

Running head: E-LEARNING THEORY AND RECENT DISTANCE EDUCATION

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## **How eLearning theory has informed recent DE Practice**

### **Introduction**

This research paper explains that the new wave of distance education (DE) reveals that there has been a massive development pertaining to the eLearning theory which has been influenced the DE practice. Over the years, the DE practice has been incorporating a mixture of online learning theories in its model. The mixture of online learning theories are also considered as blended learning theories, which are perceived to share a unified theory that is cohesive with behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism theories that include the connectivist and community of inquiry theories. It is therefore important to emphasize that the eLearning theory has informed recent DE Practice with the developments of a wide range of educational interactive learning and assessment tools. These tools have been in DE to improve the basis of pedagogical skills and inspire the next level of student learning that supports the community of inquiry theory.

### **eLearning Theory and Recent DE Practices**

Over the years it was an assumption that physical eLearning was conducted because of the advancement of technology, but there is no theory prior to 2003 to confirm an assessment of the eLearning theory (Nichols, 2003). In this view, it is important to follow the approach of an excellent theory, because it sustains trustworthy and approved models, which enables us to build on trusted and successful theories (Anderson, 2008). A researcher therefore re-emphasizes that a

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theory is a fundamental tool that can be used to design instructional programs in a wide range of eLearning platforms. In this view, it has been confirmed that University of Maryland University College (UMUC) is an ideal example of an intellectual institution which provides instructional design programs with a wide range of eLearning platforms. The UMUC instructional design programs provide resourceful information by facilitating its teaching and learning programs with a variety of educational tools, which include hyperlink, embeddable audio and video capabilities, online text-based conference classrooms with live chat and real time communication.

In addition, the UMUC instructors also incorporate Wimba application in the instructional design programs to enhance their pedagogical skills and encourage the next level of student learning despite Wimba is a third party application. This is also a recent evidence of how the rapid increase in eLearning theory has informed recent DE Practice, particularly with the pedagogical approach which incorporates the behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism learning practices. Learning helps us to acquire a form of equilibrium, and it is a vital intellectual effort which is interrelated to the teaching theory (Koohang, Riley, & Smith, 2009). In this view, the behaviorism plays a fundamental role in eLearning, because it discusses the behaviors that can be observed in different educational areas to reveal whether or not eLearning transpire. The constructivism theory focuses on how students establish what they will eventually learn based on prior knowledge and occurrences. The constructivism theory is also a learner-centered model with learning capabilities that can be incorporated in the DE programs to meet the needs of diverse learners (Koohang, Riley, & Smith, 2009). Conversely, the cognitivism theory looks beyond the human behavior to explain the various approaches that can be integrated to determine whether or not there is an occurrence of learning.

It is also important to emphasize that the existing DE theory integrate appropriate

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pedagogical and learning tools to facilitate a successful individual and collaborative DE learning environment. In this view, eLearning is an available vessel toward advance and innovative knowledge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning in the form of media and technology. The connectivism and the community theory of inquiry have created a pathway for the current community-centered learning with student-student, student-instructor, student-content, and content communication with a wide range of networks and technology applications. For example, the LinkedIn website is an ideal network that is used as a connectivism intellectual environment where people form communities and share academic and career information. The connectivist model also plays an active role in the DE programs because it provides a variety of materials to enhance a successful eLearning environment. In addition, the community-centered approach has also enhanced the pedagogical theory toward inspiring a successful student learning environment.

### **Conclusion**

It is therefore important to conclude that it is imperative to promote and sustain a global and collaborative interaction with instructor-student and student-student in the DE programs in order to be updated with technology, communication and other required information. The blending learning theories of behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, as well as the connectivism and the community of inquiry and other learning practices have innovatively improve the eLearning environment. In addition these theories and models have incorporated advance technology tools with learning capabilities that created multiple intellectual platforms to further promote a success eLearning environment in recent DE Practices.

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