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Shift happens: online education as a new paradigm in learning

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Abstract

This article addresses that paradigmatic shift. It begins by presenting an overview of the history of online education as a context and framework for understanding the state of the art today, especially the use of network technologies for collaborative learning in post-secondary education. Beginning with the innovations of early pioneers as contributing to the paradigmatic shift, it provides a framework for understanding this new field. The article then focuses on the Virtual-U, a Web-based environment especially customized to support advanced educational practices. The Virtual-U research team hosts the largest field trials in post-secondary education in the world with empirical results and insights generated from over 439 courses taught by 250 faculty to 15,000 students, attesting to what works in online education. This article concludes by discussing the signposts to future advances that these data suggest.



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Keywords

Paradigmatic shift; Virtual-U; Online education

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