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Educational Leadership and the E-Learning Paradigm

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Abstract

School systems today need leaders who are technologically savvy and can navigate the online environment. They must also have skills ranging from financial and human resource management to outcomes measurement, and government relations—all with a solid grounding in ethics and personal conviction. Some educational leaders are concerned that the online environment does not have the same high quality as the campus environment, but comparing campus and online classes may be like comparing apples and oranges because there are differences in the type and caliber of learners who choose one delivery model over the other, and there are differences in personality and communication skills of campus instructors and online instructors. After careful consideration of the potential benefits and challenges of the e-learning paradigm, it is reasonable to conclude that when it is done well, e-learning can be authentic and active. Quality online programs and global partnerships enable best practices institutions to develop professional adult educators and invest in faculty development of scholar-practitioners.

Introduction

In the Doctor of Education program at Bethel University, Dr. Craig Paulson and the program faculty are preparing educators for the rigor and challenges of educational leadership. Paulson understands that school systems need leaders who have a wide range of skills and a solid grounding in ethics and personal conviction. They must also be globally and technologically savvy. A unique aspect of Bethel's program is its cohort model and delivery system that is transforming learners from around the world into public intellectuals. Learners participate in three summer residencies and complete the remainder of the course work online. The purpose of this article is to provide a review of benefits and challenges to e-learning as a resource for future educational leaders and for researchers in the pedagogy of e-learning.

E-learning is a broad term that refers to electronically supported learning in higher education and K-12 schools. E-learning is naturally suited for institutionally sponsored distance education which began at Illinois Wesleyan University in the late 1800s (California Distance Learning Project, 2005). Fast forward to the invention of the World Wide Web, and the PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations) system designed for computer based education in the early 1960s. Originating at the University of Illinois-Urbana, the PLATO system pioneered the online community

comprising forums, message boards, email, chat rooms, instant messaging, remote screen sharing, and multiplayer games (Woolley, 1994).

E-learning has evolved since then. However, some educational leaders remain concerned about distance education and the expanding online environment, mainly because they do not believe it can have the same high quality as the campus environment. Comparing campus and online classes may be like comparing apples and oranges because there are differences in the type and caliber of learners who choose one delivery model over the other, and there are differences in personality and communication skills of campus instructors and online instructors. The variation in functionality and usability of technology including technical support staff, institutional server reliability and capacity, and the learners' computers (Bender, 2003) also impede a direct comparison.

After careful consideration of the potential benefits and challenges of the e-learning paradigm that are discussed in this article, it would be reasonable to conclude that e-learning can help higher education administrators who are on the verge of making decisions about offering online programs, and K-12 teachers who are experimenting with activities that involve technology. When it is done well, e-learning can be authentic and active. Bender's (2003) description of the ideal online learners is accurate: they seem to be a curious mix of independence in terms of being self-motivated, and a definite willingness to interact and collaborate. The ideal online instructors seem to be those who enjoy writing and do it well, practice a Socratic approach to teaching, personalize education, and are prepared to spend more time teaching online than they are used to spending in the campus classroom. The most effective online instructors are prepared to develop a comfort level and competence in using technology, so that technical frustrations can be minimized.

The Potential Benefits of E-Learning

The online learning environment can be beneficial in many ways, and the ideal courses for online delivery are those with the most potential for discussion, such as courses in the humanities, social sciences, and writing. E-learning also seems to fit adult learners who need to balance family, work, and education (Bender, 2003). The basic approach for an existing face-to-face course does not need to change when converting to an online course; however, the technique changes. Preserving the quality of a course need not mean finding an exact translation of what an instructor has always done in the past. In a face-to-face course, the instructor is a "sage on stage." In an online course, the instructor is a "sage on page" who must pay particular attention to nuances in style, attitude, and intonation (Ko & Rossen, 2004, p. 12). Using a constructivist model to promote active learning with adults in a college classroom, however, King (1993) argued for a "guide on the side" approach (para. 4). In other words, the instructor is more of a facilitator or moderator than what Ko and Rossen (2004) referred to as an "expert from whom all knowledge flows" (p. 13). Exercises are fashioned to emphasize learner collaboration and deemphasize the traditional role of the instructor (Ko & Rossen, 2004). The perception of the online instructor as less formal may help

instructors to engage in a lengthier debate and better challenge ideas than might be feasible on campus. Adult learners may appreciate more equality between the instructor and learner (Bender, 2003).

Ko and Rossen (2004) asserted that Chickering and Gamson's (1991) seven research-based principles for good practice can be accomplished in the online learning environment. These seven principles include: 1) encourage contact between learners and faculty; 2) develop reciprocity and cooperation among learners; 3) encourage active learning; 4) give prompt feedback; 5) emphasize time on task; 6) communicate high expectations; and 7) respect diverse talents and ways of learning. Shelton and Saltsman (2005) agreed that e-learning provides global access to learning, and accommodates different learning styles through interactive media delivered via the internet; it allows access to another culture on its own terms (Ko & Rossen, 2004) and the capability to better serve learners from educationally underserved areas (Bender, 2003; Ko & Rossen, 2004) such as nontraditional, rural, and other learners (Zemsky, 2007). E-learning can be authentic learning which is defined as an approach to teaching and learning that promotes higher-order thinking, and encourages learners to gain new knowledge and skills that build on ideas connected to the real world (Bender, 2003; Herrington, Reeves, & Oliver, 2010).

The online learning environment offers convenience and freedom in when, where, and how the course is delivered, as well as the opportunity to offer specialized and advanced degrees (Bender, 2003; Ko & Rossen, 2004). It overcomes the limits of place and time (Zemsky, 2007). Bender suggested there is a continuous cycle of four processes when learning takes place: experience, reflection, conceptualization, and planning. Another benefit to online learning is these phases of learning can occur in different and perhaps more authentic environments.

A constructivist approach is amenable to online learning (Glatthorn, 2000; Lucas, 2001). "Constructivism is a theory of learning based on the principle that learners construct meaning from what they experience; thus, learning is an active, meaning-making process" (Glatthorn, 2000, p. 6). The constructivist alternative challenges online courses to be project-based, requiring the learner to find, analyze, and synthesize materials found on the web, or to extrapolate meaning and conclusions from readings, discussion questions, and cohort members (Lucas, 2001). Learners are enabled to construct their own knowledge (Collison, Elbaum, Haavind, & Tinker, 2000). This theory is important to higher education curriculum because it enables learners to access knowledge that is used in solving open-ended, contextualized problems (Glatthorn, 2000).

The e-learning environment brings people from around the world together. It extends and fosters critical reflection time; provides an opportunity to compose thoughtful, probing contributions; leaves little room for disengaged learners to "hide"; and it allows access to vast resources through hyperlinks for comparison or research (Collison et al., 2000). Online learners can feel protected by anonymity. They are not interrupted when formulating responses, can respond when they feel inspired, and there is less hierarchy in terms of gender and racial differences (Bender, 2003).

In the online classroom, instructors can avoid anxiety over gaining and sustaining learners' interest over the time slot; remembering learners' names; setting up the room; looking stupid or blanking out. Concerns are removed about wearing comfortable clothing and shoes; lacking inspiration; allowing enough time for traveling to and from class; and finding a parking space. It's also easier to encourage every learner to participate and allows quiet learners to participate without being intimidated by domineering ones (Bender, 2003).

Posting lectures online frees learners to concentrate on what is being communicated. Learners can review the material in its original form or catch up on material they missed because of illness or absence. Instructors can reevaluate older and possibly out of date course materials, improve organization and coherence, and increase comprehension when adapting a face-to-face course to online. Online tools such as email and virtual office hours can improve the flow of communication in the areas of counseling, advice, mentoring, and support (Ko & Rossen, 2004). It is important to note that some learners might feel resistant to online group work, being unable to conceptualize it, but in fact it is far more convenient to work asynchronously as a group online than it is in the real world, where there are all sorts of scheduling issues to agree upon. Role-playing fits superbly online (Bender, 2003).

In online discussions, learners are able to relate education with experience, which according to Dewey (1938) is the optimal path to true learning. If a learner has missed an online synchronous conversation, the online conversation is archived and can therefore still be read after it has occurred. This is superior to having missed a meeting in physical space and time. Online chat is exciting and engaging. Time goes by quickly, and the instant gratification keeps the learners' attention. It is familiar and easy for learners who are used to instant messaging, and it may appeal to nonlinear thinkers. Synchronous conversations fit the net generation lifestyles and habits (Bender, 2003).

Ruhleder and Twidale (2000) presented similar key concepts of teaching and learning that can be accomplished in the online classroom. These concepts include the opportunity for learners to focus on collaboration, be reflective, benefit from the successes and mistakes of fellow learners, and learn by doing rather than in the abstract. True assessment is possible on a variety of challenging and rigorous learning activities on which learners receive frequent feedback and gain a sound idea as to how they are performing. Instructors who are supported by training can foster critical reflection and individual and collaborative learning that rivals, and may even exceed, traditional settings for instruction (Collison et al., 2000). Learners are given better access to certain faculty members and this helps dislodge bottlenecks for required courses (Zemsky, 2007).

According to Zemsky (2007), e-learning eases communication for some learners; attracts learners who are more motivated; improves institutional flexibility; adds enrollments without the cost of new facilities; makes new markets for institutions and promotes risk-taking; and provides opportunity to experiment and share resources. Some opponents may argue that e-learning cannot engage all five senses. Conversely,

Bender (2003) asserted that "not making use of all five senses may indeed lead to fewer distractions and greater ability to concentrate purely on the connections of thoughts and concepts" (p. 158). In the 2002 Sloan Consortium research report, faculty and learners reported high levels of satisfaction with online courses. They reported a high degree of interaction, easy access to online reference material, and thought online learning led to effective learning (Bender, 2003).

Online education does not have an artificial learning environment as a result of scheduled time for learning to take place. Learners log on when they are ready to learn. Learners who are used to very large lecture halls may benefit from more personal attention online and from the diversity of learning opportunities that each medium potentially provides online. Resources are available throughout the duration of the course, increasing the opportunity for continued thought, reflection, and meta cognition because each learner can work to some extent at his or her own best pace (Bender, 2003).

E-learning develops writing skills (Collison et al., 2000). Often the generally slower act of writing rather than speaking allows time for new ideas, thoughts, and important connections to be made and communicated. Online learners acquire an important set of skills: express themselves with clarity in written form; work meaningfully from a remote location (telecommuting and conducting online research); develop skills of collaboration and interaction with others, despite the distance (Bender, 2003). Lucas (2001) made a significant point when she wrote that the increase in educational opportunities available via the internet makes it essential that valid methods for assessment be determined by the instructor and/or institution, and communicated to the learner at the outset of the program. This is a benefit to the entire institution.

The results of two nonscientific focus groups conducted with learners at the master's level at Bethel revealed additional benefits and all of their responses corroborated those already mentioned. The participants cited as benefits: the access to electronic resources in the library and on the internet; convenience for learners who travel; and learners are allowed to learn at their own pace and can delve more deeply into issues. Additionally, learners can interact with people outside the U.S.; they do not have to listen to people spouting off and can access only what is helpful or interesting to the learner; the ability to flex their schedule which can change from week to week; learners can participate in their pajamas; and virtual classrooms relieve campus space issues. From the review of literature and the results of the focus groups, a summary of the potential benefits of the e-learning paradigm is provided in Appendix A.

The Potential Challenges of E-Learning

Based on the preceding review of literature and Bethel focus group results, it is apparent that the online learning environment can be beneficial in many ways. However, there are also significant challenges that should be considered. Before the challenges are explored, it should be noted that newcomers to online teaching and learning are likely to exaggerate the computer expertise and infrastructure required. An

online instructor only needs a basic familiarity with computers and the internet to be effective. Besides, "techies don't necessarily make the best online instructors. An interest in pedagogy should come first, technology second" (Ko & Rossen, 2004, p. 16). Also, institutions may not ever be able to provide the level of support to which faculty think they are entitled (Ko & Rossen, 2004).

It is not just the faculty who have expectations about technology support. In a panel discussion facilitated by Temares (2005), several expectations that today's learners have were brought to light: safe and convenient access (high-speed wireless available across campus and virus protection); access to software to complement course work; professors who are fluent in current technology; 24-hour labs and assistance; electronic access to professor ratings; more social networking software; text-messaging abilities with professor; more of an interactive learning environment; professors who are responsive and engaging for all learning styles; and learners do not seem to feel much responsibility (illegal file sharing and tying up the network).

Other challenges of online education include the fact that efficacy may vary according to discipline or field of study, and academic libraries are anxious about their role in teaching and learning, the need to expand entrepreneurial roles, and the pressure to produce new services. In the online classroom, instructors may have anxiety over using technology; knowing less about technology than the learners do; losing command of the class; becoming tied to the computer (lacking boundaries); making sure tone/personality is coming through; engaging all learners; being unprepared; building community; not being able to meet the same outcomes when adapting a face-to-face course to an online course (Bender, 2003). Also, adapting a face-to-face course for online is initially time consuming for the instructor, especially online lectures (Ko & Rossen, 2004).

There are benefits to cross-cultural exchanges online; however, there are also some obstacles. Some of these obstacles include: language of instruction (including the textbook); cultural patterns of learning; differing guidelines regarding writing; rules about plagiarism and originality, and ideas about time and frequency of communication; real-time activities because of differing time zones; limited internet access and unstable telephone connections in some countries; observing different religious and secular holidays (Ko & Rossen, 2004). Synchronous online conversations favor fast typists, not necessarily the best learners. This type of conversation can feel a little hectic and disjointed as several conversations can be going on at the same time. Messages have to be short; there is little chance to correct spelling and grammar mistakes. It is difficult to allow time for silence and for a reflective environment and learning in depth. There may be an extra challenge for disabled learners (Bender, 2003).

In a panel discussion facilitated by Zemsky (2007), the perception that online learning discourages active learning was cited as a challenge to the e-learning paradigm. Other challenges raised by the panelists include the following: it discourages peer-to-peer socialization opportunities; requires more academic support to help learners succeed; limits use by older people who are not familiar with technology; restricts financial aid opportunities that may not be available for e-learners; curbs a professor's ability to

communicate passion for his or her subject; increases work for faculty members; creates more intellectual property issues and security issues. All instructors, whether on campus or online, need to remember that every use for an educational purpose is not a fair use. For example, instructors hand out copies of the same newspaper article year after year without permission. New technologies, however, are increasing the potential for copyright infringements (Crews, 2003; Shaw & Shaw, 2003). Also, information on the web is of variable quality because there are no standards of control as to what is posted (Bender, 2003).

Similar to the results of the two nonscientific focus groups conducted with learners at the master's level at Bethel, participants revealed additional challenges to e-learning and corroborated some of those already mentioned. If learners use the computer at work, they do not always feel like working on the computer when they get home. Learners' technology levels vary, and they cannot see people's faces and what they look like (unless using video conferencing or a roster with photos). The lack of verbal and nonverbal queues makes the handling of conflict and controversy more difficult. Having an online discussion is much more time-consuming, and it is difficult to establish boundaries, especially if learns are not self-motivated. Learners may not feel the same level of accountability to be prepared for class, and faculty may feel like they can never turn their computer off. Focus group participants mentioned that organizations are skeptical about the credibility of an online education and favor hiring people with face-to-face degrees. Therefore, offering an online degree may hurt a school's reputation if the program is not accredited. These concerns should be addressed in the formation of online postsecondary programs, as well as high school activities that foster relationships with global partners. From the review of literature and the results of the focus groups, a summary of the potential challenges of the e-learning paradigm is provided in Appendix B.

Conclusions

Several contradictions can be identified related to the potential benefits and challenges in the e-learning environment. For learners, the online classroom provides global access to learning, but limits real-time activities because of differing time zones. The online classroom provides the capability to better serve learners from educationally underserved areas such as nontraditional and rural, but limits participation in some parts of the world because of connectivity. It is more convenient to work asynchronously as a group online than it is in the real world where there are all sorts of scheduling issues to agree upon, but this makes some learners feel resistant to online group work. The online classroom helps learners feel protected by anonymity, but leaves little room for disengaged learners to "hide." It fits net generation lifestyles and habits (synchronous conversations), but limits use by older people who are not familiar with technology. For some, the e-learning environment eases communication, but for others it makes the handling of conflict and controversy more difficult when there is a lack of verbal and nonverbal queues. Additionally, the online classroom develops the learners' writing skills, but it favors fast typists and not necessarily the best learners.

For instructors, the online classroom allows instructors to avoid anxiety over gaining and sustaining learners' interest over the time slot, but generates anxiety over being unprepared. Instructors can retain the basic approach of an existing course when adapting it for online, but it takes a considerable amount of time (especially online lectures). The online classroom assists instructors in remembering learners' names and to encourage every learner to participate, but it makes instructors uneasy over how to build community.

For administrators, the online classroom relieves campus space issues and adds enrollments without the cost of new facilities, but induces pressure to produce new services. While e-learning generates new markets for institutions, some organizations remain skeptical about the credibility of an online education. The online classroom provides opportunities to experiment and share resources, but it causes academic libraries to be anxious about their role in teaching and learning. Finally, the e-learning environment improves institutional flexibility, but it restricts financial aid opportunities that may not be available for e-learners.

Offering online programs will continue to assist educational institutions in becoming preferred providers and leading innovators in the area of e-learning. It is possible to organize for growth in infrastructure and programs, and to be a best practices institution that develops professional educators and invests in faculty development of scholar-practitioners. Still, for schools to be characterized by online good practice will require administrators to understand that "the medium is not the message, but instead is an alternative way of communicating the message, that message being the content of what is being taught and learned" (Bender, 2003, p. 165). Administrators will also need to employ instructors who are energized about online teaching and learning, and have a desire to be educationally progressive (Bender, 2003).

Technology is a compelling force that is transforming education. However, Paulson, Ed.D. Program Director at Bethel University, summarized the definitive purpose of e-learning: "The issue isn't the need for more technology, but using it in a way that enhances global relationships and learning." In conclusion, the future of education is global. Providing a global education means learners are comfortable navigating the virtual world. They are also effective at solving problems alongside people from different cultures and perspectives.

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April 2012, Vol.2 No.1, pp. 42-56
ISSN 2163-758X

Appendix A

Potential Benefits of the E-Learning Paradigm

Benefits
Benefits for Learners
• Facilitates discussion, particularly in humanities, social sciences, and writing courses
• Allows adult learners to balance family, work (especially those who travel), and education
• Is appreciated by adult learners who desire more equality between the instructor and learner
• Emphasizes learner collaboration and deemphasizes the traditional role of the instructor
• Encourages contact between learners and faculty
• Develops reciprocity and cooperation among learners
• Makes assignments conducive to active learning
• Provides channel for prompt feedback
• Emphasizes time on task
• Shows respect for diverse talents and ways of learning
• Provides global access to learning
• Fosters critical reflection and individual and collaborative learning that rivals, and may even exceed, traditional settings for instruction
• Accommodates different learning styles through interactive media delivered via the internet
• Allows access to another culture on its own terms
• Provides capability to better serve learners from educationally underserved areas such as nontraditional, rural, and other learners
• Promotes higher-order thinking
• Encourages learners to gain new knowledge and skills that build on ideas connected to the real world
• Offers convenience and freedom in when, where, and how the course is delivered, as well as the opportunity to offer specialized and advanced degrees
• Overcomes the limits of place and time
• Allows phases of learning (experience, reflection, conceptualization, and planning) to occur in different and perhaps more authentic environments
• Challenges online courses to be project-based, requiring the learner to find, analyze, and synthesize materials found on the web, or to extrapolate meaning and conclusions from readings, discussion questions, and cohort members
• Enables learners to construct their own knowledge
• Accesses knowledge that is used in solving open-ended, contextualized problems
• Facilitates interaction with people outside the U.S.

April 2012, Vol.2 No.1, pp. 42-56
ISSN 2163-758X

• Extends and fosters critical reflection time
• Provides an opportunity to compose thoughtful, probing contributions
• Helps learners feel protected by anonymity
• Lessens interruptions when formulating responses
• Allows learners to respond when they feel inspired
• Limits hierarchy in terms of gender and racial differences
• Allows quiet learners to participate without being intimidated by domineering ones
• Frees learners to concentrate on what is being communicated in posted lectures
• Allows review of the material in its original form or catch up on material they missed because of illness or absence
• Improves the flow of communication in the areas of counseling, advice, mentoring, and support with using online tools such as email and virtual office hours
• Is more convenient to work asynchronously as a group online than it is in the real world, where there are all sorts of scheduling issues to agree upon
• Suits interactive assignments such as role-playing
• Relates education with experience
• Appeals to nonlinear thinkers
• Engages learners in online chat, which is familiar and easy for learners who are used to instant messaging
• Fits net generation lifestyles and habits (synchronous conversations)
• Focuses on collaboration
• Gives learners the opportunity to benefit from the successes and mistakes of fellow learners
• Allows an opportunity to learn by doing rather than in the abstract
• Eases communication for some learners
• Attracts learners who are more motivated
• Leads to fewer distractions and fosters a greater ability to concentrate purely on the connections of thoughts and concepts when not making use of all five senses
• Allows easy access to vast resources through hyperlinks for comparison or research and online reference material
• Eliminates the artificial learning environment as a result of scheduled time for learning to take place
• Enables learners to work at their own pace and to log on when they are ready to learn
• Encourages learners to delve more deeply into issues
• Facilitates more personal attention
• Allows diversity of learning opportunities that each medium provides
• Increases the opportunity for continued thought, reflection, and meta cognition because resources are available throughout the duration of the course
• Develops writing skills
• Develops skills of collaboration and interaction with others, despite the distance,

April 2012, Vol.2 No.1, pp. 42-56
ISSN 2163-758X

permitting learners to work meaningfully from a remote location
• Allows time for new ideas, thoughts, and important connections to be made and communicated because the act of writing is slower than speaking
• Makes it essential that valid methods for assessment be determined by the instructor and/or institution, and communicated to the learner at the outset of the program
• Enables learners to “listen” only to what is helpful or interesting to the learner
• Learners can participate in their pajamas
Benefits for Instructors
• Assists in communicating high expectations
• Helps instructors engage in a lengthier debate and to better challenge ideas when the perception of the online instructor is less formal (guide on the side)
• Allows instructors to retain the basic approach for an existing face-to-face course
• Prompts instructors to reevaluate older and possibly out of date course materials, improve organization and coherence, and increase comprehension when adapting a face-to-face course to online
• Allows instructors to avoid anxiety over gaining and sustaining learners’ interest over the time slot
• Assists instructors in remembering learners’ names
• Eliminates the need for room set-up
• Helps instructors avoid looking stupid or blanking out
• Removes concerns about wearing comfortable clothing and shoes
• Reduces the need to respond when lacking inspiration
• Eliminates travel time to and from class
• Eliminates the need to find a parking space
• Benefits for Administrators
• Relieves campus space issues
• Provides better access to certain faculty members which helps dislodge bottlenecks for required courses
• Improves institutional flexibility
• Adds enrollments without the cost of new facilities
• Generates new markets for institutions
• Promotes risk-taking
• Provides opportunity to experiment and share resources

April 2012, Vol.2 No.1, pp. 42-56
ISSN 2163-758X

Appendix B

Potential Challenges of the E-Learning Paradigm

Challenges
Challenges for Learners
• Makes some learners feel resistant to online group work, being unable to conceptualize it
• Lacks engagement of all five senses
• Causes newcomers to online teaching and learning to exaggerate the computer expertise and infrastructure required
• Builds expectations for safe and convenient access (high-speed wireless available across campus and virus protection)
• Creates disappointment when institutions are not able to provide the level of support to which think they are entitled
• Triggers expectations for access to software to complement course work
• Increases expectations for 24-hour labs and assistance
• Leads to desire for electronic access to professor ratings
• Raises hope for more social networking software
• Produces desire for more of an interactive learning environment
• Increases expectations for professors to be responsive and engaging for all learning styles
• Requires learners to be more responsible (illegal file sharing and tying up the network)
• Affects various disciplines or fields of study differently
• Brings challenges to online cross-cultural exchanges in the area of language of instruction (including the textbook)
• Requires an understanding of cultural patterns of learning
• Requires an understanding of differing guidelines regarding writing
• Requires an understanding of rules about plagiarism and originality
• Triggers a variety of ideas about time and frequency of communication
• Limits real-time activities because of differing time zones
• Leads to frustration when internet access is limited and phone connections are unstable in some countries
• Makes it more important to observe different religious and secular holidays
• Favors fast typists, not necessarily the best learners (synchronous online conversations)
• Feels hectic and disjointed as several conversations can be going on at the same time (synchronous online conversations)
• Requires synchronous messages to be short; there is little chance to correct spelling and grammar mistakes
• Makes it difficult to allow time for silence, for a reflective environment, and learning in depth (synchronous online conversations)

April 2012, Vol.2 No.1, pp. 42-56
ISSN 2163-758X

• Produces extra challenges for disabled learners
• Discourages socialization opportunities in person
• Requires more academic support to help learners succeed
• Limits use by older learners who are not familiar with technology
• Creates more intellectual property issues and security issues
• Affects learners' motivation if they use the computer at work; they do not always feel like working on the computer when they get home
• Constrains communication when learners cannot see people's faces and what they look like (unless using Skype, Google video chat, or a roster with photos)
• Makes the handling of conflict and controversy more difficult when there is a lack of verbal and nonverbal queues
• Requires more time to engage in an online conversation
• Makes it difficult to establish boundaries, especially if learners are not self-motivated
• Influences learners' level of accountability in being prepared for class
• Limits participation in some parts of the world without internet connectivity
• Leaves little room for disengaged learners to "hide"
Challenges for Instructors
• Makes it necessary to teach learners that information on the web is of variable quality because there are no standards of control as to what is posted
• Takes a considerable amount of time to adapt a face-to-face course for online initially, especially online lectures
• Curbs a professor's ability to communicate passion for his or her subject
• Increases work for faculty members
• Involves teaching learners with varying levels of technology expertise
• Ties instructors to the computer (lacking boundaries)
• Creates anxiety over knowing less about technology than the learners do
• Increases fear over losing command of the class
• Triggers concern over making sure tone/personality is coming through
• Creates apprehension over engaging all learners
• Generates anxiety over being unprepared
• Makes instructors uneasy over how to build community
• Causes anxiety over not being able to meet the same outcomes when adapting a face-to-face course to an online course
Challenges for Administrators
• Forces administrators to deal with the perception that online learning discourages active learning
• Restricts financial aid opportunities that may not be available for e-learners
• Makes some organizations skeptical about the credibility of an online education and favor hiring people with face-to-face degrees
• Hurts a school's reputation if it is offering an online degree program that is not

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accredited
• Causes academic libraries to be anxious about their role in teaching and learning
• Creates the need to expand entrepreneurial roles
• Induces pressure to produce new services

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Cheryl Bostrom teaches in the Graduate School at Bethel University. She holds a Doctor of Education in Educational Administration degree and studied abroad in Turkey to complete her dissertation titled, Diffusion of Internationalization in Turkish Higher Education: A Comparative Case Study at Ankara University and Gazi University. Her work was published in the Journal of Studies in International Education. Cheryl has a K-12 Principal License, a Master of Arts in Communication degree with an emphasis in intercultural communication, and a Master's Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Cheryl also has first-hand experience in 19 countries outside the United States. Her core beliefs and values include a commitment to building trust with people of different cultures and internationalizing postsecondary education. She can be reached at c-bostrom@bethel.edu.