

2005 Virtual School Symposium: Pre-conference Session

Session Agenda: Research in K12 Online Learning (Eight New Studies)

Introduction: Matt Dawson, Technology Center Lead; Learning Point Associates (2 min.)

Moderators: Bob Blomeyer (LPA) and Ray Rose (Concord) (5 min.)

Program Summary: Researchers from eight research teams will make brief presentations summarizing findings and recommendations, small groups will break out for discussions with the researchers, and the large group will reassemble to review small group findings and open the door for a final large group discussion on research, policy, and online learning practice.

First Four Research Presentations (20 min. each)

Study 1, Dickson: Looks at what kinds of courses are effective for what kinds of learners, in terms of learner outcomes, and also explore the bimodal nature of an online learning population and its relationship to the purposes of a virtual school. (20 minutes)

Study 2, Lowes et al.: Considers whether online teachers act as education reform agents in schools, and whether their own educational practice is transformed. (20 minutes)

Study 3, Leu et al.: Examines whether online collaborative learning can stimulate higher-level comprehension skills or “new literacies” and how these skills impact learner outcomes. (20 minutes)

Study 4, Ferdig et al.: Compares long-term learner outcomes for online and conventional education, including in specific content areas, and consider whether online learning success can be predicted. (20 minutes)

Break (5 minutes)

Second Four Research Presentations

Study 5, Hughes et al.: Tests the “No Significant Difference” hypothesis in online and conventional mathematics courses using the same curriculum. They also study whether variances in online teacher staff development lead to differences in learner outcomes. (20 minutes)

Study 6, Kleiman et al.: Examines the effectiveness of an online learning and teacher mentoring program designed to provide effective Algebra I instruction in low-income and rural schools while increasing the number of NCLB Highly Qualified Teachers of Mathematics in these schools over time. (20 minutes)

Study 7, Cavanaugh et al.: Compares learner outcomes in conventional Algebra classes with those in classes designed by the virtual school, but taught either by its own instructors or by franchise instructors, and also study the performance of learners who use an embedded digital graphing tool in their course and those who do not. (20 minutes)

Study 8, Zucker: Examines online student and instructor attitudes toward interaction, and attempts to experimentally determine if one form of encouraging student-to-student interaction does increase interaction, thereby improving such factors as retention, student performance, and student satisfaction with the course. (20 minutes)

Transition to Small Groups sessions (5 minutes)

Small Group Discussions (30 minutes)

Cluster *participants and audience members* in four to six smaller groups (TBA) and use leadership team to lead small group discussions; number of groups TBA.

Group leaders:;

Possible Topics:

- ***Student Academic Performance-- Tom Clark***
- ***Characteristics of Successful Online Students-- Zane Berge***
- ***Qualities of Effective Online Courses-- Rosina Smith***
- ***Professional Development for Effective Online Teaching and Learning-- Liz Page g***
- ***Challenges of Online Learning-- Cliff Blackerby***
- ***Online Learning, School Change, and Educational Reform -- Bob Blomeyer***

Reporting: Small Group Sessions (30 minutes):

Leadership team shares discussion findings (5 min each=20 minutes) and large group discussion & questions (10 minutes)

Plenary Discussion and Presentation of K-12 Online Learning Synthesis: (20 Minutes)

(Note: Power Point Presentations describing the eight individual research projects will be available after the conference on the NACOL Site. The “Synthesis of New Research on K-12 Online Learning” will be available as a download from the NCREL website at: <http://www.ncrel.org/tech/synthesis/index.html>) The *synthesis* contains contact information on all eight researchers and instructions about contacting them to request copies of their respective research reports.)