

Viable Global Networked Learning

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ABSTRACT

This paper documents the history and ongoing development of BESTNET. BESTNET was established in the early 1980s as an effort to link universities on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border through microwave, satellite and cable television technologies. In the late 1980s BESTNET focused primarily on the development of asynchronous computer mediated learning and teaching in an internationally networked virtual environment. For the past six years BESTNET has strengthened its binational ties and continued its “high tech” focus through the development of active or vibrant model technology which is assisting in the creation of an on-line binational university setting that is “borderless.” Today, this type of design and linkage for curriculum, learning, teaching, research and performing collaborative scholarly work is called a “global virtual university.” The concepts of a “global virtual university system” and “viable global networked learning” are taking hold throughout the world. The BESTNET paradigm for looking at improving education has proven to be one of the most advanced. It is built upon three critical foundations: (1) a variety of useful, applicable technologies; (2) the experience and dedication of faculty and institutions who experience, promote and share the common goal of broadening knowledge; and (3) a sixth sense that the world will be globally connected, linked across borders, frontiers, languages and academic scholarship.