



Unpacking Online Outcomes: Applying Research to Improve the Online Community College Learning Experience

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Enhancing Online Course Outcomes: An Exploration of Teaching & Learning in Virginia

- Examines factors likely to affect quality of teaching and learning in online courses
- Research on online course-taking generally lacks:
 - in-depth examination of how content and instruction are adapted to suit the online context
 - how the technology-mediated delivery system affects student learning
 - focus on community college context
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Research Questions

1. What factors influence instructors' approaches to online teaching?
2. How do students perceive and experience online courses as compared to face-to-face courses?
3. What are the opportunities and challenges for institutions to implement and sustain online course quality enhancement efforts?

Methods and Data

- Fieldwork conducted at 2 community colleges Virginia during spring 2011
 - 83 semi-structured interviews with faculty, students, administrators, and staff
 - “Virtual” observations of 23 high-enrollment, introductory college level courses
 - Policy and instructional document collection
- Quantitative analyses utilized unit record data sorted at course and student level

Data Analysis

- Interview transcripts were coded using ATLAS.ti software
- Online courses were rated (1-3) based on CCRC-developed course quality rubric
- Quantitative analyses utilized a variety of statistical techniques (i.e., descriptive, regression)
- Limitations
 - Interviews/observations were voluntary and may not reflect the perceptions and experiences of most stakeholders
 - Students were interviewed late in semester, likely biasing our sample toward more successful online students