

DISTRIBUTED LEARNING  
2010 SURVEY—  
DL Working Conditions

# Demographics of Survey

- Conducted in February 2010
- 147 responses
- 60% female; 40% male respondents
- 61% have taught 15 years or more
- 53% have taught in DL less than 5 years
- 13% have taught in DL for 10 years or more

# Satisfaction from teaching in DL

What aspect of online teaching produces the greatest satisfaction?

1. working with students on an individual basis
2. course and resource development

# Most important current issue

1. workload
2. number of students
3. equity among DL teachers
4. equity between DL teachers and teachers in face-to-face programs
5. class composition
6. amount of marking

# Sources of dissatisfaction

1. A significant problem is the paperwork that must be done for the compliance audits. The audit criteria for DL take up 13 pages.
2. Negative perceptions of DL teachers held by others.
3. The competition between districts to attract students has created an environment that discourages co-operation of teachers across programs.

# Course completion rates

?

# Reasons for not completing courses

- low expectations of the amount of work required
- not having the reading or the technology skills necessary
- internet distractions
- no pre-course assessment of skill or motivation

# Qualities of successful DL students

- self-motivated
- support at home
- good reader
- comfortable with computer technology
- the student really needs the course and has no other options



# How to increase course completion rates?

- Professional Development in the pedagogy of teaching online
- online courses that are more interactive
- students understand what is required for success

# Student Shopping around

Shopping around among DL programs does exist, according to 67.6% of respondents.

Number of DL students (public and independent)

2005/06	13,208
2008/09	34,047
2009/10	44,042

# Quantifying DL teacher workload (1)

- Objective: equity among DL teachers
- create a catalogue of the aspects of DL teaching that have an impact on the workload of DL teachers
- create a process to describe equity, using a rubric to assist
- devise a process of external review

# Factors for comparison

- Student numbers and composition
- Courses—number taught, development requirements, access to existing resources
- Pedagogy—constructivist or online text, one to one or group, any f2f
- Teacher background—curricular and tech
- Control of expectations—relative to 24/7
- Supports and resources
- Accountability demands

## Quantifying DL Teacher Workload (2)

- Objective: equity of workload between DL and face-to-face teachers
- Define “active student”
- Identify comparable face-to-face numbers of students (210 secondary; 30 elementary?)

# Work environment and Health and safety

Most have workspace at a district facility

13% have enclosed workspace

66% said workspace not adequate for privacy

Some reported working at home part of week

32% thought workspace is not adequate ergonomically

Teacher-identified health problems include:

- carpal tunnel
- sciatica
- leg and back pain
- pain in the wrist and forearm

# Hours of work and work year

- 56% of respondents said their school offers courses on a year-round basis
- Variety of practices on staffing for year-round
- Hours of work—some by contract, others by agreement
- 24/7 expectations from online environment
- Some Memorandum of Understanding to address issues like holidays
- Issues of TTOCs to cover

# Copyright issues

“Have you found that copyright provisions are a problem in using online resources?”

– 43.3% said “Yes.”

Ownership and compensation for course development is an issue

Practices vary from district to district



## DL funding

“Are you informed about the amount of funding the district receives for DL programs?”

- Per-student funding for each DL student for 2010-11 has been frozen at the 2009-10 amount, while funding for students in face-to-face programs has been increased by about \$1,000 for 2010-11.
- DL is being used by the government to reduce funding.

## DL funding—Basic allocation

- For each eligible school-age full-time-equivalent (FTE) student enrolled in Regular, Continuing Education and Alternate schools and reported in the September enrolment count, 2010/11—**\$6,740**
- For each eligible school-age full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrolled in Distributed Learning schools and reported in the September enrolment count, 2010/11—**\$5,851**

# Funding cuts for DL

## \*Funding for 2010-11

Face-to-face student    \$6,740

DL student                    \$5,851

\*DL will not be funded for “summer learning”

\*Expect that working conditions for DL teachers will continue to deteriorate in 2010-11.

# Support for students taking a DL course from another school or district

- Requirements in DL board contracts:
- testing services and supervision
- timely sharing of Learner information and records
- co-ordinating reports to Learners and to the ministry
- “any other service that positions the Board as an education provider within a co-ordinated, province-wide distributed-learning system”

# Possible policy action

- BCTF working conditions good practice declaration
- District policy or agreement
- Memorandum of understanding between board and local
- Bargaining proposals
- Bargaining provisions

# Follow-up: Objectives

- A. To increase the awareness of working conditions issues for DL teachers.
- B. To provide space for discussion of how DL working conditions can be addressed.
- C. To frame possible policy positions for the BCTF and for locals.
- D. To help develop a voice for DL teachers that cuts across competition among programs.
- E. To develop proposals for how DL working conditions issues might be incorporated in bargaining.

# Follow-up: Activities

1. Publish the research report—August 2010.
2. Workshops on DL and the report at the Summer Conference.
3. Articles in *Teacher* newsmagazine, and discussion forum on *bctf.ca*.
4. Regional presentations for DL teachers and interested others, in conjunction with the Educators for Distributed Learning PSA: Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, Lower Island, Okanagan, North, online discussion on Elluminate.
5. Follow-up report to the EDL PSA, the BCTF Working and Learning Conditions/Bargaining Committee, and the Executive Committee.