

## This Works So Much Better Online Than In The Classroom!



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## Researcher Background

- In Online Education since 1995
- Student Experience
- Design Experience
- Teaching Experience
- Faculty Development Instructor
- Some good, some bad



## Growth in Distance Education

- College Technology Review, 2004 - 5, 2 out of 3 institutions are offering distance learning programs
- 63% of institution are offering accredited degrees in at least one subject
- Projection: by 2011, 75% teaching load will be in online courses



## As Good or Better

- No Significant Difference
- MCS studies - online consider delivery mechanisms
  - Finding: the media or medium does not + or - impact learning
  - So why do it?
  - Why the growth in online education?



## Recent Meta-analysis

- Bernard, et al. Review of Ed Research, 2004
- Some aspects of DE outperform F2F, some perform more poorly
- aspects of design (medium or method) optimal in either or both instructional contexts?
- Comparison studies a waste of time if not asking 'Why?' and 'Under what conditions?'



## Why this study?

- Only anecdotal evidence
- Figuring out what works and what doesn't
- How is this demonstrated?
  - Student satisfaction?
  - Student outcomes
  - Faculty satisfaction?
- What is behind the stories?



## Research Questions

- Which aspects of instruction are more effective and successful in the online learning environment than in the F2F classroom, and why, according to faculty who have been recognized as exemplary online instructors?
- How do these aspects impact student learning in online classes and how is this revealed?



## Methodology

Qualitative case study (Yin, Merriam)

Most appropriate for answering the **why** and **how** questions



## Participant Selection

- Nationally recognized:
  - Quality Matters
  - Sloan-C
  - USDLA
  - WebCT Exemplary Course Project
- Have taught both F2F and Online



## Participants

- 11 out of 20 invitations accepted, 1 drop
- 5 females, 5 males
- Range from adjunct to full professor
- Teaching experience:
  - F2F: 10 - 38 yrs
  - Online: 2 - 9 yrs
- 4 from 2-yr, 6 from 4-yr
- Cross section of disciplines



## Frameworks

- Seven Principles of Good Practice - Chickering & Gamson, 1987
- 4 of the 5 Sloan-C Pillars of Quality
  - Learning Effectiveness
  - Access
  - Faculty Satisfaction
  - Student Satisfaction



## Major Themes

- Better Online
- Unique to Online
- Better F2F
- Student Success
- Faculty Satisfaction



## Major Findings

- Interaction and Participation
- Content Presentation
- Learner-centered Instruction
- Visibility of Students



## Interaction and Participation

- Visible interaction
- Formative evaluation of course
- Safe environment, all participate
- More time on task
- Permanent record of discussions
- Community of learners
- Critical thinking is visible



## Content Presentation

- Better ways to present content
- 24/7 access to content



## Learner-centered Instruction

- Active participation, reduces isolation
- Less direct control
- Control through design
- Facilitate, mentor
- Promotes student-student interaction
- Time, though generally more than F2F, is time well-spent



## Visibility of Students

- Improved:
  - participation
  - writing
  - critical thinking skills
  - and in some cases test scores
- Better outcomes in many aspects




## What to Keep Online?

- Discussions
- Content presentation
- Varied opportunities and options for learning
- Open access



### Conclusions


- Course Design
- Instruction, Faculty Development and Support
- Blended Learning Environments



### Recommendations:

Questions prompted by this study:


- Does having design and media development assistance promote higher quality in online course design and instruction?
- Does developing and teaching an online course change F2F instructional strategies?



### Recommendations:

Questions prompted by this study:

- Can a blended design model be developed based on a decision-making process?



### Website

Dissertation website:  
[www.elicbrown.com/dissertation](http://www.elicbrown.com/dissertation)



### Questions? Comments?

Thank-you!

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