HIGHER EDUCATION

Politicians in the UK want e-learning to be part of the higher education (HE) system. The political vision for a 21st century HE system in the UK is one that involves personalization, choice and independence. Furthermore, the EU also believes it is important to have educational innovation including language learning and support. In the UK, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) produced an e-learning strategy in 2005. This strategy outlined the need to help higher education to use new technology effectively. HEFCE's aim is for technology to become a normal part of the activities of HE institutions.

The British Council's 'Vision 2020' document predicted that the global demand for international education will increase from 2.1 million (in 2005) to 5.8 million by 2020. This figure includes all types of students going abroad to study in any country. Over the same period, the demand in the HE sector worldwide is likely to triple to 850,000 students. This increase is partly being caused by cheaper transport, new technologies and improved communications. Thus the international student market is growing worldwide. However, competition is also growing in both the world higher education market and within the UK. The fight for student market share has even led many countries such as France and Germany to develop postgraduate programmes taught in English. This is due to the fact that English is the language that the majority of students will have learned in their home education environment. This has resulted in the USA and the UK losing some of the world market share between 2000 and 2004.

Therefore, UK HE institutions now have to become more competitive in the global market. They can no longer rely on the market share that they currently have. In addition, individual HE institutions will have to become more competitive in order to keep their share of the UK international student market. There is possibly one solution that can provide an answer to two of these issues. Universities in the UK should develop English language e-learning for international students. By doing this, universities will make themselves more attractive to international students. Therefore, this will make them more competitive. Furthermore, it will also satisfy the political drive to introduce educational innovation. Such e-learning can support international students and give them personalization, choice and independence.

True, False or Not given: *Read the text and circle the correct answer: A, B or C.*

1. Politicians in the UK want British universities to use e-learning as part of their educational activities.

2. Despite the fact that the international student market is growing, there is also more competition.

3. France and Germany are the only countries that develop postgraduate programmes in English.

4. The British Council has predicted that the global demand for international education will remain stable after 2020.

5. UK HE institutions have to become more competitive both in the global market and the UK international student market.

Multiple Choice: *Read the text and circle the correct answer: A, B or C.*

1. According to the EU, educational innovation
    A. could include language learning and support.
    B. must include language learning and support.
    C. may include language learning and support.

2. The objective of the HEFCE is
    A. to introduce technology in the activities of higher education institutions.
    B. to help higher education institutions.
    C. to produce an e-learning strategy.

3. Among the reasons why the demand in the HE sector has increased
    A. is included in the British Council's 'Vision 2020' document.
    B. are new technologies and unrealiable communications.
    C. is that transport is not as expensive as before.

4. The USA and the UK lost some of the world market share between 2000 and 2004 because
    A. countries such as Germany and France developed postgraduate programs taught in English.
    B. English is the language that most international students have learned.
    C. international students prefer to study in English.

5. UK Universities will be more attractive to international students
    A. if they satisfy the political drive to introduce educational innovation.
    B. unless they make themselves more competitive.
    C. if they develop English language e-learning.