



<http://tle.brookscole.com>

**TLEader:**

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**About Central Oregon Community College:**

Central Oregon Community College (COCC), founded in 1949, was the first community college in Oregon. The school serves a large district that encompasses three counties, Jefferson, Crook, and Deschutes, plus portions of Wasco, Lake, and Klamath counties. COCC has a small student body, and offers an average class size of 24 students per class. Forty-two percent of the COCC faculty hold PhDs. COCC offers a wide range of degree programs and works closely with four-year universities in the area to encourage students to seamlessly transfer to these schools.

**Virtual Classrooms Offer Real Alternatives**

When budget cuts shut down six of the seven satellite campuses at Central Oregon Community College (COCC), math instructors Doug Nelson and Charlie Naffziger first commiserated, then saw an opportunity to innovate. COCC serves a district roughly the size of Rhode Island, and the satellite campuses were a vital way to reach students who live far from the main campus in Bend, Oregon.

Nelson and Naffziger realized that developing new distance education programs is crucial to the math department at COCC. They turned to The Learning Equation (TLE) because they knew they needed courseware that would be content-rich, all-inclusive and fully available online since their students would never share a classroom or computer lab during the quarter.

The two instructors devised a plan to offer a series of TLE courses funded by grants from US Bank and PacifiCorp Foundation to test whether or not adopting TLE would be a way to save some students from losing access to developmental math education. TLE's fully online courseware program allowed them to offer a complete series of developmental math courses, from Basic Math through Intermediate Algebra, without needing any classroom space. Access to TLE meant the ability for these students in areas affected by the budget cuts to continue to work through their math requirements.

Distance education was new to Nelson and Naffziger, but they had confidence in the quality of TLE. "We know the content is as good as our traditional, in-class lectures, maybe better," says Nelson. Keeping track of their students' progress is "simple" according to Nelson because of the sophisticated course management system provided by iLrn.

The pilot program proved the value of TLE to the administration at COCC. Seventy percent of students that began the TLE course successfully finished. The administration at COCC was so impressed by Nelson and Naffziger's experiment with TLE that they are incorporating it into the College's online course offerings. Nelson and Naffziger's pragmatic response to dealing with the loss of physical campus facilities by creating virtual classrooms paid off for the math department, and for their students.