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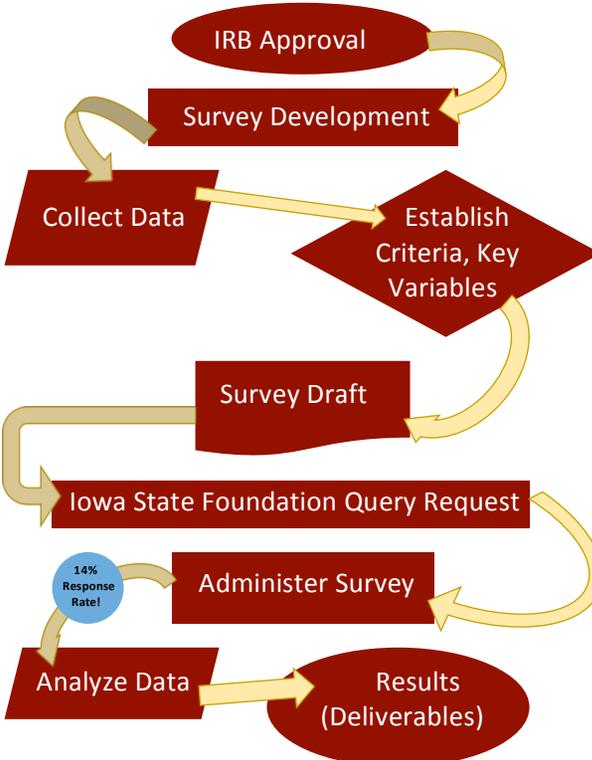
Comparison of Accounting Electives to Real-World Counterparts

Introduction:

Iowa State University Accounting Students have a variety of accounting elective courses from which to satisfy graduation requirements. While a variety of factors influence students' elective choices, there is little definitive guidance available to students looking to select elective courses based on career aspirations.

The objective of this project is to better assess the usefulness of accounting electives in common post-graduate career paths and use those findings to offer supplementary guidance to Iowa State accounting students. This study satisfies objectives by answering two main questions: why students take certain accounting classes and how they contribute to students' post-undergraduate careers.

Methods:

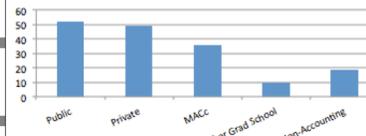


Respondents:

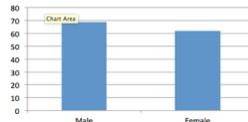
Survey participants represented a relatively uniform distribution of demographic variables of interest:

Participants' Graduation Year Distribution	
2007-2012	61
2013-2017	63
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2007-2010	40
2011-2014	43
2015-2017	41
Total Responses	124

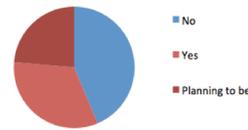
Distribution of Participants' Industry



Participant Gender Distribution



CPA Certification

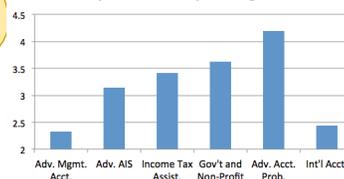


Results:

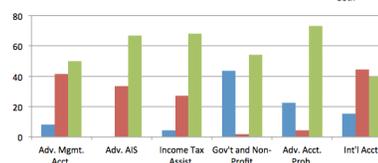
Rating		Participants were asked to rank elective courses on a qualitative five-point rating scale according to various criteria, including CPA prep and achievement of course objectives. Responses were converted to numeric values according to the "Rating" table. Participants' responses to each criterion were averaged by course, and each course was assigned a score out of 5.
Qualitative	Quantitative	
Extremely Well	5	
Very Well	4	
Moderately Well	3	
Slightly Well	2	
Not Well At All	1	

Participants' responses indicated that they valued Advanced Managerial Accounting, Advanced Information Systems, Income Tax Assistance, and International Accounting for career purposes versus preferring Governmental and Non-Profit Accounting and Advanced Accounting Problems for CPA prep. Those participants who indicated "Both" in course usefulness more frequently were not CPA certified participants. One interesting finding is the higher rating of Advanced Accounting Information Systems for CPA prep than the ratings of Advanced Managerial Accounting or International Accounting, considering no participants indicated CPA prep usefulness for Advanced AIS, but some did for Advanced Managerial and International Accounting.

Participant CPA Prep Rating Out of 5



Participant Course Usefulness Recommendation



Results Continued:

Assorted key variables were cross tabulated and subjected to chi-squared testing, a statistical method used to determine whether a significant relationship exist between two variables. The following table summarizes a selection of chi-test results.

Chi-Tests for Relationships at $\alpha = 0.05$			
	Chi Square	p-value	Significant?
Course Taken vs. Participant Industry	29.61	<0.01	Yes
Course Taken vs. Participant Gender	11.10	0.05	Yes
Participant Industry vs. Participant GPA	8.62	<0.01	Yes
Participant Certification vs. Course Taken	25.11	<0.01	Yes
Participant Gender vs. Participant GPA	1.40	0.71	No
Participant Gender vs. Participant Industry	2.46	0.48	No
Participant Gender vs. Participant Certification	1.90	0.39	No

*Participant Industry includes MACc

Conclusions:

- Some electives are better adapted to CPA preparation than others, but all elective courses provide some degree of usefulness in preparing students for career demands.
- Governmental and Non-Profit Accounting and Advanced Accounting Problems are well suited for CPA preparation.
- Post-graduate career industry influences course selection; GPA does not.
- A majority of participants indicated enrolling in Advanced Accounting Problems primarily for CPA prep and Advanced Information Systems for career prep, but these majorities are also highly valued Advanced Accounting Problems for career prep and Advanced Information Systems for CPA prep.

Contributions:

The results of this project can be used to advise students deciding which electives are best suited to their career aspirations. The data collected can also be used to improve accounting elective courses and assist academic programs, like Iowa State's MACc Program and Collegiate Women In Business.

Educational Impact:

This project involved conducting research with Iowa State University accounting graduates who have embarked on career paths the same or similar to my own future path. Their feedback on classes they found most useful based on applicable skills and knowledge gained has complemented my undergraduate education. Identifying the most useful aspects of accounting electives allowed me to reflect on my own personal coursework experiences and better process the important skills I've gained as a student.