

## The Effect of Limiting Access to Instructor-Prepared Online Teaching Material

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This study researched the access of online supplemental teaching materials: the effect on student performance during the fall semester of 2004 in the business college of Coastal Carolina University. Many students actively seek supplemental course material to aid their understanding of course content, and they will do so without specific direction from the instructor of the course. It is now common for students to have online access to course-specific materials prepared by the instructor. Students are assumed to make use of this resource in order to increase understanding and improve their performance in the course. This research attempts to correlate student access of instructor-prepared online material with student performance. The primary hypothesis is that students who routinely and frequently access online course material will have better understanding as measured by performance on exams and the grade they eventually earn in the course.

In this study, students do not have access to instructor-prepared material continuously throughout the course. Instead, the material is made available to students periodically throughout the course. Students are notified during class meetings when new material is made available. The online activity of each student is recorded throughout the semester and consists of the first date of access, the last date of access, and the total number of times the student viewed the course website.

Regression and correlation analysis is used to relate each student's performance in the course with the frequency of online activity. The primary hypothesis is not supported. It appears that the frequent of student access of online material has no relationship to student performance in the particular course tested. Other interesting observations include student willingness to substitute online experience with actual class-time and the substantial reduction in the use of printed and copied materials distributed in class.

The study has been expanded to include other courses which will increase the sample size and also provide the opportunity to determine if a relationship exists with the academic level of the course offered. Future research includes the use of publisher-prepared online materials that are specific to the course textbook and to which the students may have continuous access.