The GMetrix Exam: Does It Add Value?

TREO Talk Paper

Ms. Lily Pharris
Northwestern State University of Louisiana
pharrisl@nsula.edu

Ms. Mary Beth Tarver
Northwestern State University of Louisiana
tarverm@nsula.edu

Mr. Curtis Penrod
Northwestern State University of Louisiana
penrodc@nsula.edu

Abstract

In a nation where media representatives highlight excessive and wasteful spending as the norm for higher education institutions, the dull and seemingly insignificant incremental improvement efforts made by the typical university professor to enhance course instruction and reduce costs for students often goes overlooked.

In this study, scholars draw attention to the efforts of Computer Information Systems faculty at a four-year, regional, public institution as the faculty research ways to reduce the costs of a class. This class is the CIS 2000 – Spreadsheet Application class. In this class, students must take the Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) in Excel 2016 certification exam as their final examination. In preparation for this final examination, students must complete practice exams in GMetrix. Students pay a $122.50 lab fee to cover the cost of the certification exam as well as the GMetrix practice exams.

The scholars attempt to explore whether student success on the MOS in Excel 2016 certification exam is correlated with higher performance on GMetrix exams. Additionally, the scholars will compare the strength of the correlation between GMetrix exam scores and success on the MOS in Excel 2016 certification exam with the strength of correlation between success on the certification exam and other indicators. These indicators include high school grade point average, ACT and/or SAT scores, and cumulative grade point average at the beginning of the semester in which the student took the class.

The Computer Information Systems faculty can utilize the results of the study as an indicator of whether success on the exam is attributable to the practice for the exam. If so, investing in the exam would be a value-added activity. If not, investing in the exam might be a wasteful activity. Once the value of the GMetrix exam is determined, the departmental faculty will decide whether to continue this investment.