

## E-Instructors: Their Perceptions of Best Practices

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**Keywords:** online learning, online practices, online education

## **E-Instructors: Their Perceptions of Best Practices**

Online learning is prevalent in today's universities. Advances in technology have led to courses being taught from behind computers rather than in front of students. With this method of teaching and learning, students and teachers face challenges and are subjected to both advantages and disadvantages of e-learning. Time and place flexibility are valued by students and believed to be an advantage of online learning (Meyen, Aust, Bui, & Isaacson, 2002). However, students and faculty may face technological difficulties. If a technological mishap occurs, an entire online day could be lost.

Face-to-face (F2F) learning and e-learning are very different environments. Differences include both the level of interaction and the methods of communication to support interaction. Students may experience more direct communication through email or text-based Web pages and find they concentrate better on assigned tasks. However, they cannot transmit or receive the affective nuances that are available in F2F lessons, which are vital for interpersonal processes (Russell, 2005). Consequently, the e-instructor must facilitate communication to engage students in student-instructor and student-student interaction.

A three-year study at North Carolina A&T State University revealed several best practices in online education by university faculty. This study will expand to include faculty at the University of South Carolina and Indiana State University. The areas of investigation include communication, community, time management, student responsibility and constructivist approaches involved in online learning. The data for this

presentation is currently being gathered and will be reported at the Organizational Systems Research Association National Conference in March 2006.

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