

EDEN Conference
Helsinki 2005

Why e-learning has failed - and why it will succeed



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overview

- **e-learning projects that crashed and burned: why did they fail?**
- **slow adoption of e-learning in distance education**
- **key problems with e-learning**
- **cost-effectiveness of e-learning**
- **need for strategic use and focus**
- **why it will succeed**

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Crashed and burned

Late 1990's: e-learning frenzy
e-learning for profit; global markets
Merrill Lynch: Moe and Blodgett
Cisco CEO: 'e-learning next killer application'

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Crashed and burned

- **for-profit spin-off degree programs:**
New York University Online, Temple, E-Cornell, Open University of United States
- **for-profit consortia:** Cardean, Fathom, Global University Alliance, Universitas21
- **UK e-university**
US\$20 million lost on average; \$100 million by UK e-University

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Why did they fail?

ethical and credibility issues

e.g. Universitas 21 Global

- degree transcripts have logos of all 19 universities
- Thomson chooses authors
- self-accreditation (U21 Pedagogica)
- U21 Global degree not recognized by member institutions

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Why did they fail?

- **bad business plans:** KPMG, PriceWaterhouse
- **over-estimated market for non-credit**
- **under-estimated costs:** product not process; mass production model; learner support under-estimated
- **ignored expertise of 'traditional' DE**
- **'quarantined' tenured faculty**

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E-learning and distance education: public sector (2003)

Public sector

Print + broadcasting:	5.0 million
Fully online:	0.6 million
Total:	5.6 million
E-learners on campus:	3-4 million
Private e-learners:	3.4 million
Private distance	4.0 million

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Slow public sector development

10 years since first web-based courses but:

- **12 per cent of DE fully online; most 'web-supplemented'**
- **only one public university fully online**
- **UK Open University: 2003, 17 courses out of 500 fully online**
- **>70% of all fully online courses in private sector**

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Why so slow?

(in increasing order of importance)

1. Access
2. Need to change pedagogy
3. Lack of specialists
4. Lower economies of scale
5. Lack of business planning/CBA
6. Inventory
7. Leadership + institutional inertia

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Consequences

- some conventional universities have moved faster
- e-learning seen as different from DE; DE a sub-set of e-learning
- e-learning about competitiveness and profit, not access
- govts. see DTUs as obsolete

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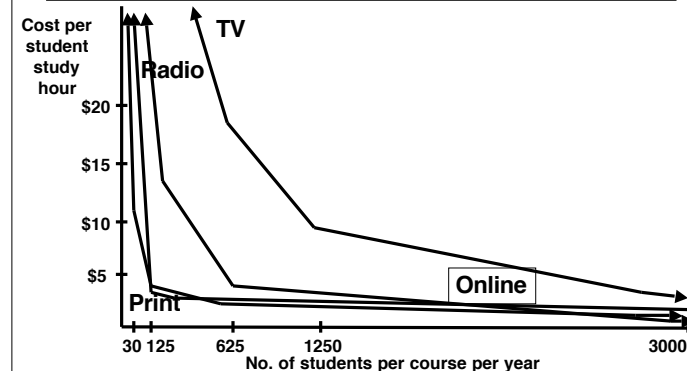
Problems with e-learning

- access IS still an issue in many countries/for some target groups;
- economies of scale still important
- quality is an issue; can learn from DE
- e-learning requires major structural changes in conventional universities
- DE students have special needs not well served by campus institutions
- technology constantly changing

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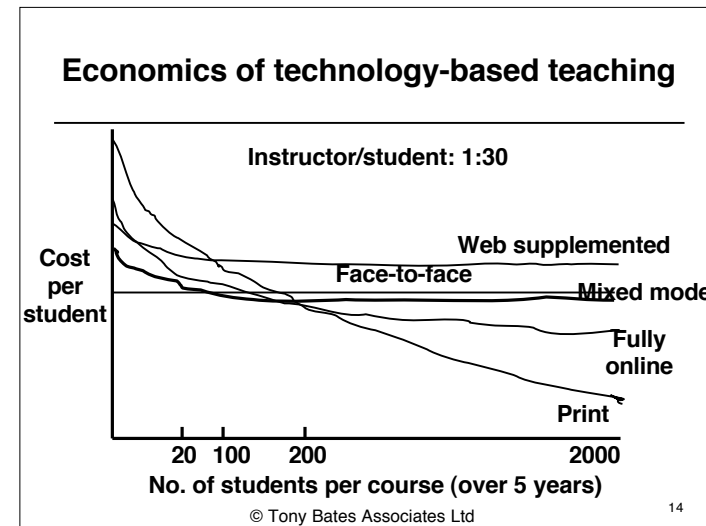
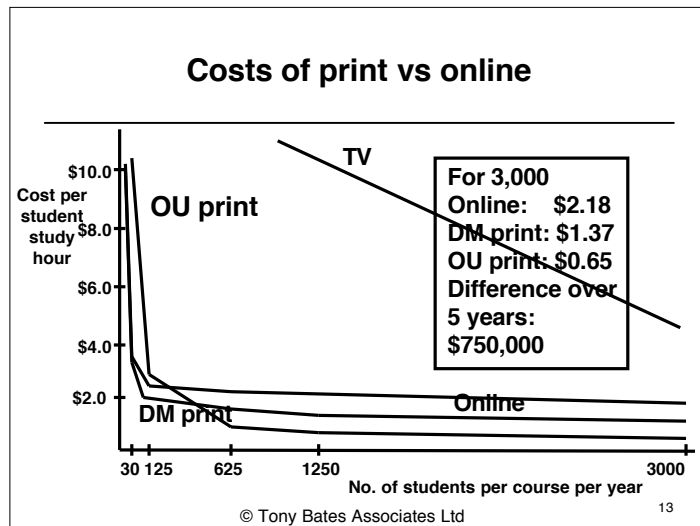
Concerns about cost-effectiveness (from Bates, 2005)



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Implementing Technological Change



Why e-learning will succeed: it can meet the needs of a knowledge- based society

Knowledge-based society: work and life dependent on information and knowledge, e.g. financial services, computing, entertainment, health, education

- industries dependent on finding, analyzing, applying information
- knowledge-base constantly changing
- workers need to be lifelong learners

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Advantages of e-learning

- **new teaching methods: from information transmission to knowledge construction**
 Creative thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving, collaborative learning, information management
- **resulting in learning how to learn (after university)**
- **but not always used this way**

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Selective use of e-learning

Two key parameters:

Learners:

novice vs experienced
dependent vs independent
full-time vs part-time
motivation

Skills/competencies:

psycho-motor vs cognitive
what else? we don't know

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Importance of distance education and e-learning for lifelong learners

- lifelong learners need delivery to work or home
- Internet provides access to new knowledge and research
- already have 'hands-on' skills from campus experience
- community of practice: lifelong learners have specialist knowledge

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Lifelong learners have different needs

- delivery to work or home
- just-in-time
- small 'chunks' but leading to credentials (degrees/diplomas)
- latest knowledge but adapted to the learner's context
- sharing/testing knowledge with peers

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why conventional universities need to pay attention to lifelong learning

- universities overwhelmed by high school entrants; don't want more students
- new funding model needed for lifelong learners: Self-financed programs hiring new research professors
- lifelong learners previously subsidized, earning good money, able and willing to pay full cost

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e-Learning can be profitable

Profit in niche markets, e.g.

University of Phoenix Online: 26,000 students, vocational

corporate e-learning: e.g. SkillsSoft: \$250 million per annum

MBA (Queens, Athabasca)

UBC Master in Educational Technology

UOC Master in e-Learning

but who pays for under-educated?

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Conclusions

- **e-learning must be used strategically**
- **lifelong learners major new market essential for economic development**
- **major changes needed in both conventional and distance institutions**
- **but e-learning will succeed because it develops skills needed in knowledge-based societies**

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References

Bates, A. 2005 *Technology, e-learning and distance education* London: Routledge

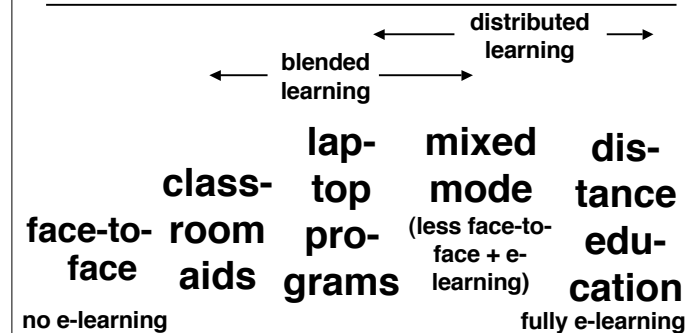
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What is e-learning?



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Choosing technology: ACTIONS model

A ccess
C ost
T eaching requirements
I nteraction
O rganization
N ovelty
S peed

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Changing technologies

1. re-usable content (learning objects)
 2. social software (wikis, blogs)
 3. e-portfolios
 4. synchronous: web conferencing
 5. student tools to create/manage own web work
- difficult to build stable, quality controlled, 'managed' systems

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Advantages of e-learning

- direct interaction between teacher and learner
- faster feedback
- skills/competencies needed in a knowledge-based society: information management; knowledge construction; independent learning
- economies of scope

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