

Hofstra University
Center for Teaching Excellence

**Student Feedback on the
NOAH Laptop Computer Initiative**
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1.0. Report Overview

The NOAH Laptop Computer Initiative is a program that provides Students with a laptop computer. The laptop computer is used for academic purposes, and it remains in the individual Student's possession for the entire year. Surveys were distributed to obtain feedback from Students regarding their use of the laptop at the end of the Fall (December 1999) and Spring (May 2000) semesters. The following report provides the combined results from the two survey administrations. The purpose of the Student feedback survey was to evaluate the contribution to learning that the laptop provided, including how it was employed and any technical problems that arose. The survey (which is provided in Appendix A) contained a combination of quantitative and open-ended questions. The quantitative questions are separated into three areas: general reactions to having laptop computer, experience with laptop computer, and laptop learning applications. The three open-ended (qualitative) questions include: how the laptop computer was used this semester, beneficial software programs/features, and additional comments or suggestions. Approximately 50% of the total NOAH Student population who received laptop computers were surveyed each semester. In some instances, a Student may have responded twice (i.e., once during the Fall semester and once during the Spring semester). For both semesters, a total of 93 Students completed the survey, which is provided as Appendix A.

The following section (2.0) summarizes the results of the quantitative survey questions and accompanying figures. Detailed tables of results are provided in Appendix B and illustrate distributions across responses. A summary of the written responses to the open-ended questions is provided in section 3.0. The full set of verbatim responses is included in Appendix C (not included in this document).

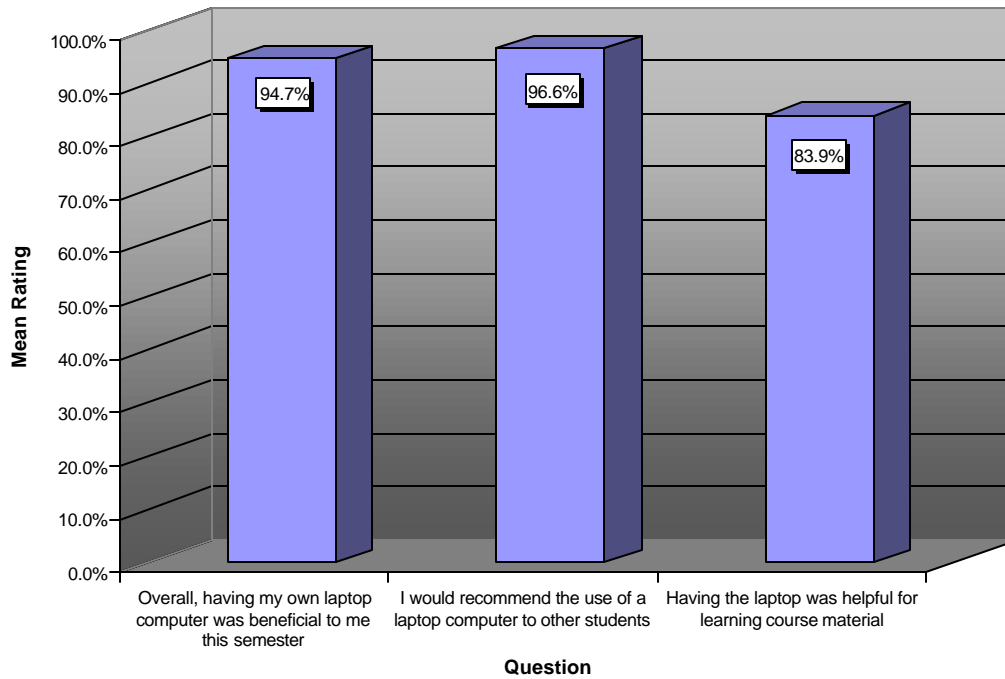
2.0. Summary of Quantitative Results

The response scale for the quantitative survey questions are presented on an eleven point percentage-based scale, with 0% representing complete disagreement, 50% denoting neither agreement nor disagreement, and 100% indicating complete agreement. Summary results for each question are provided below. Appendix B provides tables identifying the distribution of responses for each question.

2.1. General Reaction to Having Laptop Computer (*See also Table 1 in Appendix B*)

Figure 1. shows that Students reported that having their own laptop computer was very beneficial (e.g., $M=94.7\%$) and that they would recommend the use of a laptop computer to other Students ($M=96.6\%$). Slightly lower ratings were provided for how helpful the laptop computer was for learning course material ($M=83.9\%$).

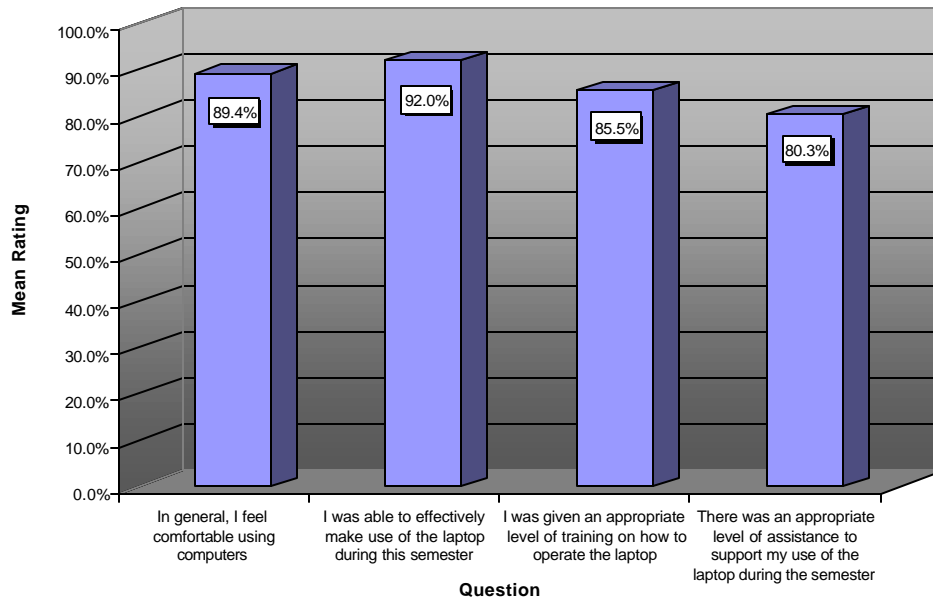
Figure 1. General Reactions to Having Laptop Computer



2.2 Experience with Laptop Computer (See also Table 2 in Appendix B)

Figure 2. illustrates that Students were generally comfortable using computers (M=89.4%). Students expressed even higher ratings for being able to effectively make use of the laptop computer during the semester (M=92%). Somewhat lower ratings were provided for receiving an appropriate level of training on how to operate the laptop (M=85.5%) and on the level of assistance to support their use of the laptop during the semester (M=80.3%).

Figure 2. Experience with Laptop Computer



2.3. Laptop Learning Applications (See also Table 3 in Appendix B)

Figure 3. depicts Student feedback related to the learning applications of the laptop computer. Students reported positively that completing the assignments were easier due to having the laptop (M=91.5%). Somewhat lower ratings were provided for the laptop making it easier to communicate with the Professor and classmates during the semester (M=83.4%) and the extent to which Instructors enabled Students to make good use of the laptop computer through course assignments (M=82.5%).

Figure 3. Laptop Learning Applications

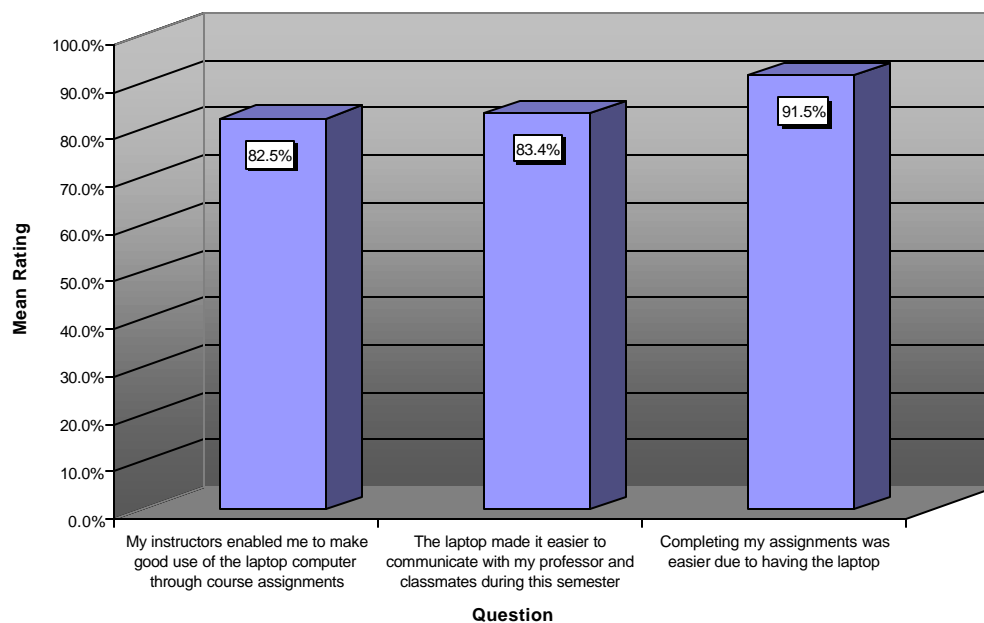
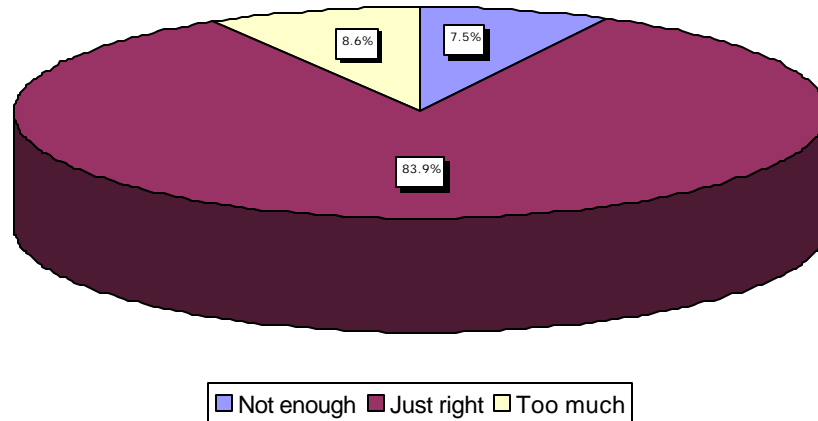


Figure 4. illustrates that a strong majority of Students were of the opinion that the amount of laptop-related work required was just right (83.9%), with a small percentage of the Students fairly divided between not enough (7.5%) and too much (8.6%).

Figure 4. Required Laptop-Related Work



3.0. Open-Ended Question Summary

Provided below are summaries of the responses from the three open-ended questions on the survey. The full set of verbatim responses appears in Appendix C.

3.1. How the laptop computer was used this semester

Students cited many different uses of the laptop computer during the semester. The use reported with the greatest frequency was Microsoft Word, as well as general typing of homework, completing course assignments, writing papers/reports and other word processing-related applications. Many of the other uses of the laptop computer cited related to use of the Internet, including: email (i.e., friends, professors, family), Internet-enabled research, creating web pages, general web surfing, accessing e-reserve to get course material, and viewing information posted on the Internet by the Professor. Students also expressed using the laptop computer for spreadsheets and presentations.

Several Student responses related to the benefits of the laptop computer itself (as opposed to a PC). The laptop computer allowed the Students to do work in different places, such as on the bus traveling home, the library, the dorm room, and at work. A few Students were able to take their work to a quieter environment when distracted (e.g., in the dorms). It was also mentioned that not having to depend on the computer lab was very beneficial to them.

3.2. Beneficial software programs/features

There were many different software programs/features that were cited as beneficial. A strong majority of the Students related the use of word processing programs (e.g., frequently Microsoft Word and to a lesser extent WordPerfect). Several of the other Microsoft-related programs/features were mentioned, including Works, Access, Document and Office, as well as PowerPoint and Excel. Students accessed the Internet most often using Netscape Navigator. Others programs/features that were mentioned by Students were AOL, Visual Basics, Real Player, Antivirus, Web-design applications, graphics programs, and games.

3.3. Additional comments or suggestions

Many Students used this section to express gratitude for receiving the laptop, and provided positive feedback about the laptop initiative. Several of the responses reflected their reliance on the laptop computer. Students reported the desire to keep the laptop computer at the end of the semester. In addition, numerous Students related that all Students should receive a laptop computer.

The suggestions that were reported most frequently by Students centered on two core areas of the laptop initiative. The first suggestion was for more training on how to use the laptop computer. Students stated that this could be conducted prior to the onset of receiving the computer or through laptop-related class assignments throughout the semester. In conjunction with training, there was also a need expressed for more technical assistance resolving problems with the laptop. The other problem reported by several Students pertained to the lack of a modem or Ethernet card, which prevented them from using the Internet and email capabilities of the computer. Some of the other suggestions mentioned by more than at least two Students were adding a dictionary/thesaurus and providing Students with a printer.

Appendix B

Table 1. General Reactions to Having Laptop Computer

	Frequencies (Percent)											Descriptive Statistics		
	Completely disagree		Neither disagree or agree							Completely agree		n	Mean	Std. Deviation
	0%	10	20	30	40	50%	60	70	80	90	100%			
1. Overall, having my own laptop computer was beneficial to me this semester...	1.1				1.1	1.1	1.1	2.2	5.4	8.6	79.6	93	94.7	14.64
2. I would recommend the use of a laptop computer to other students...					1.1	1.1		2.2	3.2	9.7	82.8	93	96.6	9.84
3. Having the laptop was helpful for learning course material...	2.2	1.1		1.1	2.2	5.4	3.2	10.8	14.0	9.7	50.5	93	83.9	22.94

Table 2. Experience with Laptop Computer

	Frequencies (Percent)											Descriptive Statistics		
	Completely disagree		Neither disagree or agree							Completely agree		n	Mean	Std. Deviation
	0%	10	20	30	40	50%	60	70	80	90	100%			
4. In general, I feel comfortable using computers...	1.1				1.1	2.2	7.5	4.3	16.1	3.2	64.5	93	89.4	17.80
5. I was able to effectively make use of the laptop during this semester...	1.1				2.2	3.2	1.1	2.2	9.7	9.7	71.0	93	92.0	17.04
6. I was given an appropriate level of training on how to operate the laptop...	1.1		1.1	2.2	2.2	6.5	2.2	7.5	10.8	12.9	53.8	93	85.5	21.75
7. There was an appropriate level of assistance to support my use of the laptop this semester...	1.1	2.2		3.2	4.3	5.4	6.5	8.6	16.1	7.5	45.2	93	80.3	24.51

Table 3. Laptop Learning Applications

	Frequencies (Percent)											Descriptive Statistics		
	Completely disagree		Neither disagree or agree							Completely agree		n	Mean	Std. Deviation
	0%	10	20	30	40	50%	60	70	80	90	100%			
8. My instructors enabled me to make good use of the laptop computer through course assignments...	2.2	2.2		3.2	2.2	3.2	5.4	6.5	16.1	9.7	49.5	93	82.5	24.96
9. The laptop made it easier to communicate with my professor and classmates during this semester...	4.3	1.1		2.2		5.4	2.2	9.7	10.8	11.8	52.7	93	83.4	25.81
10. Completing my assignments was easier due to having the laptop...	1.1	1.1			2.2	2.2	1.1		10.8	15.1	66.7	93	91.5	18.23

	Frequencies (Percent)			Descriptive Statistics				
	Too little	Just right	Too much	n	Mean	Std. Deviation		
	1	2	3					
11. The amount of laptop-related work required was...		7.5	83.9		8.6	93	2.01	0.40