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Improving Access to, Quality and the Effectiveness of Digital Instruction in K-12 Education

Patricia Burch
Associate Professor of Education
Rossier School of Education
University of Southern California

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12:30-1:30 PM
Annenberg 303

Digital instruction – using a digital platform (such as netbook, computer or handheld device) as a central part of instruction – is rapidly becoming a commonplace component of K-12 classroom and supplemental instruction. There is considerable variation in how providers of educational technology describe what they do, their services, how students access services, and what is delivered, complicating efforts to accurately assess its impact. This paper presents findings from a quasi-experimental mixed methods study of digital tutoring using rich, longitudinal observational and interview data, student attendance patterns and effects of digital tutoring on low-income students’ reading and mathematics achievement. We find significant associations between formats, curriculum drivers, tutor locations, and other characteristics of digital providers and their effectiveness in increasing student achievement, as well as differential access by student characteristics, that warrant further investigation as digital providers’ roles in K-12 instruction continue to expand.

Dr. Burch, Associate Professor of Education at University of Southern California, studies the drivers and manifestations of private involvement (for profit and not for profit) in K-12 education and the implications for equity and quality in public schools. Over the past decade, Dr. Burch has conducted major studies and evaluations of K-12 education reform such as class size reduction, systemic district instructional reform in large urban school districts, teacher professional development reforms, and school-linked services.

She is the author of several books, including Hidden Markets: The New Education Privatization (Routledge, 2009), Equal Scrutiny: Privatization and Accountability in Digital Education, with Annalee Good (Harvard Education Press, 2014) and Mixed Methods Research in Policy and Program Evaluation (SAGE, 2016).