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## **FISH!NET: IMPROVING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF ONLINE DELIVERY**

### **Abstract:**

FISH!NET

“.....It is clear that the experimental probability of attaining higher learning outcomes is greater in the online environment than in the face-to-face environment. This probability is increasing over time” (Shachar & Neumann, 2010, p.153)

While there is increasing evidence to support this claim, (Loughlin & Lee, 2007; Rutherford, 2010; Salaway, Caruso, Nelson, & Ellison, 2008) there is the issue of what constitutes an effective online environment and a positive learning experience for students.

My research into the experience of both undergraduate and postgraduate students, through a utilisation of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, has now identified key factors which contribute to success within the online environment for both faculty and students.

Taking the original work of Christenson (1998) which evaluated the motivational principles of individuals working in a fish market in Seattle – FISH! – it is possible to apply the same ideology to the online learning environment – with one important addition. FISH! suggests four underlying concepts: Be There; Play; Make their Day; and Choose your Attitude. These four concepts can be equally applied to teaching students using online learning, and, in fact, should be applied in order for students to gain the maximum learning experience from the medium.

However, my findings also suggest a fifth element that is out with the FISH! concept – the issue of community creation or what the research refers to as ‘NET’. Community is considered to be at the heart of learning, in general, (Abedin et al, 2010) and the computer-supported collaborative learning, in particular. The importance of the ‘social presence’ should not be under-estimated – as demonstrated with the exponential rise of Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram. Integrating Social Network analysis (Rourke et al, 2001) into the online student learning experience is the fifth element (together with FISH!) in creating an effective and positive learning experience for both faculty and students.

### **Keywords:**

E-learning; teaching; student experience

**JEL Classification:** I21