

# **Not Yet Sold:** What Employers and Community College Students Think About Online Education

*A Taking Stock Report*

September 19, 2014

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Through research and engagement, we provide people with the insights and support they need to arrive at workable solutions on these issues, regardless of their differences.

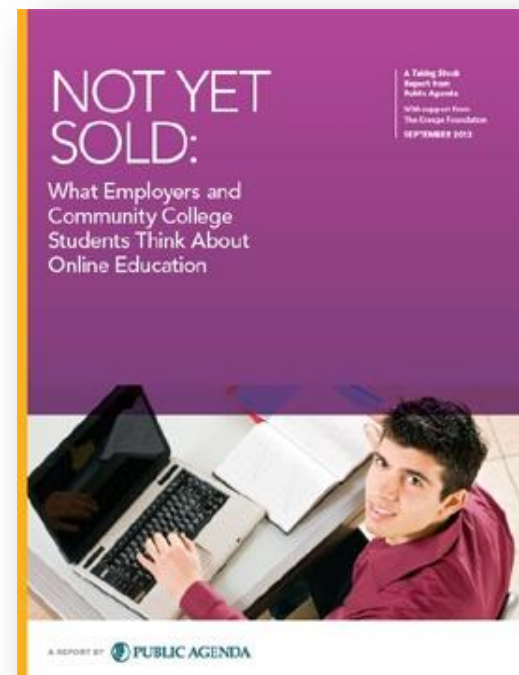
We work on lots of issues, but higher education is a big one.

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## This Report

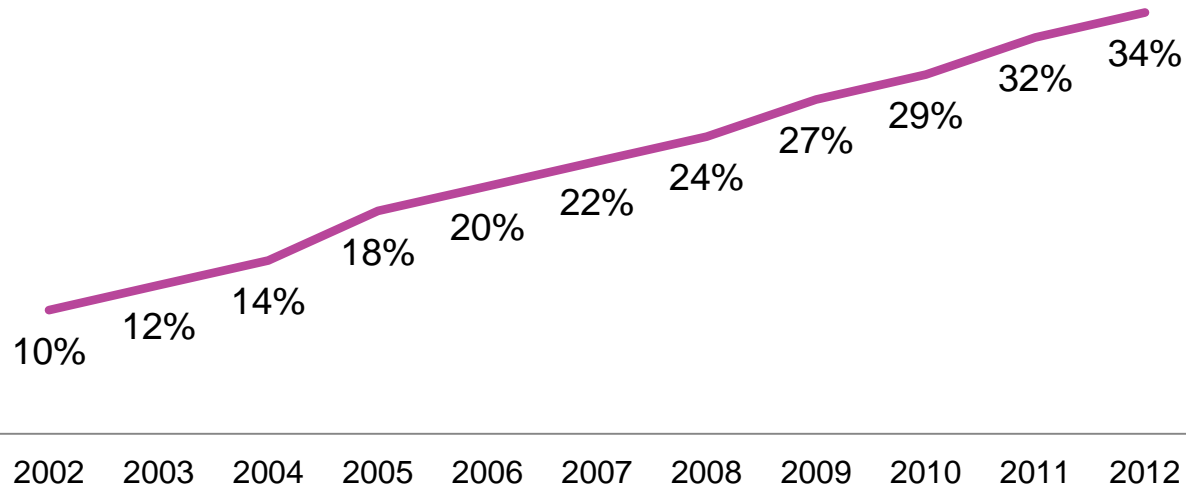
- Spring 2013
- Opinion research on the views of employers and students
- **Funded by The Kresge Foundation**



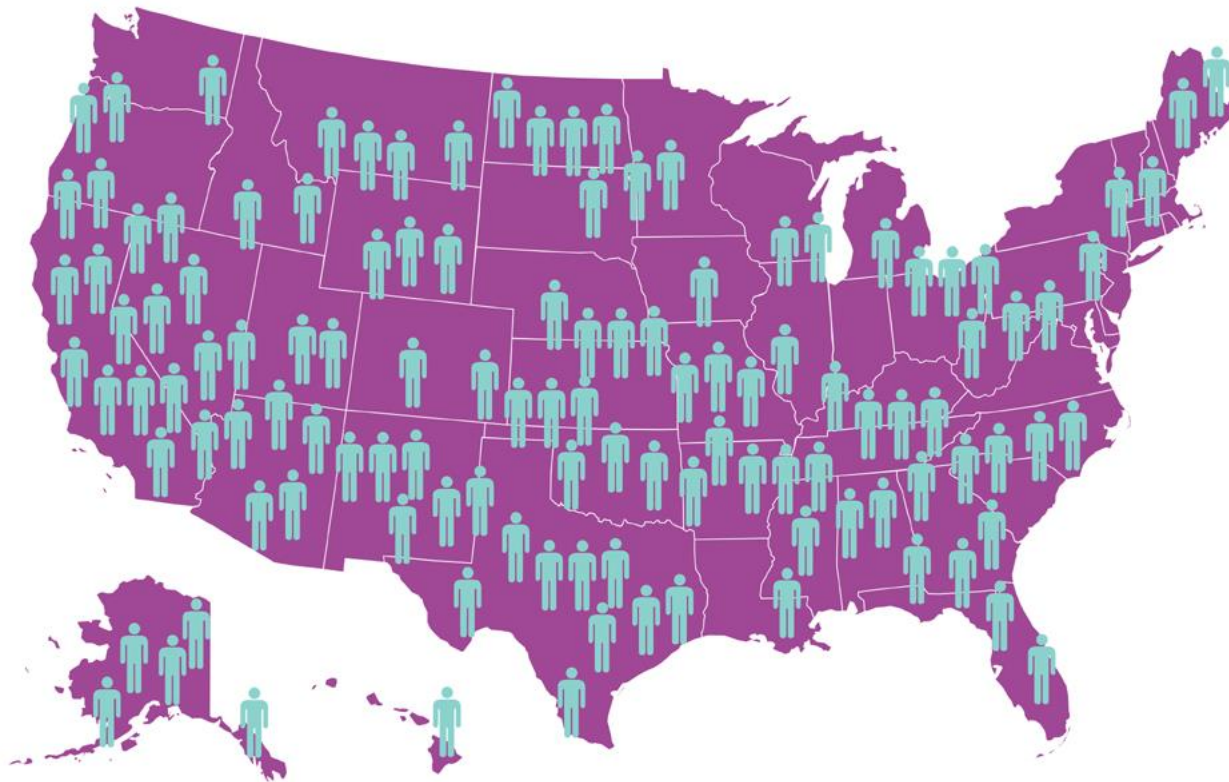
## The Trends Are Clear

- More students are taking online classes

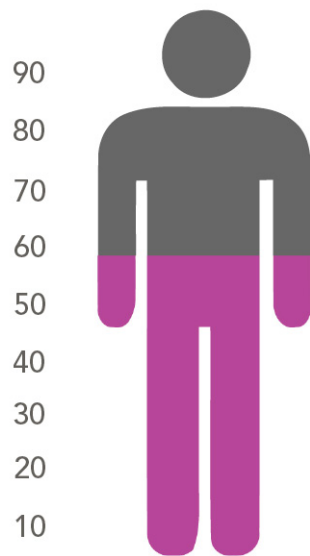
Percentage of students taking at least one class online



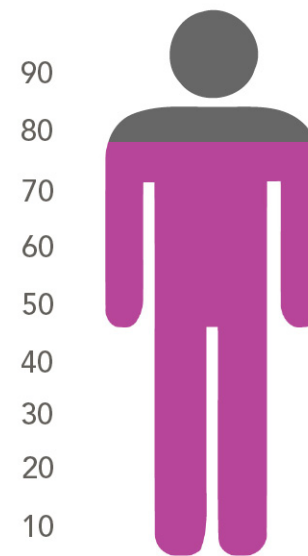
# 3 Million Students Earning Degrees Online



## Chief Academic Officers Get It



In 2003, **57%** of Chief Academic Officers said outcomes of online ed were the same as or superior to face-to-face.

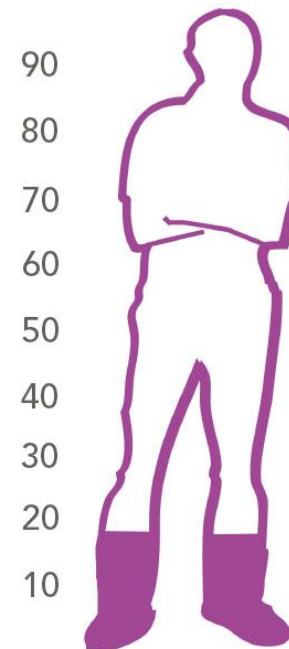


By 2012, that number had increased to **77%**.

## But Faculty Are Skeptical

Only **15%**

Of faculty who have not taught an online course say they can achieve outcomes at least equivalent to in-person courses



## Most Online Graduates Are Happy

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Just 4% say their program wasn’t worth it.



# Diversity of Online Education

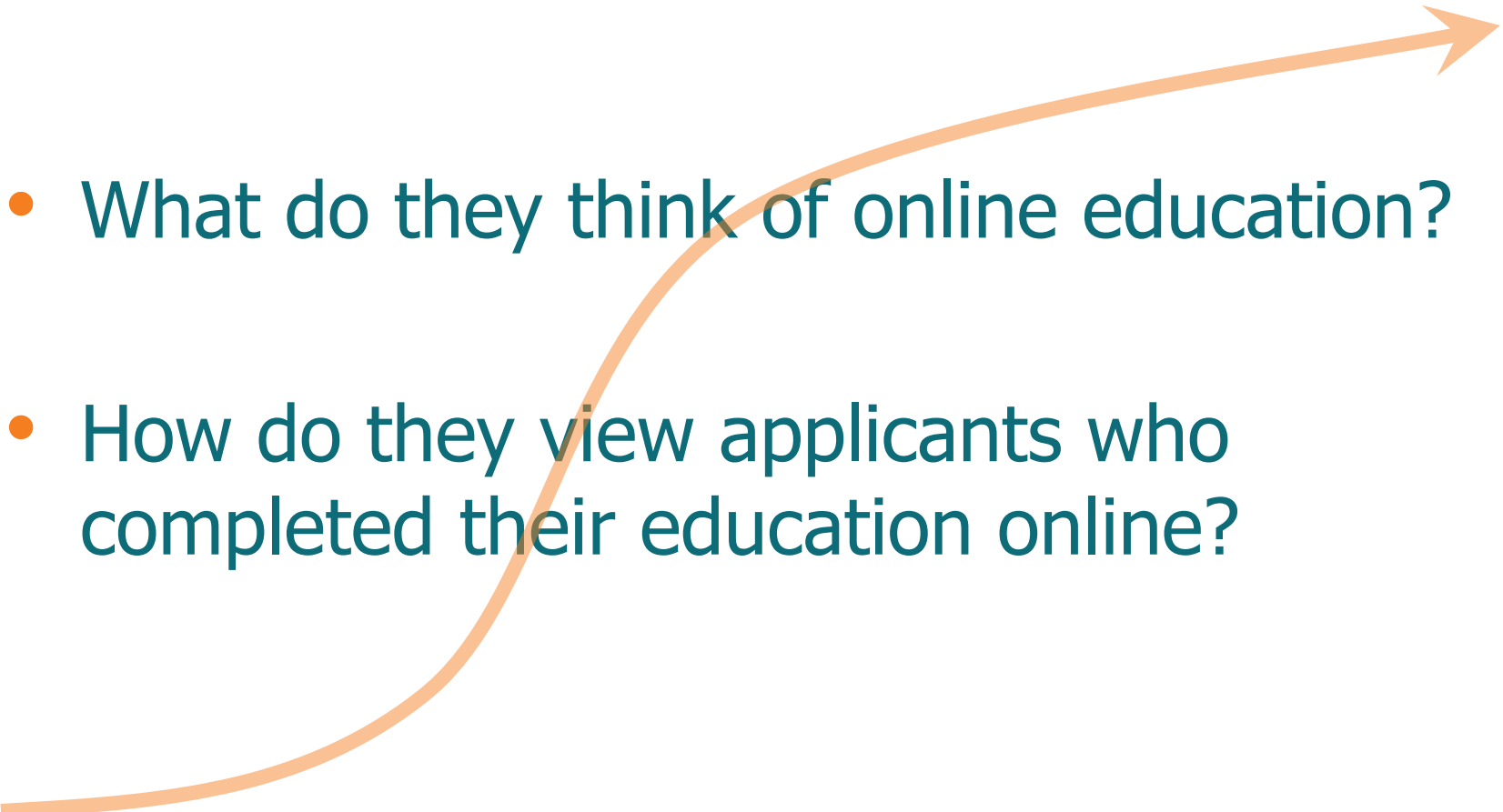


## Online Education: Rapidly Evolving

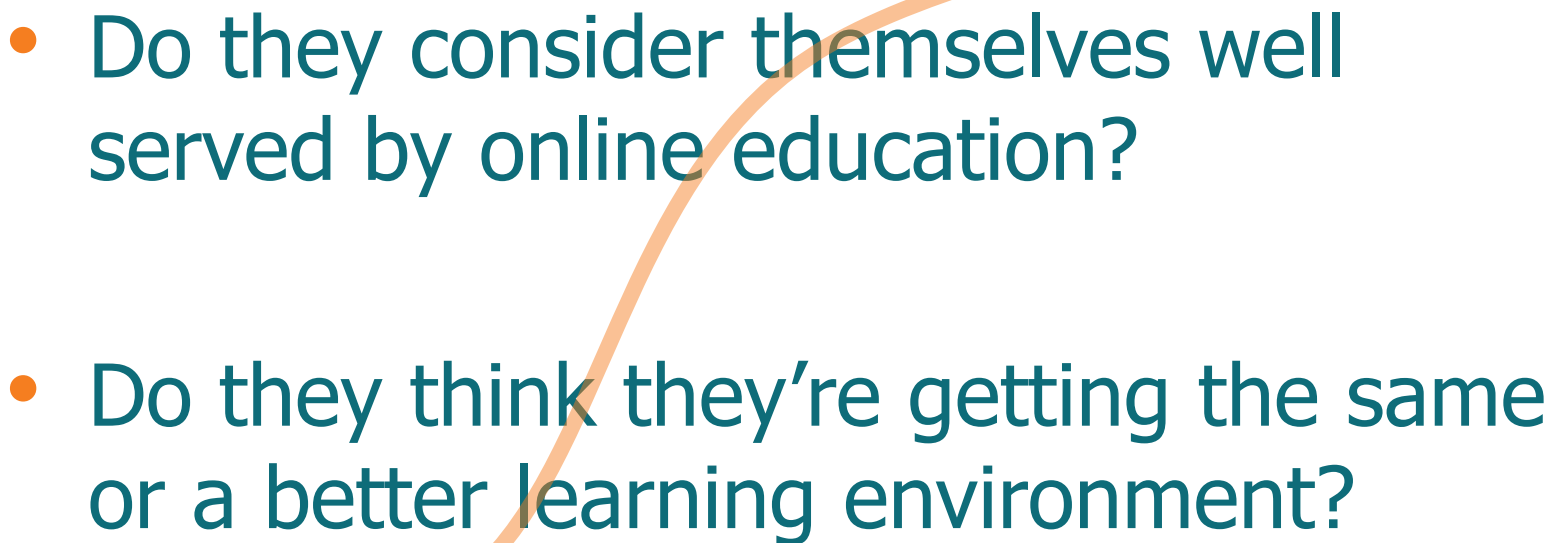
As more people are exposed to more diverse forms of online learning...

...opinions are likely to change and develop quickly.

## Employers

- 
- What do they think of online education?
  - How do they view applicants who completed their education online?

## Community College Students

- 
- Do they consider themselves well served by online education?
  - Do they think they're getting the same or a better learning environment?

# Online Education: Rapidly Evolving

How must online education evolve...

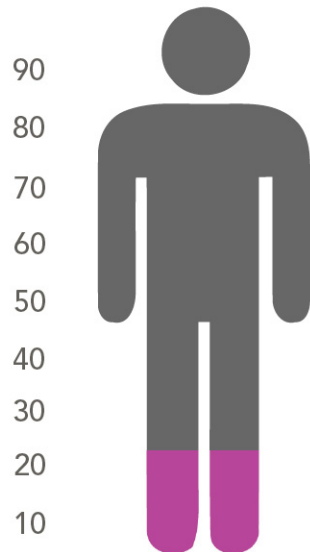
...to best serve students and future job applicants?

## Methodology

- **Employer Telephone Survey**
  - 656 HR professionals
  - Regionally representative
  - 50+ employees
  - Hiring for position that require post-secondary credential
  - Spring 2013
  - Private, public and not-for-profit sector

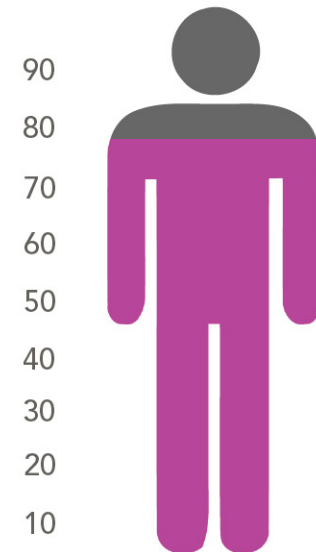


## Some Facts About These Employers



23% have taken an online class.

76% say their company supports online professional development for their employees.



## Views of Employers

Most believe  
there is a niche  
for online  
education,  
especially for  
older students

Percent of employers who say the following statement comes somewhat or very close to their views:

Online-only degrees and certificates provide real opportunities for...

...older students to get valuable college credentials.

80%

...younger, first-time college students to get a high-quality education.

50%

## Views of Employers

Many feel online programs require extra discipline from students

Percent of employers who say online-only programs require more, less or about the same amount of discipline, compared to traditional programs:

More discipline

45%

Less discipline

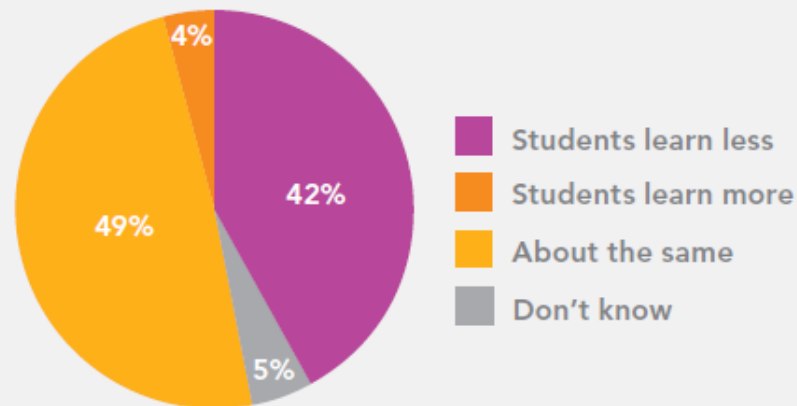
23%

About the same

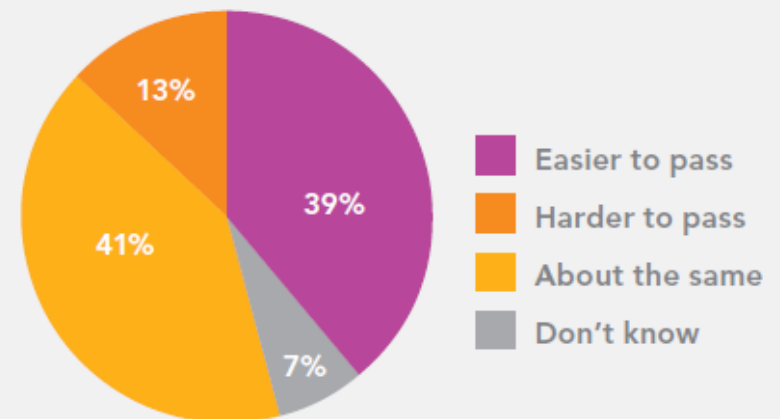
29%

# Views of Employers

Percent of employers who think students in online-only programs learn less, more or about the same amount, compared to students in traditional programs:



Percent of employers who say that, compared to traditional programs, online-only programs are easier to pass, harder to pass or about the same:



At the same time, many remain skeptical of the quality of online programs compared to traditional ones

## Views of Employers

Most would prefer a job applicant with a traditional degree from an average school over an applicant with an online degree from a top university

Percent of employers who would prefer a job applicant who:

Has a degree from an average school that was completed entirely in the classroom

56%

Has a degree from a top school that was completed entirely online

17%

It doesn't matter

21%

## Views of Employers

Most view hybrid programs as better than online-only programs

Percent of employers who say the following statement comes close or not close to their views:

Hybrid programs that involve a mix of online and in-person instruction give students a better education than online-only programs.

Very or somewhat close

82%

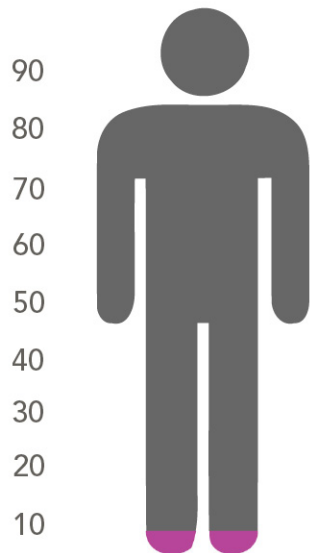
Not too or not at all close

13%

## Methodology

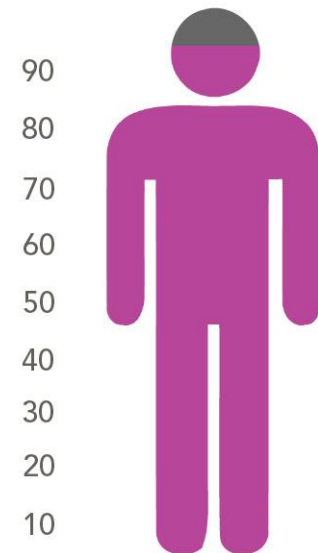
- **Student Survey**
  - 215 community college students
  - RDD telephone surveys and online panels
  - Spring 2013
  - Weighted against known demographics; propensity score matching
  - Margin of error of weighted data: +/- 7.9%

# Some Facts About These Students



94% are working toward a credential.

6% are taking classes but not looking to graduate.

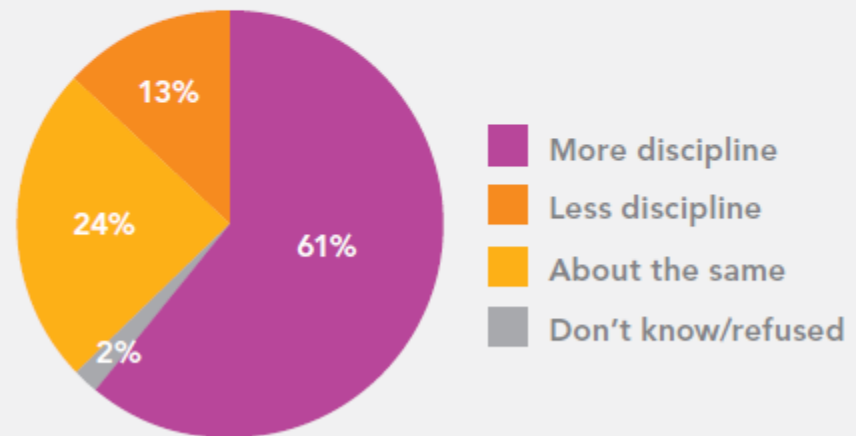




# Views of Students

Most agree online classes require more discipline from students

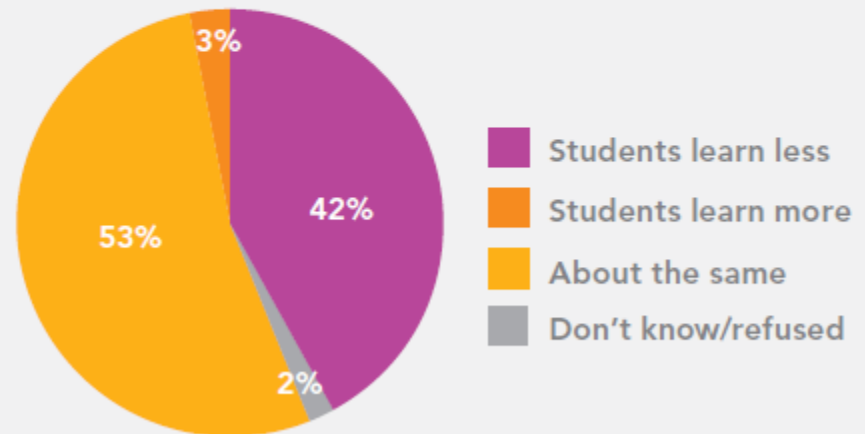
Percent of community college students who say online classes require more, less or the same amount of discipline, compared to in-person classes:



# Views of Students

But they are split on whether online classes teach students the same or less than in-person classes

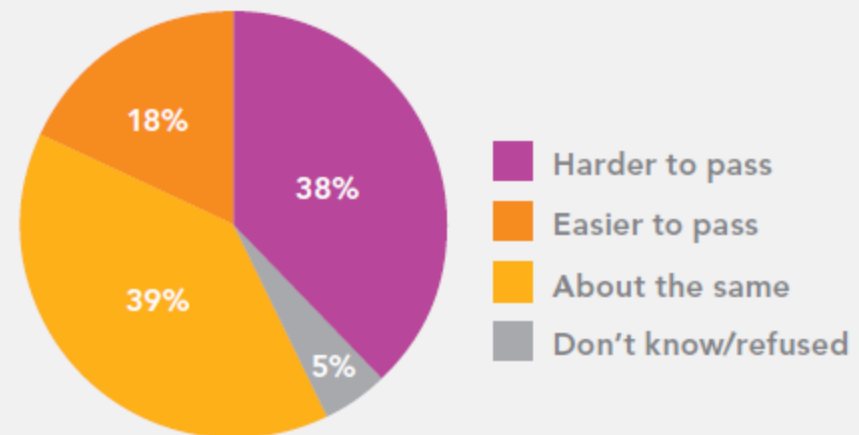
Percent of community college students who say students in online-only classes learn less, more or about the same, compared to students in more traditionally taught classes:



## Views of Students

Many say online classes are harder

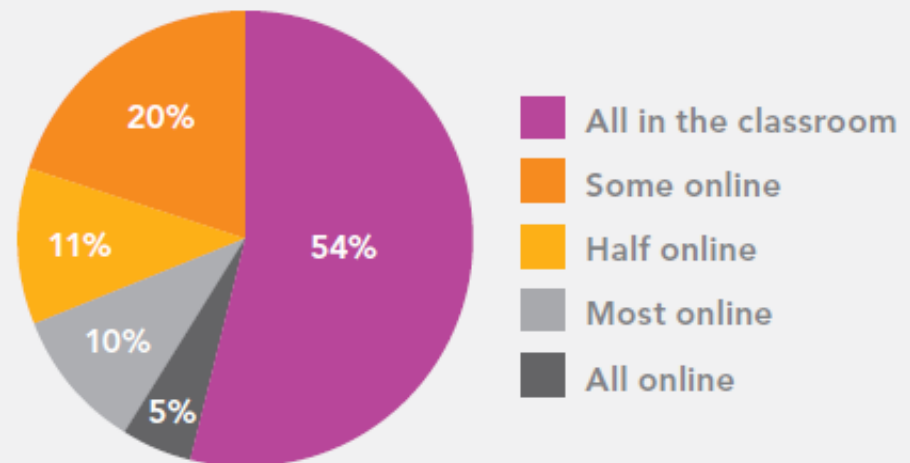
Percent of community college students who say that, compared to in-person classes, online-only classes are easier to pass, harder to pass or about the same:



# Views of Students

About half take classes online

Percent of community college students who take classes online:



## Views of Students

Though many wish they took fewer classes online

Percent of community college students who:

Want to take fewer classes online

41%

Want to take more classes online

20%

Say they are taking about the right amount online

39%

Base: Community college students who are taking classes online.

## What's Next?

- **Employers:** Will they become more accepting?

## What's Next?

- **Students:** How can we ensure online education meets their diverse needs?

Thank You

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