Foreword

Mapping the journey for online learning is not simply an ideological endeavor alone. The attention to the details of instructional design and instructional delivery methodology requires urgency no different that given to the nuanced attention to detail that educators employ during course preparation. The solutions we create within our hybrid, online, and mixed modal approaches need to be scalable, fluid in scope, and implemented as if we had laser-focus on a GPS model, that is a Guided Pathways Sequence. Our online approaches have been begged for mapping, where students can literally see the architect’s hyper-information highway toward employment and/or graduation, increased retention and engagement, that leads to student fulfillment. The mindfulness associated with student success cannot be underemphasized as online learning provides a conduit toward completion.

We are in an age of accessible content. Often, our professoriate dialogues about the continued increase of Open Educational Resources (OER), Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), or Mode Neutral, though none guarantee success or completion, in a society with an ever quickening pace and increased use of mobile devices, the interest in on demand learning at a self-pace calls for our points of connection to increase. Our lengthened strides toward online learning leaps the gateway forward as learners move closer to the close of the first 20 years of a new millennia. Our access to learning has increased infinite fold because of IoT and IoE. For those connected communities, learning has only one boundary now, the limitations of her/him who seeks information.

The information you are privy to here acknowledges the importance of online learning, its scope, and its possibilities. I posit that success is now partially based on the spheres of access, connectivity, and competencies in the 21st century. Be it the connection between faculty and student, student and student, community and student, or technological platform and student, at the crux of many conversations is the learner. The Learner represents ALL of US. Online learning provides an opportunity to decrease the separation created by the tired categorization of research steeped in age, ethnicity, but moves toward cultural currency and the impact environment. Are we not glocal citizens now?
An accessible education is in our pockets, in our laps and cast upon VR and AR screens of our newly acquired headsets, cardboard, and glasses. Viewed through the lenses of Futurists and emerging Virtists (a neologism coined to mean someone totally immersed in virtual reality). We must beg the question, are we as learners at another precipice? I know I have jumped and happily free fall toward the open and infinite concept of possibility, plausibility, and playful perspectives. These bubbly and cherubian whispers are expansive, so listen well to the surveyors of the moment, our coders-code breakers-our sculptors of tomorrow. All we ask here is for your wide-eyed imagination—anything is possible!

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