

2001 North County Educational Needs Assessment Survey

In Spring 2001, Hartnell College surveyed residents in Prunedale, Castroville, and other communities of North Monterey County. The purpose of this educational needs assessment was to determine the types of postsecondary education and training needed in these communities and how Hartnell College can meet these needs.

Who completed the survey?

Table 1 displays the characteristics of those persons who responded to the survey. Completed questionnaires were returned by 546 North County residents, including 141 from North Monterey County High School students, 91 from current Hartnell College students residing in North County, 155 from Prunedale residents, 82 from Castroville residents, and 77 from residents living in other areas of North County, including Moss Landing. Respondents generally reflect the demographics of these communities, except that a greater proportion of women (68%) and persons younger than 20 years old (36%) responded than are found in the general population. Approximately 10% of the respondents completed the Spanish version of the questionnaire.

How do students assess Hartnell?

Almost one-half of the survey respondents had previously taken courses or are currently taking courses at Hartnell College. These respon-

dents rated the instruction they received as being "very good". A typical comment was, "The teachers were well prepared and attentive to students." These respondents also rated

student services (registration, counseling, financial aid, etc.) at Hartnell College as "good". A typical comment was, "(My) questions were answered and everyone was helpful."

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics ¹

Characteristic	Total	
	N	%
Total²	546	100%
Gender		
Men	170	32%
Women	363	68%
Ethnicity		
African American	6	1%
American Indian	7	1%
Asian American	12	2%
Filipino	9	2%
Latino	180	37%
White	276	56%
Other	19	-- ³
Age		
Below 20	190	36%
20-24	30	6%
25-29	36	7%
30-39	69	13%
40-49	98	19%
Above 49	98	19%
Subgroup		
High School Students	141	26%
Current Hartnell Students	91	17%
Castroville Residents	82	15%
Prunedale Residents	155	28%
Other North County Residents	77	14%
Attended Hartnell		
Yes	260	48%
Current Student	91	17%
Within Last Year	49	9%
Within 2-5 Years	70	13%
More than 5 Years Ago	92	17%
No	283	52%

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

¹ Results for all respondents.

² Some subtotals may not sum to the total because some respondents did not identify their subgroup.

³ Not included in percentage calculations.



Do residents want to take Hartnell courses?

The largest proportion of respondents (46%) indicated that they would like to take Hartnell College courses in the future and an additional 40% reported that they might like to take courses. Only 13% of those completing the survey did not want to enroll in courses at Hartnell College.

While this response is overwhelmingly positive, it is likely that most of those who were not interested in attending Hartnell did not complete the questionnaire. Thus, survey results generally represent those interested in taking courses at Hartnell and not the overall population.

What types of courses do residents want?

Graph 1 shows that the largest proportion of those interested in taking college courses would like to take computer classes (52%). One reason for this might be that computer skills have become almost mandatory in today's job market. In addition, over one-third of the respondents were interested in taking general education courses. General education courses include math, English, science, and humanities.

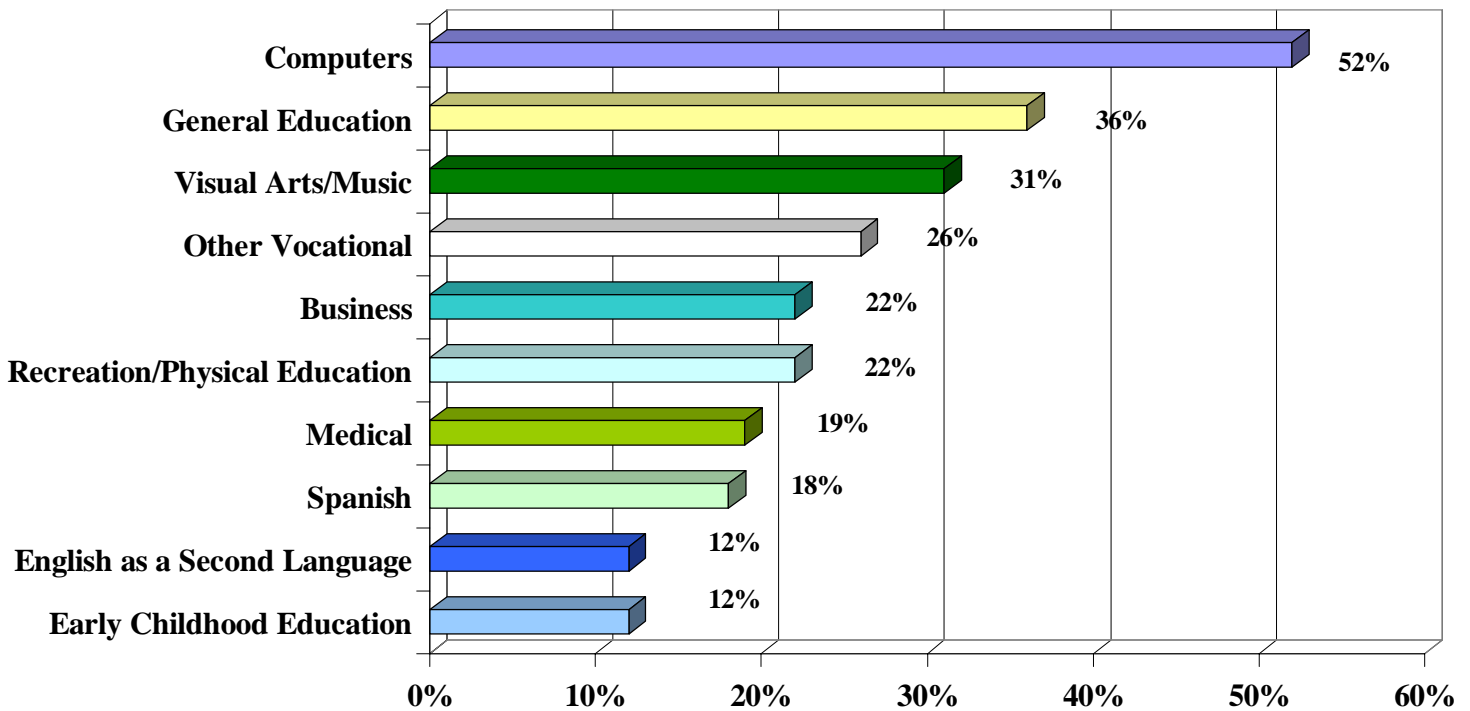
Almost one-third of respondents were interested in taking visual arts/music courses (31%) and an additional 26% were interested in other vocational classes, which include

technology (other than computers), law enforcement/corrections, construction, mechanics, and agriculture production. Other courses in which there was moderate interest included, business (22%), and recreation/physical education (22%).

The types of courses that respondents wanted are reflected in the reasons why they want to take courses. The top reasons residents were interested in taking classes were personal interest (57%), prepare, advance, or change career (30%), and earn a certificate or license (25%).

Approximately one-third of the residents responding to the survey reported that they would need financial aid assistance to attend classes. In addition, career counseling will be

Graph 1. What types of courses would you like to take?



needed by 24% of the respondents, child care by 18%, and tutoring by 12%.

Distance learning classes are fast becoming the wave of the future. Most respondents indicated that they would be interested in taking courses at home or at work via computer or television. The majority of them also specified that they had access to the Internet and/or a cable network.

Where should classes be offered?

Because the district that Hartnell serves is very large, it is important to offer classes as close as possible to potential students. Survey results show that respondents would be will-

ing to travel 6-10 miles to attend classes.

As displayed in graph 2, the largest proportion of total respondents would like courses offered at Hartnell’s main campus in Salinas (72%). The other sites where respondents were most willing to attend classes included North County High School (55%), Prunedale (45%), and Castroville (45%). A high proportion of Castroville residents (82%) would like classes offered in Castroville.

What is the best time to offer classes?

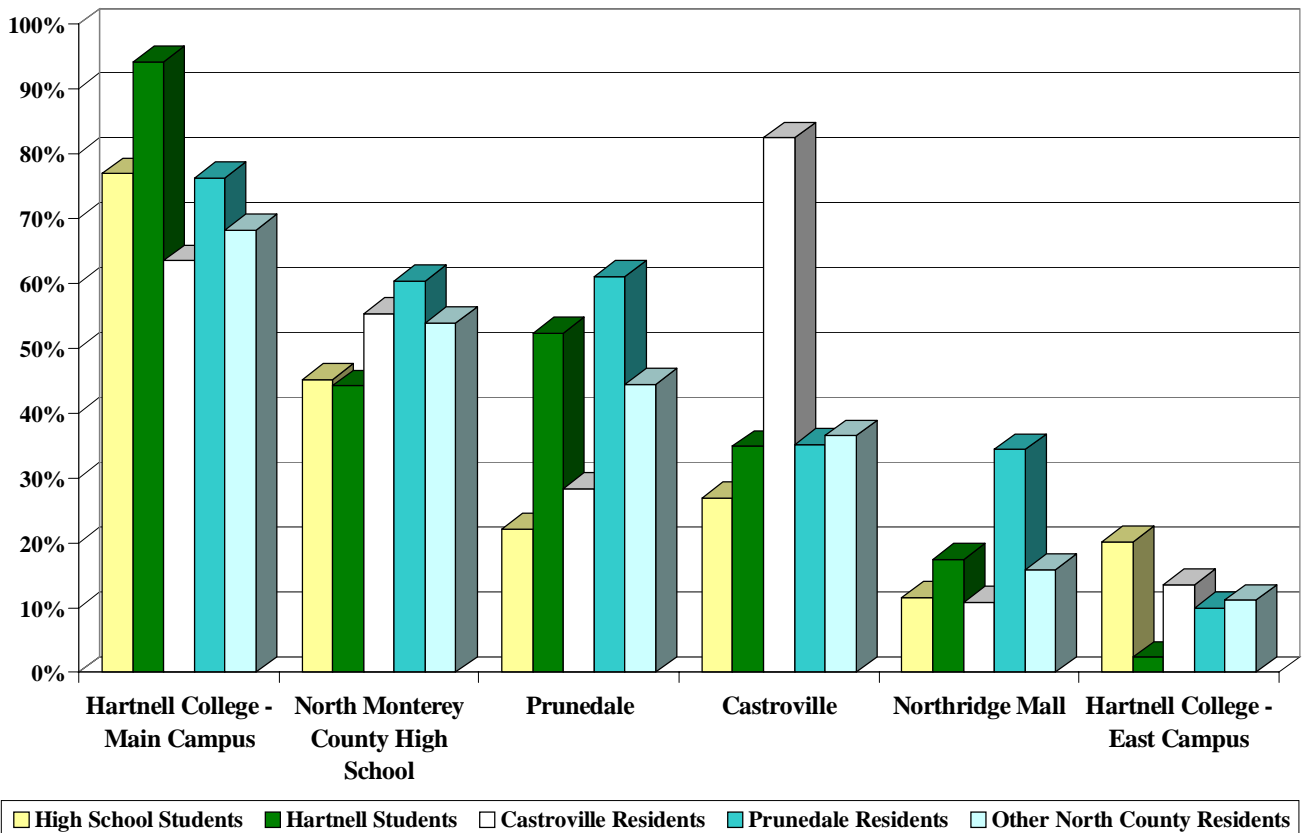
Graph 3 shows that the largest proportion of survey respondents want

courses offered on Monday through Thursday evenings. Since over one-third of the respondents (35%) reported that they work full-time, the preference for evening classes may reflect the need to take classes that would be compatible with a full-time work schedule.

What are the reasons for not attending Hartnell?

What an irony it is that with all of society’s modern conveniences, we find ourselves busier and more rushed than ever. It is not surprising then that among residents not interested in taking Hartnell classes, the primary reason was a lack of time (63%). Other reasons respondents were not

Graph 2. Where would you be willing to take classes?



interested in taking classes included, classes are too expensive (31%) and no interest (30%).

Summary and Conclusions

Survey results generally represent residents interested in taking courses at Hartnell College. The typical respondent was a 30-39 year old woman from Prunedale, who also worked full-time and had some college training. Among those interested in taking Hartnell classes, the typical resident wanted to take semester length, computer courses that are of-

ferred at the main campus on Wednesday evening. The largest proportion of those who did not want to take Hartnell classes specified the reason as being a lack of time.

Overall, comments that were received were very positive. A typical comment was, "I think Hartnell College offers a wonderful opportunity for an education."

North Monterey County employers were also surveyed using a different questionnaire. Results of this portion of the study may be found in the long version of this report.

Research Brief is a publication of the Institutional Research and Planning Office. More detailed information may be found in the **2001 North County Educational Needs Assessment Survey Final Report**, which is available upon request.

Graph 3. What time of the day and days of the week would you like classes offered?

