



OII Exchange Series
Innovations in Education
Virtual Schools

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My Agenda

- Overview of virtual schools
- Quick look at The Virtual High School – the Coop model
- Future progress and policy issues



Quick History

- Correspondence Courses (snail mail)
- 21-inch Classroom
- ITV courses
- Technology enhanced Correspondence courses (email)
- Lectures / books on line (web pages)
- Online courses delivered on the Internet
 - Course Management Systems

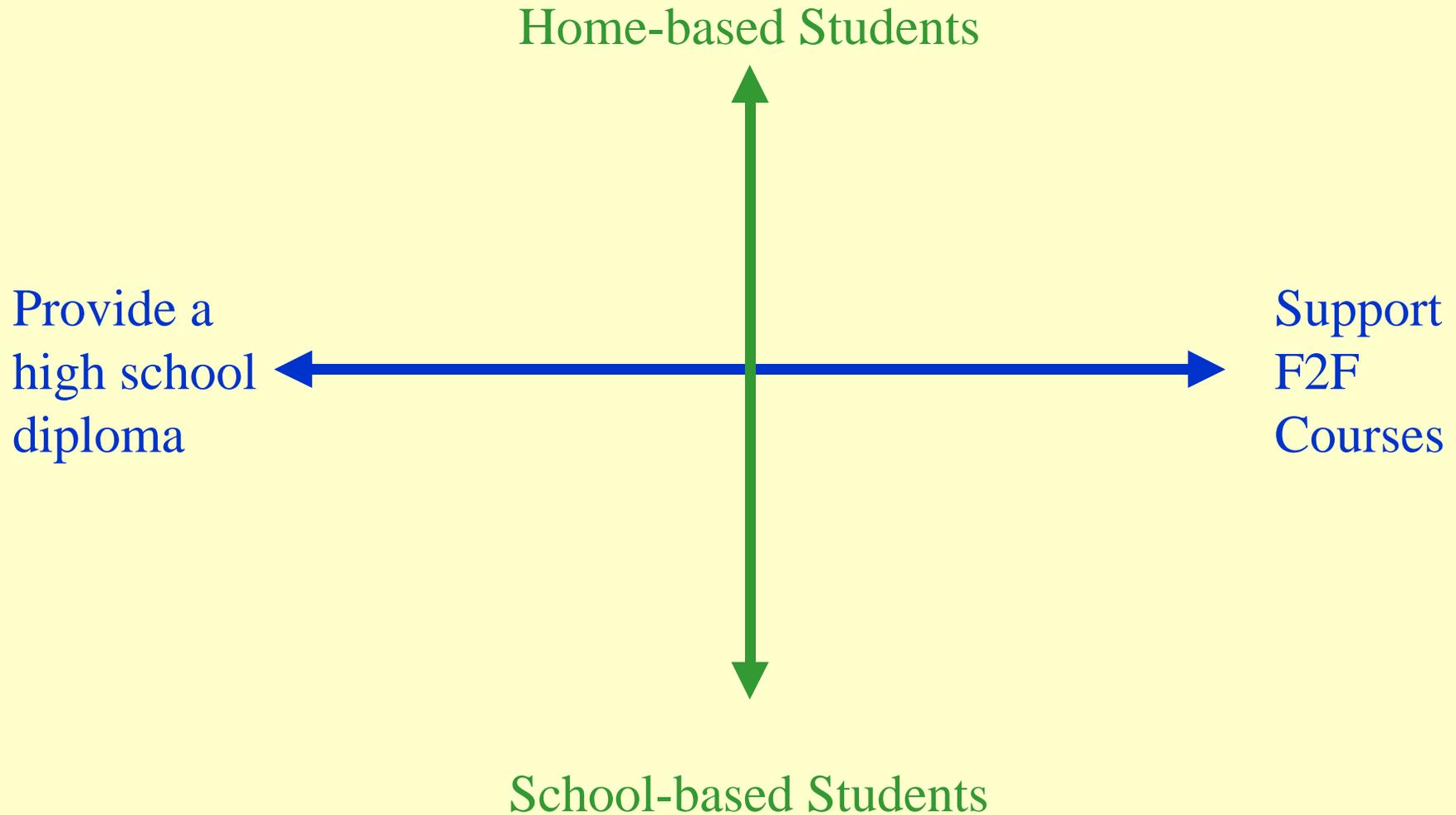
- VHS *and* Florida Virtual School been in existence since 1997
 - Currently enroll over 15K students
- During the 2000/01 school year, nearly 50,000 students in 48 states enrolled in Apex Learning online curriculum.

The 40 virtual school programs profiled [in the 2002 PEAK Report] reported a total of 85,500 students in (2002).... Projections for a broader spectrum of virtual school programs...estimate the total number of students at the 88 identified K-12 virtual schools to be 275,000 in 2001-2002.

PEAK report Virtual Schools Across America:
Trends in K-12 Online Education 2002

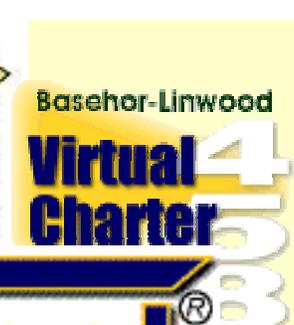
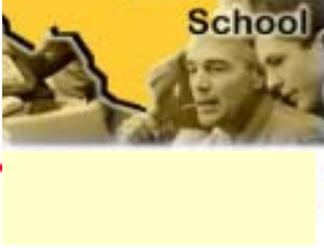


Goal and Audience for Virtual Schools





Virtual School Providers





- 1996 Technology Innovation Challenge Grant to Hudson, MA, Public Schools and Concord Consortium
- Coop model
 - Participating schools offer courses
- Self-sufficient, membership-funded for the past 2 years
 - www.goVHS.org

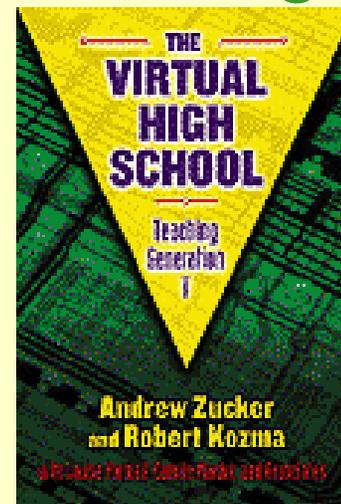


Students Succeed Online if...

- Self-motivated
- Interested in the course content
- Don't have technology problems
 - Including access problems
- Access not limited by assumptions made in design.

Evaluations Exist

- Illinois Virtual High School (01-02)
- Florida Virtual School (www.flvs.net)
Comprehensive Evaluation 1999-2000
- Virtual High School (www.goVHS.org)
- **The Virtual High School Teaching Generation V**
– Teachers College Press



My Frustrations

- Assumption that all F2F is inherently better than any online education.
- New programs that don't *research or* build on the learnings of existing virtual schools.
 - Retention
 - Teacher training
 - Instructional models
- We're too wedded to the traditional school, course, class model.

Issues to Watch

- Access issues
 - Universal design
 - Requiring students to own computers and Internet access
- Data collection
 - Disaggregated student performance data

Research Directions

- What can we learn about online interaction patterns to improve communications?
- What's the most effective F2F model?
- What's an effective online synchronous learning model?
- What do we know about basic learning?

Policy Concerns

- Funding requirements
 - Teacher Certification
 - Who “Owns” the Students (ADA)
- Seat-time as a measure of learning
- Restrictions on progress and development of new, potentially more effective learning due to policy reinforcement of School, Building, Course, and Classroom model

Future Directions

- Open Source Courseware
- Learning Objects
- Standards for use of content
 - The Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM)

- Remember:
 - Not all virtual schools are the same, don't paint them with the same brush.
 - Virtual schools aren't automatically second best to the brick and mortar alternative.
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