



RENTON TECHNICAL COLLEGE COMMUNITY EDUCATION REPORT

SURVEY BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The RTC community education survey is designed to measure several dimensions of the community education program. Students are asked to rate the level of importance of several items on their decision to take a community education class. These items include number of class sessions, driving distance, location, cost, reputation, recommendations, improvement of skills, and socialization.

Students are also asked about their past experiences with community education program at RTC, their involvement in classes or events, how they heard about the class they are currently enrolled in, and their preferences for when community education classes should be offered.

The survey also asked about gender and age of the respondents.

The survey was conducted in the spring quarter of the 2006-07 academic year and resulted in 504 completed surveys being returned.

Tables and charts of the results are presented in the body of this report. Statistical tests were conducted on all questions for both age and gender categories. For statistical testing, the importance ratings were reduced from four categories down to two—important and unimportant, while age was reduced from five categories to two—younger than 40 and 40 or older. Statistically significant differences are reported within the body of the report.

Counts and percentages for all questions are provided in Appendix A.

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community Education Programs provide non-credit cultural, recreational, and other community and human services classes that meet the interests, needs and concerns of the community. Community Education classes are designed to develop hobby or personal interests rather than employment skills.

IMPORTANCE RATINGS—TAKING A CLASS

Respondents were asked to identify the importance of several factors on their decision to take a community education class at RTC. Table 1 provides the results from this analysis. Approximately 47% of respondents rated—improve personal skills—as extremely important in their decision to take a community education class. This was higher than any other factor. The second most influential factor appeared to be cost with 30% of respondents rating this as extremely important.

TABLE 1. IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS ON DECISION TO TAKE A CLASS

FACTOR	Not Important	Mildly Important	Moderately Important	Extremely Important
Number of Class Sessions	34.3%	25.0%	29.4%	11.2%
Convenient Driving Distance	11.3%	24.7%	39.3%	24.7%
Appeal of the Location	13.7%	27.3%	42.0%	17.0%
Cost	7.5%	19.9%	42.2%	30.4%
RTC's Reputation	20.6%	33.6%	34.7%	11.1%
Class was Recommended	49.2%	20.8%	18.4%	11.6%
Improve Personal Skills	13.0%	9.4%	30.8%	46.8%
Improve Professional Skills	48.8%	12.2%	15.9%	23.0%
Take a Class with Friend or Relative	48.8%	17.7%	19.7%	13.7%
To Meet People or Socialize	56.9%	27.0%	10.5%	5.5%

The least important factor, with 57% of respondents rating it as not important, was to meet people or socialize. Other factors that had little effect on respondents' decision to take class included—class recommendation, improve professional skills, and taking a class with a friend or relative.

When comparing demographic factors on the importance ratings of taking a class, some interesting differences emerged. Respondents 40 years old and older were significantly more likely to rate the driving distance, appeal of the college's location, and the college's reputation as important compared to younger respondents.

TABLE 2. RESPONDENTS RATING ITEM AS "IMPORTANT" BY AGE

ITEM	AGE		Significance
	Younger than 40	40 and Older	
Number of class sessions	36.2%	42.1%	n.s.
Convenient driving distance	55.8%	67.0%	*
Appeal of location	48.8%	63.0%	**
Costs	72.1%	72.6%	n.s.
RTC's reputation	31.2%	51.5%	**
Class was recommended	30.6%	29.8%	n.s.
Improve personal skills	73.6%	79.3%	n.s.
Improve professional skills	42.2%	38.0%	n.s.
Take a class with friend or relative	33.3%	30.1%	n.s.
To meet people or socialize	13.6%	16.9%	n.s.

* p ≤ .05
 ** p ≤ .01
 n.s. not statistically significant

TABLE 3. RESPONDENTS RATING ITEM AS "IMPORTANT" BY GENDER

ITEM	GENDER		Significance
	Female	Male	
Number of class sessions	39.9%	44.1%	n.s.
Convenient driving distance	66.5%	57.8%	n.s.
Appeal of location	58.6%	62.3%	n.s.
Costs	73.3%	72.2%	n.s.
RTC's reputation	43.8%	53.1%	n.s.
Class was recommended	26.1%	41.9%	*
Improve personal skills	76.9%	80.7%	n.s.
Improve professional skills	31.2%	61.1%	*
Take a class with friend or relative	30.3%	32.2%	n.s.
To meet people or socialize	12.7%	23.6%	*

* p ≤ .01
 n.s. not statistically significant

Male respondents were significantly more likely than females to rate class recommendation, improving professional skills, and meeting people or socializing as important in their decision to take a community education class.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES WITH COMM. EDUCATION

Table 4 provides the results of a set of four questions concerning respondents previous experiences with community education at RTC. As shown, over half (57%) of respondents reported taking a community education class previously at RTC.

An overwhelming percentage of respondents indicated they were satisfied (96%) with their current community education class.

QUESTION	Yes	No	Not Sure
Ever taken Comm Ed Class from RTC?	56.6%	42.6%	0.8%
Were you satisfied with your Comm Ed class?	96.4%	1.9%	1.7%
Family/Friend ever taken a Comm Ed class?	40.1%	47.0%	12.9%
Ever considered taking a class from another organization?	56.3%	39.4%	4.3%

Older respondents were significantly more likely to have previously taken a community education class (60%) than were younger respondents (48%). No other differences were statistically significant.

ITEM	AGE		Significance
	Younger than 40	40 and Older	
Previously taken Comm Ed class	48.1%	59.9%	*
Satisfied with Comm Ed class	95.1%	97.0%	n.s.
Family or friend taken class at RTC	40.6%	40.0%	n.s.
Considered taking class from another organization	54.4%	57.7%	n.s.

* p ≤ .05
n.s. not statistically significant

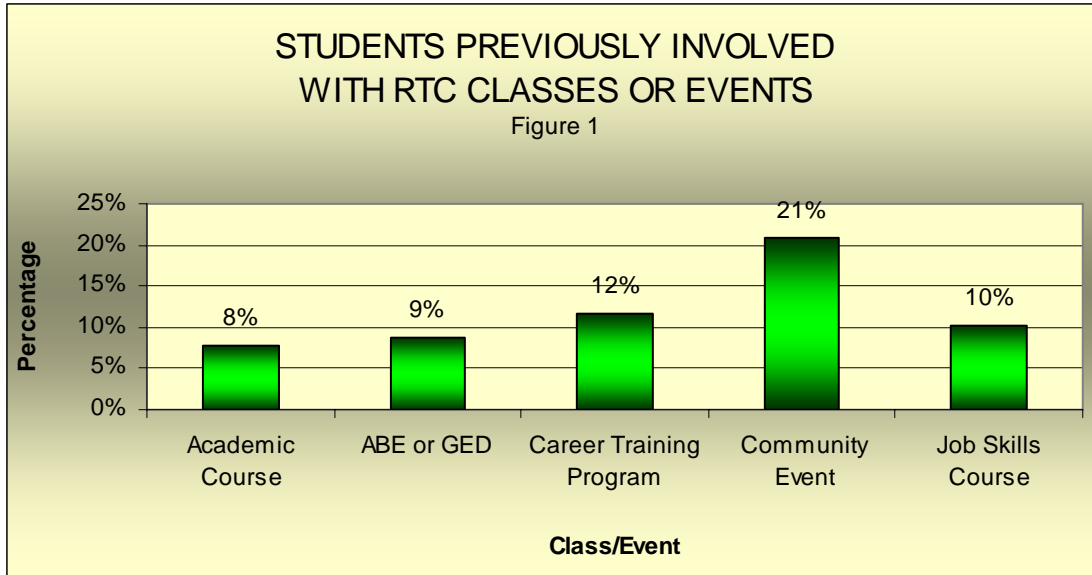
There were no statistically significant differences between females and males in relation to respondents' previous experiences with community education at RTC.

ITEM	GENDER		Significance
	Female	Male	
Previously taken Comm Ed class	58.1%	50.4%	n.s.
Satisfied with Comm Ed class	97.0%	95.5%	n.s.
Family or friend taken class at RTC	42.2%	31.0%	n.s.
Considered taking class from another organization	57.8%	54.6%	n.s.

n.s. not statistically significant

INVOLVEMENT WITH RTC CLASSES OR EVENTS

Respondents were most likely to have participated in a Community Event (21%) compared to any other class or event at RTC. Respondents were nearly as likely to have participated in an academic course, ABE/GED, or a job-skills course.



As shown in Table 7, there were no statistically significant differences between younger and older respondents and their prior involvement with events or class at RTC.

ITEM	AGE		Significance
	Younger than 40	40 and Older	
Academic Course	10.6%	6.5%	n.s
ABE or GED	7.6%	9.1%	n.s
Career Training	14.4%	10.8%	n.s
RTC Community Event	17.4%	23.3%	n.s
Job-Skills Course	9.1%	11.1%	n.s

n.s. not statistically significant

Male respondents were significantly more likely to participate in ABE/GED classes (14%) and job-skills courses (21%) than were female respondents (6% and 7% respectively). Females were statistically more likely to participate in an RTC community event than were males (27% vs. 8%).

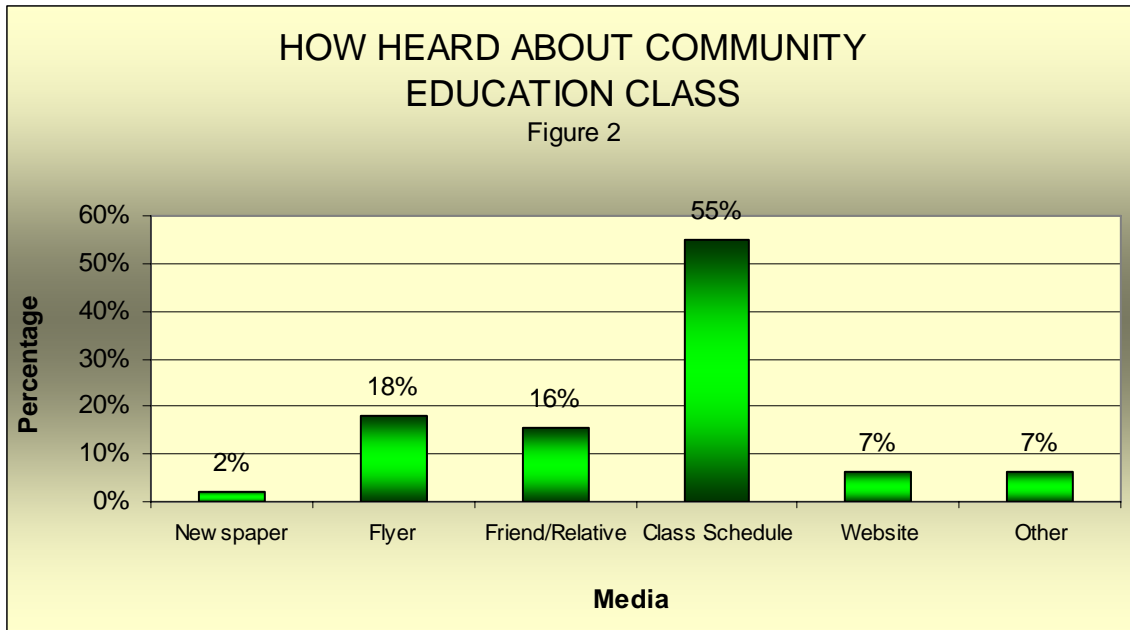
ITEM	GENDER		Significance
	Female	Male	
Academic Course	8.1%	7.6%	n.s.
ABE or GED	5.8%	14.4%	*
Career Training	12.1%	9.3%	n.s.
RTC Community Event	26.5%	7.6%	*
Job-Skills Course	6.6%	21.2%	*

* $p \leq .01$
n.s. not statistically significant

REFERRAL SOURCE FOR CLASSES

Approximately, 55% of respondents indicated that they had heard about their community education class from the class schedule. Flyers were the second most cited source (18%) followed by friends/relatives (16%).

Newspapers appeared to be the least successful method of advertising as only 2% of respondents had heard of their class through this source.



Older respondents were significantly more likely than younger respondents to have heard about their class from a flyer (21% vs. 13%). No other differences were statistically significant.

Only one gender difference emerged as significant with a higher percentage of males reportedly hearing about their class through other sources (11%) compared to 5% of females.

SOURCE	AGE		Significance
	Younger than 40	40 and Older	
Newspaper	3.0%	2.0%	n.s.
Flyer	12.9%	20.7%	*
Friend/Relative	33.3%	30.1%	n.s.
Class Schedule	49.2%	57.7%	n.s.
Website	8.3%	6.3%	n.s.
Other	6.8%	6.5%	n.s.

* p ≤ .05
n.s. not statistically significant

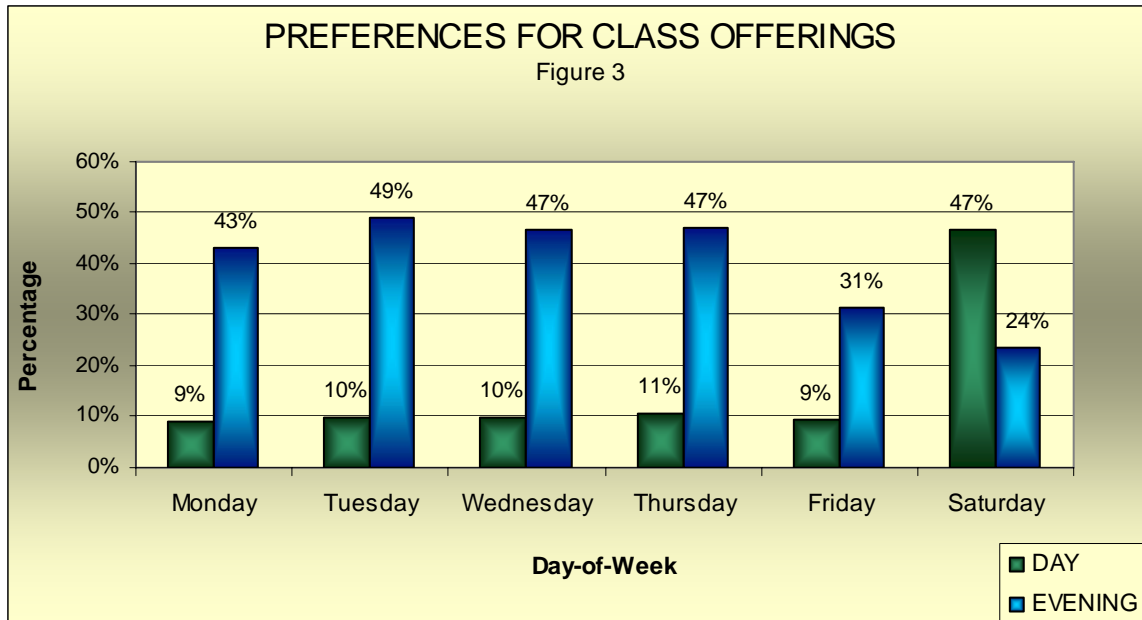
SOURCE	GENDER		Significance
	Female	Male	
Newspaper	1.7%	3.4%	n.s.
Flyer	18.7%	16.1%	n.s.
Friend/Relative	30.3%	32.2%	n.s.
Class Schedule	58.2%	49.2%	n.s.
Website	7.2%	6.8%	n.s.
Other	5.2%	11.0%	*

* p ≤ .05
n.s. not statistically significant

PREFERENCES FOR CLASS OFFERINGS

The most preferred day and time for community education classes is Tuesday night as 49% of respondents selected this. A nearly equal percentage (47%) also selected Wednesday and Thursday nights and Saturday during the day as their preference.

Ten percent or fewer respondents would prefer classes be offered Monday through Friday during the day.



Older respondents were significantly more likely than younger respondents to prefer classes Tuesday through Friday during the day. Younger respondents however, were significantly more likely to prefer classes on Saturday night (31%) compared to older respondents (22%).

DAY/TIME	AGE		Significance
	Younger than 40	40 and Older	
Mon - Day	5.3%	10.5%	n.s.
Mon - Night	45.5%	44.0%	n.s.
Tue - Day	5.3%	11.6%	*
Tue - Night	50.0%	50.6%	n.s.
Wed - Day	3.0%	12.8%	**
Wed - Night	47.0%	48.9%	n.s.
Thur - Day	3.8%	13.4%	**
Thur - Night	43.9%	49.4%	n.s.
Fri - Day	3.8%	11.9%	**
Fri - Night	34.1%	31.3%	n.s.
Sat - Day	53.8%	45.7%	n.s.
Sat - Night	31.1%	21.9%	*

* p ≤ .05
 ** p ≤ >01
 n.s. not statistically significant

CLASS PREFERENCES—CONTINUED

Although females were significantly more likely to prefer Friday day classes (12%) compared to males (4%); the majority of respondents preferred weekday nights and Saturday days.

DAY/TIME	GENDER		Significance
	Female	Male	
Mon - Day	10.1%	6.8%	n.s.
Mon - Night	44.1%	45.8%	n.s.
Tue - Day	11.0%	8.5%	n.s.
Tue - Night	48.1%	56.8%	n.s.
Wed - Day	11.8%	5.9%	n.s.
Wed - Night	48.7%	47.5%	n.s.
Thur - Day	11.8%	6.8%	n.s.
Thur - Night	46.4%	52.5%	n.s.
Fri - Day	11.5%	4.2%	*
Fri - Night	31.3%	37.3%	n.s.
Sat - Day	50.1%	41.5%	n.s.
Sat - Night	22.8%	30.5%	n.s.

* $p \leq .05$
 n.s. not statistically significant

APPENDIX A—FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES

IMPORTANCE FACTORS

COUNTS/PERCENTS FOR IMPORTANCE FACTORS ON DECISION TO TAKE A CLASS					
FACTOR	Not Important	Mildly Important	Moderately Important	Extremely Important	Missing
Number of Class Sessions count	32.1% 162	23.4% 118	27.6% 139	10.5% 53	6.3% 32
Convenient Driving Distance count	10.9% 55	23.8% 120	37.9% 191	23.8% 120	3.6% 18
Appeal of the Location count	12.9% 65	25.8% 130	39.7% 200	16.1% 81	5.6% 28
Cost count	7.1% 36	19.0% 96	40.5% 204	29.2% 147	4.1% 21
RTC's Reputation count	18.8% 95	30.8% 155	31.7% 160	10.1% 51	8.5% 43
Class was Recommended count	41.3% 208	17.5% 88	15.5% 78	9.7% 49	16.1% 81
Improve Personal Skills count	12.1% 61	8.7% 44	28.6% 144	43.5% 219	7.1% 36
Improve Professional Skills count	42.1% 212	10.5% 53	13.7% 69	19.8% 100	13.9% 70
Take a Class with Friend or Relative count	43.7% 220	15.9% 80	17.7% 89	12.3% 62	10.5% 53
To Meet People or Socialize count	51.4% 259	24.4% 123	9.5% 48	5.0% 25	9.7% 49

APPENDIX A—CONTINUED

PAST EXPERIENCES

QUESTION	Yes	No	Not Sure	Missing
Ever taken Comm Ed Class from RTC? count	54.8% 276	41.3% 208	0.8% 4	3.2% 16
Were you satisfied with your Comm Ed class? count	90.1% 454	1.8% 9	1.6% 8	6.5% 33
Family/Friend ever taken a Comm Ed class? count	38.1% 192	44.6% 225	12.3% 62	5.0% 25
Ever considered taking a class from another organization? count	52.0% 262	36.3% 183	4.0% 20	7.7% 39

INVOLVEMENT WITH CLASSES & EVENTS

CLASS/EVENT	Involved	Not Involved
Academic Course count	7.7% 39	92.3% 465
ABE or GED count	8.7% 44	91.3% 460
Career Training Program count	11.7% 59	88.3% 445
Community Event count	20.8% 105	79.2% 399
Job Skills Course count	10.1% 51	89.9% 453

APPENDIX A—CONTINUED

REFERRAL SOURCE FOR CLASSES

COUNTS/PERCENTS FOR HOW STUDENTS HEARD ABOUT COMMUNITY EDUCATION CLASS		
MEDIA	Yes-Heard	No-Did not Hear
Newspaper count	2.2% 11	97.8% 493
Flyer count	17.9% 90	82.1% 414
Friend/Relative count	15.5% 78	84.5% 426
Class Schedule count	55.0% 277	45.0% 227
Website count	6.5% 33	93.5% 471
Other count	6.5% 33	93.5% 471

PREFERENCES FOR CLASS OFFERINGS

COUNTS/PERCENTS FOR PREFERENCES FOR CLASS OFFERINGS		
DAY-OF-WEEK	<u>TIME-OF-DAY</u>	
	Daytime	Evening
Monday count	8.9% 45	43.1% 217
Tuesday count	9.7% 49	49.0% 247
Wednesday count	9.9% 50	46.8% 236
Thursday count	10.5% 53	47.0% 237
Friday count	9.3% 47	31.2% 157
Saturday count	46.6% 235	23.6% 119

APPENDIX A—CONTINUED

RESPONDENTS' AGE

COUNTS/PERCENTS OF RESPONDENTS' AGE			
AGE	Count	Percent	Valid Percent
Under 20	5	1.0%	1.0%
20 - 29	50	9.9%	10.3%
30 - 39	77	15.3%	15.9%
40 - 49	132	26.2%	27.3%
50 & Above	220	43.7%	45.5%
Total	484	96.0%	100%
Missing	20	4.0%	
Total	504	100%	

RESPONDENTS' GENDER

COUNTS/PERCENTS OF RESPONDENTS' GENDER			
GENDER	Count	Percent	Valid Percent
Female	347	68.8%	74.6%
Male	118	23.4%	25.4%
Total	465	92.3%	100%
Missing	39	7.7%	
Total	504	100%	