

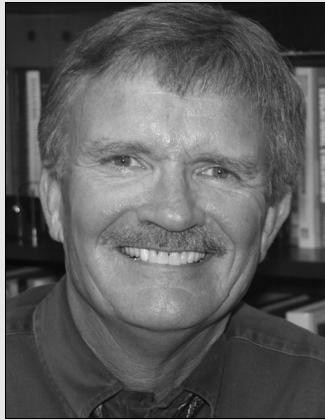
Inevitable? Do You Really Think So?

Michael Simonson

A recent column in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 29, 2009) by Margaret Brooks, a professor at Bridgewater State College, had the wonderfully intriguing title, "The Excellent Inevitability of Online Courses." Brooks presented an interesting review of why colleges should offer online courses. The eight reasons included in the article make great companions to the column in the

Quarterly Review of Distance Education titled, "Eight Steps for Transforming Your Organization" (Simonson, 2005). The two articles provide important reading for educational leaders who are contemplating the move into distance education. The first article gives eight reasons why, and the second gives eight steps how.

Brooks categorizes three types of persons when it comes to opinions about online courses. First are the traditionalists who see online education as something less than optimum, to be tolerated and, with any luck, done by others. Supporters, on the other hand, are those who advocate and state that online instruction benefits students and is equivalent to traditional instruction. Finally, there is the third group; those who see the overall integration of technology into society that is driving the popularity of online instruction. Certainly these categories of individuals, university-types, are easily recognized on any campus, and warrant study to find out why some gravitate to one category rather than another. Rogers' work on the diffusion of innovations (2005) would be a great place to start, especially the sections dealing with categories of innovation adopters. But, Brooks goes on to list the eight reasons



Michael Simonson, Editor, *Distance Learning*, and Program Professor, Programs in Instructional Technology and Distance Education, Fischler School of Education, Nova Southeastern University, 1750 NE 167 St., North Miami Beach, FL 33162. Telephone: (954) 262-8563. E-mail: simsmich@nsu.nova.edu

... continues on page 95