### Seven myths of distance education (or realities?)

1. Universities do lifelong learning
2. Distance education is about access
3. Technology is the answer
4. E-learning replaces distance education
5. E-learning is a new and better pedagogy
6. E-learning will make money and globalize the market
7. Anyone can do distance education

Then lessons to be learned

Realities in green

- Lifelong learning essential for knowledge-based societies
- Market for lifelong learning = those leaving high school
- Distance education most appropriate method for LL
- Universities not interested in LL
- Professors already overloaded
- New economic model needed
Myth 2: Distance education is about access

DE: originally commercial
UK Open University: access
open universities worldwide
now DE about money: more access
to HE, ideological shift to right
the promise of cost-effectiveness
access still important for many

Myth 3: Technology is the answer

New technology better than old?
learning resource management systems (LRMS), e.g. new WebCT, Blackboard
• integration with admin
• higher cost - open source
• Lone Rangers - poor design

Myth 3: Technology is the answer (cont.)

Web conferencing (synchronous)
• bandwidth limited off-campus
• high cost of software
• group interaction difficult
• poor design (real-time lectures)
• want good design models that integrate wideband to desk-top with asynchronous learning
Myth 3: Technology is the answer (cont.)

learning objects: graphics, tests, animations, assignment questions, text
meta-tagged: IMS/SCORM/CAREO
high cost of implementation
business model/intellectual property? context-free objects/classification?

Myth 3: Technology is the answer (cont.)

cheap, reliable, accessible technology needed for DE
using advanced technology is research not teaching
design/project management/cost-effectiveness as important using people often more practical

Myth 4: e-learning replaces distance education

key issue: do students have access to the technology?
in most developed economies and for middle class: yes, but not for the poor
thus mass media of print/broadcasting still important for many target groups

Technology and flexible learning

blended learning → distributed learning
mixed mode
face-to-face aids
no e-learning
distance education
fully e-learning
Myth 4: e-learning replaces distance education

most e-learning aimed at campus-based students
distance education needs better
• course design
• learner support
• administrative systems
THEN it can be integrated

economics of e-learning different from mass distance education:
economies of scope, not scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mass DE</th>
<th>E-learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher access</td>
<td>Lower access</td>
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<td>Lower quality</td>
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Myth 5: e-learning is a new and better pedagogy (Peters, 2002)

Yes, e-learning is better than mass media distance education pedagogy:
• greater interaction: student-teacher and student-student
• better integrated media
• better learning outcomes

But no, e-learning is not yet a new pedagogy, e.g.
• collaborative learning
• problem-based learning
• critical/creative thinking
are also classroom based
difference is flexibility
Myths and realities

Myth 5: e-learning is a new and better pedagogy (Peters, 2002 - cont.)

technology and time/place of delivery different needs of learners constant:
• read, observe, think, practice, receive feedback, assessment, and accreditation

but, e-learning could be a better pedagogy new media adopt earlier formats So far, potential of e-learning under-exploited need to match potential to new learning outcomes that prepare for knowledge-based society

Myth 6: e-learning will make money and globalize the market

Late 1990’s: e-learning frenzy e-learning for profit; global markets Many for-profit initiatives failed (e.g. New York University, Temple University, FATHOM, Open University in USA) US$20 million lost on average ethical and credibility issues e.g. Universitas 21 Global degree transcripts have logos of all 19 universities Thomson chooses authors self-accreditation (U21 Pedagogica)
Myth 6: e-learning will make money and globalize the market (cont.)

Profit in niche markets, e.g.
University of Phoenix Online: 26,000 students, vocational corporate e-learning
MBAs (Queens, Athabasca) other continuing professional education degrees

Masters in Educational Technology (for teachers)
UBC/Tec de Monterrey: joint degree + T de M degree fully online: English and Spanish certificates + master

partnership since 1996: masters opened 2002
joint degree: 80 students a year Tec de M degree: 200 + per year fee: US$9,000, paid per course full cost recovery inc. overheads and risk = new research faculty

Students choose known brands: e.g. MET joint degree (English)
UBC on-campus students: 20%
rest of province: 24%
rest of Canada 23%
international (31 countries) 33%
Myths and realities

Myth 6: e-learning will make money and globalize the market (cont.)

Lessons:
different financial strategies for different markets
as student fees increase, DE becomes more attractive to institutions because of marginal costs (UBC undergraduate fees = 80% of DE costs, < 50% f2f)

Lessons (cont.)
students want the real thing: don’t exclude the star professors from DE (but protect them)
integrity matters: don’t dilute brand
cost-effectiveness matters: project management + quality assurance

Myth 7: anyone can do distance education

ostriches, geeks and amateurs
lesser problem when DE and classroom teaching separate
e-learning forces the issue
professors and managers don’t understand need for help (apprentice model - research on learning not known)
Myths and realities

Myth 7: anyone can do distance education

Lone Rangers: distance education + WebCT or Blackboard
too much effort: no boundaries
poor interface/graphics/more time than professionals
no economies of scale
deter other professors

Project management:
establish projects
work in a team
• professor + course developer + web designer
schedules/budgets/product funding linked to project management

The continuum of design

class-room aids
hybrid learning
multi-media distance education
technical help
less — change in methods — more
more up-front money

Ph.D. training for research, not for teaching
technology provides more choice in teaching
choice requires knowledge
train for teaching or put in team
Myths and realities

Myth 7: anyone can do distance education

HECTIC report: need for training implications for senior management:
• understand the issues around technology, e-learning and distance learning
• courses, training, and rewards

Technology raises the skill level of both teachers and managers in higher education
Teachers and managers in higher education are inadequately prepared for quality technology-based distance education

Goal: cost-effectiveness and quality assurance

added value of professional DE:
high quality at reasonable cost
• clear academic goals
• instructional design
• project management
• accurate budgeting
• evaluation and maintenance

Implications for higher education institutions

roles of professors must change
pedagogy + organization of teaching: face-to-face, hybrid, distance
technology raises skill level
formal training/qualification
Myths and realities

The challenge

distance education needs to be more integrated with mainline teaching
yet distance education remains uniquely different
professors need to work alongside distance education professionals
distance education is a highly satisfying professional career

Myth 6: e-learning will make money and globalize the market

Growth of consortia:

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Universitas 21 Global</td>
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<td>Cardean U</td>
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<td>e-University</td>
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Criteria for success:
1. widens student program choice
2. coherent degree programs
3. full credit transfer
4. courses taught by regular faculty
5. increased enrolments/access
6. financially sustainable

Further information

http://bates.cstudies.ubc.ca