

→ Fast Facts

→ Online learning

The National Center for Education Statistics estimated that the number of K–12 public school students enrolling in a technology-based distance education course grew by 65 percent in the two years from 2002–03 to 2004–05. On the basis of a more recent district survey, more than a million K–12 students took online courses in the 2007–08 school year. Few rigorous research studies of the effectiveness of online learning for K–12 students have been published.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, "Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies," Washington, D.C., 2009, www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf. Retrieved August 20, 2009.

→ SAT scores

More than 1.53 million students in the class of 2009 took the SAT. Of those, 40 percent were minority students. This is an increase from 38 percent in 2008 and 29.2 percent in 1999. This year the average scores were 501 on the critical-reading section, 515 on the mathematics section, and 493 for writing. The average mathematics score is the same as last year, while the reading and writing scores went down one point in 2008. On a long-term basis, mathematics scores have experienced an upward trend and are now four points higher than a decade ago; conversely, critical reading scores have declined, now four points below what they were ten years ago.

The College Board, "College Bound Seniors 2009," August 25, 2009, chronicle.com/article/SAT-Scores-Down-Slightly-as/48166/. Retrieved August 27, 2009.

→ Multitasking and media consumption

As of June 2009, 57 percent of Internet consumers use television and the Internet simultaneously at home. The number of people watching mobile video on handheld devices increased 70 percent from last year. People who watch video online increased their viewing by 46 percent compared to one year ago. The average American TV consumption remains at an all-time high (141 hours per month). Currently, 30 percent of homes in the United States have digital video recording (DVR) devices.

"Television, Internet and Mobile Usage in the U.S.," *A2IM2 Three Screen Report*, Volume 5, 2nd Quarter 2009, September 2, 2009, blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/3ScreenQ209_USRpt_final.pdf. Retrieved September 3rd, 2009.

→ Heavy

With potential implications for books versus e-books, four studies show that the abstract concept of importance is grounded in bodily experiences of weight. For example, participants in one study estimated the value of foreign currencies more highly while holding a heavy versus a light clipboard. The research demonstrates that the experience of weight is an integral part of the abstract conceptualization of importance. Much as weight makes people invest more physical effort in dealing with concrete objects, it also makes people invest more cognitive effort in dealing with abstract issues.

Nils, B. Jostmann, Lakens Daniël, and W. Schubert Thomas, "Weight as an Embodiment of Importance," *Psychological Science*, no. 9 (2009), dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02426.x

Gary Pattillo is reference librarian at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, e-mail: pattillo@email.unc.edu