

Digital Learning Commons

2008-09 Annual Report

July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

Summary

The 2008-2009 school year was one of significant growth and change for the Digital Learning Commons (DLC). We served our highest total of schools and students during the year with 259 schools (up 18%) and 95,837 students and educators (up 31%). Over 1,000 students took online courses through the DLC—our highest number ever.

Meanwhile, the Washington State Legislature's passage of Substitute Senate Bill 5410 ushered in a period of change for the DLC. SSB 5410 paved the way for a new partnership between DLC and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The DLC's future has two tracks:

- a) Many of the DLC's activities and staff have moved to the new Digital Learning Department (DLD) within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- b) The DLC will remain a non-profit, and continue to offer access to some resources, as well as continue to work on several projects designed to support schools in their use of online educational resources.

We encourage you to review our 2008-09 annual report and contact us with any questions you may have. We thank all those students, educators, vendors, donors, advocates, and friends who have been a part of this year of growth.

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Making a difference

The DLC provides many avenues for success and student achievement.

Online Courses – providing options where none previously existed

Participation in online courses continued to increase in 2008-09; the DLC registered 1,007 students from 97 schools in 1,822 courses during the school year.

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Enrollments	674	1098	1669	1822
Students	506	717	918	1007
Participating Schools	56	73	92	97

Our online courses help provide options for students. One-third of courses taken were simply not otherwise available at the school. DLC courses also provide credit recovery opportunities.

Why do students register?	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Course not available at the school	41%	47%	40%	34%
Course helps students make up failed credits needed to graduate	23%	19%	24%	28%
Course helps students earn credits needed to graduate	16%	14%	13%	16%
Online learning environment perceived as better fit for meeting students' learning styles	4%	4%	5%	8%
Online course venue helps alleviate scheduling conflict	12%	10%	11%	7%
Other	4%	2%	3%	5%
Course is needed for WASL remediation or as an alternative to passing the WASL	0%	4%	2%	2%

Online course registrations by subject

Enrollment by subject	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Social Studies	17%	16%	17%	21%
Foreign Language	22%	24%	18%	15%
Language Arts	24%	19%	20%	24%
Mathematics	18%	21%	19%	15%
Science	7%	7%	9%	11%
Technology	6%	6%	7%	6%
Arts	5%	4%	5%	4%
Business	3%	2%	4%	3%
Career and Technical Education	1%	1%	2%	2%

Life Skills-Health	3%	3%	3%	2%
Occupational credit qualified	0%	0%	1%	<1%
Interdisciplinary	0%	0%	1%	<1%
English as a Second Language	0%	0%	0%	<1%

(Note: totals may not equal 100% due to rounding and assignment of a single course into multiple categories.)

Enrollment by level	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Standard	56%	57%	64%	61%
Credit Recovery	32%	28%	29%	33%
Advanced Placement	10%	7%	5%	2%
WASL Preparation	0%	12%	4%	2%
Honors	2%	1%	1%	1%
College	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%
Pre-AP	<0%	1%	<1%	0%
International Baccalaureate	0%	0%	0%	0%

According to grade reports for the online courses, DLC courses have a 75 percent completion rate and a 75 percent passing rate for 2008-09.

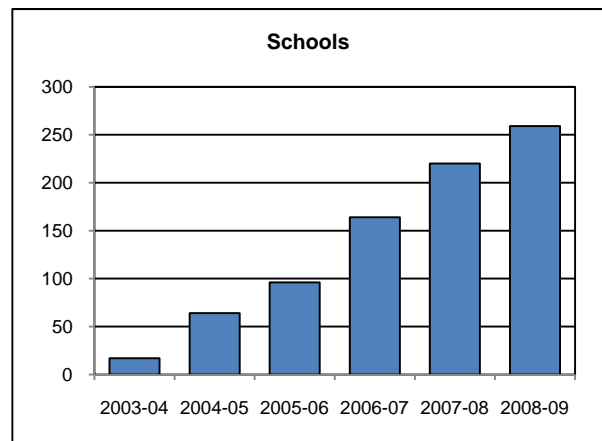
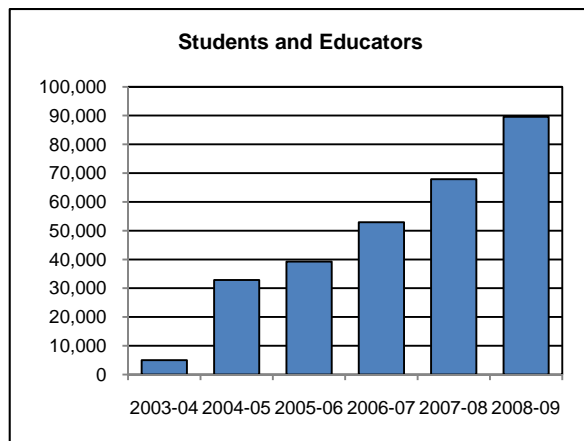
Continued growth

Our partners in schools and districts around the state continue to gain competency and confidence in our resources and services. We continue to support their implementations with professional development opportunities and exceptional customer care. The DLC partnered with 259 schools in 134 districts, representing 36 of the 39 counties in Washington.

Membership

Significant growth occurred during the 2008-09 school year with more than a 30 percent increase in the number of students and educators using our services. We also saw an increase in member schools of nearly 20 percent. That new member growth was supported by a satisfied customer base and a renewal rate surpassing 86 percent.

Membership	2007-08	2008-09	% increase
Students	67,872	89,574	32%
Students and Educators	73,077	95,837	31%
Schools	220	259	18%



Usage

DLC resources were accessed over 375,000 times in 2008-09, a usage level on par with 2007-08.

Other user statistics include:

- Students, educators, and parents accessed DLC resources an average of 7,800 times per week during 2008-09, a 13 percent increase over last year.
- On average, thirty-six percent more users, or just over 3,000, accessed the resources each week. When adjusting this for growth in membership, the year-to-year increase was 16 percent.

- An average of 180 schools accessed DLC resources each month, a 12 percent increase from last year. Seventy-four percent of member schools accessed resources in an average month.

Ease of use for students and educators

When reviewing DLC resource usage, our library resources proved to be the most-accessed, likely because of their ease-of-use by students and educators. Both the ClassTools and Portfolio resources also showed robust usage, along with WOIS, a career and college planning tool.

Library resources	Accessed
Grolier Online	66,188
SIRS	41,863
netTrekker d.i.	32,977
Facts on File News Service	16,569

Teaching Resources	Accessed
ClassTools	35,173
ExploreLearning Gizmos	8,573
Thinkfinity	3,154
BeyondBooks	1,185
DLC Mathcasts	1,049

College & Career Planning Resources	Accessed
WOIS	21,909
Bridges	1,649
Number2	479
Workforce Explorer	445
FinAid	407
DO-IT	72

Digital Tools	Accessed
Portfolio	15,802
GoPost	1,857
Collect It	442
ShareSpaces	69
Peer Review	15

Other Highlights:

The DLC began the work to expand the Mathcasts resource into the elementary grades. The additional Mathcasts are based on the 4th grade WASL released items and existing items were realigned to the newly adopted math standards for grades 3 – 10. The Mathcasts descriptive information and usage suggestions on the DLC website was updated to reflect the replacement of the WASL with the MSP (Measurement of Student Progress) and the HSPE (High School Proficiency Exams).

The DLC Tutor program continued with five tutors working with 420 students in 52 schools. The transition from the prior email-based tutoring system to a new multifaceted platform went smoothly. The new platform allows the DLC to offer real-time “live” tutoring in the evening hours, in addition to email help during off-hours.

The Professional Development Catalog, initially added to the DLC site in the spring of 2008, was completed during the fall of 2008. It lists professional development opportunities for teachers,

including courses from both DLC and third-party providers, further strengthening our position as a resource for educators beyond the classroom.

The DLC Alignments feature was updated to reflect newly added resources, as well as new features and state initiatives. This feature enables teachers to align DLC resources and tools with (a) the components of Powerful Teaching, (b) state initiatives, (c) state test preparation efforts, and (d) special needs programs.

Support and Outreach

School support and training remains a key component of the DLC's success.

Support makes a difference: schools that had at least two DLC trainings accessed our resources 154 percent more often and had 135 percent more users than schools with fewer than two trainings.

Implementation Meetings

Every DLC member school has the option of holding an implementation planning meeting to prepare for the school year. DLC staff introduce newly added resources or features and help align specific DLC resources to meet a given school's needs. Eighty-four percent of new schools took advantage of our implementation meetings during 2008-09. We offered a new option this year to our continuing schools: the choice of an on-site "check-in" meeting, a phone-based check-in, or an email check-in. Nineteen percent chose an on-site check-in, while the remaining opted for either the phone- or email-based check-in.

On-site and online trainings

The DLC provides a variety of on-site and online trainings. Schools can request custom trainings or access one of the DLC's standard workshops.

During 2008-09, 41 percent of DLC member schools had an on-site visit during the year. Another 24 percent took advantage of our phone-based, online trainings. We delivered 236 resource trainings, a 12 percent increase over the previous year.

To evaluate trainings, the DLC asks participants to fill out two surveys: a training evaluation taken immediately after the training and a second some months afterward to gauge the longer-term impact. From these, we found:

- 95 percent of training participants rated the training as either "good" or "excellent."
- 82 percent of training participants felt equipped to use the resources on their own.
- 74 percent of training participants felt that the DLC training had impacted their use of DLC resources.
- 68 percent of training participants say they usually consider using specific DLC resources when developing lessons and activities.
- 70 percent of training participants say they have seen some benefit to student achievement as a result of using DLC resources.

Deepening implementation and professional development

We've fine-tuned and expanded the following professional development opportunities in 2008-09:

Innovative Practices for Student Achievement Conference: Forty-two teachers attended our annual conference to learn about innovative uses of DLC resources and best practices that have made an impact on student achievement and align with powerful teaching.

Teacher2Teacher Program: Sixteen teachers attended the comprehensive Summer and Fall 2008 T2T workshops where they used the concepts of peer coaching to develop the skills and confidence needed to become leaders in their schools. This year-long commitment creates strong bonds among the participants and builds a statewide team of DLC teacher leaders.

Train the Trainer: Forty-three teachers attended these targeted two-day workshops (one in November 2008, and one in January 2009) where they explored each DLC resource in detail in preparation for training colleagues within their schools. The training includes a workbook and follow-up course online.

We're leading the way

We are recognized as a leader in the field of online education. As a result, the organization attends a number of education conferences, both as presenters and as exhibitors.

The DLC presented at the following conferences across the state:

- OSPI Summer Institute (Tacoma) – July 28-Aug. 1, 2008
- OASL/WLMA Conference (Portland) – Oct. 9, 2008
- WALA Fall Conference (Pasco) – Nov. 13-15, 2008
- GEAR UP NW Conference (Vancouver) – Nov. 13-14, 2008
- WSSDA Annual Conference (Spokane) – Nov. 19-22, 2008
- OSPI January Conference (Seattle) – Jan. 7-9, 2009
- WALA Spring Conference (Vancouver) – Feb. 26-28, 2009
- WASA-AWSP Summer Conference (Spokane) – June 28-30, 2009

In addition, DLC staff members meet regularly with the leaders of Washington's education associations, including the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington Association of School Administrators, Association of Washington School Principals, Washington State Library, Washington Association for Learning Alternatives, and more.

Communications

As advocates for powerful learning and technology integration, we strive to communicate openly with our members because the dialogue we create together is changing the way our children learn.

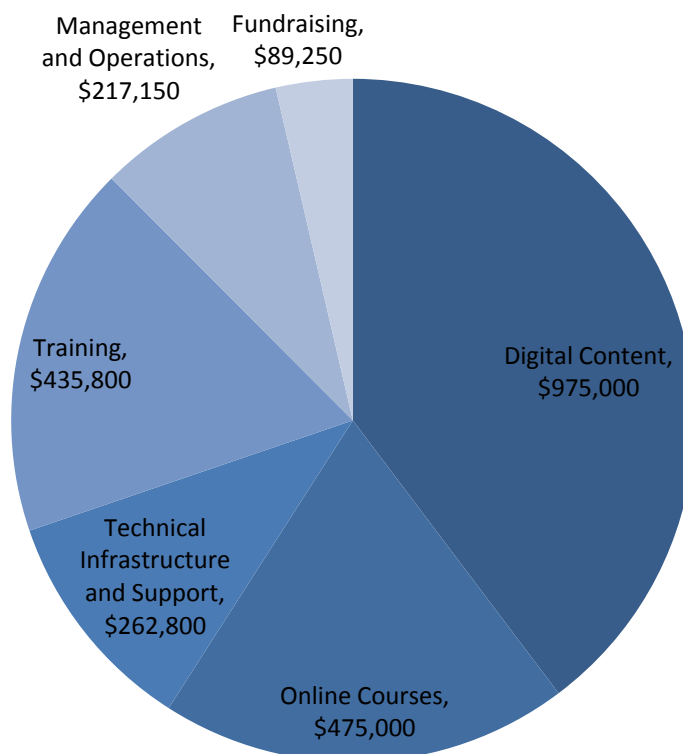
Keeping DLC members abreast of what's available takes many forms:

- Monthly newsletters go to over 1,000 educators.
- Twelve website highlights keep site visitors apprised of new and notable features.
- Success stories—short profiles on teachers who have experienced significant success with DLC resources—encourage others to take chances and have fun along the way.
- Ongoing web trainings and telephone support personalize the user experience.

Fiscal stability through good management and client satisfaction

The total revenues were \$2,288,600 and the total expenses were \$2,455,000. Total net assets at the beginning of the year were \$627,000 and at June 30, 2009 were \$378,000. Total assets at June 30, 2009 were \$530,000.

The chart below details the actual expenses in the major program categories.



Fundraising

Source	Amount
Amgen Foundation	\$6,700
Charlotte Martin Foundation	\$7,500
The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation	\$30,000
Verizon Foundation , National	\$25,000
TOTAL:	\$69,200

Moving Forward

Change is coming to the Digital Learning Commons. In the 2009 session, the Washington State Legislature passed Substitute Senate Bill 5410 which paved the way for a new partnership between DLC and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The DLC's future has two tracks:

- c) Many of the DLC's activities and staff have moved to the new Digital Learning Department (DLD) within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. They will continue to set a high standard for online learning and technology integration in Washington schools.
- d) The DLC remains a non-profit and will continue to offer access to some resources, as well as continue to work on several projects designed to support schools in their use of online educational resources.

The new Digital Learning Department will help to fulfill the DLC's vision of serving every school in the state, as well as establishing an office that provides a statewide focus on online resources. The new office provides:

- Information about and access to high-quality online course providers and online school programs
- Access to online educational resources
- Continued quality assurance for online course providers

The DLD provides, free of charge, to every school statewide:

- **Access to online courses:** Schools maintain student funding amounts while helping students to meet graduation requirements, complete missed credits, or tackle Advanced Placement subjects with flexible online courses that are vetted, cataloged, and supported for student success.
Students now have access to 250+ online courses through the DLD, complete with a registration system, teacher training, course support, and free online tutors.
- **Access to online school programs:** For students seeking a sequential online school program that they can access full-time or part-time, the DLD offers information about providers of online school programs in Washington.
- **Teaching and learning resources:** A number of free resources, including Mathcasts and a collection of helpful links to college and career information, are available to all schools in the state at no charge.

The DLD offers, at a reduced price, to every school statewide:

- **Library package:** The DLD's Library Package is available for the low rate of \$5.00 per student. This resource package includes four K-12 library research databases; an online bookmark system; and a comprehensive search engine.

For 2009-10, the Digital Learning Commons will continue to offer access to the Catalyst suite of digital tools, along with maintaining much of the website content developed in previous years. The DLC will also be active in professional development, partnering with OPSI to offer a training conference.

Information about the DLD can be found at <http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/>. The DLC website and activities will remain at <http://www.learningcommons.org/>.