

# The Future of Online Learning

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Even in this age of rapidly changing technology, trends may be identified

If we study these trends, deep changes in the nature of learning are identifiable

# Future Technology

- ❑ Bandwidth will be unlimited
- ❑ Processing power will be unlimited
- ❑ Computers will become more specialized
- ❑ Operating systems will fade, software will become *task based*
- ❑ Keyword: *simplicity*

# New Technology in Education

- ❑ Personal Access Device (the **PAD**) means that education will be *personal* and *portable*
- ❑ Presentation software - eg., Director, virtual reality, etc. - will come to the fore  
consequently...
- ❑ Instructors less and less likely to produce their own online materials

# Interaction and Conferencing

- ❑ Synchronous conferencing systems will become cheap and easy to use - a platform into which tools (eg whiteboard) are plugged
- ❑ Asynchronous conferencing will evolve into full multimedia
- ❑ Standards will develop for a wide range of conferencing modes

# Personalized Education

- ❑ Learning topics will be selected according to students' needs, not predefined structures
- ❑ Groups will be formed dynamically, as needed (the Quest model)
- ❑ Materials will be presented automatically, as needed
- ❑ Learning systems will adapt to individual students' learning styles

# Time and Place Independence

- Time will *cease to be* an objective standard
- Not self-paced; dynamically paced
- Instruction of the future will *encourage* mobility
- Schools of the future will consist of meeting places, not classrooms
- On and off campus learning will *converge*

# Learning Communities

- Learning is a social activity
- *Interest based* communities will exist online
  - these communities need to be fostered
- *Peer based* learning communities will form around schools, churches, community centres, etc.



# The Triad Model

- Consists of student, instructor, facilitator
- The *instructor* does not deliver instruction, but rather, acts as an expert and resource
- The *facilitator* is community based, and is an advocate for students
- The *host/provider framework* describes the institutional model (especially as traditional boundaries become fuzzy or disappear)

# Accreditation

- Already a mish-mash and won't improve
- Learning and the assessment of learning will diverge - testing and certification
- PLA & self-managed learning will flourish
- *Education as a service* - institutions will be seen not as providing knowledge, but rather, counsel and support for learning

# Modularity

- Courses and delivery systems will be modular (each part updated as needed)
- Modularity will be used to support *customized and individualized courses*
- The *course* itself is an arbitrary division
- *Distributed design* - modules from all over will be plugged into courses
- Educational Object Protocols and IMS

# Ownership and Copyright

- ❑ *Courses per se* will not be owned
- ❑ *Course components* will be owned
- ❑ Specialized resources will be offered by institutions and companies, using a pay-back system
- ❑ Topic-based online services will exist independently of institutions
- ❑ Institutions will select & manage content

# Economics of Online Learning

- In the *short term* costs will be high
- In the *long term* savings will be large:
  - improved automation
  - wider reach & more students
  - savings in capital infrastructure
- Savings depend on the *fragmentation* of instructional tasks
- The largest beneficiary will be *students*

[http://www.assiniboinec.mb.ca/  
user/downes/future](http://www.assiniboinec.mb.ca/user/downes/future)