



55 E. Monroe St. Suite 1930
Chicago, IL 60603

Phone | 312.447.8080
Fax | 312.447.8081

www.edlinktuition.com

Contact: Debbie Steele
EdLink
Tel: 312-447-8042
Email: dsteele@edlinktuition.com
www.edlinktuition.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EDLINK ENROLLMENT TREND REPORT: ONLINE SURPASSES TRADITIONAL ENROLLMENT

Chicago, IL, May 2011— Recent data analysis of the country’s largest database of corporate tuition program usage confirms that enrollment by working adults in online education now has surpassed traditional enrollments in classroom-based learning, albeit by a narrow margin for 2010.

EdLink continually tracks, analyzes and reports on trends in tuition program usage to help employers gain more value from their employee tuition program investments. One of the important trends EdLink has been monitoring closely is enrollment in online versus classroom-based learning.

The popularity of online schools and programs has been growing at a rapid rate over the last decade, with significant growth occurring in the last few years. EdLink began tracking education delivery methods (traditional, online and blended) in 2008. By the end of 2010, online education enrollment surpassed traditional enrollment.

According to the data¹— which includes over 400,000 courses — over 50% of all enrollments included some form of online learning (either fully online or blended study.) Fully online delivery grew from 31% in 2009 to 44% in 2010.

“Online enrollment continues to rise as employees take advantage of the convenience of online degree programs designed to meet the needs of working adults and the companies that sponsor that education,” stated John Zappa, CEO of EdLink. *“This is an important trend to understand, as companies increasingly demand that their educational investments drive business outcomes and provide practical skills,”* continued Zappa. *“According to the Business Roundtable, 61% of employers say it is difficult to find qualified employees with the skills the company needs to fill vacancies.”*

Why Online?

Online-only institutions, as well as universities and colleges offering online courses and degree programs, are very attractive to the adult learner because of their accessibility,



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flexibility, convenience, broad spectrum of programs, and in some cases, cost savings. Many for-profit, nonprofit and public colleges and universities also currently offer online courses and degree programs.

“Significant numbers of employees are using their tuition benefits to pursue online degrees and certification programs,” said John Zappa. *“It is important to understand this trend, and its impact, especially as more millennials enter the workforce.”*

“All of our [Featured Provider Network](#) members offer online courses and degree program options that appeal to employees trying to balance work and education,” explained Jason Mulrooney, EdLink’s Manager of Education Partnerships. *“As we grow our network, we actively seek out quality schools that offer a variety of online education options.”*

EdLink’s Featured Provider Network is an expanding network of almost 70 regionally accredited higher education institutions that offer preferred tuition rates, customized education options and other accelerated learning options for employers.

Online Education in the United States

Online education enrollment continues to grow with no sign of slowing down. Over 5.6 million students took at least one online course during the fall 2009 term, according to [Class Differences: Online Education in the United States, 2010](#)², a study based on the responses of more than 2,500 colleges and universities on the state of online learning in U.S. higher education. The increase of nearly one million students taking at least one online course represents the largest single year-to-year increase recorded in the eight years of these reports. Since the survey started in 2002, online enrollment has increased from 9.6% to 29.3%.

Footnotes:

1. EdLink data was extracted from program participant applications collected in 2009 and 2010.
2. Class Differences: Online Education in the United States, 2010 represents the eighth annual report on the state of online learning in U.S. higher education. The survey is designed, administered and analyzed by the Babson Survey Research Group with support from Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Data collection is conducted in partnership with the College Board. This year’s study, like those for the previous seven years, is aimed at answering some of the fundamental questions about the nature and extent of online education.

About EdLink, LLC:



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EdLink has been designing and administering successful tuition programs for over 25 years. It is the nation's largest provider of outsourced tuition management services, working with companies of all sizes and across multiple industries. Long considered the thought leader in the industry, EdLink's deep expertise and commitment to research and innovation ensures results that matter to both corporations and working adults.

EdLink is an independent company jointly created by two national non-profit leaders in education, the [Council for Adult and Experiential Learning \(CAEL\)](#) and [ACT, Inc.](#)

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Further Information:

Debbie Steele
312-447-8042
dsteele@edlinktuition.com