

Learning Science Online: A Descriptive Study of Online Science Courses for Teachers

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Summary

Online education is a rapidly growing phenomenon for science teachers. Using a sample of 40 online science courses for teachers offered during the 2004-2005 academic year, the Learning Science Online (LSO) study asks:

- Who are the students are in these courses?
- Who are the instructors?
- What does science teaching and learning looks like in these courses?

This research is unique in that it is the first aggregate study of online science courses from a wide variety of educational programs. Descriptive analyses suggest the typical instructor of these courses mirrors the science professoriate in many ways. The typical student is representative of the majority of high-school science teachers, although more likely to be in the early stages of their careers than the average teacher. The science teaching and learning utilized in these courses included frequent use of online discussions, Web-based readings, and images, while the use of more common instructional methods varied across courses.

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