

1 **Aspects of Online Courses
That Are More Effective
and Successful Than
Face-to-Face
Courses**

Eli Collins-Brown, Ed. D.
Dissertation, Illinois State University

November 10, 2006

2 **Researcher Background**

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

3 **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

4 **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?

5 **Bernard, et al. Meta-analysis, 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?'

6 **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?

7 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?

8 Methodology

- Qualitative case study (Yin, Merriam)
 - Most appropriate for answering the why and how questions

9 Protocol

- Survey to lay foundation for interviews
- Semi-structured interview
- Observation (when possible)
- Artifacts (when available)
- Member checks with all participants

10 Participant Selection

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

11 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

12 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

13 **Major Themes**

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

14 **Major Findings**

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

15 **Interaction and Participation**

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

16 **Content Presentation**

- Better ways to present content
- 24/7 access to content
- Both come under the Access and Student Satisfaction pillar

17 **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

18 **Visibility of Students**

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

19 **What to Keep Online?**

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

20 **Conclusions**

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

21 **Recommendations:**

Questions prompted by this study:

- Do better students take online courses?
- Or do students who stay in online courses become better students?
- What is the student story? Repeat student with students.

22 **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?

23 **Recommendations:**

Questions prompted by this study:

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

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Questions?
Comments?

Dissertation website: www.elicbrown.com/dissertation

Thank-you!

Contact info:

Dr. Eli Collins-Brown
Director of Instructional Technology
Methodist College of Nursing
ecollins-brown@mmci.org