



De-Mystifying Online Education

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Keynote Presentation
University of Kansas
School of Education
January 16, 2007





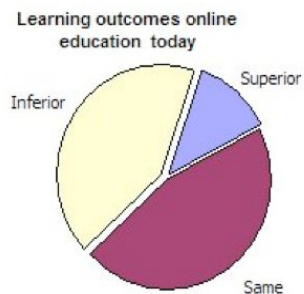
Overview

- Why consider online education (OE)?
- Background: what, where, when, who of OE
- Journey from technophobe to convert - lessons learned along the way
- Issues, benefits, barriers
- How does this relate to you? Points to consider on your own journey

Clarifying some (mystery) terms

- Distance vs. online education
- Online = >80% online delivery
- Hybrid, web-enhanced
- Online education (OE) encompasses a wide variety of philosophies, methods, and tools
- Face-to-Face (F2F) education
 - is not any one method, but rather a wide range of methods & beliefs
 - does not have one set standard
 - thus is not *the* standard against which OE can be measured

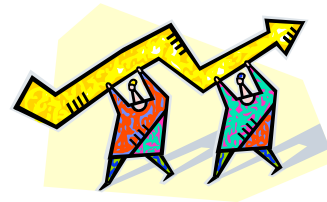
Why consider online education?



- Sloan Consortium survey of online learning in 2003 predicted that the quality of online learning will be equal to F2F within 3 years (Seaman, 2003)
- Globalization 3.0 (Friedman, 2005)
- Motivation should be because we want to do better, not (merely) economic & space savings.

Size of online learning

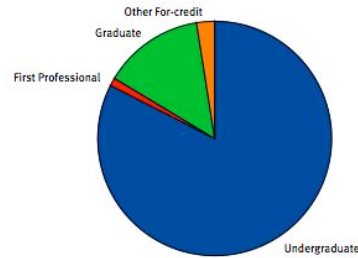
- Online enrollments growing substantially faster than overall enrollments
- Record online enrollment (taking one class or more online):
 - Fall 2002: 1.6 million
 - Fall 2004: 2.3 million
 - Fall 2005: Nearly 3.2 million (largest absolute and % increase in # of students)
- Now 17% of all higher education students are online students



(Allen & Seaman, 2006)

Online student profile

- Close match to general higher education body



	Proportion of students in OE	Proportion of total higher ed population
Undergrad	82.4%	85.6%
Graduate	14%	12.4%

(Allen & Seaman, 2006)

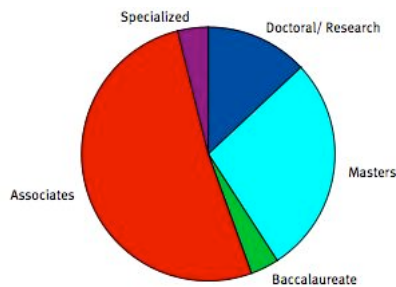
Types of institutions offering OE

- Overall:
 - Public institutions & largest institutions of all types lead OE offerings
 - Least likely to offer & ones with most negative opinions of OE: small, private institutions
- Statistics:
 - 96% of institutions > 15,000 have some OE offerings (more than double rate of smaller institutions)
 - 2/3 largest institutions have fully online programs, vs. 1/6 of smallest
 - Doctoral institutions have highest level of online programs & highest rate overall rate (>80%) having some form of online offering

(Allen & Seaman, 2006)

Associate institutions lead

- 51% of online students are at 2-year Associates institutions (compared to 37.9% of overall higher education population).



Type of institution for students taking at least 1 online course - Fall 2005 (Allen & Seaman, 2006)

Perceptions by Chief Acad. Officers

- Increase in belief that online instruction equal to or superior to F2F:
 - 2002: 57%
 - 2005: 62%
- Importance to the university:

ONLINE EDUCATION IS CRITICAL TO THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY OF MY INSTITUTION

	Doctoral/Research	Masters	Baccalaureate	Associates	Specialized
2006	61.0%	65.1%	37.3%	67.0%	52.0%
2005	52.4%	55.7%	27.7%	72.2%	46.5%
2004	56.2%	48.9%	25.8%	67.1%	48.7%
2003	53.7%	46.5%	31.1%	57.7%	38.5%

(Allen & Seaman, 2006)

BUT: What motivates faculty?

“Those who decide to participate in distance education do so because they desire to grow professionally and they recognize it fits their professional values”



(Yick, Patrick & Costin, 2005).

A better question, therefore, is to ask first “why do we teach?”

My story...

- My motivation to become an educator, first, and then to become involved in online education
- What would make me stop doing this?
- Why I am here talking to you, telling you this? My journey..



Background: No way..

- ...that OE could compare with f2f!
- ..that I would teach online



How did I become a convert?

- Fertile ground - my early experiences & growing beliefs:
 - Co-teaching with special educator - universal design
 - Coming to USA & learning about:
 - cooperative learning
 - constructivism
 - multiple intelligences
 - Friere's education for critical consciousness
 - Brookfield's critical reflection
 - Realization of new golden rule



From technophobe to geek

- Lead, follow, or get out the way
- Sabbatical: certificate in ed.tech.
- If you've got it, use it - technology as an end
- ...to technology as a means:

Technology is not the point - learning is



Next stop: online education...

- Those who don't believe it can be done, should get out of the way of those who are already doing it...
 - Colleague's experiences in UMD M.Ed. & students' testimony

Invitation for me teach in M.Ed.

- Anything that's worth doing, is worth doing badly...
 - Journey using online discussions
 - Hybrid tech class
 - No going back - even in old F2F classes
 - Meetings, virtual office hours, virtual speakers

Sabbatical II - Distance Ed

- Tower of Babel - speaking in different tongues
- What is DE?
- What can we learn from those already doing it?



So many tools, so little time

- Blogs, wikis, podcasts
- Online discussions
- VOIP (voice & video over Internet Protocol)
- Photo & video sharing
- Online learning networks & communities
- Learning/course management systems
- Social networking
- Even cell phone text messaging!



Some key benefits of OE

- Study & teach any time, anywhere
- Flexible pacing, sequencing, style of learning
- Easy and anytime access (resources, library, instructors)
- Increased accessibility for students with disabilities & speakers of other languages
- Interaction with and among students from diverse backgrounds and regions (state, national, global)
- Students not pre-judged by each other on their physical characteristics
- Geared to lifelong learning

Benefits (continued)

- Greater potential for interaction among students & between students & instructor
- Constructivist approach enhanced because of ease of responding to individual student interests & needs (customize delivery, resources)
- If hybrid, class time can then be used for critical analysis of what students have learned online (rather than using class time for providing info)
- Archiving of student responses electronically enables easier assessment of student work (and of instructor teaching)



Barriers cited by academic leaders

Students need more discipline to succeed in online courses	63.6%
Greater faculty time & effort required to teach online	31.9%
Lack of acceptance of online instruction by faculty	25.9%
Online education costs more to develop & deliver	23.5%
Lack of acceptance of online degrees by potential employers	13.8%
Lack of student demand for online courses & degrees	4.6%

(Allen & Seaman, 2006)

Barriers cited by faculty

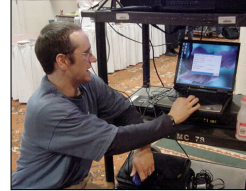
- Concern about loss of interaction, contact
- Problems in use of & access to technology
- Already so busy, no time for new approach
- Time consuming:
 - Learning new skills (tech & teaching)
 - Redesigning old or creating new courses
- Compromising existing high standards & reputation of institution
- Not valued: Effect on promotion & tenure, merit

Faculty issues

- Congruence with beliefs & values
- Incentives/rewards
- Flexibility/instructor choice in delivery
- Affect on tenure & promotional decisions
- Workload
- Class size matched with method of delivery
- Training & support
- Course ownership
- Selection of classes suited to DE delivery
- Copyright & intellectual property

Faculty skills needed

- Technological (from basic to complex, depending on delivery)
- DE instructional methods e.g.
 - design of DE courses
 - preparing students to be online learners
 - creating online learning community
 - facilitating online discussions; creating online resource & materials
 - use of Internet to access appropriate scholarly resources
- Online assessment (tests, grading online)



Faculty skills (cont)

- Advising & interacting with students at a distance (e.g. netiquette of email, online discussions, synchronous chats, online office hours using IM)
- Time management & balance
- Retaining your identity, honoring your own needs as an instructor & scholar



Student issues

- Types of students (working full time, adult learners, grad vs. undergrad)
- Students' reasons for taking DE course
- Expectations: time, workload, skills, technology (hardware, software, Internet access)
- Support (student services, technological, academic)
- Type of delivery (self-paced? Cohort? Synchronous or asynchronous? Required f2f time?)



Points to consider

- Being an effective teacher F2F does not guarantee online teaching success
- Prepare students & instructors for their roles
- Need to have system to support technology, instructors & students
- One size doesn't fit all: consider context (desired learner outcomes; appropriate match with students, instructor, and DE support system).
- Even simple online tools, used correctly, can be highly effective



Points to consider (cont)

- Use online technology to go *beyond* rather than merely try to replicate F2F strategies
- Be realistic, adopt new techniques in manageable chunks
 - Design for sustainability after initial euphoria has worn off
- Hold ourselves accountable to high standards (as we would for F2F)
- Technology is not the point: learning is (or: technology is merely a tool to enhance teaching & learning, and not an end in and of itself)
- No model dictates rigor, support, accessibility and quality. The university, professors & students in the program determine this.

Possible questions for you...

- Why do we want to offer courses or programs online?
- What is happening now?
- What are we hoping to gain?
- What is KU trying not to lose?
- What forms of DE are we considering (and why those)?
- What do we need to do to develop a plan?

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