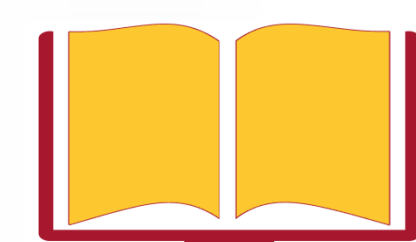


## What Do Students Think about Online Course Structure?



### Introduction

- Online learning success depends on the ability to personalize the teaching and learning processes (Saba, 1999; Burgess, 2006).
- Traditional education approaches must be re-examined and revised to build solid online learning.



### Literature

- Students preferred information to be presented using: 1) audio, 2) graphics, 3) video, 4) text and 5) self-evaluated test question (Boyd & Murphrey, 2001)
- Some instructional design aspects such as inaccessible resources and educational materials, lack of communication, and technical difficulties are obstacles, which make students isolated, and unsatisfied (Kelsey, Lindner & Dooley, 2002).



### Methodology

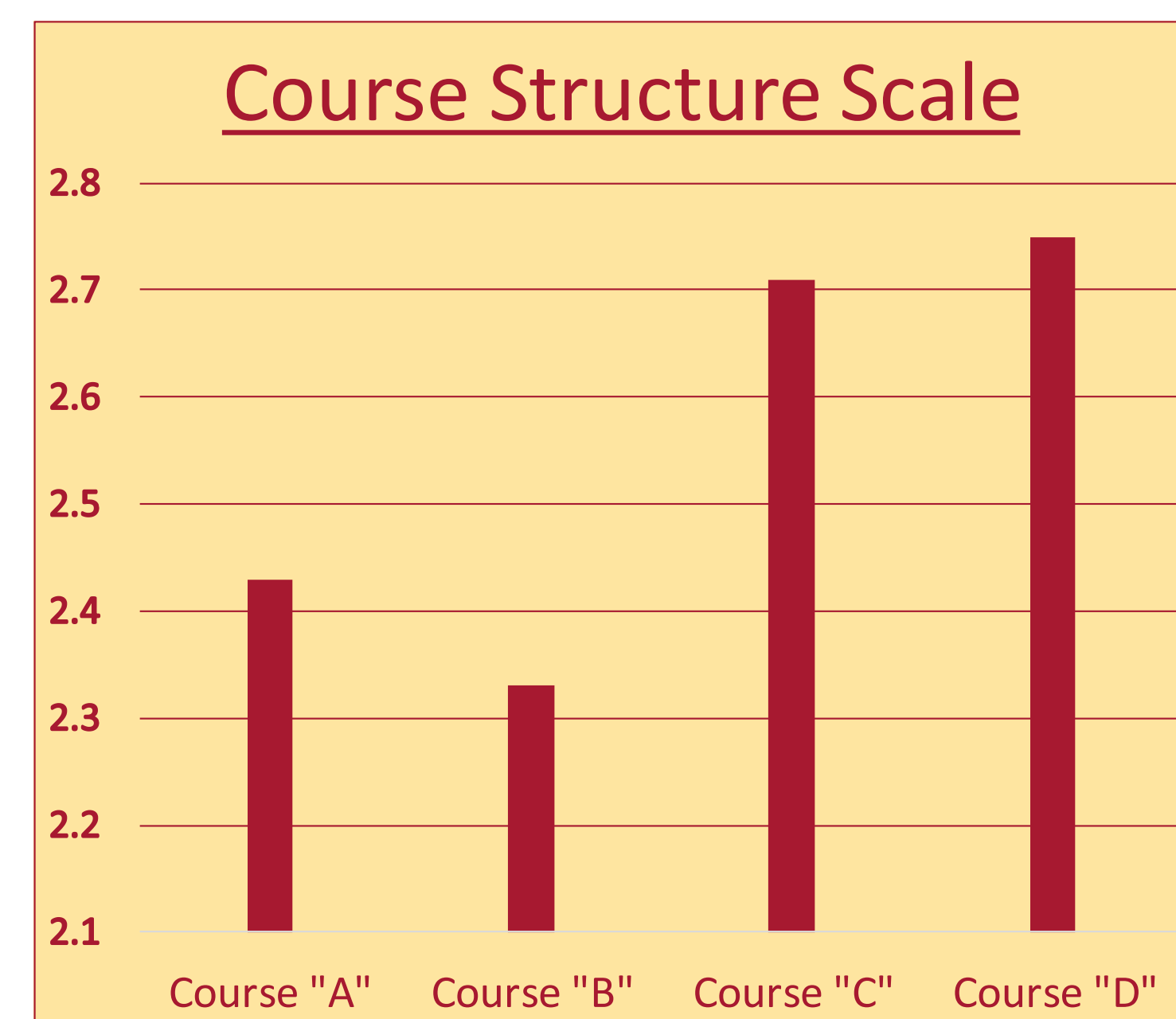
- Quantitative descriptive study investigate differences between students' perceptions regarding online course structures.
- Four online graduate courses were measured using the Structure Component Evaluation Tool

### Objectives

1. Measure the structure of the online courses
2. Differences between perceptions of the students within online courses?



### Findings



\*0= Not Structured,  
1= Minimally Structured,  
2= Moderately Structured, and  
3= Fully Structured

Structure Component	Course (x-y)	Mean Difference *	P-value	Std. Error
Course Objectives Clearness	C	-.753*	.028	.264
	B			
	D	-1.162*	.000	.279
Course Organization Plan	A	-1.346*	.001	.330
	B			
	C	-1.520*	.000	.332
Grading System Clearness	D	-1.889*	.000	.351
	A	-1.101*	.008	.332
	B	-1.349*	.001	.334
	C	-1.798*	.000	.354

\*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.



### Conclusions

- Findings support the Transactional Distance Theory
- Most important features of the courses include course schedule, consistency, and student-instructor interaction
- All courses received a high score in course consistency
- Most appreciated structure components were course objectives, course plan, and grading system



### Implications/Recommendations

- Departments should offer flexible online courses that help students to apply learned knowledge
- Communication and interaction play an important role in online learning environments.
- Online courses must be clear about the objectives, schedule, assignments, and expectations.
- Refer to course evaluations when desire to improve online courses.
- Findings contribute to the profession by being a piece of the literature of distance and web-based education.
- Findings can assist educators and instructional designers, within the profession of agricultural education, to develop meaningful and engaging online learning environments.



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