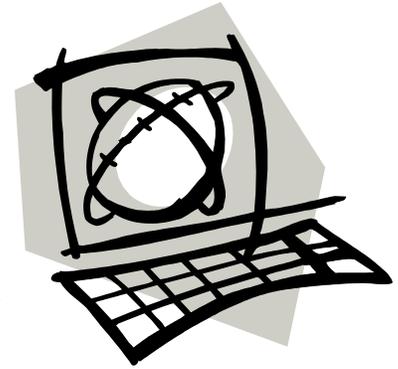# ONLINE LEARNING IN OREGON

SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS & FUTURE PROSPECTS

What is the history and current state of K-12 online learning in Oregon?

2002-2003 School Year:

- 3000 students took courses from K-12 Oregon online learning providers.
- 120 online K-12 courses offered, comprehensive curriculum leading to diploma and college credit.

Since 1996, Oregon is a nationwide leader in K-12 online learning: innovation, students globally served, regional & national media coverage, regional and national recognition and awards.

K-12 online learning efforts

- ➢ CyberSchool – 1996, first provider of online high school courses in the nation, Eugene School District, becomes COOLSchool (OPEN/LBLESD)
- ➢ NetSchool – 1998, Hillsboro School District. Discontinued 2001.
- ➢ SK Online – 1999, Salem-Keizer School District
- ➢ SOOS – 2000, Southern Oregon ESD, expanded to Oregon Online
- ➢ Cyberscholars – 2000, Portland Public School District summer and alternative program
- ➢ NW WebSchool – 2001 NWRESD. Discontinued 2003.
- ➢ Corvallis Online – 2001, Corvallis School District
- ➢ COOLSchool – 2001, Linn-Benton-Lincoln ESD
- ➢ OSU K-12 Online – 2003, offered through OSU Extended Campus.

Other learning programs incorporating or piloting online instruction Molalla, McMinnville, Albany, West Lane, Coos Bay, Dayton, Polk-Yamhill Consortium, Sheridan, North Clackamas.

Currently proposed online charter schools: Bend-La Pine, North Clackamas, Lebanon

What is the history and current state of higher education and web-based learning in Oregon?

For the 2002-2003 school year, Oregon University System offered 817 web-based courses serving 15,545 enrollments. In 2001-02, Oregon community colleges served nearly 32,000 students.

Higher education has been involved in distance education since the mid 80s when the state invested in building ED-NET, a satellite system offering compressed video to some 40 sites throughout Oregon. Oregon higher education system is positioned as a national leader in distance education.

Growth was jumpstarted by the use of external grant funds obtained by faculty and staff in the higher education institutions.

Progress has been made over the last 15 years by:
- building partnerships
- coordinating efforts among campuses and sectors
- establishing policies that encourage growth
- targeting resources to high demand curricular areas
- establishing networks and infrastructures.

Today many Oregon colleges and universities offer online degrees and programs for all levels of learners.

What can web-based learning bring to Oregon students?

- Solve schedule conflicts for students and teachers

- Provide broader curricular options

- Supplement in-school and home school learning

- Adjust and modify to better meet student learning styles and needs

- Accommodate the learning environment for student long-term illness, work schedules, and special education

- Overcome barriers of time and space

- Accelerate curriculum offerings for younger students

- Specialize instruction for targeted groups of students

- Consolidate resources for more efficient instruction

- Recover ADM for students who have left traditional schools

- Prepare students for 21st Century learning

- Enable alternative credit recovery opportunity

What is the future of online learning?

As students need alternatives to traditional education, they will continue to gravitate toward online learning. For some students, web-based learning will be their primary school. For most it will be one choice among many educational options.

Highly mobile and web-connected students will mix and match online, video conferencing, video on demand, and community-based learning experiences from non-traditional sources with traditional high school.

Hybridization of the online and traditional classrooms will individualize instruction in schools. Students in traditional classrooms can use online course content as the foundation for self-paced, differentiated learning with the support of an instructor "at the elbow."

Online learning is spreading throughout our society: universities and colleges, military training and college, DoDEA education for K-12, technical training and certification. Every student should have meaningful online learning experiences to develop the skill set for self-directed learning: communication, network resources, and technology embedded learning.

What does Online Learning Look Like?

Quality online learning is highly interactive. The virtual classroom environment is a place for much teacher-student and student-student interaction, just as you would see in a traditional classroom. Teachers are expected to do many of the same things they are expected to do in a face-to-face environment, with the difference being in the medium of communication and their use of online resources.

In general, online courses incorporate:
- Flexible, asynchronous learning so that student learning is not necessarily tied to the daily schedule of their teachers.
- Significant communication through email, threaded discussions, chat session, phone calls, and face-to-face meetings by appointment.
- Teacher developed content and or interactive programs presenting and reinforcing student learning.
- Courses designed to requirements of district and state content standards.
- Web-based course content that is often open-ended and project-based.

How can both small and rural schools benefit? How can urban schools benefit?
- On demand learning – students may take courses as needed.
- Flexibility in staffing and access to a broader pool of teachers.
- Expanded course offerings.

What is necessary to support learning online?

- Funding: online instruction costs are different but comparable to traditional schooling. Staffing is the greatest cost.
- Staffing: teachers, administrative, and clerical support. Contractual issues should be considered.
- Infrastructure: servers, Internet connectivity, technical support staffing.
- Course management system to organize and host online instruction.
- Development and acquisition of online curriculum.
- Staff development in support of instruction and content design.
- Support of students through staffing within the traditional school setting.
- Site mentors
- Attendance / course progress monitoring and reporting

How are students, teachers, and schools held accountable?

- Accreditation for coursework through Northwest Association of Schools, Colleges & Universities for school or district programs. (NASCU taking the lead on defining accreditation criteria for the United States).

- Teacher qualifications – Oregon licensed instructors. Meet requirements of NCLB highly qualified teachers. Instructors subject to TSPC licensure requirements. Most teachers are online part-time and teach in traditional classrooms.

- Contractual – District online schools operate under local bargaining agreements, ESD's work under individual personal agreements, university's instructors are hired as employees and held under university agreements.

- Curriculum – courses aligned to District and state curriculum standards.

- Communication – online instructors use a full range of contact channels: email, chat, discussion groups, telephone, some use of face-to-face appointments.

- Earning of credit based on meeting the course standards.

- Governance – District online programs ultimately answerable to elected local school board, subject to oversight by district administration. ESD and university based programs under a board of representatives.

- Authentic student work – Full electronic records can be kept within course management system. Asynchronous and project-based learning individualizes student work and pace.

- ADM accountability – based on active participation and performance rather than solely linked to seat-time.

What increases student completion and achievement in online learning?
- Expanded course offerings
- Reliable and student-friendly online courses: easily navigated and simple to use.
- ADA compliance and unique accommodations: 508, 504, and IEP.
- Asynchronous pacing
- Mastery and performance-based learning
- Personal and hybrid online and face-to-face course support
- Project-based learning
- Enhanced communication and personal contact through email, telephone, and personal interaction
- Program stability
- Access to labs

Is there a problem with online student isolation and lack of socialization?
- No more than in a traditional settings, truly a non-issue for today's connected students.
- Online learning can help overcome the negative socialization of large schools.
- Online learning can help overcome the isolation of rural schools.
- Teachers and students may even connect better in an one-on-one setting online through email and discussion than they do in traditional settings.

How does online learning help English language learners / ESL students?
- Customized curriculum in dual languages.
- Asynchronous courses allow individual pacing.
- Provides required course content while student continues to gain English skills.
- Moderate cultural differences through customized courses.

How does online learning help address NCLB?
- Highly qualified teachers within an expanded pool beyond a single district.
- Differentiated curriculum addressing student differences.
- Asynchronous credit recovery to meet timely graduation requirements in 4 years.
- Course development aligned to state content standards.

What are the challenges to sustainable online learning?
- Adequate, stable, long-term funding of K-20 education.
- Funding the costs of professional and curriculum development.
- Solving the dilemma of tuition-based funding vs. free public K-12 learning.
- Investment to meet rising demand.
- Vision and understanding of a new way of looking at school.
- Program and course content access.
- Contractual considerations.
- Policy changes for rules and statutes that may not apply in an online situation.

Web addresses of programs and additional resources

Chemeketa Online	online.chemeketa.edu
COOLSchool	www.coolschool.k12.or.us
Corvallis Online	www2.corvallis.k12.or.us/corvallisonline
e-Learning @ Oregon Dept. of Education	www.ode.state.or.us/elearning
Oregon Network for Education	oregonone.org/
OSU K-12 Online	k12online.oregonstate.edu
OSU Extended Campus	ecampus.oregonstate.edu
SK Online	www.skonline.org
Southern Oregon Online School/Oregon Online	www.o2learning.org
360 Learning	www.360Learning.com