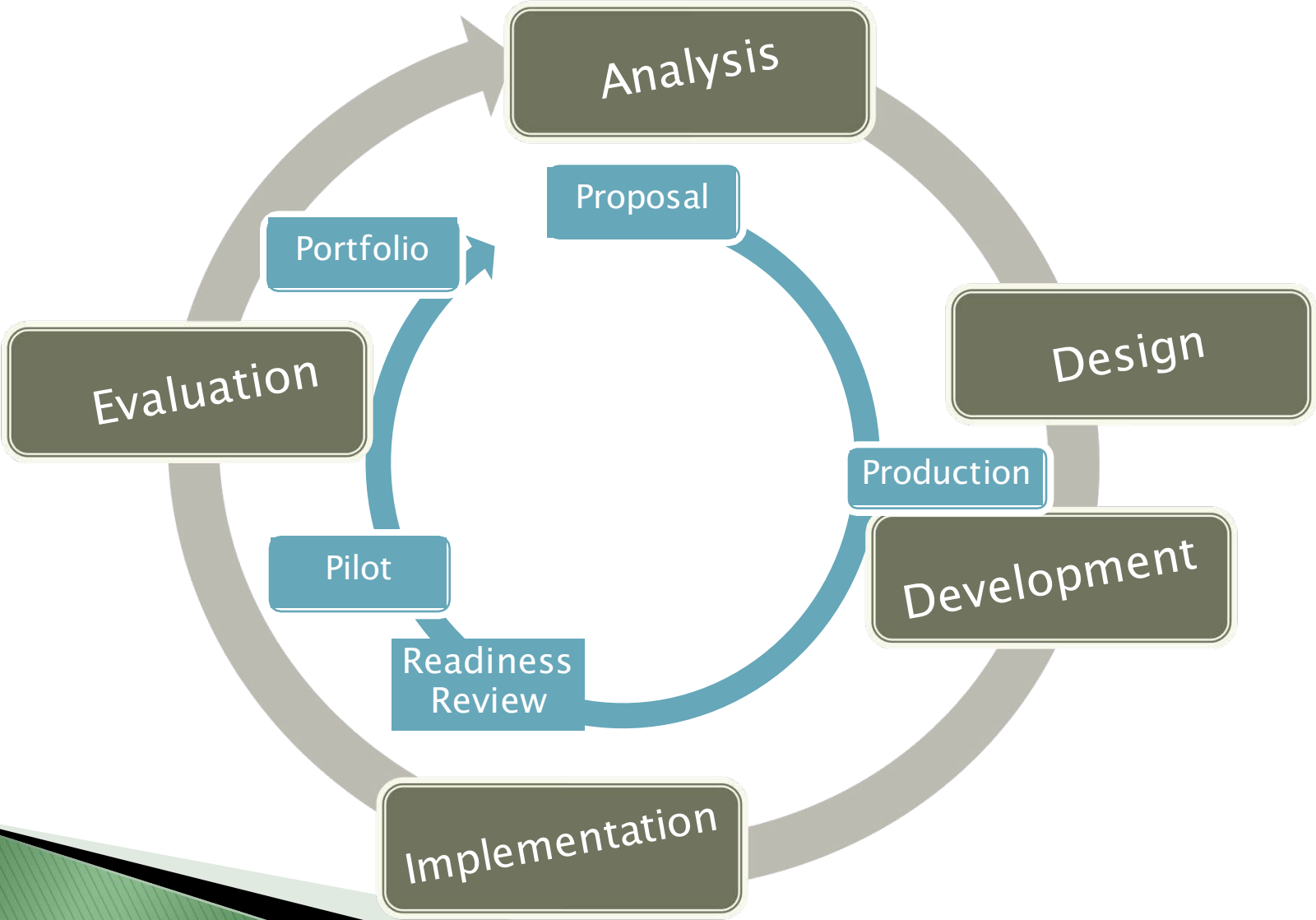
Expectation:

Aspiring and practicing educational leaders can participate in, facilitate, and initiate collaborative learning and school improvement teams.

- Introductory video
- Small group discussion
- Team collaboration
- Class discussion



Instructional Design Cycle at GMU



Student Feedback on Interactions

Midterm (N= 19)

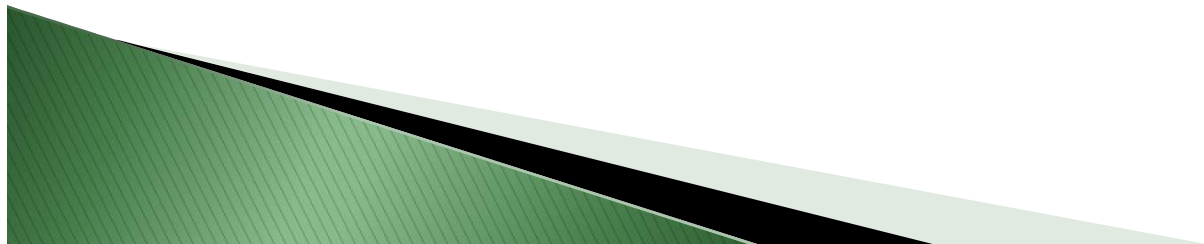
- + **Group Work** (group paper, case study)
 - Difficult, hard, frustrating, not flexible, procrastination (n = 9)
 - Enjoyed, great (n = 3)
- + **Interactions** (discussions, community)
 - Enjoyed, pleasant (n = 3)
 - Surprising “face time” (n = 1)
- + **Instructor Presence**

Course Evaluation (N= 14)

- + **Learning satisfaction:**
Mean= 4.93/6, S.D. = 1.0
- + **Course design**
 - *Top five helpful items:*
 - Content Resources
 - Assignments
 - Videos
 - Discussions
 - Instructor Support
 - *Least helpful item:* Group work

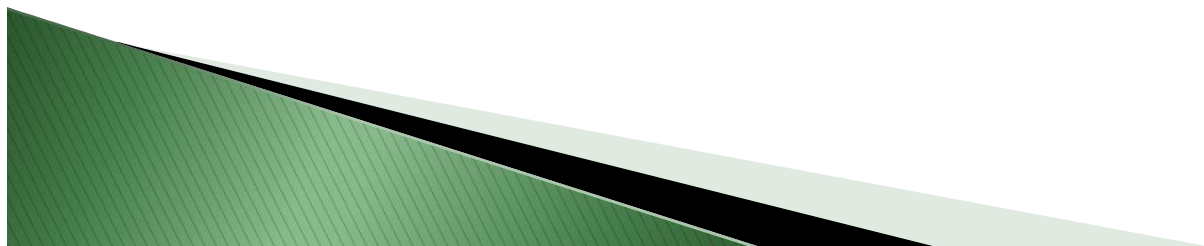
Lessons Learned

- + Students like to work together, but
 - They need more time
 - Outcome can be impeded by group members
- + Student concerns around graded group assignments
 - One group grade vs. individual grade
 - Peer review
- + Need opportunities to modeling leadership and collaboration



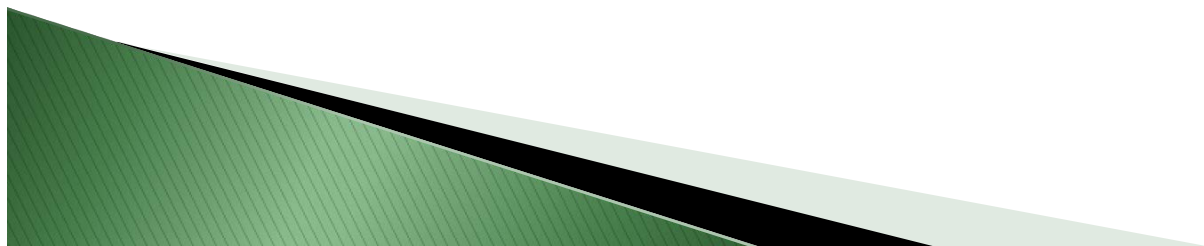
Changes for Fall 2015

- + Time: Give more time for group activities
- + Group work:
 - Individual work + group collaboration
 - Work with different people
- + Instructions: Provide clear/precise instructions
 - Naming of the groups
 - Expectations of Individual task and group effort
- + Evaluation and assessment: Explain expectations with clear rubric



So far...

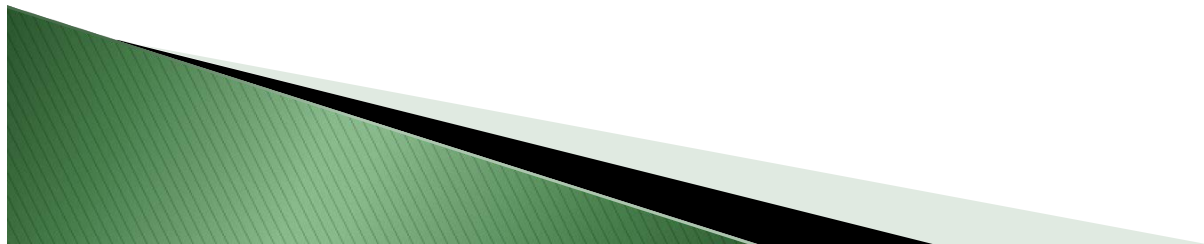
- + Students agreeing with one another
 - How do we increase quality interactions
- + Provide weekly announcements to clarify instructions and increase interaction
- + Plan for using Bb Collaborate in the future
- + Benefits of robust course orientation



Questions?

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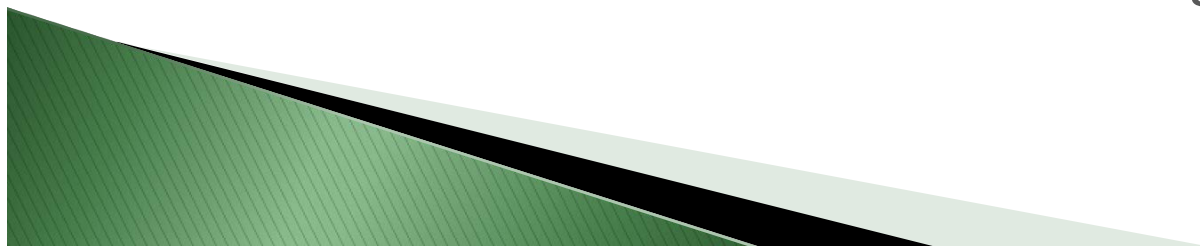
Article Review Group Activity

Fall 2014

- + Five articles to study: Each group is responsible for one article presentation
- + Each group posts one presentation
- + Whole class discussed five articles

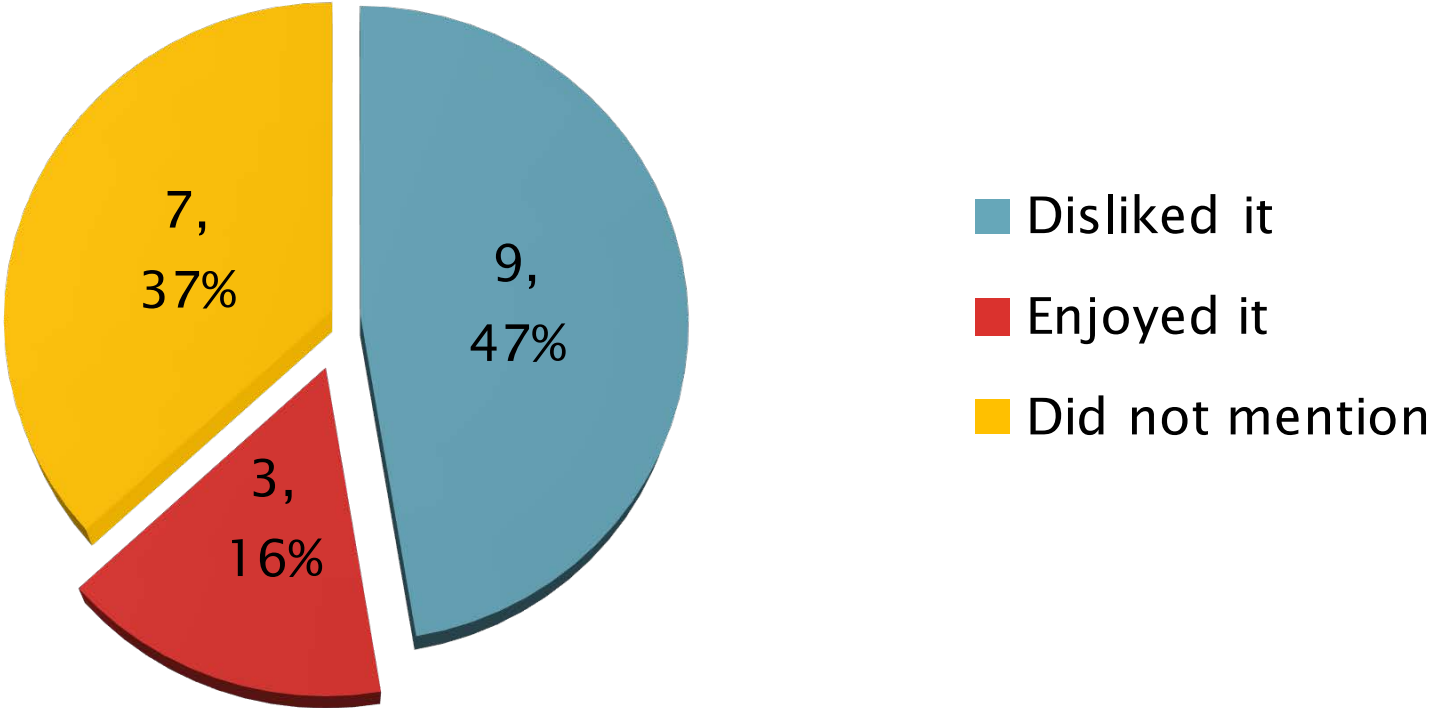
Fall 2015

- + Each group discuss the total of five articles
- + Each group member is responsible for one article
- + Each small group discuss five articles
- + Each group posts one comparison summary
- + Whole class discuss five group comparison posts



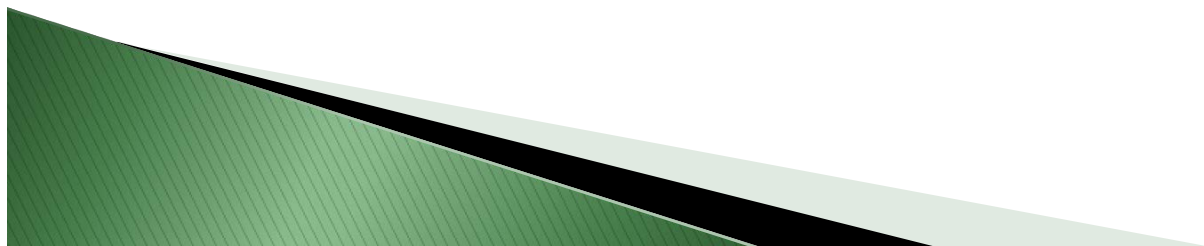
Data from Fall 2014:

Group Activity



What did students say?

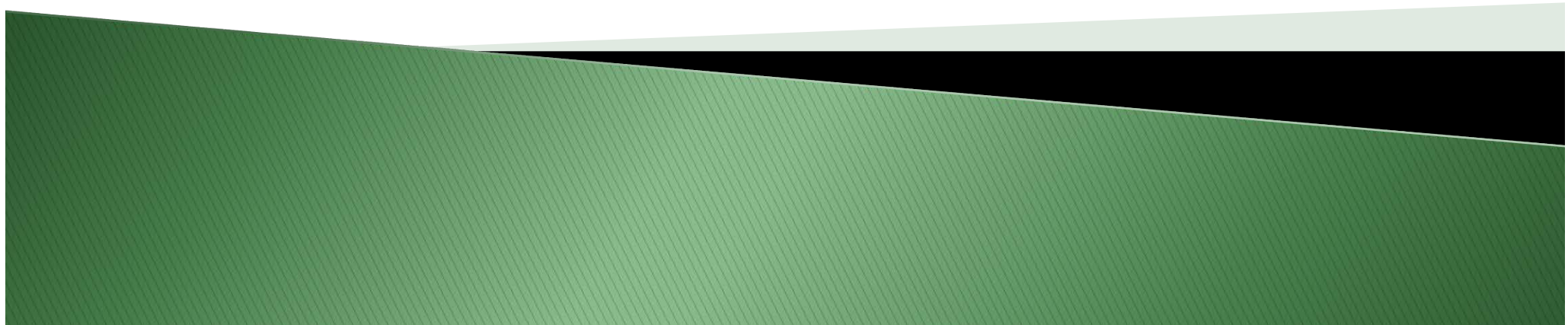
- + The group paper we just did was so hard to come together to hash out a plan that fits everyone wants,...
- + The assignments that required group work have been challenging, particularly the case-study paper. I absolutely see the benefit of collaborating with classmates, but in terms of writing an actual paper it was difficult to blend our voices into one cohesive writing, even though we agreed on what we wanted to communicate.
- + ... To write a paper with a partner is logical. To write a paper with 4 people is a nightmare.



EDLE 620

Mid-Course Evaluation

Dr. Sonya Horsford
Fall 2014



19 responses with numbers

(using 8-point Likert Scale)

Question:	Mean	S.D.
1. I am learning a great deal in this course.	6.74	0.93
2. Course materials and learning activities are effective in helping me learn.	6.61	1.54
3. This course is helping me develop intellectual skills (such as critical thinking, analytical reasoning, integration of knowledge)	6.47	1.61
4. The instructor shows genuine interest in students and their learning.	7.32	0.75

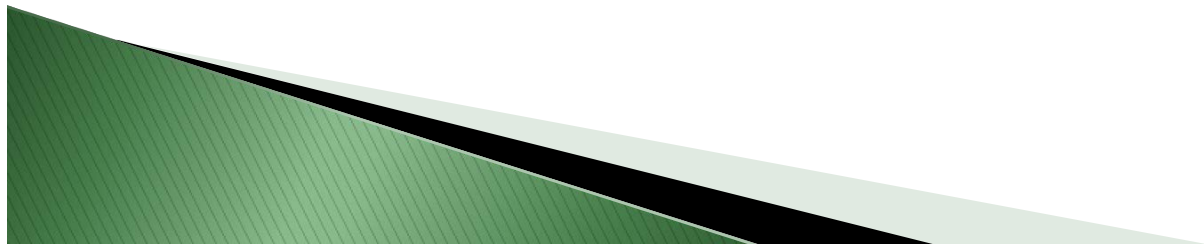
Topics Highlighted

+ Group Work (group paper, case study)

- Difficult, hard, frustrating, not flexible, procrastination (n = 9)
- Enjoyed, great (n = 3)

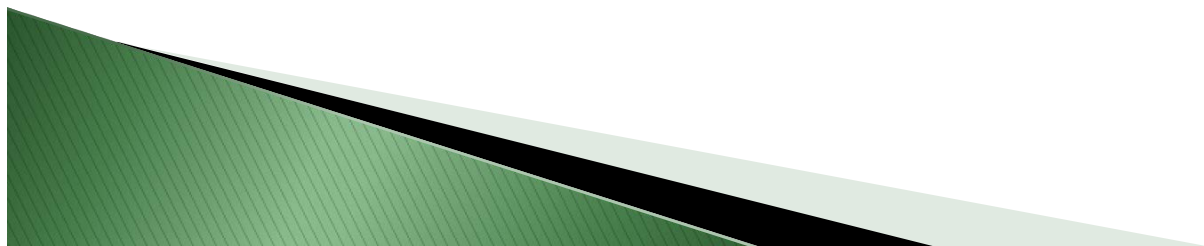
+ Content resources (textbook, readings, videos)

- Well-chosen, expand my frame, learned a lot (n = 9)
- Very repetitive (with the textbook) (n= 1)
- Work load (ranged from 2 – 10+ hours per week)
- Appropriate, reasonable , money worth (n=4)



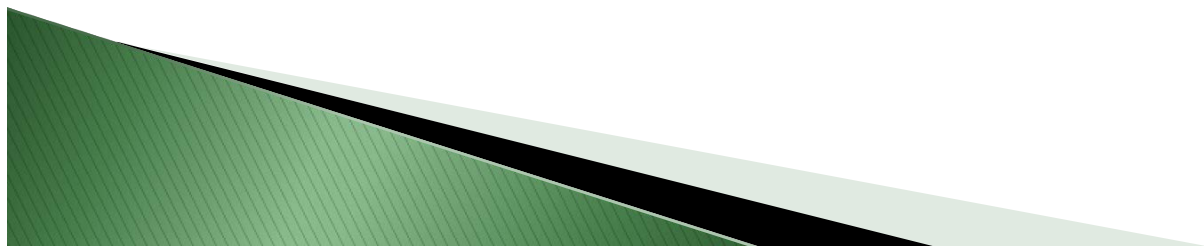
Topics Highlighted (Continued)

- + Interactions (discussions, community)
 - Enjoyed, pleasant (n = 3)
 - Surprising “face time” (n = 1)
- + Technology & Navigation(Bb, course structure)
 - Slow on discussion board (n = 1)
 - Successful, helpful, flexible (n= 2)
 - Difficult to find assignments (n = 2)
 - Consistency of the class (schedule) (n=1)



Suggestions

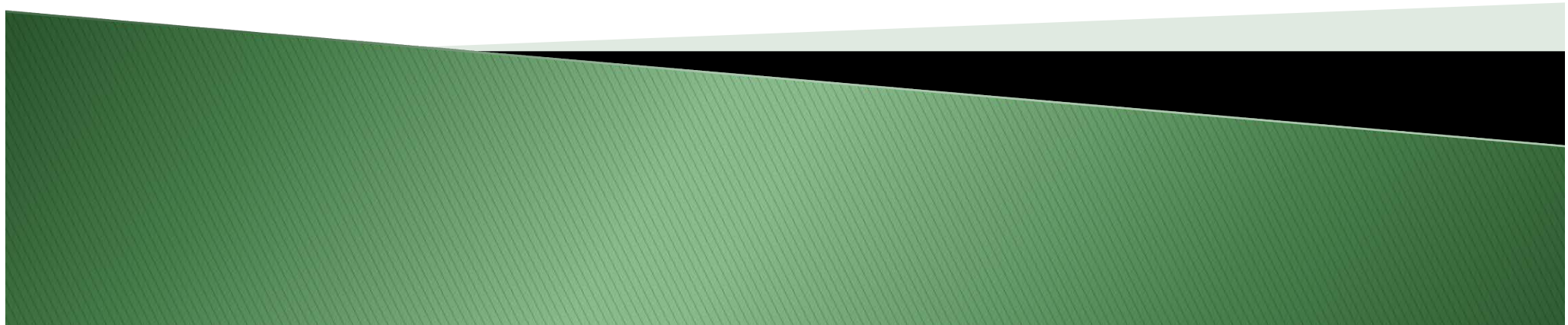
- + More examples of student work(n =1)
- + More specific idea of what is being assessed, apart from a rubric (n=1)
- + Making the connection to what would happen in the school (n=1)
- + Having at least two weeks for group activities (n=1)
- + Two or three week frames rather than week by week (n=1)
- + No changes (n = 3)



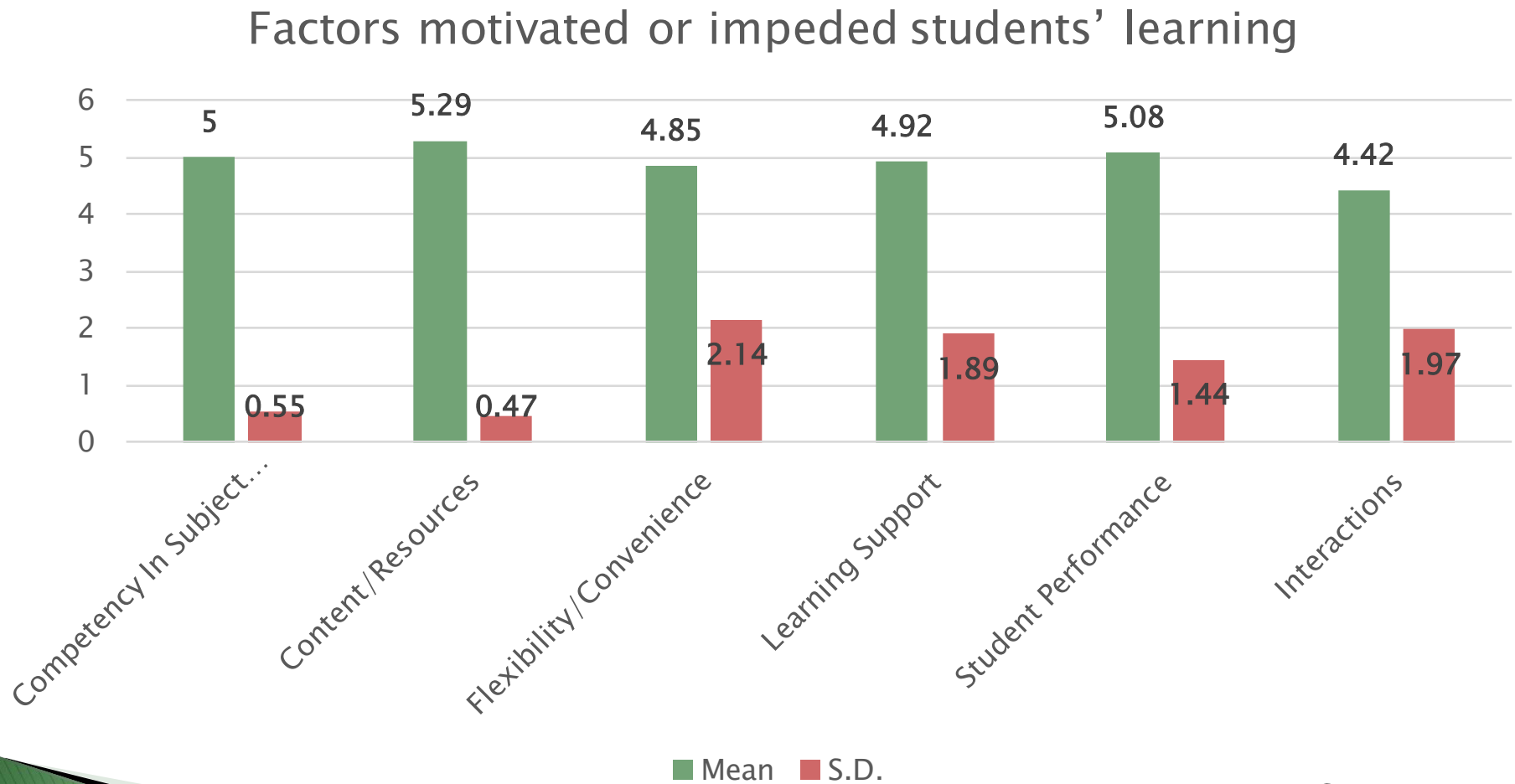
EDLE 620

End-of-Course Evaluation

Dr. Sonya Horsford
Fall 2014



Student Perspectives on Learning*



* At end of semester

Student Comments

- + I enjoy the online learning community. I like group work and getting to know the other students on our own time and schedules.
- + I found this class to be very different than what I expected. It was not simply writing and reading assignments that were released by chapter. The activities forced me to really think and assess things and then apply them to real life. My only problem was in the group work. Individuals in my group were in different countries, and coordinating collaboration was more than challenging.



Student Comments (continued)

- + I have had a positive experience. I am allowed to collaborate with group members when necessary. Blackboard is very easy to navigate. I love the announcements/update column because it serves as a great reminder for me. I have no complaints.
- + The group work slightly impeded my study and affected my learning outcomes because of the absence of uniformed effort put forth by all group mates. Unfortunately in addition to impeding my learning outcomes, it also caused me to form professional opinions about group members, as well.

