A New Journal? Why?

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Abstract

This article addresses the question of why a new journal about innovations in online education has been started.

KEY WORDS: journal innovations streams pillars

You are reading the inaugural version of the International Journal on Innovations in Online Education (IJIOE). The editors hope you will find the papers useful and thought provoking. Most particularly, we hope you find content here that describes recent important innovations in online and blended education, some of which will be timely and necessary for your work.

Our field, the field of online education, is young, dating back roughly to the start of the commercial Internet (i.e., to about 1993). After an initial period, during which online education was practiced primarily in one model (over the approximate time interval 1993–2010)[1], online education has now scattered into a multimodal form. The preponderance of degree-oriented education is still largely available in the format initially developed and refined in subsequent years, but now we also have assorted other options, such as multiple MOOC models, Khan Academy, and similar variations.

Thus, our field is young and being practiced in many forms, with expectations of additional proliferation. This landscape is fertile ground for innovation, and this journal intends to be the primary catchment of these innovations. We need your input to make it as useful as it possibly can be.

The phrase "innovations in online education" is rather broad, indeed all encompassing, and we are applying it to a field with proliferating practice models. An organizing framework is needed, and the editors have arrived at a plan to ensure that each issue is a composite of papers representing several categories of current importance in the online education field. These categories or "streams" flow into each issue. Each paper submitted for publication is assigned to one of 10 streams currently identified and in use, and it is then assigned to a stream editor for examination and recommendation. This process intends to assure that we are directing special attention toward the important segments of this active field for innovations.

However, we additionally want to measure, as best as possible, how the innovations identified are leading to advancing overall quality in online (and blended) education. For this reason, we propose to align the papers being published in IJIOE with the Pillars approach to quality measurement. The editors will have a short section in each issue that shows how the papers published to date are distributed among the Pillars, which are access, learning effectiveness,

faculty satisfaction, cost effectiveness, and overall student satisfaction[2]. This editor's section will show cumulative data so that we can all see where, among the Pillars, the majority of innovation is taking place and possibly where additional focus is necessary[3].

Periodically, the editors will also include at least a qualitative assessment of impact on quality from innovations described in IJIOE. As a general guideline, the editors will not accept untested innovations or armchair theorizing, but rather innovations that have been reduced to a degree of practice. In this way, we anticipate that impacts on quality will be visible.

Finally, I want to remind the readers and contributors that this journal is for you and for the larger online education community. We will always welcome your ideas and suggestions on all aspects of the publication and take actions to improve our service wherever possible.

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[1]During the 1993–2012 period, degree-oriented online education almost exclusively consisted of instructor-led courses with 15–25 students per class; course materials and capability of interactions between students and faculty all available online; with traditional tuition and appropriate fees being applicable.

[2]http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/5-pillars/

[3]We recognize that more than one Pillar could apply to a paper and for that reason, one paper may be distributed among two or more of the relevant Pillars.