

Florida Virtual School

Sample Projects Evaluated by PEER

Using a Virtual Learning Lab for Teaching and Learning: A Case Study for Meeting the Needs of Gifted Middle School Students in a Rural School District (2012–2013)

Case study evaluation typified a Florida Virtual School (FLVS) Virtual Learning Labs (VLL) model for allowing public school students to obtain learning in a blended learning environment. Using this approach allowed the investigators to see and understand as much as possible about the types of interactions between the teachers and learners in a successful blended-learning setting, without having to generalize beyond it. Data collection was extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information, including all six of the sources recommended by major researchers in the field, such as Yin (2003), Stake (1995), and others. Findings included an in-depth explication of the learning lab, lessons learned, and evidence for supporting the use of this type of blended learning environment. In Florida, school districts are using these labs to ease class-size limits, help students fulfill graduate requirements, and improve districts' academic results. According to FLVS, currently there are 317 of these labs in Florida, which are offered in a computer lab or other classroom with on-site lab facilitators. VLL are a migration from fully online learning, into a physical school environment where students can learn using the Internet to deliver instruction and content, while being supervised.

- Principal Investigators: Bonnie Swan and Michael Hynes, UCF PEER

Comparative Descriptive Study of the Effectiveness of Online Distance Education Teachers (2012–2013)

The purpose of this Florida Virtual School (FLVS) and Morgridge Family Foundation sponsored study was to look at the effectiveness of FLVS online distance education for Algebra and Biology. The project sought to examine the educational practices and beliefs of a workforce of critically needed distance teachers in a large virtual school and examine how these factors related to student and parent satisfaction and course completion.

- Principal Investigator: Bonnie Swan, UCF PEER