

Instructor: BENADDA Abdelouahid

Level: Master 1 / Language and Communication

Module: E-Learning

Course 3: Characteristics of e-learning

- **Course Scope:** An introduction to the general topic of e- learning "how people learn at distance" (this course is an overview of the characteristics of e-learning, its related disciplines, types, and current practices)

- **Course Learning Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify the theoretical constructs that support e-learning in networked environments.
- Explore the scope, trends, and characteristics of e-learning.
- Discover the opportunities and affordances of e-learning.
- Describe how the internet is changing how and where learning is occurring.

Guiding Thoughts to the Course

1. Do you have an idea of the different characteristics of e-learning?
2. Have you ever thought of its related disciplines, types, and current practices?
3. How is it applied to education and can you benefit from it?

- **Course Content**

- **Characteristics of e-learning**

E-learning can be characterised by the following critical issues:

- Shift from traditional education / training to flexible, individual, self-organized learning,
- Move to process-oriented learning instead of product oriented learning,
- Collaborative learning based on a community of learners, experts, facilitators,
- Make models of each student, i.e., a profile showing each learner's background, learning needs, preferences in terms of teaching methods, and constraints.

Keegan (2002) identified five characteristics and differences between distance education and traditional teaching and learning, namely

- The quasi-permanent separation of teacher and learner throughout the length of the learning process (this distinguishes it from conventional face-to-face education).
- The influence of an educational organisation both in the planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of student-support services (this distinguishes it from private study and teach-yourself programmes).
- The use of technical media – print, audio, video or computer – to unite teacher and learner and carry the content of the course.
- The provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or even initiate dialogue (this distinguishes it from other uses of technology in education).
- The quasi-permanent absence of the learning group throughout the length of the learning process.



Academic year : 2021 / 2022.

Learners are usually taught as individuals and not in groups, with the possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialization purposes. (Keegan, 2002)

- **E-learning Related Disciplines**

E-learning is related to a variety of disciplines that contribute in expanding its scope:

- **Educational Technology** (commonly abbreviated as **EduTech**, or **EdTech**) is the combined use of computer hardware, software, and educational theory and practice to facilitate learning. (Kennedy, 2019). It is almost understanding the most recent technological developments and how they impact teaching and learning
- **Distance Learning** is the education of students who may not always be physically present at a school. Today, it involves online education. A number of other terms (distributed learning, e-learning, m-learning, online learning, virtual classroom etc.) are used roughly synonymously with distance education.
- **Educational Psychology**: Applying psychological principles to instructional tasks and situations involving Web/Internet technologies.
- **Instructional Design**: Designing and implementing learning environments and experiences to be as effective as possible

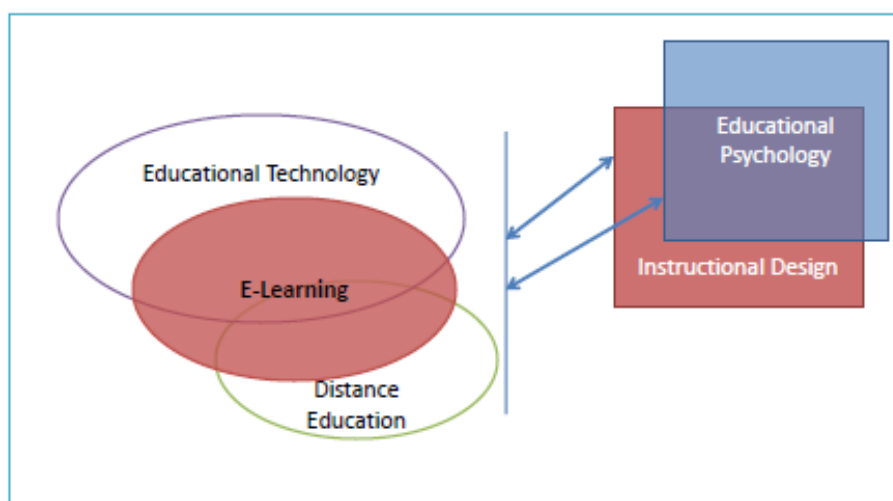


Figure 4: E-learning Related Disciplines (nfriesen@tru.ca)¹

- **E-learning Practice**

E-learning practice has grown to cover all domains of education. It is a good option when:

- instructors are faced with a significant amount of content to be delivered to a large number of learners;
- learners have limited mobility or in geographically dispersed locations;
- learners cannot devote enough time to learning;
- learners are highly motivated to learn and appreciate arranging learning at their own pace;
- content must be reused for different learners' groups in the future;
- training aims to build cognitive skills rather than psychomotor skills;
- the course addresses long-term rather than short-term training needs;

¹ Friesen, N. (2009). *Re-thinking e-learning research: Foundations, methods, and practices* (Vol. 333). Peter Lang.

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Academic year : 2021 / 2022.



⊙ **Group Discussion: Communication Assignment**

Here are some questions to reflect on as an extension of the course content (To be discussed in groups):

- a) How is online teaching different from traditional classroom teaching?
Write the maximum of notes and share them with the other groups