

Office of Analysis, Assessment, and Accreditation

**UNIVERSITY CONNECTIONS SURVEY 2005
8 WEEK COURSE**

December, 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each Fall Semester USU offers two types of University Connections courses for incoming freshman. One is an eight week course that starts when the semester begins. Students attend twice a week for eight weeks. The other Connections course starts on the Wednesday before the semester begins and students attend Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and half day on Saturday and then twice more in the semester, each session is one hour. The objective of the courses is to “provide an environment of challenge and support to help new students make a successful transition to USU. Class curriculum and activities provide an environment wherein students became familiar with the broad academic, social, and cultural opportunities offered by USU and the surrounding community” (USU Catalog).

The Connections Survey was designed to assess the reasons students’ took Connections and their satisfaction with the various components of the course. Several demographic questions were also asked. This report presents the data for the students who attended the eight week Connections course. A total of 65 students were enrolled and 45 students responded to the survey yielding a return rate of 69.2%.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- 64% of the respondents were female.
- 69% of the respondents graduated from a high school in Utah.
- 53% of the respondents were living on campus.
- 82% of the respondents were between the ages of 17 and 19.
- When asked the difficulty of their Fall Semester courses approximately 47% of the respondents indicated that their courses were moderately difficult and 47% said they were somewhat difficult and 10% said they were very difficult.

MOST IMPORTANT REASONS FOR TAKING CONNECTIONS

- Attended to learn about campus resources (67%)
- Attended to learn the physical layout of the campus (60%).
- Attended to learn University policies (58%).
- Attended to learn more about a possible major (58%).

SELECTED FINDINGS

- 93% of the respondents understood the Computer Information Literacy (CIL) requirement.
- 91% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that registering for Connections was easy.
- 84% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Connections faculty/staff were helpful.
- 78% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that because of the Connections course they were more informed about campus events.
- 73% agreed or strongly agreed that because of the course they were more comfortable contacting their professors.
- 73% agreed or strongly agreed that the computer lab information was helpful.
- 71% agreed or strongly agreed the course helped them to understand what is available in the library.
- Only 58% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Connections course helped ease their transition to USU.
- About 53% agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the Connections course to other students, while 27% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 70% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their Connections experience.

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INTRODUCTION

Each Fall Semester USU offers two types of University Connections courses for incoming freshman. One is an eight week course that starts when the semester begins. Students attend twice a week for eight weeks. The other Connections course starts on the Wednesday before the semester begins and students attend Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and half day on Saturday and then twice more in the semester, each session is one hour. The University Connections course was designed to give students an early introduction to the expectations and challenges of university life; to the academic, geographic, social/communal, and procedural maps of the University. Connections 2005 also emphasized some of the learning skills students would need to achieve their university goals successfully. The course explored problems common in the transition of students from high school to university life. The course provided an orientation to the breadth of University services and resources, to basic policies and procedures governing the conduct of staff and students, and to the physical layout of the USU campus and Cache County community.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the survey was to evaluate student opinion in the 4 sections of the eight week Connections course. The survey consisted of three parts: survey demographics, a section of questions evaluating students' experiences with the course, and a section requiring students to rank reasons for taking Connections. The Connections Survey was placed on the WebCT site and all students were asked to submit their responses by October 21, 2005.

A total of 65 students took the eight week Connections course during Fall Semester of 2005 and a total of 45 students responded to the course survey. This is a response rate of 69.2%. A copy of the Connections Survey appears in Appendix A.

Two questions in the survey could not be analyzed due to the discovery of a computer coding error that occurred when the survey was written. Question 8 "The course helped me learn to manage my time more effectively, and questions 9 "The course helped me to prepare for and take tests more effectively.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS (See Table 1)

Of the 45 respondents, 64.4% were female. A majority of respondents (68.9%) graduated from a Utah high school. Over half of the respondents (53.3%) lived on campus. Eighty-two percent of the respondents were between the ages of 17 and 19.

When the students were asked to predict their Fall Semester grade point average, a plurality of respondents (44.4%) anticipated getting between a 3.50 to a 4.0 GPA. Another 42.2% predicted getting a GPA of between 3.0 and 3.49. When asked how difficult their Fall Semester courses had been, 46.7% of the respondents said that they were somewhat difficult and 46.7% said their courses were moderately difficult while 10% said they were very difficult.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Gender:	Male 35.6%	Female 64.4%		
Graduated from:	Utah High School 68.9%	Non-Utah High School 31.1%		
Reside:	On Campus 53.3%	Off Campus 46.7%		
Age:	17-19 years 82.2%	20-22 years 17.8%	More than 22 years old 0.0%	
Predicted GPA for Fall Semester:				
	4.00 - 3.50 44.4%	3.49 - 3.0 42.2%	2.99 - 2.5 8.9%	2.49 - 2.0 4.4%
				Less than 2.0 0.0%
How difficult have your Fall Semester courses been?				
	Not Difficult 2.2%	Somewhat Difficult 46.7%	Moderately Difficult 46.7%	Very Difficult 4.4%

FINDINGS: REASONS FOR TAKING CONNECTIONS (See Table 2)

Students were asked to rate reasons for taking Connections according to how important it was to them. They were to rate the items as Very Important, Somewhat Important, or Not Important.

Nearly 67% of the respondents rated "To learn about campus resources" as very important; only 2.2% of the respondents thought this item was not important. Sixty percent of the respondents indicated that learning the physical layout of the campus was very important to them, but 11% said it was not. About 58% of the respondents thought it was very important to learn University policies, while only 4.4% thought this was not important. Almost 58% reported that it was very important to learn more about a possible major, while nearly 16% said this was not important. Fifty-six percent of the respondents thought it was very important to develop a clearer understanding of the value of a college education.

Making friends with other new students was very important to 46.7% of the respondents, while 33.3% thought this item was only somewhat important. Forty-seven percent of the respondents said it was very important to learn college level study strategies; 42.2% said this was somewhat important. A majority of respondents (51.1%) indicated that it was only somewhat important to meet faculty and staff, while 35.6% thought this was very important. Sixty percent of the respondents said it was somewhat important to learn about opportunities to be involved on campus, while 33.3% said this was very important.

Only 31.1% of the respondents thought it was very important to learn about what there is to do in Logan. The least important reason for taking Connections was to be with friends who were enrolling in Connections; only 15.6% of the respondents thought this item was very important.

Table 2. Reasons for taking Connections

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
To learn about campus resources.	66.7%	31.1%	2.2%
To learn the physical layout of the campus.	60.0%	28.9%	11.1%
To learn University policies.	57.8%	37.8%	4.4%
To learn more about a possible major.	57.8%	26.7%	15.6%
To develop a clearer understanding of the value of a college education.	55.6%	35.6%	8.9%
To make friends with other new students.	46.7%	33.3%	20.0%
To learn college level study strategies.	46.7%	42.2%	11.1%
To meet faculty and staff.	35.6%	51.1%	13.3%
To learn about opportunities to be involved on campus.	33.3%	60.0%	6.7%
To learn what there is to do in Logan.	31.1%	53.3%	15.6%
To be with friends who were enrolling in Connections.	15.6%	37.8%	46.7%

FINDINGS: STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH THE CONNECTIONS COURSE (See Table 3)

The survey included questions requiring students to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements about Connections in general, course content and assignments, and perceptions of the helpfulness of faculty and staff on campus. Results are discussed in descending order of responses by agreed plus strongly agreed.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (93.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the Computer Information Literacy (CIL) requirement. Ninety-one percent of respondents said that registering for Connections was easy. When asked if the Connections faculty and staff were helpful, 84.4% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

A majority of respondents (77.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that because of the course they were more informed about campus events. Seventy-three percent of the respondents indicated the course enabled them to feel more comfortable contacting their professors. Seventy-three percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the computer lab information in the course was helpful. About 71% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the course helped them to understand what was available in the University's library; 11.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item. Seventy percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their Connections experience. Only 5% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item. Neutral responses on these items ranged from 15.6% to 25%.

Because of the course, 61.4% of the respondents indicated they felt more comfortable getting help from library staff, while 13.6% did not. Nearly fifty-eight percent of the respondents reported that the Connections course helped ease their transition to USU, while 11.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Only 53.3% of the respondents reported that Connections course assignments helped them to learn more about college expectations, while 13.3% indicated it did not help. Fifty-three percent of the respondents would recommend the Connections course to other students, while 26.7% would not. Only 51.1% of the respondents indicated the Connections course assignments were relevant to their first semester experience, while 20% said they were not. Neutral responses on these items ranged from 20% to 33.3%.

One third of the respondents indicated that they became more involved in student activities because of course presentations, but 35.6% of the respondents marked this item as neutral. Although 77.8% of the respondents indicated that they felt more informed about campus events because of the course, only 31.8% attended more campus events because of this information. Making friends at USU was easier because of Connections for only 26.7% of the respondents, while 28.9% indicated it was not. Only 24.4% of the respondents indicated all students should be required to take Connections; 48.9% were not in agreement with such a requirement. Neutral responses on these items ranged between 26.7% and 44.4%.

More detailed data for all of this section of questions appear on Table 4 in the Appendix B.

Table 3. Students' Experiences with the Connections Course

Rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree + Agree	Neutral	Disagree + Strongly Disagree
I understand the Computer Information Literacy (CIL) requirement.	93.3%	2.2%	4.4%
Registering for Connections was easy.	91.1%	6.7%	2.2%
The Connections faculty and staff were helpful.	84.4%	13.3%	2.2%
Because of the course I was more informed about campus events.	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%
The course enabled me to feel comfortable to contact my professors.	73.3%	15.6%	11.1%
The computer lab information was helpful.	72.7%	25.0%	2.3%
The course helped me to understand what is available in the University's library.	71.1%	17.8%	11.1%
I am satisfied with my Connections experience.	70.0%	25.0%	5.0%
Because of the course, I feel more comfortable getting help from library staff.	61.4%	25.0%	13.6%
The Connections courses helped ease my transition to USU.	57.8%	31.1%	11.1%
Connections course assignments helped me to learn more about college expectations.	53.3%	33.3%	13.3%
I would recommend the Connections course to other students.	53.3%	20.0%	26.7%
Connections course assignments were relevant to my first semester experience.	51.1%	28.9%	20.0%
Because of the course I became more involved in student activities.	33.3%	35.6%	31.1%
Because of the course I attended more campus events.	31.8%	40.9%	27.3%
Making friends at USU was easier because of Connections.	26.7%	44.4%	28.9%
All students should be required to take Connections.	24.4%	26.7%	48.9%

APPENDIX A

Connections Survey (8 Week Option)

Mark one response to each question.

1. My Connections course instructor is: Select your instructor
3. I am male female
3. I graduated from a Utah High School Non-Utah High School
4. I live on campus off campus
5. I am 17-19 years old 20-22 years old More than 22 years old
6. What do you predict your grade point average will be at the end of the Fall Semester?
 4.00-3.50 3.49-3.0 2.99-2.50 2.49-2.00 Less than 2.00
7. How difficult have your Fall Semester courses been?
 Not difficult Somewhat difficult Moderately difficult Very difficult

Rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The Connections courses helped ease my transition to USU.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Making friends at USU was easier because of Connections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. The Connections faculty and staff were helpful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Registering for Connections was easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Because of the course I became more involved in student activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Because of the course I was more informed about campus events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Because of the course I attended more campus events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. The course helped me learn to manage my time more effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. The course helped me to prepare for and take tests more effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I understand the Computer Information Literacy (CIL) requirement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. The computer lab information was helpful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. The course helped me to understand what is available in the University's library.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Because of the course, I feel more comfortable getting help from library staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. The course enabled me to feel comfortable to contact my professors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 15. All students should be required to take Connections. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. Connections course assignments helped me to learn more about college expectations. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. Connections course assignments were relevant to my first semester experience. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. I am satisfied with my Connections experience. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. I would recommend the Connections course to other students. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Rate each of the following reasons for taking Connections according to how important it was to you:

- | | Very
Important | Somewhat
Important | Not
Important |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. To make friends with other new students. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. To learn University policies. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. To learn the physical layout of the campus. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. To learn about campus resources. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. To learn college level study strategies. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. To be with friends who were enrolling in Connections. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. To learn more about a possible major. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. To learn about opportunities to be involved on campus. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. To learn what there is to do in Logan. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. To meet faculty and staff. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. To develop a clearer understanding of the value of a college education. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

APPENDIX B

Table 4. Students' experiences with the Connections course:

(Rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Connections courses helped ease my transition to USU.	4.4%	53.3%	31.1%	11.1%	0.0%
Making friends at USU was easier because of Connections.	6.7%	20.0%	44.4%	24.4%	4.4%
The Connections faculty and staff were helpful.	28.9%	55.6%	13.3%	2.2%	0.0%
Registering for Connections was easy.	37.8%	53.3%	6.7%	2.2%	0.0%
Because of the course I became more involved in student activities.	6.7%	26.7%	35.6%	26.7%	4.4%
Because of the course I was more informed about campus events.	22.2%	55.6%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Because of the course I attended more campus events.	9.1%	22.7%	40.9%	25.0%	2.3%
I understand the Computer Information Literacy (CIL) requirement.	40.0%	53.3%	2.2%	4.4%	0.0%
The computer lab information was helpful.	18.2%	54.5%	25.0%	2.3%	0.0%
The course helped me to understand what is available in the University's library.	24.4%	46.7%	17.8%	11.1%	0.0%
Because of the course, I feel more comfortable getting help from library staff.	13.6%	47.7%	25.0%	11.4%	2.3%
The course enabled me to feel comfortable to contact my professors.	15.6%	57.8%	15.6%	8.9%	2.2%
All students should be required to take Connections.	17.8%	6.7%	26.7%	33.3%	15.6%
Connections course assignments helped me to learn more about college expectations.	11.1%	42.2%	33.3%	8.9%	4.4%
Connections course assignments were relevant to my first semester experience.	8.9%	42.2%	28.9%	13.3%	6.7%
I am satisfied with my Connections experience.	22.5%	47.5%	25.0%	0.0%	5.0%
I would recommend the Connections course to other students.	22.2%	31.1%	20.0%	13.3%	13.3%