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## Online secondary education growing

### High school courses blend campus, at-home studies

By Caroline An, Staff Writer

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Thanks to the Internet, getting ready for school no longer means taking a shower, assembling the perfect outfit and dashing out the door by 6:30 a.m.

For Hadley Radt, a junior at Alverno High School, that scenario is very appealing.

"I already spend enough time on the Internet, especially on Facebook," Radt said.

As the education alternatives increase from charters schools to independent study programs, some high schools are offering online courses to students - or in a radical direction, offering an entire four-years high school experience through the computer.

The trend of "distance learning" or online education has largely been available at the college level, through University of Phoenix and other programs that offer online degrees.

The trend of online classes is now being seen in the secondary level, giving students the chance to learn geometry and the history of the Civil War

from the comforts of their living room sofa.

Alverno High School, a Catholic School in Sierra Madre, is offering online summer courses and a hybrid of online and campus classes through its Summer Institute.

Cam Werley-Gonzales, Alverno's Summer Institute director, said the decision reflects the fact that online education is the way of the future.

"It used to be that online classes were seen to be not as hard or rigorous," Werley-Gonzales said. "But it requires more student involvement in that you have to post something to a blog or a message board or respond to questions."

Students can access the class lectures any time and, depending on their instructor, will be required to log in at a certain time to "chat" and to submit assignments and take quizzes.

The final exam, however, will require students to set foot on the campus, Werley-Gonzales said.

Radt supports the online option because it gives her the freedom to decide when she wants to learn the material. While it doesn't take her hours to get ready in the morning, curling up to study science in her pajamas sounds good.

"I can do it on my time instead of having a strict schedule," she said.

Finding an appropriate online high school for her 14-year-old son Israel has Nikki Cortez

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attending information sessions throughout the area.

Cortez has home-schooled her five children, teaching them through curriculum she has purchased, and with Israel getting older and learning more difficult subject material, she hopes to find the right program for her son and take some pressure off of her.

She refuses to enroll him the traditional four-year high school because of what she calls "a negative environment."

After attending an information session for Insight School, an online high school that enrolls students throughout area, Cortez is more receptive to that type of structure.

"I definitely want a program where there is textbooks available. I don't want something where everything is just on the computer." she said.

[caroline.an@sgvn.com](mailto:caroline.an@sgvn.com)

(626) 578-6300, Ext. 4494