Borderless Education: International Promise & Challenge

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Online education is becoming well established in the United States. Schools such as Harvard, Stanford, the University of Texas, and many other universities are currently offering some degrees online. Such course offerings can only get better as the Internet becomes faster, richer, more ubiquitous, and as it improves with each new generation. As professors create better online content for distance learning curricula and learn to be more effective at delivering that content online, the potential exists for the online technology to reach whole new markets for education worldwide. What impact will this technology have on global issues such as transfer of ideas and culture around the globe, access to educational opportunity in transition countries, and the removal of barriers to exchange of ideas among peoples? This roundtable discussion will provide an opportunity to assess the greater impact of online education in a global context.

Discussions Questions

1. What impact will Internet-based education have on global issues such as transfer of ideas and culture around the world? Will such education homogenize cultures internationally?

2. What are the threats to validity of Internet-based education? I.E., how can consistency be assured? Or, how can course content be controlled? Etc.

3. In what ways does an Internet-based education environment serve as a catalyst for the removal of barriers to the exchange of ideas among peoples? How do communities of common interests fostered through the Internet apply here?

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Internet-based education in a global setting? How can the weaknesses be addressed?

5. How will Internet-based education provide greater access to educational opportunity around the world? How can the technical infrastructure be established to achieve increased educational access in lesser developed countries?