

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR EXPLORING SUCCESS FACTORS IN ONLINE LEARNING

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Abstract

This paper discusses a study based on the introduction of two online Masters programmes in the School of Computing at the University of Paisley, Scotland. As one of the courses was also taught in the traditional face-to-face (F2F) format comparison of the two teaching and learning methods was possible and revealed the online students as having achieved better results than the F2F students. We believe the online students achieved better pass rates as a result of the distinctive teaching and learning methods available in the online format. Given the number of variables in the situation, however, determining which factors contributed to the online students' success had to be based partly on anecdotal evidence primarily from the students themselves. This suggests a continuing need for investigation of online pedagogical elements such as teacher presence, learner control and enhanced learning opportunities provided by online learning. This paper will also introduce a tentative framework for exploring success factors in online learning that has been developed from experiences with the two online Masters programmes.