TECHNOLOGY COUNTS 2009

Breaking Away From Tradition: E-Education Expands Opportunities For Raising Achievement

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Our Guests

Susan Patrick
President and CEO
International Association for K-12 Online Learning

William R. Thomas
Director of Educational Technology, Southern Regional Education Board
The number of K-12 students using online courses rose to more than a million public school students during the 2007-08 school year, a 47 percent increase from 2005-06.

Source: Sloan Consortium
Advanced Placement Secures Online Niche

- Since about 40 percent of public high schools do not provide Advanced Placement courses, online offerings are a way to level the playing field between bigger and better-off schools and the rural and urban schools that lack such resources.

- Three years ago, 13 percent of the roughly 17,000 schools that offered AP courses had online versions of those courses available for students. This school year, that percentage has risen to 17 percent.

Source: College Board
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Hunting the Internet for Quality Content

While roughly 75 percent of K-8 teachers turn to the Internet for instructional resources, some seven in 10 principals and teachers said they need help finding high-quality curricular resources online that meet state standards.

Source: “Schools and Generation ’Net” survey
“One of the big lessons we learned in higher ed is that the first online course someone takes is critical,” says Diane J. Goldsmith, the executive director of the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium. It’s necessary, she advises, to “help students navigate that first experience.”
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Teacher Training Goes in Virtual Direction

“One of the things we’ve been nervous about with online learning is that it could set us back decades where districts purchase access to a series of online courses for teachers, and teachers go home at night and sit alone in front of their computers, answering questions all in isolation.”

Joellen Killion
Deputy Executive Director, National Staff Development Council

Read the 2009 Technology Counts Report:
www.edweek.org/go/tc09
Virtual Approaches Vary:
State policies and programs for online-only education differ

“The criticisms that we have heard from policymakers [about online education] usually are around oversight, quality assurance, and funding.”

Kathy Christie
Chief of Staff, Education Commission of the States

Read the 2009 Technology Counts Report:
www.edweek.org/go/tc09
E-Learning Industry Evolving

“The virtual school market, while still relatively new, has been growing dramatically” and will likely continue to grow at a moderate pace.

Source: BMO Capital Markets Corp., a financial services company
E-Learning Industry Evolving

“The virtual school market, while still relatively new, has been growing dramatically” and will likely continue to grow at a moderate pace.

Source: BMO Capital Markets Corp., a financial services company.
Recent data show that most states have made progress enacting policies related to the use of educational technology. States, on average, earned a B in that category, according to original survey research by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center.

Nine states—Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, and West Virginia—have put in place all of the policies tracked by the research center in the use-of-technology category, earning each of those states an A.
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Technology Leaders: Grading the States

- States averaged a C-plus for policies that support the capacity for educators to use technology. For the second year in a row, Georgia, Kentucky, and West Virginia each earned an A for enacting at least five of the six policies monitored in this area.

- More data is available on state grades and we encourage you to follow up by checking it out online.

Find an interactive map with state technology grades at: www.edweek.org/go/tc09
Susan Patrick
President & CEO
International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL)
National Overview: K-12 Online Learning

• The K-12 online learning market is growing rapidly at 30% annually; 1,000,000 enrollments in 2008

• In K-12:
  – 25 states with state virtual schools (Technology Counts 2009)
  – 32 states with statewide programs; 44 states have statewide programs and policies for supporting students taking online courses (Keeping Pace 2008)
  – 70% of school districts across the United States offer online courses (Sloan 2008)
  – 18 states with 92,000 students enrolled in 173 full-time virtual school programs (Center for Education Reform)
Figure 1: National summary of how online learning is being implemented across the country.
Synthesis of New Research in K-12 Online Learning

• #1 Online Learning Expands Options
  • “The first impetus to the growth of K-12 distance education was an interest in expanding educational options and providing equal opportunities for all learners.” (p.7)

• #2 Is Effective: “Equal or Better”
  • “One conclusion seems clear: On average, students seem to perform equally well or better academically in online learning.” (p. 17)

• #3 Improves Teaching
  • Teachers who teach online reported positive improvements in face-to-face, too.
  • “Of those who reported teaching face-to-face while teaching online or subsequently, three in four reported a positive impact on their face-to-face teaching.” (p. 25)
Delivery of Online Courses as Disruptive Innovation in K-12

• Provides access to courses otherwise unavailable
• New model using e-learning offers:
  – Advanced courses and dual enrollment
  – Core courses (math, science, foreign language)
  – Remediation and content/credit recovery
  – Multiple pathways for learning (assessing)
• Must be a shift in teaching and learning paradigm
  – Carnegie model to computer-mediated model, shifting time and instructional support (student-learning focused, not seat-time focused)
  – Changes teacher-student interactivity, student-student, student-content; increases resources available, stronger instructional support model
• Disruptive innovation: offer something not available - providing alternative “as good as”; National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE 2008) reported online courses were “more engaging” for students than traditional lecture courses
WA Digital Learning Commons

• Independent research demonstrates increased on-time graduation rates and college/workforce readiness.
  – The results are clear -- DLC access to online courses increases on-time graduation rates at schools studied in Washington State.
  – When online courses are made available through the DLC to students who would not otherwise have had access to that course -- whether for purposes of remediation, advanced placement, or college entrance -- it makes a significant difference, increasing graduation rates and college/workforce readiness.

- **Research focused on online courses**
  - Multi-faceted online resources make it uneven, difficult to evaluate success (websites, etc).
  - The DLC has focused their research on the impact from online courses, as outcomes and results can be objectively gathered and tabulated.
  - 2004-05 DLC statistics in enrollment in advanced coursework are consistent with those of NCES, which reports that 14% of enrollments nationally are in AP or college-level courses.
  - Remediation & core courses are needed through online learning
    - INACOL Needs Assessment show Algebra I as the #1 course needed
Major Findings from DLC Evaluation Research: Online Learning Increasing Graduation Rates

• **1. INCREASED GRADUATION RATES**
  – Of the 115 students who graduated, 33% would NOT have graduated without a course made available through the DLC.

• **2. COLLEGE AND WORKFORCE READINESS**
  – Of the fifty-nine students who were college eligible, thirty-six students (61%) took advanced classes to better prepare themselves for college.
Federal Stimulus Funds: Invest in Expanding Online Learning

• Reach goals in stimulus
  – Equitable teacher distribution
  – College-ready and career-ready
  – Improve quality of data
  – Increase graduation rates

• Funding for online learning (many sources):
  – $650 million innovation fund
  – Title I $13B; with $3B for school improvement (40% for middle/high school); modernization
  – $650M for educational technology
  – $300 million for teacher quality and incentive grants ($100 million teacher quality and enhancement)

• Targeting this one-time money toward a solid investment in online learning to expand opportunities for online courses, train teachers to teach online, and build the technology infrastructure will increase offerings now and into the future
Thank You!

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E-Education Expands Opportunities for Student Achievement & Success

Improving Access and Graduation Rates

Bill Thomas
Director, Educational Technology
Southern Regional Education Board
SREB’s *Challenge to Lead*
Goals for Education

**Goal 3:** Achievement in middle grades for all groups of students exceeds national averages and performance gaps are closed.

**Goal 4:** All young adults have a high school diploma – or, if not, pass the GED tests.

**Goal 5:** All recent high school graduates have solid academic preparation and are ready for postsecondary education and a career.
All Required Core Academic Courses Should Be High-Quality and Available When Needed

• School districts should use online courses instead of uncertified or unqualified teachers.

• Quality online courses taught by quality online teachers are available for all core academic subjects and many others as well.

• An increasing number of online courses are available from state virtual schools.
All Middle Grades Schools Should Provide Student Access to Online Core Academic Courses

• Student academic problems usually start long before high school.
• Quality online courses and teachers are now or could be available.
• Areas of emphasis should include:
  – supporting students with academic difficulties
  – accelerated courses that enable students to advance rapidly
  – credit recovery for students who have failed a course.
Online Credit Recovery Courses

- Are needed by a huge number of students.

- Should not be considered a “quick fix.”

- Are difficult to develop and provide in large part because we are addressing students who have already failed.

- Can be successfully provided -- an upcoming SREB publication provides valuable insights and information.
Increase the Use of Hybrid Courses

• Are traditional courses with online components integrated in the course.

• Improve both student and teacher understanding of content.

• Improve student motivation.

• Should be used at all levels – elementary, middle and high.
Quality Online Professional Development is Needed

- Nationwide, most school districts are small.

- The need to improve middle grades and high school teachers’ academic and pedagogical skills and knowledge is extensive.

- A wide menu of professional development courses and training can be provided online.
Improving Teacher Performance: Recognize Success

- The teacher is the most important factor in student learning.

- Florida Virtual School has used a successful teacher performance-based program for more than five years.

- It is a success story that deserves replication.
Minority and English-Language Learners

• Account for a significant number of dropouts.

• Need online courses designed just for them.

• Would benefit if online teachers representing the same populations were recruited and trained.
Conclusion:
It’s Time for Significant Change

• Thomas Friedman is right! 2008 launched the Great Disruption.

• E-education can make a tremendous difference in the lives of countless thousands of students.

• State virtual schools can help many school districts “get it right.”

• Online learning is all about learning. Isn’t that what education is really all about?
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Question #1

• Do you recommend online courses for elementary aged children? If so, what grade levels and what subjects do you think would be appropriate?
Question #2

• Does e-learning prohibit certain types of hands-on collaborative activities, such as elaborate science experiments?
Question #3

• How are online schools accredited? Is this problematic for new schools?
Question #4

- How do schools manage a situation where many students are taking different courses and going at different speeds? It breaks the lockstep of the grade system, right?
Question #5

• What e-learning models are K-12 schools designing that incorporate a blend of traditional and online instruction? For example: a traditional English class that meets for two days per week and online for the remainder of the course.
Question #6

• What has been learned from delivering online learning to K-12 students that can be used to inform the delivery of online professional development for educators?
Question #7

- What impact does the current trend in K-12 online education have on higher education? Are there examples of innovative K-16 collaborations that are drawing on best practice?
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