

# Online instruction blended with face-to-face time is best strategy for students recovering from COVID-19 setbacks

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Students are most likely to benefit from online credit recovery when it

blends online instruction with face-to-face time, rather than being conducted fully online, according to research published by Carolyn J. Heinrich, chair of the Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations and Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor of Public Policy and Education at Vanderbilt Peabody College of education and human development, and her co-authors.

[The research brief](#) based on this body of work, "Design Principles for Effective Online Credit Recovery," outlines strategies to help students make up coursework missed during COVID-19.

"Schools have increasingly turned to online credit recovery to help students make up missed coursework. But research shows that even when students regain course credits, online credit recovery often leads to little substantive learning and negative long-term outcomes, including lower lifetime earnings," Heinrich said. "This brief provides specific, research-based principles for effective online credit recovery, including which students benefit most, how to group classes and how to train instructors."

The findings of Heinrich's research were published as part of the EdResearch for Recovery Project, sponsored by Results for America and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University.

Heinrich is a leading scholar in the study of digital learning, including online credit recovery—an issue that is receiving ongoing attention as [school administrators](#), teachers and parents work to develop best practices to recover from disruptions in learning due to COVID-19.

Many students are using online options to catch up, with supplemental support from teachers, but questions remain about how well these online credit recovery approaches are working.

**More information:** Carolyn J. Heinrich et al, Does Online Credit Recovery in High School Support or Stymie Later Labor Market Success?, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* (2022). [DOI: 10.1002/pam.22376](https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22376)

Carolyn J. Heinrich et al, A Look Inside Online Educational Settings in High School: Promise and Pitfalls for Improving Educational Opportunities and Outcomes, *American Educational Research Journal* (2019). [DOI: 10.3102/0002831219838776](https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219838776)

Carolyn J. Heinrich et al, Does Online Course-Taking Increase High School Completion and Open Pathways to Postsecondary Education Opportunities?, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* (2021). [DOI: 10.3102/0162373721993485](https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373721993485)

Equity and Quality in Digital Learning: Realizing the Promise in K–12 Education. [www.hepg.org/hep-home/books/eq ... -in-digital-learning](http://www.hepg.org/hep-home/books/eq...-in-digital-learning)

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