Effective Online Instruction in Higher Education

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Purpose
This article summarizes components of online learning. Crawford-Ferre and Wiest review approaches to successful online instruction.

The Article
Online instruction increased significantly in recent years. Online education enables students to enroll in and successfully complete classes irrelevant of the constraints of time and location. Crawford-Ferre and Wiest assess course design, interaction among course participants, and instructor preparation and support as factors that contribute to effective online education. When educational institutions provide online courses, technical support, student needs, and communication methods (synchronous and asynchronous) should be established.

In order for students to gain meaningful online learning experiences, multiple methods for presentation, learning activities, and communication tools (i.e., instant messaging and email) should be built into online course designs. Students who do not experience immediate faculty feedback build bonds with one another. Time zones affect international student’s learning and English Language Learners ability to understand abstract concepts in synchronous classes because attendance occurs at inconvenient times. Instructors are reluctant to teach in an online environment because of the time requirements; initiating smaller class loads and teaching assistants could alleviate these reservations.

Implications and Recommendations
“Online education will surely continue to grow at a rapid rate. However, given the reported reluctance of faculty to teach this modality and the lack of training and support for faculty teaching online it is clear that more research is necessary regarding how to develop effective online instruction” (Crawford-Ferre & Wiest, 2012, p. 14).

Citation

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