Author

My name is Andy Mann. I am the Educational Technology Consultant for the Calhoun Intermediate School District in Marshall, Michigan. In my position I have the pleasure of working with educators and sometimes students throughout a dozen different districts we serve. My role is to help them use technology resources to improve teaching and learning.

Research Question

What online course design strategies can instructors employ to best support students who complete most of their course work offline?

Relevant Journals


This journal article examines print vs. on-screen consumption of information. Medical students were interviewed, asking why they print rather than read material on the screen. The journal found time/convenience, learning styles, and document formatting to be primary reasons. Limitations such as being able to annotate text on the screen were considered issues which will eventually be addressed as software evolves. In summary it asked, “is it possible that we are trying to force the computer to function in ways it simply cannot? Perhaps its highest function is to serve for nearly immediate information access.”


This journal’s research explains why reading online may not be as effective as reading in print. It supports this through research and explains that how users read should be considered when designing online courses. It goes on to say how students are more easily distracted while reading online. It also highlights the differences between how older people learn preferring printed text, while younger readers have developed the ability to learn faster reading text in a digital format. It went on to explain advantages of reading printed text – such as it is multi-sensory. It also highlighted the advantage of digital text including the option for electronic aids and embedded hyperlinks.


This research attempts to measure the differences in recall and recognition of advertising and news stories when read in print as compared to read online. The results suggest individuals who read advertising in print remember more content. Individuals who read news stories in print tend to remember a similar amount of content as compared to those reading the same news stories online.

This study looks at the differences between online and face-to-face learning environments on student learning. In attempted to answer three research questions including: “How do learning style preferences relate to the student outcomes achieved in online and face-to-face learning environments; and what learning style constructs significantly influence student outcomes in both the online and face-to-face delivery formats?” These are relative as printing and reading material offline is more often considered a design of face-to-face instruction than online instruction.


This journal article researches the most effective instructional designs for online courses. It also considers how students learn differently online and how the design and organization of the content must be adjusted for online delivery. It provided many best practices for designing content for online courses. The research made a basic recommendation relevant to my research: “Provide content in multiple formats. This is done through the use of various communication technologies.” The journal went on to explain the learning value of providing content in multiple formats.


This study compared students learning library research skills using a traditional printed workbook vs. an online electronic workbook. The theory was an electronic workbook may reduce the tedium associated with printed workbook. The research found students using the electronic workbook found it to be easier, more user-friendly, and less time-consuming than the printed workbook. The study also found that students retained information equally using either learning strategy.


This is not a journal but a web article which seems relative to my research question. It includes some recommendations such as “when content is longer than about 10 printed pages, or intended to be read as a whole, you should probably post the document for download.” It continues to say that few people read long documents online. It also recommends if original documents contains complex graphics or layouts it is better to post as a file which may be downloaded.

I used [KnightsCite](http://www.onenw.org/toolkit/writing-online-best-practices) from Calvin College in Grand Rapids for creating my APA citations.