

Public Abstract

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Title:The Effectiveness of Online Learning in a Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy: A Quantitative Study

From a student learning perspective, a significant amount of empirical research over the past 20 years clearly suggests online learning is as effective as traditional instructor-led classroom learning. As a result, online learning has been adapted by many educational institutions and professional organizations as an effective learning alternative to traditional face-to-face learning. One educational domain in which online learning has been patently rejected is in law enforcement training academies which provide basic police officer certification training. Many states prohibit online learning in these institutions because policy-makers do not believe it is as effective as face-to-face learning. Consequently, there is a lack of empirical research examining the effectiveness of online learning in this setting. This quantitative analysis attempted to address this gap in the research by comparing average test scores of academy students randomly assigned to a four-hour block of training in either an online setting or a traditional face-to-face setting. In support of the literature, the results of this study found no significant difference in student learning when comparing test scores of the two groups. Additionally, there was no correlation discovered between educational level, self-directedness and online learning success.