

## TEACHING AND ASSESSING OF AFFECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS: A CRITICAL MISSING LINK IN ONLINE EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

Online education, defined as a platform for delivering educational content and facilitating instructor – student interaction over a computer network (Shelton & Saltsman 2005, pp 3-4 ) came of age in the 1990's and grew rapidly over the next decade (Allen & Seaman, 2010). 96% of US Universities currently offer online learning opportunities; with over 3 million students enrolled (Ebersole 2007). In addition, several colleges and universities around the globe now offer degrees that can be accomplished online. The promise and potential of online education is laudable; it has the ability to make education more convenient and accessible. Advances in technology has made this possible since learning can occur “asynchronously” anytime, anywhere, anyplace (Sloan 2010). However, studies (for example-Gerlaugh et al 2007, Popham 2009, Saxon and Calderwood 2008) have shown that teaching and assessment in schools; within the in-class, blended and online set up, are concentrated on cognitive achievement to the detriment of affective and psychomotor development of learners. In the light of this, and because of the fact that comprehensive assessment is an indispensable aspect of any meaningful educational program, attempt is made in this paper to examine the implications of the aversion to the teaching and assessing of affective characteristics in online education. The paper also makes strategic suggestions as a way forward.

**Key Words:** Affective, cognitive, assessment, in-class, online educators, online learners.