

Preface

Online and web based courses within the scope of distance education has become popular with both students and educational institutions as the new mediums to deliver educational programs and opportunities. For universities and other educational programs, online learning is an excellent way to reach students in diverse and distant locations. Given their popularity and increased use, it is important that administrators and educators alike monitor teaching practices within this new frontier as this medium become ever more ubiquitous. Hopefully, this type of monitoring and feedback may help in modifying and improving the learning environment and education programs so that online education can function as desired by all parties, including the adult learning population.

With this ideal, the purpose of *Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices* serves to identify the factors that affect adult learning in an online educational environment. The information presented in this text will lead to the development and implementation of innovative strategies to promote quality teaching and student learning via online and ICT enhanced learning opportunities. In order to effectively develop a conducive environment for adult learner in an online environment, instructional designers, educators, trainers, and facilitators must pay particular attention to the design of instruction, modes of delivery, instructional and teaching practices, as well as the technologies employed to disseminate the learning to adults. Only then can we as master educators begin to harness the power of online learning.

Concerted efforts in online learning have the potential to generate new patterns of teaching and learning for adult learners. This idea is strongly linked to recent developments in information and communication technologies and new patterns of information access and learning. With current evidence online education and advances in technology may lead to innovation in mainstream education, and may even have effects beyond the realm of education itself. Online education through quality learning opportunities therefore, plays a decisive role in the creation of the global knowledge-based society.

In order to understand this new frontier for teaching practice, *Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices* serves to bridge adult learning methods with ICT advancements, pedagogy, and with factors that affect adult learning online. A large component of this text relates to the principles and theories of learning including the adult learning methodology or andragogy, active learning principles, and ICT strategies. Additionally, instructional design, learning communities, learning management systems, web based instruction, and social networking are as equally important to the themes outlined in this text.

As the fascination with online education continues to grow, the World Wide Web will continue to offers a worldwide forum in which to teach courses and empower adult learners. One can assume, for example, that each adult at any time has an excellent resource of information at his or her disposal. Course material from the educator's perspective can be dynamically updated and linked across several related sources. Course text, examples and exercises can be interactive in the sense of immediately il-

lustrating equations with graphs, changing parameters and seeing the results, linking to other web-sites according to the interests of the student. As online educational environments continue, this frontier will essentially free education from the limitations of space and time, while reaching adult learners around the world with great ease.

Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices presents learning models that offers educators and students a wealth of information that was never possible in the classical educational model. The possibility of linking these ideals together worldwide in a multitude of formats creates a remarkably rich medium for learning. Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices is not merely duplicate of an original discussion, but rather a structured conversation used to spark the burning desire to continue strong teaching practices online. Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices represents a new type of discussion that takes full advantage of emerging web and multimedia technologies in order to achieve an effective yet enjoyable learning process. Thus, with Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices concepts are introduced in innovative ways – ways that involve the adult learner and integrate them into the learning process online. Moreover, Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices links to vast resources available worldwide and introduces new levels of value to online educational opportunities.

Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices can be envisioned as a dynamically-evolving resource that will prove beneficial to both adult learner and instructors alike, making it a great source of strategies and content. In the light of this text, Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices presents evident that assists in the design of online educational opportunities for adult learning. Thus, Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices teaches that online educational opportunities are developed through the efforts of a team of professionals with a complementary range of skills, as opposed to classical course design, which is typically developed by faculty alone. Designer and educators alike will have opportunities to see teaching practices and principles made alive for the next generation of learning. The richness of Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices allows for unlimited creativity when it comes to online educational development. Such richness offers educators new opportunities to develop innovative learning material while posing a challenge in that it requires faculty to rethink their own teaching practices online. In order to best serve adult learners and related stakeholders Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices takes an active look at effective practices and strategies that inform online education. It is not enough for educational institutions to just give financial resources, hardware and software, however, they should fundamentally equip online educators to effectively teach, engage, extend, and enhance the adult learner's educational experience.

By equipping the all stakeholder for effective teaching practices within an online environment, *Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices* offers effective design strategies, content, learning templates, materials, and models to further quality teaching and active student engagement online. It is important to understand that in order to foster an environment conducive to effective learning in the online atmosphere, we must pay close attention to the factors that affect instructional quality as discussed in this new frontier of learning. For such research, the future seems very bright and encouraging. This theme will be repeated as other aspects of online learning come under scrutiny. We know enough at this point to optimize quality in visual aesthetics, however the instructional quality and quality of deliver is more difficult to define and measure; that is why *Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices* offers to fill this gap with strategies, process, and procedure effectively engage all stakeholders in the development of online education.

In order to provide the best balanced coverage of concepts and issues related to the topics of this book, current researchers from around the world were asked to submit their chapter describing their

unique coverage of online education and adult learning and the new teaching practices associated with such innovation. Each chapter submission began with the proposal phase. Following the submission phase, each proposal was submitted for blind reviewed by a team of reviewers who indicated the accepted or rejection of the chapter proposal. Following the proposal review phase, each author was then given permission to complete their own chapters for the book.

After completing their respective chapter, the chapter was then submitted once again for blind peer review once more. After a two round rigorous referred processed of two reviewers, the chapters that were strong and favorable from the reviewers were chosen as entries for this book. The ideas presented in this book were assembled by the best minds in the online learning field. Further, the chapters authored were selected based on the author's expertise and leadership roles within the field as well as their unique perspective they tell relating to the subject.

As a result of the double blind submission process, *Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices* highlights current concepts, issues and emerging trends relating to online education and adult learning. To this end, *Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices* offers twenty two chapters that highlights the history of online learning, transition strategies from face to face learning to online learning, hidden challenges to online education, strategies for instructional quality, how to empower adult learners through online education, the use of educational games in online learning, theoretical model for designing online education, online pedagogical effectiveness in adult contexts, impact of e-learning on adult education, and the impact of online education on progressive educational ideals.

With the mix of educational perspectives outlined in this book, a wide range of perspectives are covered to meet the needs of everyone. This book highlights online education and new associated teaching practices as a growing field of study which uses ICTs are a means to solve online educational and learning challenges. The chapters are not organized by industry; instead, they are divided into three major themes: introduction to online education, new frontiers for online and teaching practices, and finally case studies for online education.

For all practical purposes *Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices* discusses various methods and tools for assessment, testing and evaluation of effective online educational practices. For the future developments of online education and associated teaching practices, this book presents information concerning the history, trends and major issues facing online teaching and learning. In the end, this book contains a wide range of ideas, examples, guidelines, stories, models, and solution all with the basic premise improving teaching practices online.

As online education continues to grow in order to meet the needs of adult learning *Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices* will continue to serve the purpose of supporting quality instructional and teaching practices online. As advancement in ICT's reach a diversity of people and online educational opportunities reach new territories, we can help and support to empower adult learners and related stakeholders throughout the world.

With the diverse and comprehensive coverage of multiple perspectives in online education and its associated teaching practices, this authoritative book, *Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices* will contribute to a better understanding all topics, research, and discoveries in this evolving, significant field of study. Further, the contributions included in this book will be instrumental in expanding of the body of knowledge in this vast field. The coverage of this book will provide strength and support as a reference resource for both online education and their associated teaching practices. Not only will *Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices* provide support for better decision makers in obtaining a greater understanding of the concepts, issues, problems, trends, challenges and opportunities associated with online education, however

Online Education and Adult Learning: New Frontiers for Teaching Practices will continue to provide all stakeholders with the curiosity to seek better ways of teaching online

It is my sincere hope that this publication and the amount of information presented will assist all major stakeholders in enhancing their understanding of this adult learning and online education as well as to effectively design and implement strong yet high quality online educational opportunities for our global society. Perhaps this publication will inspire its readers to contribute to the current body of research in this immense field, tapping into possibilities to assist educational institutions in making all educational opportunities open to participants.

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