

Chapter 13

E-Learning vs. T-Learning: Examining Assessment

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ABSTRACT

This chapter intends to explore distance learning today both in the television medium and in the online one, acknowledging that during these early decades of the 21st century multiple and diverse remote learning opportunities have arisen given the permanent technological evolution and of societies. In order to present this actual circumstance, focused analysis of both media is developed pointing out each main key characteristic, benefits, and disadvantages, examining the existence and reliability of each respective means of assessment.

INTRODUCTION

More than ever in human history the current 2020 COVID-19 epidemic across the globe has taught us all the importance of communication in our societies. The forced social exclusion and the consequent lack of proximity between people, and the absence of shared moments amongst citizens have caused an increased general need to contact one another. According to Castells (2013), it is fundamental to think of communication as a necessary element of sociability.

Given this present social circumstance in the world which seems to have the potential in the upcoming future to fragment human perceptions about solid cornerstones as education is globally understood, authors believe to be relevant to discuss how is distance learning (DL) today delivered by television and online platforms, exploring its different forms of assessment.

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Alongside the above, the multiplication of emerging different digital technologies has been enabling the evolution of online DL, opening within itself new possibilities towards the future. On the other hand, as television has been focusing itself over the last two decades into information and entertainment contents, DL relevance seems to have not been prioritized within this media social important role. Which reveals a crucial shift when comparing with the vitality that television has had in the past in regards with DL, like the Portuguese education television program Telescola, an important case study explored in this chapter compensating the lack of investigation about Telescola curriculum practices that would allow to better understand the culture in class (Costa, 2010).

Moreover, regarding the reliability of assessment on DL, with the rapid proliferation of distance education and e-learning courses, there is a need for a comprehensive and professional approach to assessing its effectiveness

(Ruhe et al., 2009). In fact, despite DL's dynamism, popularity and diversity, as it is evolving at two different rhythms on both environments and differently developed by each platform, the literature review shows an inexistent generalized standard way of assessment.

This chapter intends to explore how both academic and broadcasting entities are currently delivering their DL educational programs determining the existence of each different form of assessment. It primarily addresses a contextualization of online and television DL highlighting success cases in both contexts. Authors later present characteristics of both environments exploring each present context. Later is outlined both assessment methodologies evolution, closed by a partial conclusion, finishing with considerations towards the future.

BACKGROUND: SOCIETY AND DISTANCE LEARNING TODAY

Human professional and cultural development have relevantly changed in the last 50 years. Accompanying this evolution, education has moved as well into a new perspective, concept, or idea, becoming DL the natural response to the changes in our society. DL is a generic term used to refer to the physical separation of teachers and learners (Schlosser et al., 2006), which slightly differs from the e-learning concept that is an instructional program delivered online including tutorials proposed on campus, workshops, short courses and worksite-based instruction (Ruhe et al., 2009).

The increasing number of distant learners, as opposed to the ones attending collective presential classrooms, seems to rely on plural factors, as the growing number of population, that limits the access to schools, living in distant locations from educational areas, the general growing interest in being educated and to acquire knowledge, the capability and/or preference to study by themselves, the difficulty of completion courses and also the need to enter into the labor market.

Alongside with social reasons, DL evolution has also benefited from technological improvements that foster educational environments. Interactive software has been evolving in a such a progressive way that tends to be the basis of DL's future, by recycling pedagogical interfaces, improving educational relationships to overcome its spatial and temporal former issues, bringing us to a global bidirectional technological mainstream system where new teaching procedures and methods of evaluation provide new flexible forms of learning.

Consequently, the paradigm of today is how educational entities use multiple technological possibilities to foster DL environments. While online DL is one of the new learning trends as a learning approach widely adopted in academic institutions, benefiting from clear perception and understanding

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