
Ensuring Quality in Online Courses: Applying the AACSB International's Distance Learning Quality Issues

Dr. Jorge Gaytan
North Carolina A&T State University
jagaytan@ncat.edu

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the Distance Learning Quality Issues published by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB-International) to document the various characteristics that high-quality online courses must possess. A content analysis methodology was employed to examine the seven quality issues to develop a high-quality framework to assist business schools' faculty and administrators and other educators in planning, designing, evaluating, and continually revising online courses.

Introduction

A significant growth in the demand of online courses has resulted in a major increase in the number of online courses being delivered (Allen & Seaman, 2010, 2013). This unprecedented growth, however, has brought several challenges. For instance, ensuring quality in online courses has proven to be a significant challenge and, as a result, has become a major focus in online and distributed education today (AACSB-International, 2007; Moore & Kearsley, 2012).

Much formal, scientific research has been conducted on online learning. For instance, some researchers (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006) wrote a comprehensive review of literature related to online learning. Yet, other researchers (Gaytan, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b; Gaytan & McEwen, 2007) have focused on student and faculty perceptions of online teaching and learning. However, more research is needed that focuses on quality issues in online courses (AACSB-International, 2007) because high-quality online and distributed education programs "can fundamentally change the way schools compete for students, especially part-time students. A school that develops distance learning programs usually increases the scale and scope of its offerings" (AACSB-International, 2007, p. 3).

Guidelines for quality issues in online education have been developed by AACSB-International (2007) and should be used by "educators who design, construct, and deliver distance learning programs as a source of ideas to ensure quality programs" (AACSB-International, 2007, p. 3). This study will examine the AACSB-International's Distance Learning Quality Issues to document the various characteristics that high-quality online courses must possess. The goal is to develop a high-quality framework to assist business schools' faculty and administrators and other educators in planning, designing, evaluating, and continually revising online courses.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the AACSB-International's Distance Learning Quality Issues to document the various characteristics that high-quality online courses must possess. A content analysis methodology will be employed to examine the seven quality issues to develop a high-quality framework to assist AACSB-accredited business schools' faculty and administrators and other educators in planning, designing, evaluating, and continually revising online courses. Specifically, this study will seek answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the AACSB-International's Distance Learning Quality Issues?

2. What recommendations could be given to faculty and administrators, housed in AACSB-accredited business schools, to assist them in the effective integration of these quality issues into teaching practices to deliver high-quality online courses?

This study's findings and discussions will assist AACSB-accredited business schools' faculty and administrators, as well as other educators, in gaining a better understanding of the characteristics that online courses must possess to be considered of high quality.

Literature Review

The AACSB-International's Distance Learning Quality Issues document was first written in 1999 and revised in 2007 by an AACSB-International Task Force appointed by the AACSB-International Board of Directors. It emerged from the recognition by AACSB-International's Board of Directors of the great importance of online teaching and learning in business education and charged the Task Force to provide quality guidelines for online education to assist business schools' faculty and administrators in developing high-quality online education programs and assessing the success of such programs (AACSB-International, 2007).

Low-quality online education programs have resulted in lower student retention in such programs than in traditional, face-to-face counterparts (Liu, Gomez, Khan, & Yen, 2007; Stanford-Bowers, 2008; Terry, 2007), which has become a major educational concern (Allen & Seaman, 2013). In order to respond to this challenge, faculty and administrators in business schools must understand that the demographics of online learners (e.g., older, family and work responsibilities) are much different from those present in the face-to-face learning environment, making it very challenging to apply existing high-quality models, designed for the face-to-face classroom, to online students (Rubin, 2013; Street, 2010).

Students claim that both internal and external factors affect the quality of an online course and, therefore, the likelihood of remaining in that course. Regarding internal factors, student motivation and self-efficacy are two key factors. External factors, on the other hand, have to do with environmental influences, such as organizational and family support (Street, 2010; Jones & Meyer, 2012). For example, Liaw (2008) conducted a study that developed and tested a high-quality model for developing online learning that included three factors: learner's self efficacy, interactive environments, and multimedia formats. Findings revealed that self-efficacy (i.e., self-directed behavior and autonomy) was the most important contributor in predicting online student satisfaction with the quality of the online course.

Several learner-centered educational theories and approaches have been found to offer insight into the characteristics of a high-quality online course. Among them are: social integration (Tinto, 1975); constructivism (Khare & Lam, 2008; Magnussen, 2008); situational and authentic learning (Correia & Davis, 2008; Khare & Lam, 2008); and transformative learning (Correia & Davis, 2008; Stanford-Bowers, 2008).

Gaytan (2008a) found that teachers did not have a good understanding of effective ways to integrate the Internet into their teaching practices. As a result, he presented a research-based and -validated framework to guide instructors in such integration. Gaytan (2006) recommended the development of a framework for planning, designing, delivering, and assessing distance education, using the reputable work of the American Psychological Association (APA Task Force on Distance Education and Training in Professional Psychology, 2002).

Three years later, Gaytan (2009) presented this framework based upon the nine domains that constitute the principles of good practices in distance education developed by APA. These domains "were chosen because they are research-based and -validated principles that provide an integrated framework of all factors affecting e-learning, allowing a thorough understanding of the way human beings learn" (p. 70). The nine domains included:

- (1) Access;
- (2) Interactions within the Learning Community;
- (3) Faculty Support;
- (4) & Student Support;
- (5) Curriculum and Instruction;
- (6) Evaluation and Assessment;
- (7) Institutional Context and Commitment;
- (8) Facilities and Finance; and
- (9) Library and Learning Resources. (Gaytan, 2009, p. 70)

However, more research is needed to determine the characteristics of high-quality online courses with the goal of developing a high-quality framework to assist educators, particularly business schools' faculty and administrators, in planning, designing, evaluating, and continually revising online courses.

Methodology

This qualitative study will employ a content analysis methodology to examine the AACSB-International's Distance Learning Quality Issues to document the various characteristics that online courses must possess to be considered of high quality, increasing the probability of student academic success. A content analysis methodology will be used to examine the seven quality issues to develop a high-quality framework to assist educators, in general, and business schools' faculty and administrators, in particular, in planning, designing, evaluating, and continually revising online courses. Content analysis has been defined as "a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012, p. 142). Generally, content analysis includes the following steps (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012):

1. The specific material to be studied is identified by researcher. If material is small, it is studied in its entirety. If it is large, a random sample is used and the material is broken down into more manageable parts that are analyzed separately. In this study, AACSB-International's Distance Learning Quality Issues were identified.
2. Researcher defines the traits or qualities to be examined. In this study, the traits or qualities to be examined are the characteristics that online courses must possess to be considered of high quality, according to AACSB and an extensive literature review.
3. Researcher scrutinizes the material to find and document the various characteristics that online courses must possess to be considered of high quality, based upon the material under scrutiny (step 2).
4. Researcher interprets data. This last step may involve quantitative analyses (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Findings and Discussion

Findings related to the two research questions under scrutiny will be presented in this section. The seven AACSB-International's Distance Learning Quality Issues include the following items: (1) mission, (2) students, (3) faculty, (4) curriculum and learning issues, (5) instructional resources, (6) intellectual contributions, and (7) business and institutional relationships (AACSB-International, 2007). As each quality issue is presented and discussed, recommendations will be given for its effective integration into teaching practices to deliver high-quality online courses in an attempt to develop a high-quality framework for the delivery of online education.

1. *Mission*

Faculty and administrators in a business school must first determine the mission of its school's online program to ensure that it aligns well with both the school's and the university's mission. The main issue is that a business school must ensure that its online program contributes to the high-quality, face-to-face educational programs. Problems may occur when a business school's online program decreases the value of other programs (AACSB-International, 2007).

For instance, a business school's online program may have a mission to provide an opportunity to gain educational access to a diverse group of individuals otherwise unable to take advantage of such educational opportunity (AACSB-International, 2007; Allen & Seaman, 2013; Gaytan, 2009). This mission, however, must be consistent with the school's and the university's mission. While the increase in bandwidth and Internet connectivity in the community (Gaytan, 2008b) and the decrease in costs associated with distance learning hardware and software have contributed to the increase in online course offerings, several access-related challenges remain, such as disabled individuals being reached by the online program; full-time employees with hectic work and family schedules; and individuals living in rural areas that have, if any, limited access to technology (AACSB-International, 2007; Allen & Seaman, 2013; Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006). In addition, while online courses satisfy students' demand for convenience (Gaytan & McEwen, 2007; McEwen & Gaytan, 2006; Moore & Kearsley,

2012), Gaytan (2009) found that students living in remote areas or those considered physically-challenged had very limited access to online education. The mission of the business school and that of the university may include the allocation of funds to the online program to respond to the access-related challenges effectively.

The following recommendations are offered to assist business schools' leadership teams in the effective integration of mission-related issues into planning, designing, delivering, and assessing online programs to ensure they are of high quality (AACSB-International, 2007):

- B. A business school must create a plan for the development of the mission and implementation strategies of its online program that must involve the following stakeholders: online and face-to-face students, faculty, administrators, and employers located in the online program's service area. The perceptions, experience, and expertise from these stakeholders should assist a business school's leadership team in the effective development of program content, delivery of instruction, assessment of costs, and understanding of timing issues. A business school must systematically solicit input from these stakeholders to ensure proper planning, designing, delivery, and assessing of an online program to ensure that its online program is of high quality.
- C. The mission of the online program must be consistent with the mission embraced by both, the business school and the university. That is, a business school must articulate the way its online program emerged from, and contributes to, the mission of the business school and that of the university. To this end, a business school must identify the student learning outcomes of the online program and courses. Then, an assessment process must be in place to ensure that learning activities, that are connected to the student learning outcomes, are designed by online instructors, completed by online students, and evaluated by instructors using well-designed assessment rubrics to ensure that students have achieved the stated course learning outcomes. Closing-the-loop activities must be designed by a business school's leadership team to ensure that the online program's weaknesses are determined and addressed systematically to engage in continuous improvement efforts. In short, student learning outcomes, instructional activities, and assessments must be linked.
- D. Based upon the mission of the online program, a business school must analyze the characteristics of the student population to be served by the online program and determine the various needs that must be met to achieve an effective and efficient online program. This way, a business school should be able to articulate the uniqueness of its online program and the way it serves its unique student population.
- E. A business school's leadership team must have significant commitment to its online programs and courses. To this end, the leadership team must establish a strong educational infrastructure that includes policies, procedures, and proper funding. Most institutional policies for online courses do not include course development, training, support, and evaluation (Gaytan, 2009; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). In terms of funding, the costs associated with online education are enormous because state-of-the-art online technologies are very expensive. In addition, faculty members should be compensated for developing and delivering online courses because of the significant amount of time it takes to plan, design, and deliver an online course. Course reductions, financial and other types of incentives, and a faculty support system require significant additional funding by a business school. Regarding a faculty support system, it should take the form of a consulting team comprised of online technology technicians, online distribution and site administrators, and library personnel that constantly and consistently provide assistance to online instructors. For instance, "redesigning a course to fit the online framework is not an easy process because it may require the expertise from various individuals (e.g., technology and pedagogy experts) and countless resources" Gaytan (2009, p. 69). This belief is also held by other researchers (Lin, Dyer, & Guo, 2009; McQuiggan, 2007). The costs associated with the establishment of this online faculty support system are extremely high, quite often unknown to a business school's leadership team. For this reason, a business school's leadership team must engage in benchmarking efforts against existing online learning programs at comparable institutions to determine online programs costs and overall best practices for the delivery of online education. Problems "will continue to emerge anytime that there is a difference in the way online and face-to-face faculty are treated regarding academic qualifications, workloads, class size, intellectual property, research opportunities, salary, incentives, recognition, and merit and promotion review criteria" (Gaytan,

2009, p. 72).

- F. Quite often, there is a conflict between a business school's leadership team and online faculty instructional issues that must be addressed. While online faculty are thinking about ways to improve the quality of their online courses, business schools' leadership teams may have other priorities such as being able to remain competitive (Gaytan, 2009). For instance, while administrators view online education "as a way to remain competitive and to increase college visibility and enrollment, faculty perceived online education as a time-consuming instructional delivery mechanism unable to support and promote student learning outcomes" (Gaytan, 2009, p. 67). In addition, "while colleges have embraced online education to respond to pressures from the external environment, the adoption of online instruction has been guided by a vision that is based upon unsubstantiated beliefs and assumptions and has taken the status of myth" (Gaytan, 2009, p. 67). For example, some business schools' leadership teams may want to increase enrollment and reduce costs by placing a large number of students in an online course. However, a faculty member would struggle significantly because of the amount of time required to be invested in teaching such a large online course. In this scenario, learning outcomes may not necessarily be achieved by the online students (Gaytan, 2009). In summary, a business school's leadership team must focus on instructional quality and not so much on cost savings and remaining competitive.

2. *Students*

Faculty and administrators in a business school must inform the students that the online experience requires a different kind of attitude and disposition toward learning to be successful. Business school personnel must be able to articulate very clearly the demands and expectations of online courses and communicate them to the students in a constant and consistent manner. Most students are not aware of the fact that, in order to be successful in an online course, they must manage and control their own learning far more than in a face-to-face learning environment. In other words, students must be mature enough to be able to assume more responsibility for their own learning, be flexible, take more of a lead in asking questions and seeking assistance, and understand that technology fails and they must plan accordingly (AACSB-International, 2007).

Faculty and administrators in a business school must monitor students enrolled in online courses at various intervals during a given term to ensure that the challenges that students are experiencing are addressed properly and timely. The following recommendations are offered to assist business schools' faculty and leadership teams in addressing student-related issues effectively:

- A. The demands and expectations of online courses must be communicated to the students before the course actually begins to allow students an opportunity to engage in some type of training activities. For instance, students must be aware of the type of technology that they must have access to be successful in an online course and the fact that some online courses require a few face-to-face mandatory meetings to
- B. Many academic administrators have "embraced a vision of online education that is based upon the assumption that students acquire technological skills, required by today's global economy, by participating in online courses... because technology has experienced unprecedented advances, many individuals claim that online education technology has fostered advances in student learning. This claim is unsubstantiated because technology, by itself, does not have much of a positive impact on student learning" (Gaytan, 2009, p. 68-69). Rather, it is the way online technologies are used and the type of instructional activities that make a difference in student learning (Lamb, 2006). Consequently, student training must include critical learning areas such as online team collaboration and interaction strategies and the proper use of online technologies required to implement those strategies effectively. In addition, online students must be trained in the following areas: course registration process, financial aid, cost and payment policies, and online Helpdesk access and dynamics.
- C. A centralized online Helpdesk must exist to ensure that students have access to immediate assistance when needed. Because student support is key in the success of online instruction, a business school must write policies and guidelines related to technical support for students (Jones & Meyer, 2012; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). The online Helpdesk must be staffed with competent individuals (e.g., online technology technicians, Web designers, database managers,

graphic designers, and instructional designers) able to provide around-the-clock support to students (National Education Association, 2008).

3. *Faculty*

Business school administrators must first gain faculty commitment to online teaching and learning. It is highly recommended to begin "with the involvement and development of a small cadre of faculty who are highly respected by their peers. These early-entry faculty then can become resources to assist the development of additional faculty" (AACSB-International, 2007, p. 8). This small group of faculty members must be composed of technology-driven instructors with a clear understanding of their roles as developers of student-centered learning environments in which they are the facilitators and designers of learning experiences. The following recommendations are offered to assist business schools' faculty and leadership teams in addressing faculty-related issues effectively:

- A. The initial investment in technology and faculty and student support and training represents a major financial commitment.
- B. Decisions related to pedagogical issues must not rest on individuals responsible for the technical aspects of online education. Instead, these decisions must be made by excellent instructors. However, these instructors must be trained. Therefore, the small group of faculty members selected must undergo training related to the online learning environment in "critical pedagogical issues such as effective and efficient delivery of instruction, proper use of communication tools, effective assessment techniques, and the importance of feedback" (Gaytan, 2009, p. 69). Training must focus in the effective planning, designing, delivering, and assessing of online courses. In addition, instructors must learn how to evaluate their teaching effectiveness as it relates to the achievement of online course learning outcomes by their students. Furthermore, training should also
- C. Upon active participation of online learning environment training by the small group of faculty members, the next step is to convince and train skeptical faculty members.
- D. A business school's promotion and tenure guidelines and reward systems must reflect the heavy demands placed on faculty involved in the online teaching experience.

4. *Curriculum and Learning Issues*

Once every faculty member teaching online courses receives the appropriate training discussed in # 3 above, curriculum decisions must be made and instructional delivery mechanisms chosen. Each faculty member must pay attention to student various learning styles (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006; Lin, Dyer, Guo, 2009). The following recommendations are offered to assist business schools' faculty and leadership teams in addressing curriculum and learning issues effectively:

- A. Each faculty member must be able to clearly articulate course content and the way it will be delivered through various technologies. Then, each faculty member must clearly establish student learning outcomes, design instructional activities linked to those student learning outcomes, and develop rubrics to assess whether or not students achieved the learning outcomes. The instructional activities must include meaningful tasks that motivate students to engage in higher-order level thinking strategies. These types of tasks allow students to analyze, summarize, and generate new ideas, becoming active learners. Each faculty member must continuously search for instructional technology that represents the best fit to teach the knowledge or skill represented by the learning outcomes. However, technology, by itself, will not improve online teaching and learning. Instead, instructional practices have the most impact on teaching and learning. Each faculty member must understand that "self-teaching is not the essence of online education" (Gaytan, 2009, p. 71). Campus technology must be compatible with student technology. A business school's administrative team must constantly and consistently evaluate online technology being used to ensure continuous improvements and that it adapts to the demands placed by students and the outside world.
- B. Faculty teaching online courses must receive assistance from online instruction specialists in the effective development and delivery of an online course. In addition, assistance in the area of assessment is highly recommended (Southern Region Education Board, 2008). For instance, assessing students' work in an online course requires a more continuous and systematic approach

than the one used in a face-to-face course. Examples of effective assessment techniques include “projects, portfolios, self-assessments, peer evaluations, weekly assignments with immediate feedback, timed tests and quizzes, and asynchronous type of communication using the discussion board” (Gaytan & McEwen, 2007, p.129). Assessment integrity must be sought by ensuring that testing procedures possess adequate security.

- C. While the interaction with a student working alone is typically asynchronous, group interaction is typically synchronous. Group members should be given an opportunity to meet online at designated days and times to engage in planning their activities. In both cases, interaction must be dynamic, assessed, and take place constantly and consistently because it has a direct impact on student achievement (Gaytan, 2006; 2007a; Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). In short, “every effort should be made to ensure a high-level of interaction between students and faculty and among students” (Gaytan & McEwen, 2007, p. 130).

5. *Instructional Resources*

The success of online courses in a business school depends upon the availability of resources (AACSB-International, 2007). The following recommendations are offered to assist business schools' faculty and leadership teams in addressing issues related to resource availability effectively:

- A. Students must be trained in the proper access to library databases, course registration services, bookstore services, and academic advising. In addition, students must receive training in the effective use of distance learning technologies, including course management systems
- B. Because instructional resources are critical to student success in an online course, they must be evaluated regularly and become an essential part of budget, policy development, and strategic planning considerations and decisions.

6. *Intellectual Contributions*

A business school's leadership team must clearly articulate ownership issues, including royalties, rights and privileges, and use and distribution of materials developed for the online learning environment (AACSB-International, 2007). The following recommendation is offered to assist business schools' faculty and leadership teams in addressing curriculum and learning issues effectively:

- A. A business school's leadership team must develop clearly stated policy related to intellectual property, including licensing and compensation, for materials either developed or used by any of its faculty members. This policy must be communicated to any faculty member that will become involved in the online teaching experience. A form must be signed by both, the faculty member and the institution, to ensure that both parties understand issues of intellectual contributions. This way, if a faculty member decides to accept an employment offer from another business school or educational institution, both parties would know what constitutes a violation of such intellectual property policy.

7. *Business and Institutional Relationships*

A business school's leadership team must form relationships with other educational institutions and business organizations to provide off-campus support to faculty and students. The goal is to provide support services that mirror those delivered on campus (AACSB-International, 2007). The following recommendations are offered to assist business schools' faculty and leadership teams in addressing issues of business and institutional relationships effectively:

- A. All logistics related to the formal relationships between a business school and outside parties must be established before the delivery of online courses. For instance, mutual expectations (i.e., rights and obligations) must be clearly articulated. Both parties must clearly agree upon issues related to instructional tools, technology infrastructure, faculty and student support, program management and promotion, and assurance of learning, among others.
- B. In the event that a business school enters into a partnership with a business organization to deliver customized versions of already existing degree programs to that organization's employees, "it should be delivered in a manner and quality that would allow students to transfer credits between

the corporate and open programs" (AACSB-International, 2007, p. 14).

Conclusion

This study employed a content analysis methodology to examine the AACSB-International's quality issues in distance learning and provided recommendations for their effective integration into online instructional practices to deliver high-quality online courses. First, the mission of a business school's online program must be consistent with both the school's and the university's mission. The mission of the business school and that of the university may include the allocation of funds to the online program to respond to the access-related challenges effectively.

Second, students taking online courses must clearly understand that they must manage and control their own learning far more than in a face-to-face learning environment in order to succeed in online courses. By "manage and control their own learning," this researcher means that students must be intellectually ready to assume more responsibility for their own learning, be flexible, take more of a lead in asking questions and seeking assistance, and understand that technology fails and that backup plans must be in place.

Third, a business school's administrators must first gain faculty commitment to online teaching and learning. The idea is to select a few technology-driven faculty highly interested in the online learning environment and willing to undergo training in the effective design and delivery of online instruction. These faculty members would then motivate other faculty to enter the online learning arena and undergo training in this area. Fourth, faculty teaching online courses, once trained, must make curriculum decisions and select instructional delivery mechanisms, paying attention to student various learning styles. Fifth, students must be trained in the proper use of instructional resources, including access to library databases, course registration services, bookstore services, and academic advising. In addition, students must receive training in the effective use of distance learning technologies, including course management systems (e.g., Blackboard). Instructional resources must be evaluated regularly and become an essential part of strategic planning considerations and decisions.

Sixth, a business school's leadership team must clearly articulate issues related to ownership, such as royalties, rights and privileges, and the use and distribution of materials developed for the online learning environment. Seventh, a business school must form meaningful relationships with other educational institutions and business organizations to provide off-campus support to faculty and students to provide support services that mirror those delivered on campus.

Business schools must engage in appropriate planning, designing, evaluating, and continually revising their online courses to ensure instructional quality. The process of teaching and learning is far more important than the technology by itself. Consequently, business schools' faculty and administrators must evaluate their online programs and courses based on the manner teaching and learning are being enhanced and not by the technological components of the online learning environment.

Highly effective online institutional structures must be developed in order to effectively respond to the challenges of online education. For instance, Gaytan (2009) claimed that:

Progressive online multimedia environments will continue to facilitate the effective delivery of online instruction because they provide the dynamics involved in high-quality instruction. For instance, well-designed Internet-based instructional models will continue to flourish because they support problem solving and allow detail-oriented instructional guidance using highly structured tasks. Issues of plagiarism; authentication of the learner; confidentiality; integrity of student records, programs, and course materials; reliability; privacy protection; security; and safety must be addressed. (p. 73)

Business schools' faculty and administrators must understand that many individuals continue to challenge the quality of instruction delivered in online courses. These individuals continue to claim that online education must be required to demonstrate levels of quality found in face-to-face courses. However, these levels of instructional quality have been seldom found in traditional, face-to-face learning environments (Gaytan, 2009). In other words, online courses must not be required to be "at least as effective" than their

face-to-face counterparts. They should be required to advance the scholarship of teaching and learning.

References

American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB-International). (2007). Quality issues in distance learning. Tampa, FL: author.

Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2010). Learning on demand: Online education in the United States, 2009. The Sloan Consortium.

Allen, I.E., & Seaman, J. (2013). Changing courses: Ten years of tracking online education in the United States, 2012. Babson Survey Research Group.

APA Task Force on Distance Education and Training in Professional Psychology. (2002). Principles of good practice in distance education and their application to professional education and training in psychology. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Correia, A., & Davis, N. (2008). Intersecting communities of practice in distance education: The program team and the online course community. *Distance Education*, 29(3), 289-306.

Gaytan, J. (2006). Distance education versus classroom instruction: A literature review of meta-analysis studies. *Business Education Forum*, 61(2), 53-55 and 62.

Gaytan, J. (2007a). A review of empirical research related to online teaching and learning. *Texas Business and Technology Educators Association Journal*, 10(1), 21-25.

Gaytan, J. (2007b). Visions shaping the future of online education: Understanding its historical evolution, implications, and assumptions. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 10(2). Retrieved from <http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/>

Gaytan, J. (2008a). Understanding teaching with the Internet in business education: A grounded theory study. *The Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, 50(1), 31-44.

Gaytan, J. (2008b). Online education: Current status, benefits, barriers, and critical issues. *Georgia Business Education Association Journal*, 26(1), 42-47.

Gaytan, J. (2009). Analyzing online education through the lens of institutional theory and practice: The need for research-based and -validated frameworks for planning, designing, delivering, and assessing online instruction. *The Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, 51(2), 62-75.

Gaytan, J., & McEwen, B. C. (2007). Effective online instructional and assessment strategies. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 21(3), 117-132.

Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.

Jones, S. J., & Meyer, K. A. (2012). The "virtual face" of distance learning at public colleges and universities: What do websites reveal about administrative student support services. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 15(5). Retrieved from www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/winter154/jones_meyer154.html

Khare, A., & Lam, H. (2008). Assessing student achievement and progress with online examinations: Some pedagogical and technological issues. *International Journal on E-Learning*, 7(3), 383-402.

Lamb, A. (2006). Building treehouses for learning: Technology in today's classrooms. (4th ed). Emporia,

KS: Vision to Action.

Larreamendy-Joerns, J., & Leinhardt, G. (2006). Going the distance with online education. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(4), 567-605.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2012). *Practical research: Planning and design*. (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Liaw, S. (2008). Investigating students' perceived satisfaction, behavioral intention, and effectiveness of e-learning: A case study of the Blackboard system. *Computers and Education*, 51(2), 864-873.

Lin, H., Dyer, K., & Guo, Y. (2009). Exploring online teaching: A three-year composite journal of concerns and strategies from online instructors. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 12(3). Retrieved from www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/fall1153/lin_dyer_guo153.html

Liu, S., Gomez, J., Khan, B., & Yen, C. (2007). Toward a learner-oriented community college online course dropout framework. *International Journal on E-Learning*, 6(4), 519-542.

Magnussen, L. (2008). Applying the principles of significant learning in the e-learning environment. *Educational Innovations*, 47(2), 82-86.

McEwen, B.C., & Gaytan, J. (2006). E-learning assessment: Implications for business teacher education. *NABTE Review*, 33, 29-36.

Moore, M. G., & Kearsley, G. (2012). *Distance education: A systematic view of online learning* (3rd Edition). Belmont, VA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

McQuiggan, C. A. (2007). The role of faculty development in online teaching's potential to question teaching beliefs and assumptions. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 10(3). Retrieved from <http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/fall1103/mcquiggan103.htm>

National Education Association. (2008). *Guide to teaching online courses*. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/technology/images/onlineteachguide.pdf>

Rubin, B. (2013). University business models and online practices: A third way. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 15(1), Retrieved from www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/spring1161/rubin.html

Southern Regional Educational Board. (2008). *Domains of good practice: The foundation for quality of the electronic campus of the Southern Regional Educational Board*. Retrieved from <http://www.sreb.org/>

Stanford-Bowers, D. E. (2008). Persistence in online classes: A study of perceptions among community college stakeholders. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 4(1). Retrieved from <http://jolt.merlot.org/vol4no1/stanford-bowers0308.pdf>

Street, H. (2010). Factors influencing a learner's decision to drop-out or persist in higher education distance learning. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 13(4). Retrieved from www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/winter1134/street134.html

Tallent-Runnels, M. K., Thomas, J. A., Lan, W. Y., Cooper, S., Ahern, T. C., Shaw, S. M., & Liu, X. (2006). Teaching courses online: A review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(1), 93-135.

Terry, N. (2007). Assessing instruction modes for master of business administration (MBA) courses. *Journal of Education for Business*, 82(4), 220-225.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of*

Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, Volume XVI, Number IV, Winter 2013
University of West Georgia, Distance Education Center
[*Back to the Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration Content*](#)