

## Virtual Schooling as a Collaboration between Public Schools and the Scientific Community

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**Abstract :** Over the past fifteen years, virtual schooling has been introduced and implemented in varying degrees throughout the public education system in the United States. It is possible in some states for students to voluntarily take all of their course load online, without ever having to step in a classroom. Experts foresee a dramatic rise in the number of courses taken online by public school students in the United States, with some predicting that by 2019 as many as 50% of public high school courses will be delivered online. This electronic delivery of public education offers tremendous potential to the scientific community because it calls for innovation and is funded by public school revenue. Public accountability provides a ready supply of statistical data for measuring the progress of virtual schools as they are implemented into the public school arena. This allows for a survey of the current use of virtual schooling through examination of past statistical data, as well as forecasting forward for future years based upon this past data. Virtual schooling is on the rise in the United States, but its growth has been tempered by practical problems of implementation. The greatest and best use of virtual schooling thus far has been to supplement the courses offered by public schools (e.g., offering unique language courses, elective courses, and games-based math and science courses). The weaknesses of virtual schooling lay in the problematic accountability in allowing students to take courses online at home and the lack of supportive infrastructure in the public school arena. Virtual schooling holds great promise for the public school education system in the United States, as well as the scientific community. Online courses allow students access to a much greater catalog of courses than is offered through classroom instruction in their local public school. This promising sector needs assistance from the scientific community in implementing new pedagogical methodologies.

**Keywords :** virtual schools, online classroom, electronic delivery, technological innovation

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