

Sloan-C View

Perspectives in Quality Online Education

A Publication of the Sloan Consortium

A Tipping Point for Online Education?

Claudine SchWeber
Chair, Doctor of Management Program, Collegiate Professor
University of Maryland University College

A tipping point is the "moment when ideas, trends and social behaviors cross a critical threshold, causing a tidal wave of far reaching effect" [1]. What are some indicators that this might be happening in the online environment?

One indicator is the number and pattern of online enrollments nationwide. For the past three years, the Sloan foundation has surveyed United States institutions to determine the extent of online learning nationwide [2]. The surveys reveal that students taking at least one online course increased from 1,602,970 in Fall 2002, to 1,971,397 in Fall 2003, and to 2,634,189 in Fall 2004. This increase represents an average growth rate of 19.8% in Fall 02–Fall 03, and 24.8% in Fall 03–Fall 04 [1].

Another indicator is the ratio of growth at individual institutions. The University of Maryland University College (UMUC) is one of 11 institutions in the University of Maryland system. It is the only campus that focuses on working adults and part-time learners. The student population includes those in the United States as well as members of the armed forces worldwide, with a current headcount of 88,052. UMUC began to offer online degrees in 1998, and has added regularly to the options. At present UMUC offers 17 graduate degrees and 14 undergraduate degrees online. Growth in online enrollments has been substantial, including the proportional increase with respect to total enrollments.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
enrollments	39,865	62,686	87,423	110,423	126,650
% of total enrollments	19%	28%	37%	43%	48%

* fiscal year data

Continued on [page 6](#)

[A Letter from the Editors of the Sloan-C View, 2](#)

[New Programs, 2](#)

New programs listed in the Sloan-C Catalog

[How can Online Pedagogy be Better than Face-to-face? 3](#)

[Online Engineering Education, 4](#)

A Sloan-C workshop and an excerpt from a recently published paper.

[Hot Off the Blog, 5](#)

Theoretical & pedagogical approaches to online learning that can have an important impact on quality and retention

[Calendar, 8](#)

Upcoming events in Online Education

[Newsletter Registration](#)



THE SLOAN CONSORTIUM
A Consortium of Institutions and Organizations Committed to Quality Online Education

[forward](#) ▶

... From the Editors

A letter from the editors of the *Sloan-C View*

Looking ahead at ways asynchronous learning networks affect pedagogy and growth, this issue includes:

- In "A Tipping Point for Online Education?" **Claudine SchWeber** of the University of Maryland University College considers how national and institutional enrollment growth and transformed infrastructure impact leading online education systems.
- In "Hot off the Blog," **Ray Schroeder** of the University of Illinois at Springfield provides news of pedagogical approaches that emphasize connectivity: student success, interactivity, and non-linear learning.
- A forthcoming Sloan-C report on blended learning examines the reasons for blending and the barriers to blending. Be sure to [join](#) Sloan-C to be eligible to receive your free copy.
- In "How Can Online Pedagogy Be Better Than Face to Face?" a Sloan-C [online research workshop](#) invites participants to consider constructivism, collaboration and community. In this workshop, authors from the annual summer research workshop will interact synchronously and asynchronously with participants to explore effective ALN-enabled pedagogical practices that enhance the ways we learn. In addition to discussions and live chats, you'll have early access to the studies and presentations from the annual Sloan invitational summer research workshop. Activities begin on Wednesday, **March 2**.
- In "Excerpts from 'Online Engineering Education: Learning Anywhere, Anytime,'" you can get a glimpse of the impact of ALN on engineering education. If you are an engineering educator or just interested in engineering education, please join us in an online workshop [Online Engineering Education: Learning Anywhere, Anytime](#) discussion about online education in engineering. Workshop activities during the week of **March 21-25** will include review of a paper on online education published in the January issue of the *Journal of Engineering Education*, by John Bourne, Dale Harris and Frank Mayadas. In addition, we will have a set of distinguished panelists from MIT, Stanford, Florida, SUNY, GaTech, U. Washington to interact with you to help with online engineering education at your institution.

In other news, [University of Massachusetts—UMassOnline](#) announces an online certificate program in [Instructional Technology Design](#). Sloan-C welcomes the [National Center on Accessible Distance Learning](#) (ACCESSDL) to Sloan-C membership. The AccessDL site contains resources and links for distance learning administrators, educators, web designers and students about how to ensure that distance learning is accessible to students and instructors with disabilities. Resources include discussion lists as well as publications and streaming video for distance learning designers, instructors, trainers, webmasters and editors.

In 2005, Sloan-C plans a continuous series of online workshops on topics such as copyright compliance, engineering education, virtual worlds, online pedagogy, blended learning, business issues and more. [Sign up here to be notified of new events](#), and for more information, and to register, visit [Sloan-C Online Events](#).

Please share your effective practices with the higher education online community in the Sloan-C [effective practices](#) collection. And, for a wealth of useful information, please visit the Sloan-C [free resources](#) page.

We look forward to hearing from you and to seeing you online,

... for the Sloan Consortium

Frank Mayadas, John Bourne and Janet Moore

The purpose of the Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C) is to help learning organizations continually improve the quality, scale, and breadth of their online programs according to their own distinctive missions, so that education will become a part of everyday life, accessible and affordable for anyone, anywhere, at any time, in a wide variety of disciplines. You are welcome to join Sloan-C:
<http://www.sloan-c.org>

Welcome New Programs in the Sloan-C Catalog

[University of Massachusetts—UMassOnline](#)

*[Instructional Technology Design](#)



How Can Online Pedagogy be Better Than Face-to-face?

constructivism, collaboration, community

This question will be addressed in an [online research workshop](#) (ORW) that begins March 2 and continues through March 11, 2005.

Each summer the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation conducts an invitational, face-to-face summer research workshop (SRW) for researchers and practitioners to collaborate on issues of importance to higher education. Workshop participants write papers for an annual volume in the Sloan-C series on quality online education. Then, the SRW writers lead annual online research workshops (ORW) to collaborate with larger audiences, engaging more people in building knowledge about emerging best practices.

ORW participants will receive audio presentations and early release copies of papers to be published in the 2005 volume, *Elements of Quality Online Education: Engaging Communities*. In addition, participants will be able to collaborate with each other and with experts synchronously and asynchronously to answer the challenge: "How can online pedagogy be better than face-to-face?"

Generally, answers to this challenge center on greater opportunities for improving the quality, scale and breadth of learning via **constructivism, collaboration and community**. **Gary Miller** of The Pennsylvania State University has pointed out that the "The pedagogy inherent in ALN—inquiry-oriented, resource-based learning—is a natural pedagogy for the world in which we live" [1]. Because of ALN's freedom from time and place constraints, its opportunities for reflective thinking and its reach and connectivity, online education can engage faculty and students in new interactions with content, with each other, and with the world outside the classroom.

The four papers that serve as common background for the workshop challenge give perspectives on constructivism, community and collaboration.

In "Engagement and Learning Communities," **Albert Ingram** of Kent State University calls for common understanding of the terms, *engagement* and *learning communities*. He proposes that true collaboration is a fundamental part of building community and defines engagement as "the confluence of three important concepts: attention, effective cognitive processes, and a social context." In "A Constructivist Model for Thinking About Learning Online," **Karen Swan** of Kent State University's Research Center for Educational Technology provides a primer of constructivist learning theory and its "implications for designing online learning environments that are learner centered, knowledge centered, assessment centered, and community centered." Giving an example of this kind of learning environment, **Jim Theroux** and **Clare Kilbane** of the University of Massachusetts explain how four universities cooperatively engage students in "The Real-time Case Method," using ALN and the internet for studying and advising an actual company. In "A Case Study in Blended Learning: Leveraging Technology in Entrepreneurship Education," **Barry Bisson** of the University of New Brunswick and colleagues describe the engagement of faculty and students at three universities in a resource rich course in entrepreneurship that uses synchronous and asynchronous technologies in addition to face-to-face meetings at the campuses. In addition, Starr Roxanne Hiltz, of the New Jersey Institute of Technology and the [learning networks effectiveness research center](#), will join the workshop as a guest panelist.

We hope you will join us in this online research workshop. For details and to register, please visit Sloan-C's [Online Events](#).

[1] Miller, Gary. Message to the Sloan-C listserv, August 1, 2004.

Sloan-C Online Research Workshops

The next annual Sloan-C Online Research Workshop is just around the corner!

This year's topics:

- ☞ March 2-11: How Online Can Be Better Than On-Ground
 - A Constructive Model for Thinking About Learning Online
 - The Real Time Case Study: The Internet Creates the Potential for New Pedagogy
 - Leveraging Technology in Entrepreneurship Education
 - Engagement in Online Learning Communities
- ☞ March 30-April 8: The "Business" of Online Education
 - Business Issues in Online Education
 - Are We Cost Competitive?
 - What Do We Mean by the Business of Online Education?
 - Reinventing the University

Sloan-C Online Research Workshop Series 2005 sign up for the no-obligation waiting list!

Blending... & Barriers

Why are schools adopting blended learning? What are the challenges of these programs? Sloan-C will soon be releasing a survey report addressing these questions to all Sloan-C Premium Members. For more information on how to become a Sloan-C Premium Member, please visit the [Premium Member website](#).

Sloan-C Online Workshop Series

Online Engineering Education: Learning Anywhere, Anytime

brought to you by the Sloan Consortium

Online Education is transforming the world of Engineering Education.

Join us in this workshop as we explore these changes and how you can implement them at your institution - the following topics/questions will be covered:

- What implications does online education have for the future of online engineering education?
- What are the barriers to implementing engineering education online?
- How can virtual laboratories be effectively used in engineering education?

Dates: Designed to fit your schedule, starting March 21, 2005

Pricing: \$150 - \$295 (depending on your Sloan-C membership level)

Visit the Sloan-C website for more information!
www.sloan-c.org/workshop/engineeringworkshop.asp

Currently, few colleges have created online B.S. [engineering] degree programs. Nevertheless, there is a clear potential for creating such degrees across multiple institutions through shared resources. By sharing resources (remote laboratories and curricula online), the high costs associated with delivering bachelor's degrees can be reduced. This potential may remain unrealized, however, until there is additional pressure for improving breadth and scale in engineering programs. ~ ~

Learn more in the workshop beginning March 21: [Online Engineering Education: Learning Anywhere, Anytime.](#)

Effective Practices

Do you have an effective practice the world should emulate? If so, post it in the [Sloan-C Effective Practices](#) collection. Practices that appear in the collection are automatically eligible for nomination for annual awards.

Elements of Quality Online Education: Into the Mainstream

Sloan-C is now offering the 5th volume of the Sloan-C Book Series. This year the research reports come alive as the researchers themselves present the findings of their research in 14 informative video presentations (on CD-ROM). If you are a member and purchase the book and CD-ROM together, you will receive **20% off the entire package!***

*If you are a member already, this discount is **in addition** to the discount you would already receive (**50% for Premium Members / 20% for Free Members**)

Please visit
www.sloan-c.org/info/vol5
for book and CD-ROM descriptions

Excerpts from "Online Engineering Education: Learning Anywhere, Anytime"

by John Bourne, Dale Harris, & Frank Mayadas, originally published in the *Journal of Engineering Education*, Vol. 94, No. 1, January 2005, pp. 131-146.

While online education may be primarily about offering to distance learners anywhere and at anytime, it may well play a remarkable role in bringing together the work of colleges and universities across the United States (and eventually across the world). Such collaboration will ultimately provide more choice and diversity of opportunity to learners with lower costs. For these reasons, online education will ultimately play a much greater role in changing higher education in the world than simply

providing education at a distance. Collaboration, partnerships, and lowered costs for higher-quality educational products with higher learner satisfaction will become commonplace as a result of providing engineering education with quality, scale, and breadth. ~ ~

A common misconception is that online education is a solitary, non-instructor-led, self-paced activity. Nothing could be further from the truth! Why this mantra has penetrated the consciousness of the engineering education professoriate is unclear. Correcting this misperception requires an understanding of how modern quality online education is a vital people-oriented, instructor-led activity with remarkably high communication attributes compared with much on-campus engineering education. In this paper, we make the case that online education can achieve certain goals that are difficult to achieve in face-to-face education. ~ ~



by Ray Schroeder

This month we are looking at theoretical and pedagogical approaches to online learning that can have an important impact on quality and retention.

[The Connecticon by Paul Justice, A Book Review – Elearning Scotland](#) –

This book makes the case that the changes brought about by the connectivity of the Internet have so transformed the nature of post secondary learning that we need to view it differently. Both the content and the processes of learning have been profoundly altered because of the accessibility of information and the multi-way interactivity provided by the Internet. We call this new phenomenon 'the Connecticon'. The Connecticon encompasses the paradigm created by the infrastructure, the content & the multiple connection devices of the Web, the diverse human resources of Internet users, as well as by the hyper-interactivity of the connected generation for whom attention is the new currency. It is the aim of this book to identify and document the Connecticon its nature, its impact and its implications.

[A Holistic Perspective on the Student Dropout Problem with Special Attention to e-Learning – Zane L. Berge and Yi-Ping Huang, DEOSNews](#) – This article introduces a

comprehensive model to assist institutions in planning for interventions to address student dropout and to increase student retention. The model is the result of an extensive review, analysis, and synthesis of research and theoretical studies. It is flexible and represents a comprehensive set of factors related to student retention, categorized in meaningful ways, and can be used at multiple levels: institutional, departmental or program, or by individual faculty, or by students.

[Connectivism: A Learning Theory for the Digital Age – George Siemens, Instructional Technology and Distance Learning](#) –

Connectivism presents a model of learning that acknowledges the tectonic shifts in society where learning is no longer an internal, individualistic activity. How people work and function is altered when new tools are utilized. The field of education has been slow to recognize both the impact of new learning tools and the environmental changes in what it means to learn. Connectivism provides insight into learning skills and tasks needed for learners to flourish in a digital era.

You can always see the latest items, and find many more articles posted seven days a week at the [Online Learning Update blog](#).

Until next time, I'll see you online! ~ray

S
L
O
A
N
-
C
V
E
N
D
O
R
C
O
R
N
E
R

Searching for ways to enhance your online offerings?

Try the Sloan-C Vendor Corner:

The Sloan-C Vendor Corner will help you identify your needs, research solutions, and choose which products or services provide those solutions. Along with a list of vendors and their product descriptions, we provide research that will aid you in defining what your needs are and what you should be looking for.

The Vendor Corner will be sponsored by the vendors who are listed in the vendor corner, but the research provided is independent and maintains the Sloan-C effort to be a trusted source of information.

www.sloan-c.org/vcorner

**Elements of Quality Online Education:
Into the Mainstream:
Wisdom from the Sloan Consortium**

Of value to practitioners in the full range of educational contexts, the sixteen wisdom papers in this collection include perspectives ranging from programs and institutions to effective practices to insights about the future of higher education as new models emerge that will improve learning effectiveness, cost effectiveness, access, faculty satisfaction and student satisfaction.

For more information or to order the book online, please visit:
www.sloan-c.org/info/marchwisdom.asp

Tipping Point continued from [cover](#)

The University of Illinois/Springfield (UIS) is one of three institutions of the University of Illinois system. It is an upper division campus that serves primarily non-residential students in their junior or senior year of a bachelor's degree or at the master's level. The current headcount is 4,300. Many of its students are involved in the state government or related careers. UIS offered the first online degree—MS in Management Information Systems—in 1998. Since then, UIS added a new degree almost every year for a current total of eight online degrees. While onsite enrollments have been decreasing, annual online enrollment data show a continuing increase:

UIS, Online Enrollments USA 2000-2004 *, and % of total credit hours					
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
enrollments	1,373	2,066	3,017	3,988	5,105
% of total credit hrs	-	-	11.5%	13.8%	19%
* calendar year data					

By Fall 04 these enrollments represented about 20% of the total. UIS has 165 full-time faculty, of whom about one third have taught online [3]. Since online enrollments are growing (in contrast to onsite enrollments), the online environment represents an institutional investment in its future productivity [4].

UIS and UMUC represent two institutions on the tipping point trajectory. At UIS, online enrollments are approaching a critical mass; the continued upward growth is poised to increase with the forthcoming introduction of eight new online degrees. At UMUC the proportion of online learning has reached a tipping point. At 48% online enrollments, UMUC's institutional environment has shifted towards online learning. Research in the legal field (1960s and 1970s) showed that 40% of a minority group could 'tip' the racial composition of a neighborhood [5]. Thus it may be possible to identify the enrollment point at which online education will become a dominant mode of learning.

A third indicator is infrastructure. At UIS and UMUC, a full spectrum of support services are designed for the online population, many of them also available to the on-ground population.

This combination of indicators—national and institutional enrollment growth and transformed infrastructure—and the point at which they intersect, might be termed the *educational tipping point*. Hopefully "once the beliefs and energies of a critical mass of people are engaged, conversion to a new idea [online learning] will spread like an epidemic, bringing about fundamental change" [6].

[1] Tyrell, M. *Shape your own psychology*. Uncommon Knowledge Newsletter (book review of M. Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*, retrieved September 3, 2004.

[2] Allen, I.E. and J. Seaman. *Entering the mainstream: The quality and extent of online education in the United States 2003 and 2004*. Needham, MA: Sloan Consortium, 2004.

[3] Schroeder, R. e-mail message to author October 16, 2004; interview with author October 18, 2004 (UIS has received a Sloan Foundation matching grant that will result in 8 additional online degrees 2004-2007.)

[4] University of Illinois at Springfield Online Info. <http://online.uis.edu/info/>

[5] Hellerstein, W. The benign quota, equal protection and 'the rule in Shelly's case.' *Rutgers Law Review* 17: 531-543, 1963.

[6] Kim, W. C. and R. Mauborgne. Tipping point leadership. *Harvard Business Review*: 60-69, April 2003.

ALT-C 2005
**Exploring the frontiers of e-learning:
 borders, outposts and migration**
Manchester, England
6-8 September 2005
 The 12th International Conference of the
Association for Learning Technology
 Keynotes include Carol Twigg and Etienne Wenger
 Earlybird registration deadline: 30 June 2005
www.alt.ac.uk/altc2005

Sloan-C Online Seminar Series

Virtual Reality Worlds for Online Educators

brought to you by the Sloan Consortium

Virtual reality worlds, computer games, simulations, and animations can be powerful tools for active, engaged learning with visually rich hands-on experiences, trial and error activities, and virtual participation in historical events. Online virtual-reality worlds offer educators new opportunities to connect with their students.

The workshop will demonstrate how to access, navigate, and interact in a virtual-reality world, and consider ways to individualize and personalize learning.

Dates: Designed to fit your schedule, starting April 6, 2005

Pricing: \$97.50 - \$195 (depending on your Sloan-C membership level)

Visit the Sloan-C website for more information!
www.sloan-c.org/workshop/virtualreality.asp

Virtual Teams & Collaboration 2005

Online Conference - March 29-31

Location: Online, from your computer

URL: <http://www.icohere.com/virtual2005>

A three-day international online conference designed for those leading virtual organizations and teams. Attend from your computer and learn the latest in virtual team and organizational collaboration!

Join thought leaders from Cisco Systems, The World Bank, Hewlett-Packard, and other progressive organizations. Connect with other managers, change agents and practitioners to gain new insights, tools and strategies for virtual team leadership.

For 3 days, March 29-31, participants will come together for live & pre-recorded online presentations from experts in the field--all focused on how geographically distributed organizations can foster collaboration to successfully achieve business goals and objectives.

Hear from the experts- obtain practical tools-network and build new relationships! Register before March 18 and receive the early bird discount of 20% off the standard registration rate.

To register or learn more, visit <<http://www.icohere.com/virtual2005>>.

Sloan-C Premium Membership

Sloan-C is the leading source of information for how to provide quality online education.

Premium Membership Benefits:

- Access key content exclusively available to Premium Members only.
- Receive deep discounts on publications about online learning that you already purchase.
- \$35 discount on conference attendance.
- Institutional Membership includes these additional features:
 - o One full printed set of this coming year's annual publications
 - o 50% off of additional publication purchases (unlimited)
 - o 50% off for any workshop participant from that institution (\$150 value per participant)

This Premium Membership is sure to keep you and your institution up-to-date and competitive in the rapidly growing world of online learning.

As an additional SPECIAL PROMOTION, Institutional Premium Membership will include 3 copies of Volumes 5 & 6 in the Sloan-C Series - a \$330 value!! (while supplies last)

Annual membership fees for the new year will increase, but if you sign up soon you can get next year's membership at this year's prices:

Annual Premium Membership Costs*:

- Institution: \$595
- Multi-Campus: \$476 per campus
- University System: \$416.50 per campus
- Community College: \$297 per campus

*Pricing for Premium Membership will increase \$25-50 depending on membership level for all registrations after May 1, 2005. Individual Premium Membership is also available, please visit the Sloan-C website.



THE SLOAN CONSORTIUM
A Consortium of Institutions and
Organizations Committed to Quality Online Education

The Sloan-C View is published by Sloan-C™ and is supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

Contact Information:

Sloan Center for OnLine Education (SCOLE)
Olin College of Engineering and Babson College
Olin Way, Needham MA 02492-1245

voice: 781-292-2524

fax: 781-292-2505

email: publisher@sloan-c.org

on the web: <http://www.sloan-c.org/>

If you have a question or comment, or would like to submit an article for publication, please email publisher@sloan-c.org.

John R. Bourne, Editor
Janet C. Moore, Editor
Kathryn M. Fife, Publisher

The Sloan-C View is published by Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C™).
Responsibility for the contents rests with the authors and not with Sloan-C™.
Copyright ©2004 by Sloan-C™
ISSN 1541-2806

Materials in the Sloan-C View, unless otherwise noted, may be distributed freely for educational purposes. However, if any materials are redistributed they must retain the copyright notice and use the proper citation, including the URL. Kindly send an email to publisher@sloan-c.org indicating how you are using the material for distribution.

U of Wisconsin - 21st Annual Conference on Distance Learning & Teaching

Date: August 3-5, 2005

Location: Madison, WI

URL: <http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference/>

2005 themes include: course design strategies, innovative faculty support, using video elements, and embedding learning objects. Look for Sloan-C in the exhibit hall.

ALT-C 2005: Exploring the Frontiers of E-learning

Date: September 6-8, 2005

Location: Manchester, England

URL: <http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc2005/index.html>

Please see the website for more detailed information.

If you know of, or are hosting, an event that should be listed on the Sloan-C View Calendar, please send the details of the event and url to publisher@sloan-c.org.

CALENDAR

Sloan-C: Online Research Workshop

Date: March 2-11, 2005 - How Online Can be Better than On-Ground & March 30-April 8 - The "Business" of Online Education

Location: Online

URL: <http://www.sloan-c.org/info/03/vseminar.asp>

Please see our ad on [page 3](#).

Sloan-C: Online Engineering Education: Learning Anywhere, Anytime

Date: Starts March 21, 2005 - designed to fit your schedule

Location: Online

URL: <http://www.sloan-c.org/info/03/vengineer.asp>

This online workshop from the Sloan Consortium will explore how Online Education is transforming the world of Engineering Education. Please see our ad & excerpt on [page 4](#).

TxDLA: International Conference

Date: March 7-9, 2005

Location: Fort Worth, TX

URL: <http://www.txdl.org/apps/Conference/2005/home.html>

Look for Sloan-C in the exhibit hall.

Virtual Teams & Collaboration 2005

Date: March 29-31, 2005

Location: Online

URL: <http://www.icohere.com/virtual2005>

A three-day international online conference designed for those leading virtual organizations and teams. For more info, [see page 7](#).

UCEA 90th Annual Conference

Date: March 30- April 2, 2005

Location: Boston, MA

URL: <http://www.ucea.edu/pages/2005confmain.html>

Revolutionary Times: Extending Higher Education Opportunities. Look for Sloan-C in the exhibit hall.

Sloan-C: Virtual Reality Worlds for Online Educators

Date: Starts April 6, 2005 - designed to fit your schedule

Location: Online

URL: <http://www.sloan-c.org/info/03/vreality.asp>

Please see our ad on [page 7](#).

CADE-ACED: 2005 International Conference

Date: May 7-11, 2005

Location: Vancouver, Canada

URL: <http://www.cade-aced.ca>

The Canadian Association for Distance Education (CADE-ACED) & Simon Fraser University are proud to announce the 2005 International Conference.