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Is There Anybody Out There? Faculty and Student Perceptions of Distance Learning

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IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?

Faculty and Student Perceptions of Distance Learning

Moderated by members of the
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An Old Concept

Early 1700s

1st known form of Distance Education: Prospective clergymen obtain training through mail correspondence (Albrektson, 1995)

1858 University of London offers Distance Learning degrees

(<http://museumofdistanceeducation.com>)

1873 Society to Encourage Studies at Home (Robey, 2010)

1921 Latter Day Saints' University issues the first educational radio license (Robey, 2010)

1958 Survey examined validity of national organizations claiming to provide *training* in psychotherapy via correspondence courses

- Catalyst for what would eventually be known as *diploma mills* (Brophy & Durfee, 1960)



Technology Develops

1976 *Journal of Computers and Education*

(Baepler, 2010)

1983 *Reconsidering Research on Learning from Media* (Clark, 1983)

Results yielded: *No significant difference*

1996 University of British Columbia: first successful virtual learning environment, “WebCT” (Clark, 1983)



Today...

69%

of Academic Leaders

report that online learning
is critical to their long-term plans

6.7 million students

are taking at least 1 online class
(or 32% of all students)

–Allen & Seaman, 2013

77% of 4-year colleges
offer online classes

29% of the public
think online learning is a good value
–Pew Research, 2011

30% of Academic Leaders
think that their faculty
value online learning

– Allen & Seaman, 2013

56% of Employers
prefer applicants from
traditional classrooms

61% of Students
think online learning requires
more discipline

18% of Students
think online learning is easier

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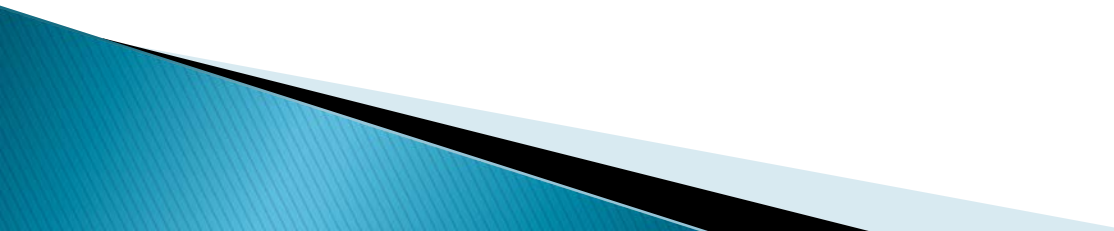
Cost

- ▶ Cost of a Master's degree in counseling
 - Regent: ~ 34K
 - Walden: ~41K
 - Capella: ~44K
- ▶ Time to complete: 2 ½ years

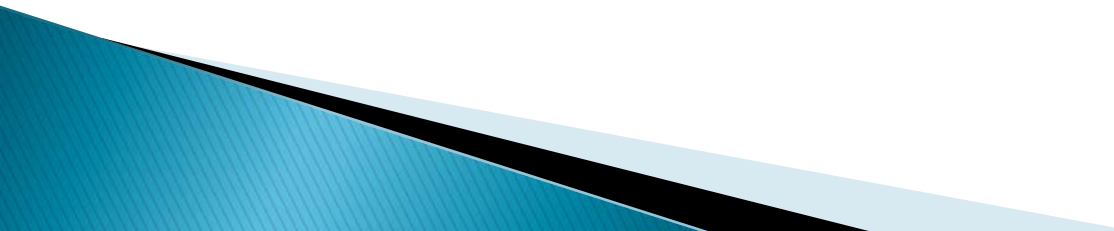
Admissions Standards

- ▶ Generally speaking, they're lower.
 - Capella: 2.7 GPA or higher, no GREs, no interview
 - Regent: 2.7 GPA or higher, no GREs, no interview
 - Walden: Bachelor's degree

Classes

- ▶ All classes are conducted online
 - ▶ Contact with other students/faculty is limited
 - ▶ Courses are primarily graded online discussions and papers
 - ▶ Unofficial honor system
 - ▶ Residency requirements
- 

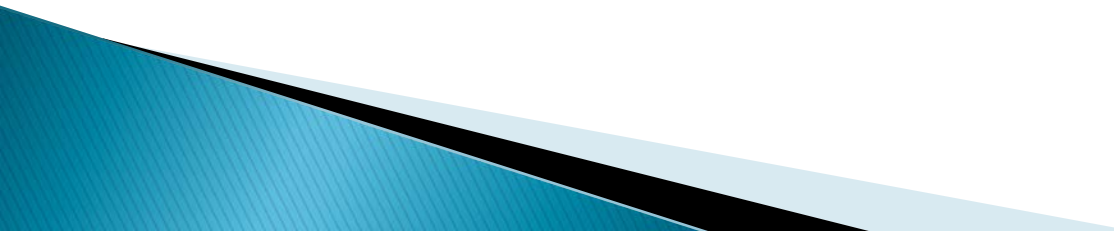
Discussion Questions

- ▶ Is this – mental health counseling – a training model that can be converted to online? Would you want to see a therapist that was trained in this way?
 - ▶ Are there specific programs (graduate or undergraduate) that would fit well with this approach?
- 

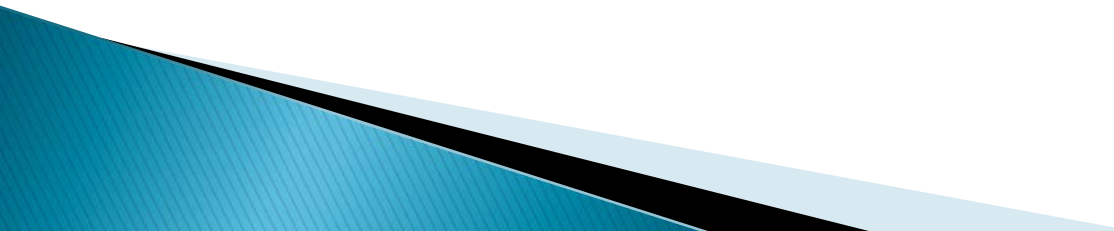
A Well Educated Cat



Our Initial Findings

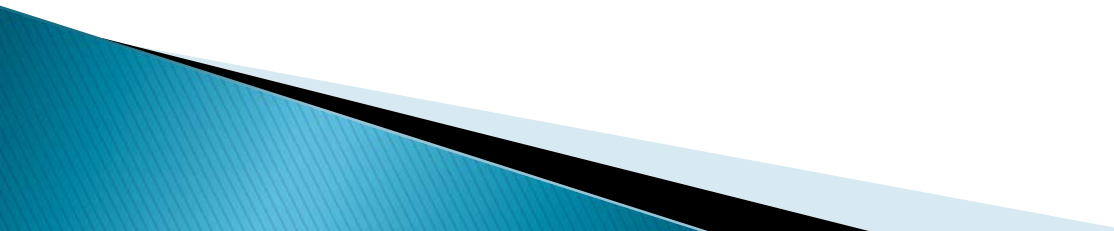
- ▶ Convenient, convenient, convenient
 - But feeling a bit disconnected from others
 - Yet *still able* to find ways to connect with classmates
 - ▶ Forced creativity & mastery of new tasks
 - Heightened sense of self-efficacy
 - ▶ Satisfied with the knowledge gained
 - Disappointed by the skepticism
- 

What might be the potential advantages of online education?



Is anything really lost?

Or is this simply a fear of the
new?



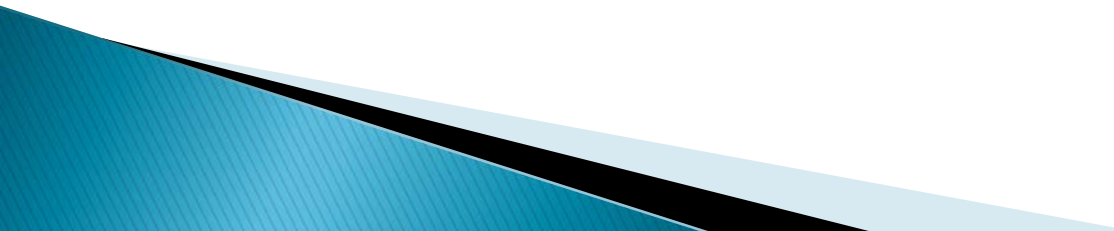
Just because we can, does
that mean we should?

Students want it,
but faculty (and employers)
remain skeptical

How should this dissonance
be quelled?



For those of you with
experience in online courses:
How did it go?



Assuming online education is the future, how do we improve its reputation?

Specifically, how do we take a tier 4 school and make it a tier 1 school?