Online Teaching
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Higher education systems all over the world are challenged nowadays by new information and communication technologies (ICT). These technologies have had a huge impact on the world economy, corporate management, and globalization trends. They bear a tremendous potential in reshaping the nature of study environments everywhere. The Internet provides the opportunity to access intercultural and personalized knowledge for learning, to acquire theoretical knowledge, and to explore and apply knowledge. The Internet offers worldwide accessible knowledge and learning applications at any time and any place. One of the learning applications which has become widespread is online learning.

Existing and emerging e-learning technologies are having intense, immediate, and disruptive impacts on the education systems. Nowhere is the impact felt more than on the practitioners who teach. More specifically, education has moved into the third decade of profound change in how courses and programs are designed and delivered. During this time, many new possibilities have become apparent. Simultaneously, many changes have sprouted in almost all the sectors of education with the rise of e-learning technologies.

Online teaching can be defined as gaining knowledge and skills through learning applications that are written, communicated, supported, and managed with internet technology. It is often referred to as e-learning. Online learning has become one of the most beneficial applications in higher education. Online courses and programs continue to grow in higher education sessions. Students are increasingly demanding internet access and as a result, universities and colleges are improving their systems to meet their demands.

Online teaching is an instructional delivery system that allows students to participate in an educational space without being physically present in the same location as the instructor. The rapid growth in the number of distant education courses and programs has/had a profound impact on the ideas and beliefs about teaching and learning. The use of the internet with web-based course work has become a core method of instruction in distance learning.

Online/Distance learning has a long history and there are several types available today including:

- Correspondence Courses: conducted through regular mail with little interaction.
- Tele-courses: where content is delivered via radio or television broadcast.
- CD-ROM Courses: where the student interacts with static computer content.
- Online Learning: Internet-based courses offered synchronously and/or asynchronously.
- Mobile Learning: employing devices such as cellular phones, PDAs, and digital audio players (iPods, MP3 players).

Online enrollments continue to grow at rates faster than for the broader student population and institutes of higher education expect the rate of growth to continue increasing.

Online distance learning meets the needs of an ever-growing population of students who cannot or prefer not to participate in traditional classroom settings. These learners include those unable to attend traditional classes, who cannot find a particular class at their chosen institution, who live in remote locations, who work full-time and can only study at or after work, and those who simply prefer to learn independently.

The minimum requirement for students to participate in an online course is access to a computer, internet, and motivation to succeed in a non-traditional classroom. Online courses provide an excellent method of course delivery, unbound by time or location allowing for accessibility to instruction at any-
time from anywhere. Learners find the online environment a convenient way to fit education into their busy lives. The ability to access a course from any computer with Internet connectivity 24 hours a day, seven days a week is a tremendous incentive for many of today’s students.

Some of the main advantages of online learning include:

- **Convenience**: 24/7 access from any online computer; accommodates busy schedules; no commuting, no searching for parking.

- **Enhanced Learning**: Research shows an increased depth of understanding and retention of course content; more meaningful discussions; emphasis on writing skills, technology skills, and life skills like time management, independence, and self-discipline.

- **Leveling of the Playing Field**: Students can take more time to think and reflect before communicating; shy students tend to thrive online; anonymity of the online environment.

- **Interaction**: Increased student-to-teacher and student-to-student interaction and discussion; a more student-centered learning environment; less passive listening and more active learning; a greater sense of connectedness, synergy.

- **Innovative Teaching**: Student-centered approaches; increased variety and creativity of learning activities; address different learning styles; changes and improvements can translate to on-ground courses as well.

- **Improved Administration**: Time to examine student work more thoroughly; ability to document and record online interactions; ability to manage and grade online.

- **Savings**: Accommodate more students; increased student satisfaction = higher retention and fewer repeats.

- **Maximize Physical Resources**: Lessen demand on limited campus infrastructure; decrease congestion on campus and parking lots.

- **Outreach**: Give students options; reach new student markets; appeal to current students thus increasing enrollments.

**Reference**