

Remote Delivery of Physical Education Classes

Chantelle R. Russell, M.A.
Department of Physical Education and Recreation
Division of Student Life

Trish Dorman, Ph.D.
Department of Physical Education and Recreation
Division of Student Life

Brian A. M. Clark, Ph.D.
Office of Assessment and Research
Division of Student Life

Please contact Chantelle Russell (russellc@uoregon.edu) with questions.

Please use the following citation when using or referencing information from this document:
Russell, C. R., Dorman, T., & Clark, B. A. M. (2020). *Remote Delivery of Physical Education Classes*.

Overview

Over the past three past years, the Physical Education & Recreation CAKE¹ team has been exploring the experiences of students who participate in PE classes. The goal of these studies is to develop a deeper understanding of why students enroll in PE classes, how prior experience may play a role in class selection, what wellbeing and success outcomes result from PE class participation, and satisfaction with PE classes (recently, the remote delivery of them). As part of these studies, we surveyed PE class students in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 to understand motivations influencing enrollment decisions and assess satisfaction. This report focuses on the Spring term survey, primarily to assess remote delivery of PE classes.

Survey Materials

Students were asked the following questions:

- Why did you enroll in a PE class? Response options were:
 - Earn elective credit
 - Fill course schedule
 - Needed 1 credit (for graduation, financial aid, etc)
 - Learn new skills
 - Improve personal fitness

¹ CAKE = Community Assessment Knowledge Experts. CAKEs are department-embedded assessment teams in the Division of Student Life.

- Improve personal health and wellness
- Relieve stress
- Meet people
- Spend time with friends
- Like the instructor
- Like class activity/content
- Previous experience with activity/content
- Recommendation from friend
- Recommendation from advisor
- Provided sense of personal accountability
- Other
- Would you recommend a PE class to a future student? Response options were:
 - Yes, even if remote
 - Yes, but in-person only
 - Yes, either in-person or remote
 - No, regardless of delivery
- Why did you stay in the class after it went to remote delivery? Response was open-ended.
- What was the highlight of your class? Response was open-ended.
- How could we have improved your remote class experience? Response was open-ended.

Survey Respondents

The response rate to the survey was 20% (287 of 1443 students).

Comparing the panel of all students invited to participate to the sample of students who did participate, there was a generally even representation based on PE subject, class, gender and race/ethnicity.

- Of the respondents, seniors, grad students and women are a little overrepresented.
- There were no respondents classified as American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander in the sample, which are very small groups in the UO population.

Key Findings

Improve Wellbeing

Students responses when indicating why they enrolled in PE classes, describing why they stayed in the classes when they went to remote delivery, and describing the highlights of their classes were centrally about personal wellbeing. The most frequently selected reasons for enrolling were improving health and wellness (55%), relieving stress (52%), and improving personal fitness (48%). In the responses to open-ended questions, students referred to several wellbeing factors through mentions of physical and mental health; being challenged, held accountable, or motivated; having something to look forward to; stress management; self-care; and staying active. Despite the additional stress of a quick transition to remote learning and living in various levels of quarantine during spring term, students identified PE classes as something that provided skills and techniques to benefit their wellbeing. Students shared examples of improving their fitness levels, building community, and including their family in movement and healthy eating practices.

- Graduate students prioritized wellbeing-related reasons for enrolling (learning a new skill, improving personal fitness, health and wellness, relieving stress, liking a class activity/content) to a greater extent than undergraduates did.

Student Statements:

- “I still had the same desire to have an outlet for stress as well as a way to keep up with mind and body wellness.”
- “Actually, I enrolled in the class because it was going to be remote. After learning that all classes would be remote, I immediately thought that adding this yoga class would help me balance my remote work load and get some much needed activity in my days.”
- “Because I felt like during such an uncertain time being held accountable for a meditation and movement practice would be very beneficial to my wellbeing”
- “The highlight was building up my sense of personal accountability by working on the class remotely. It required me to look at exercise as a constant thing rather than sporadic.”

Credit Earned

It is evident that PE courses support students in earning their degrees, graduating, and meeting minimum credit requirements (for housing, financial aid, scholarships, upper division credit, etc). After wellbeing, earning an elective credit was the most frequent reason for taking a PE course and staying in the course when delivered remotely.

- 65% of senior respondents indicated that needing one credit was a reason why they enrolled, which is higher than all other classes (next closest were juniors at 26%).
- Nearly 88% of Black respondents indicated that needing one credit was a reason for why they enrolled, which is higher than other race or ethnic groups (next closest were white respondents at 42%).

Satisfaction

Almost all (99%) respondents would generally recommend a PE class to a future student (i.e., the combination of “even if remote” “in-person only,” and “either in-person or remote” responses). A supermajority of respondents (67%) would recommend a remote PE class (i.e., the combination of “even if remote” and “either in-person or remote” responses). With a little over a week to make the transition to remote delivery, and the unique challenges that presents for physical activity-based courses, this is remarkable.

- Golf, mind-body, and running were the subjects that had the highest percentages of students say that they would recommend the course “even if remote” (note this was only 48 total responses).
- First-Years, Seniors, and Graduates chose “yes, even if remote” more frequently than the other options; where-as sophomores and juniors chose “yes, in-person only” slightly more than “yes, even if remote.”
- Women chose “yes, even if remote” slightly more than other options, while men had a slight preference toward “yes, but in-person only.”
- LatinX respondents were the racial/ethnic group who would recommend “but in-person only” more frequently than other groups who most frequently selected “yes, even if remote.”

Recommendations

Based on what we learned from participants in this study, we offer the following recommendations:

- Communicate and highlight the positive impact of PE classes on the wellbeing of students, especially during the pandemic and remote delivery. Ensure that students and mentoring faculty and staff understand the opportunities and importance of scheduling time for personal wellbeing and self-care and how PE can create that time.
- Ensure academic advisors and people in other mentoring roles are aware of PE classes to fulfill credit requirements. This will help students find PE classes as an opportunity to meet requirements, and progress toward their degree.
- As it is likely that future terms will include remote delivery, use recommendation results for marketing and communications in recruiting students to enroll in PE classes. Make sure others know that students enjoyed, were successful in and satisfied with the remote delivery of PE classes.
- Use highlights and student feedback to improve future terms with remote delivery. We have created a list of ways to improve class organization, delivery, instructor interaction and support. We will also share highlights at faculty orientation for fall to remind them of the positive ways they are impacting students and techniques they should continue to include in their teaching. Student highlights were grouped into physical and wellbeing improvements, instructor engagement, personal discovery, community, class delivery and assignments.