ONLINE LEARNING: COMMON CHALLENGES FOR INSTRUCTORS IN LARGE ONLINE COURSES: STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR FRUSTRATION

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Teaching in the online classroom is becoming commonplace for instructors as universities seek to grow enrolments and tap into unexplored markets. Many instructors, however, are often unprepared for the nuances of distance education and apprehensive about making the transition to online learning. This presentation aims to discuss basic principles of online learning, advantages and disadvantages compared to face to face learning, common challenges for instructors of high-enrolment online courses. Those challenges align with the areas students commonly consider as necessary for successful online delivery. Using examples from large online classes and the existing research on best practices in online education, ways to minimize those challenges will be discussed. These suggestions include recommendations for assignment construction, including the use of group work, collaborative assignments, e-portfolios, as well as for planning course design, including consistent deadlines and course structure. These suggestions are aimed at mitigating student and instructor frustration with high enrolment online classes.