The integration of learning technologies in open distance learning at the North-West University

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Thesis submitted for the degree Doctor of Philosophy at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus

Promoter: Prof. Dr. A. Seugnet Blignaut

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wife Elsa

Without her love, constant support and encouragement,
this study would not have been possible
I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

- My study supervisor and co-author, Prof A Seugnet Blignaut, for the enormous investment of effort, dedication and shared wisdom. I would strive to reinvest the acquired experience and appreciation for transformative people-centred research in Technology Enhanced Learning!
- Prof E.J. Spamer, the Director of the School for Continuing Teacher Education, North-West University, for unwavering support, patience and encouragement. Permission for and facilitation of this study through the SCTE permitted the development of a framework for integration of learning technology, emerging from collective experience and wisdom of the practitioners in South African distance education execution guided by his leadership
- Faculty, support staff and teacher-students of the SCTE, NWU. Concern for education in Africa binds us together in a calling to facilitate learning; on behalf of the future generation and current lifelong learners such as ourselves. Working at the SCTE these past two years has been a joyous experience as a result of the powerful positive group spirit, the encouragement and cooperation afforded to me. Pieter Badenhorst and Jacques Pienaar, my colleagues at e-Learning Support enabled me to perform this research while they were carrying an additional burden. Their sacrificial dedication and pleasant demeanours enabled us to progress in strides, even while much of my energy was consumed by this study
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- The Ferdinand Postma Library at NWU, for the electronic database facilities enabling me to obtain literature on my own and for specific assistance in cases where I was unable to manage independently
- Financial support from North-West University Research Support as well as the National Research Foundation project ODL for TEL
- The privilege of an extended study tour in conjunction with the presentation at the 24th ICDE in Bali, October 2011. This enabled me to collaborate with professors and peers at the Open University, UK and the Indira Gandhi Open University in Delhi, India for extending my understanding of technology use in Open Distance Learning.

Soli Deo Gloria
North-West University in South Africa is committed to expanding use of learning technologies for contact and distance education students by augmenting the existing NWU teaching and learning policy with an e-learning policy. The School of Continuing Teacher Education at North-West University is currently training about 24 000 in-service teacher students through Open Distance Learning. Only a few students submit assignments in typed format and seldom electronically. Students rarely use electronic technologies to augment their learning, and the SCTE employs few to support students. This does not comply with the South African Government’s policy on e-Education that demands information and communication technology mastery in teacher training.

The aim of this research was integration of learning technologies in open distance learning at SCTE NWU through recommendations compiled in a sociologically transformative emergent implementation framework. The researcher followed a concurrent mixed-method sociologically transformative approach, focussing on the use of technology for social empowerment to cross the digital divide, through a theoretical lens of ICT for development. The lived experience in the natural setting of distance education students, lecturers, and involved stakeholders was used as initial data collection, informed by a continuous literature study of emergent learning technology use.

Purposeful sampling was used during participant selection. The role of the researcher was that of participant observer, interviewer, and human instrument, from a position of methodological pragmatism as a method of inquiry. Using a design-based research approach, the thesis addresses the main research question through five research papers; each addressing one of the sub-questions as design-based research cycles, while collectively addressing the research problem to address the main research question. Non-standardised measuring instruments were developed based on themes identified from literature and the analysis of qualitative data. Significant barriers to population-wide ICT adoption exist. Strong intentions of perseverance in attaining functional computer literacy are evident. Support and enablement are required to promote trust to attempt using computers, necessary to obtain self-confidence through accomplishment. In this way perseverance to attain functional computer literacy may be cultivated.

The study presents a model for intention to use, confidence, trust and perseverance in attaining computer literacy competence with statistically significant standardised regression
weights. In terms of affective responses of students during computer literacy training, a two-dimensional model for computer literacy learning emotions is presented. Perceptions during professional development produced a model for faculty development towards socially transformative learning technology integration for open distance learning. The researcher also presents a people-technology interaction in teaching and learning model in the fifth paper. A distinction is made between reactionary interventions and pre-emptive unobtrusive seamless support, based on requirements identified through bottom-up feedback listening to latent requests of participants. Technology-enhanced learning integration should be legitimised through visible commitment from the university as institution. Lecturer training, innovative planning of time issues, acquisition of appropriate infrastructure, buying in from the institution and IT support services, and support of teacher-students are all essential for evolvement towards an e-mature organisation for the delivery of ODL to vast numbers of newly industrialised context clients.

**Keywords**
1. Computer literacy
2. e-Learning
3. Faculty training
4. Higher Education
5. Interactive white boards
6. Learning technology integration
7. Open Distance Learning
8. Student support
9. Teacher training
10. Technology adoption
11. Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)
12. Technophilia
13. Technophobia
OPSOMMING

Die Noordwes-Universiteit in Suid Afrika is verbind daartoe om die gebruik van leertegnologieë deur studente in kontak- sowel af standsonderwys uit te brei deur versterking van die bestaande onderrigleerbeleid met behulp van e-leerbeleid. Die Skool vir Voortgesette Onderwysersopleiding aan die Noordwes-Universiteit lei tans 24000 praktiserende onderwysers op deur Oop Afstandsleer. Slegs 'n klein persentasie van hierdie studente handig getikte opdragte in en weinig dien dit elektronies in. Studente maak selde van elektroniese tegnologieë gebruik om hulle leer te versterk, en die SVO wend slegs enkele hiervan aan om studente te ondersteun. Dit stem nie ooreen met die Suid Afrikaanse regering se beleid oor e-Leer nie, want hierdie beleid vereis dat onderwysers wat opgelei word ook inligtings- en kommunikasietergologie bemeester.

Die doel van hierdie navorsing was om leertegnologieë in oop afstandsleer aan die SVO aan die NWU te integreer deur aanbevelings te maak binne 'n raamwerk van ontluikende maatskaplik transformenderende implementering. Die navorser het 'n konkurrente gemengde metode met 'n maatskaplik transformenderende benadering gevolg, gefokus op die gebruik van tegnologie vir maatskaplike bemagtiging om sodoende die digitale gaping te oorbrug, deur 'n teoretiese lens van IKT vir ontwikkeling. Die geleefde ervaring in die natuurlike omgewing van afstandstudente, dosente en alle rolspeilers is aanvanklik gebruik vir data-insameling. Deelnemers is doelbewus geselekteer, en die rol van die navorser was die van deelnemende waarnemer en menslike instrument vanuit metodologiese pragmatisme as ondersoekmetode. Deur gebruik te maak van ontwerp-gebaseerde navorsing, behandel die tesis die primêre navorsingsvraag deur vyf navorsingsartikels waarvan elk een van die sub-vrae aanspreek. Nie-gestandaardiseerde navorsingsinstrumente is ontwikkel, gebaseer op die temas geïdentificeer uit die literatuur en die analyse van kwalitatiewe data. Betekenisvolle hindernisse staan in die pad van landwye aanvaarding van IKT. Daar is duidelike aanduidings van toegewye voorneme om funksionele rekenaargeletterdheid te bereik. Ondersteuning en bemagtiging word vereis ten einde die nodige vertroue te skep om 'n poging aan te wend om rekenaars te gebruik, wat 'n voorvereiste is vir selfvertroue en verwesenliking.

Die studie bied 'n model vir die voorneme om vrymoedigheid, vertroue en deursettingsvermoë aan te wend ten einde funksioneel rekenaargeletterd te raak met statisties betekenisvolle gestandaardiseerde regressiewaardes. Betreffende affektiewe response van studente gedurende opleiding in rekenaargeletterdheid, word 'n twee-
dimensionele model aangebied van emosies ervaar tydens sodanige opleiding. Persepsies
tydens professionele ontwikkeling het ’n model opgelewer vir die ontwikkeling van
maatskaplik transformeerende leertegnologie in die fakulteit, en die integrasie daarvan tydens
oop afstandsleer. Die navorser bied ook in die vyfde artikel ’n model van wisselwerkings

tussen mens en leertegnologie vir onderrig en leer. Daar word onderskei tussen reaksionêre
intervensies en voorafbepaalde volgehoue ondersteuning wat gebaseer is op die behoeftes
geïdentifiseer deur onuitgesproke versoekte in die terugvoer van deelnemers. Die integrasie
van leertegnologie-verrykte leer as mikpunt behoort gelegitimeer te word deur duidelik
waarneembare verbintenis en onderneming van die universiteit as instansie. Opleiding van
dosente, innoverende tydsbeplanning, die verkryging van gepaste infrastruktuur, die inkoop
die von die institusie en IT ondersteuningsdienste sowel as ondersteuning van onderwyser-
studente is alles nodig vir ontwikkeling tot ’n e-volwasse organisasie vir die aflewering van
OAL aan reusegetalle pas-geïndustrialiseerde kliënte.

**Sleutelwoorde:**
1. Akademici opleiding
2. e-Leer
3. Hoër Onderwys
4. Interaktiewe witborde
5. Leertegnologie integrasie
6. Liefde vir tegnologie
7. Onderwysersopleiding
8. Oop Afstandsleer
9. Rekenaargeletterdheid
10. Studenteondersteuning
11. Tegnologieaanvaarding
12. Tegnologie-verrykte Leer
13. Tegnologievrees
SOLEMN DECLARATION

Solemn declaration by student

I, Hendrik Daniel Esterhuizen, declare herewith that the thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation/article entitled (exactly as registered/approved title),

_The integration of learning technologies in open distance learning at the North-West University_

which I herewith submit to the North-West University Potchefstroom Campus, in compliance / partial compliance with the requirements set for the PhD degree, is my own work, has been language edited and has not already been submitted to any other university.

I understand and accept that the copies that are submitted for examination are the property of the University.

Signature of student ___________________________ University number __21466386__

Signed at Potchefstroom this ___3rd__ day of October 2012

Declared before me on this ___2nd__ day of October 2012

Commissioner of Oaths: ___________________________

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Declaration by supervisor / promoter / research director / dean

The undersigned declares:

1.1 that the student attended an approved module of study for the relevant qualification and that the work for the course has been completed or that work approved by the Senate has been done;

1.2 that the student has complied with the minimum duration of study as stated in the yearbook;

1.3 the student is hereby granted permission to submit his/her mini-dissertation/dissertation or thesis;

1.4 that registration/amendment of the title has been approved;

1.5 that the appointment/amendment of examiners has been finalised and

1.6 that all the procedures have been followed according to the Manual for Postgraduate Studies.

Signature of Supervisor/Promoter: ___________________________ Date: 2012 11 02

Signature of Research Director: ___________________________ Date: __________________

Signature of Dean: ___________________________ Date: __________________
CERTIFICATE OF PROOFREADING

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CERTIFICATE ISSUED ON 1 NOVEMBER 2012

I hereby declare that I have linguistically edited the dissertation submitted by Mr Hendrik Daniel Esterhuizen for the PhD degree.

The integration of learning technologies in open distance learning at the North-West University

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SATI number 1001489
ID 4504190077088
Ethics Approval of Project

The North-West University Ethics Committee (NWU-EC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-EC grants its permission that provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

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While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-EC:
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- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the NWU-EC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
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The Ethics Committee would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Committee for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof MM Lowes
(chair NWU Ethics Committee)
Integration of Technology Enhanced Learning at the School of Continuing Teacher Education at North West University

1 Background ........................................................................................................1

2 Context of the Study .........................................................................................2

3 The Problem and Motivation for the Research .................................................3

4 Review of Literature .........................................................................................4

5 Research aim, Objectives and Purpose of the Study ........................................15

5.1 The Main Research Question .........................................................................16

5.2 Sub-Questions ..................................................................................................16

6 The Need for a Framework for Learning Technology Integration ..................16

7 Research Design and Methodology ..................................................................17

7.1 Paradigms ........................................................................................................18

7.2 Using Adapted Design-Based Research .........................................................24

7.3 Researcher’s Role ............................................................................................26

7.4 Participant Selection .......................................................................................27

7.5 Mixed Methodology .........................................................................................28

7.5.1 Data Analysis ...............................................................................................29

7.5.2 Data Collection .............................................................................................29

8 Ethical Aspects ..................................................................................................30

9 Presentation of this Research .........................................................................30
9.1 Practitioners in Collaboration with the Researcher ......................................... 30
9.1.1.1 The Researcher .............................................................................................. 31
9.1.1.2 Students .......................................................................................................... 34
9.1.1.3 Lecturers ......................................................................................................... 35
9.1.1.4 Other Practitioners as Participants ................................................................. 37
9.1.2 Structure of Papers ........................................................................................ 37
9.1.3 Background to Research ................................................................................. 38
9.1.3.1 Paper 1: A Localized Socially Transformative Learning Technology Integration Framework for ODL ................................................................. 38
9.1.3.2 Paper 2: ODL Students’ Perceived Computer Literacy Competencies, Expectations of Support, Intention to Use and Perseverance ................. 40
9.1.3.3 Paper 3: Computer Literacy Learning Emotions of ODL Teacher-Students .. 41
9.1.3.4 Paper 4: Looking Out and Looking In: Exploring a Case of Faculty Perceptions during e-Learning Staff Development ............................................. 42
9.1.3.5 Paper 5: Seamless Support: Technology Enhanced Learning in Open Distance Learning at NWU ................................................................. 42
9.2 Section Summary ............................................................................................ 45
9.3 References ...................................................................................................... 46

Article 1: A Localized Socially Transformative Learning Technology Integration Framework for ODL

Abstract ..................................................................................................................... 1
Background .................................................................................................................. 1
Research methods ....................................................................................................... 3
Findings ....................................................................................................................... 4
Teacher-students ....................................................................................................... 4
Lecturers ..................................................................................................................... 4
Institution ................................................................................................................... 4
Interviews with and observations of kingpin stakeholders ......................................... 5
The curriculum ............................................................................................................ 5
Information .................................................................................................................. 5
Access and connectivity ............................................................................................. 6
Learning Technologies ............................................................................................... 6
The framework ............................................................................................................ 6
Conclusions ................................................................................................................ 7
Recommendations ....................................................................................................... 8
Article 2: ODL STUDENTS’ PERCEIVED COMPUTER LITERACY COMPETENCIES, EXPECTATIONS OF SUPPORT, INTENTION TO USE AND PERSEVERANCE

INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................... 76
LITERATURE REVIEW ..................................................................................................... 78
Using Computers for ODL ................................................................................................. 78
Computer Literacy ............................................................................................................. 79
Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) ............................................................................... 80
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY ................................................................. 80
The Instrument ................................................................................................................... 81
Study Sample .................................................................................................................... 82
RESULTS .......................................................................................................................... 82
Access ............................................................................................................................... 82
Anticipated Support ........................................................................................................... 82
Self-confidence .................................................................................................................. 83
Intention to Persevere ........................................................................................................ 84
Intention to Use .................................................................................................................. 85
Structural Equation Model for Intention to Use, Confidence, Trust and Perseverance ..... 86
CONCLUSION ................................................................................................................... 87
BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of the AUTHORS .............................................. 88
REFERENCES .................................................................................................................. 89
APPENDIX I ....................................................................................................................... 93

Article 3: Computer Literacy Learning Emotions of ODL Teacher-Students

Abstract ............................................................................................................................ 586
Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 586
Literature Review ............................................................................................................. 586
Design and Methods ........................................................................................................ 587
Study Context .................................................................................................................. 587
Method ............................................................................................................................. 587
Qualitative Methods ......................................................................................................... 588
Quantitative Methods ...................................................................................................... 588
Findings and Discussion of Findings ............................................................................... 588
Quantitative Findings ..................................................................................................... 589
Qualitative Findings ........................................................................................................ 590
Why necessarily a framework? ................................................................. 133
Emergent TEL Integration Framework ....................................................... 133
To initiate Technology Interaction in Teaching and Learning .................. 135
Maturity determination .................................................................................. 135
Main aspects not included in the TEL integration framework .................... 138
Priorities towards the integration of TEL in ODL at NWU ......................... 139
Conclusion ................................................................................................... 139
References .................................................................................................. 139

Synopsis, Conclusions, Framework for Technology Enhanced Learning at the School of Continuing Teacher Education at North-West University and Recommendations

1 Introduction .............................................................................................. 142
2 Addressing the Research Question .......................................................... 142
3 Synopsis .................................................................................................... 142
3.1 Addressing Sub-Questions ...................................................................... 143
3.1.1 Sub-Question (a) ................................................................................ 143
3.1.2 Sub-Question (b) ................................................................................ 146
3.1.2.1 Significance of technophobia ............................................................. 146
3.1.2.2 Significance of technological disadvantage ......................................... 146
3.1.2.3 Significance of perceived ease of use and usefulness ......................... 146
3.1.2.4 Implications ....................................................................................... 147
3.1.3 Sub-Question (c) ................................................................................ 148
3.1.4 Sub-Question (d) ................................................................................ 150
3.1.5 Sub-Question (e) ................................................................................ 152
4 Concatenation of the Sub-questions to address the main Research Question ........................................................................................................ 155
4.1 Findings, Recommendations and Opinions ........................................... 155
4.1.1 SCTE Students comprising Teachers upgrading their Qualifications .... 156
4.1.2 SCTE Lecturers ................................................................................... 157
4.1.3 The University as Institution ................................................................. 158
4.1.4 The Curriculum ................................................................................... 159
4.1.5 Information .......................................................................................... 160
4.1.6 Access and Connectivity ..................................................................... 161
4.1.7 Learning Technologies ......................................................................... 162
4.2 Differentiating between General and Significant Requirements .......... 162
4.3 Differentiating between Reactive Interventions and Seamless Support ..... 163
LIST OF FIGURES

The integration of learning technologies in open distance learning at the North-West University

Figure 1: North-West University in South Africa, showing provinces ........................................1
Figure 2: Model of eCompetence layers ..................................................................................14
Figure 3: Four Paradigms for the Analysis of Social Theory ..................................................19
Figure 4: The Adapted Design-based analogy approach to the study ........................................24
Figure 5: The design research cycles which address the Research Problem to address the Research Question ........................................................................25
Figure 6: Design-based research approaches in educational technology research ...............26
Figure 7: The design of the study as executed according to an adapted DBR process .............43

Article 1: A Localized Socially Transformative Learning Technology Integration Framework for ODL

Figure 1: Overview of the Proposed Socially Transformative ODL Learning Technology Integration Framework ..........................................................................................7

Article 2: ODL Students’ Perceived Computer Literacy Competencies, Expectations of Support, Intention to Use and Perseverance

Figure 1: Model for Intention to Use, Confidence, Trust and Perseverance with Statistical Significant Standardised Regression Weights ......................................................8

Article 3: Computer Literacy Learning Emotions of ODL Teacher-Students

Figure 1: Emotion Coding Themes and Codes Structured as Technophilia .......................591
Figure 2: Emoting Coding Themes and Codes Structured as Technophobia ....................591
Figure 3: Model for Computer Literacy Learning Emotions ..................................................594

Article 4: Looking out and looking in: Exploring a case of faculty perceptions during e-learning staff development

Figure 1: Pragmatic Research Design Exploring Faculty Needs for Technology Enhanced Learning ........................................................................................................110
Figure 2: Tree Diagram for 34 Variables According to Ward’s Method for Euclidean Distances ..................................................................................................................114
Figure 3: Model for Faculty Development towards Socially Transformative
Learning Technology Integration for Open Distance Learning ........................................ 117

Article 5: **Seamless Support: Technology Enhanced Learning in Open Distance Learning at NWU**

Figure 1: Social transformation of aspects included in the framework through intervention .......................................................................................................................... 126

Figure 2: Preconditions to interventions required for transformation.......................................................................................................................... 127

Figure 3: Development of the Emerged TEL Framework through an adapted DBR process resulting in five research papers .......................................................................................................................... 132

Figure 4: Complex relationships exist in support and empowerment required for optimum interaction between people and technology in teaching and learning .......................................................................................................................... 135

Figure 5: Interaction between Perspectives, Support, Environments and Objectives .......................................................................................................................... 137

Synopsis, Conclusions, Framework for Technology Enhanced Learning at the School of Continuing Teacher Education at North-West University and Recommendations

Figure 1: Model for Requirements to Persevere in Attaining Computer Literacy Competence .......................................................................................................................... 147

Figure 2: Model for Computer Literacy Learning Emotions .......................................................................................................................... 149

Figure 3: Model for Faculty Development towards Socially Transformative Learning Technology Integration for Open Distance Learning .......................................................................................................................... 152

Figure 4: Interaction between aspects grouped as Perspectives, Environments and Objectives .......................................................................................................................... 153

Figure 5: Relationships between Perspectives, Environments, Objectives, Consequences with Support and Empowerment needed .......................................................................................................................... 154

Figure 6: Overview of the design process in developing a General Approach towards a framework for integration of TEL at SCTE, NWU .......................................................................................................................... 166

Figure 7: People-Technology Interaction in Teaching and Learning .......................................................................................................................... 170

Figure 8: TEL integration maturity classification phases to evaluate evolvement in each of the aspects showing Perspectives in this instance .......................................................................................................................... 171

Figure 9: The Contribution of the Study .......................................................................................................................... 181
**LIST OF TABLES**

The integration of learning technologies in open distance learning at the North-West University

Table 1: Research papers addressing research sub-questions.................................37

Article 2: ODL Students’ Perceived Computer Literacy Competencies, Expectations of Support, Intention to Use and Perseverance

Table 1: Percentage Frequencies Computer and Internet Accessibility .................5
Table 2: Percentage Frequencies Support Anticipated.............................................6
Table 3: Percentage Frequencies Student Computer Use ........................................6
Table 4: Percentage Frequencies Student Personal Responsibility and Intention .........7
Table 5: Percentage Frequencies Motivation to Use ..............................................7

Article 3: Computer Literacy Learning Emotions of ODL Teacher-Students

Table 1: Factor analysis of the Emotion Codes (≥ 2-factor loading) .......................589
Table 2: Cross tabulation between learning and Emotion Coding Variables ..........589
Table 3: Cross-tabulation between the emotion code successful and incompetent technophobia, incompetent technophilia, competent technophobia, and competent Technophilia.................................................................590
Table 4: Cross-tabulation between different levels of competence and technophobia and Technophilia..........................................................590
Table 5: Emotion Codes, Learning Codes, Descriptions and Typical Quotations......591

Article 4: Looking out and looking in: Exploring a case of faculty perceptions during e-learning staff development

Table 1: Faculty committing to the use of TEL..........................................................112
Table 2: Calculation of Significant Differences between Faculty Perceptions (Looking Out) and Observations of eLearning Manager (Looking In) ..........113
Table 3: Cluster themes with agreement and contrast between intensities ..........115

Article 5: Seamless Support: Technology Enhanced Learning in Open Distance Learning at NWU

Table 1: TEL integration maturity classification phases ........................................138
LIST OF ADDENDA

Addendum A  Ethics Approval
Addendum B  Consent Letters
Addendum C  Article 1
Addendum D  Article 2
Addendum E  Article 3
Addendum F  Article 4
Addendum G  Article 5
Addendum H  Integrated Bibliography

The addenda are available as a .PDF format file on the CD-ROM at the back of the thesis.
LIST OF ACRONYMS

AACE  Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education
ACE   Advanced Certificate in Education
ADSL  Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Lines
APA   American Psychological Association
BEd Hons Honours Degree in Education
CAA   Computer Aided Assessment
CAI   Computer Assisted Instruction
CAL   Computer Aided Learning
CBL   Computer Based Training
CBT   Computer Based Training
CD-ROM Compact Disk - Read Only Memory
CERI  Centre for Educational Research and Innovation
CMC   Computer Mediated Communication
CSIR  Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DBR   Designed-Based Research
DoE   Department of Education
DVD   Digital Versatile Disks
ELTI  Embedding Learning Technologies Institutionally
ERIC  Educational Resources Information Center
HCI   Human-Computer Interface
HEI   Higher Education Institution
ICDE  The International Council for Open and Distance Education
ICT   Information Communication Technologies
ICTE  Information Communication Technology for Education
IRRODL International Review of Research in Open Distance Learning
IT    Information Technology
IWB   Interactive White Board
KHz   Kilohertz
LMS   Learning Management System
M-learning Mobile learning
MOOC  Massive Open Online Course
NADEOSA National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa
NIC   Newly Industrialized context
NPDE  National Professional Diploma in Education
NWU North-West University
ODL Open Distance Learning
OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OER Open Education Resource
SADTU South African Democratic Teachers Union
SCTE School of Continuing Teacher Education
SEM Structural Equation Model
SITES Second Information Technology in Education Study
SMS Short Message Service
TAM Technology Acceptance Model
TEL Technology Enhanced Learning
TESSA Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
TOJET The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology
TPACK Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge
UK United Kingdom
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UODL Unit for Open Distance Learning
USA United States of America
USB Universal Serial Bus
VLE Virtual Learning Environment
Wi-Fi Wireless Fidelity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asynchronous online learning</td>
<td>Asynchronous online learning refers to students learning away from assistance of lecturers and facilitators and contributions to the communication process between participants are not taking place in the same time span (synchronously), but sequentially, possibly interspaced with significant periods of inactivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlas.ti™</td>
<td>Atlas.ti™ is a computer-based qualitative data analysis program to analyse the qualitative sections of the data according to an open thematic approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic computer literacy</td>
<td>Basic computer literacy in this study refers to the ability to successfully and productively use desktop computer boxes or portable versions of the same, also referred to as digital literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
<td>Benchmarking is the process of comparing one’s business processes and performance metrics to industry bests or best practices from other industries. Dimensions typically measured are quality, time and cost. In the process of benchmarking, management identifies the best firms in their industry, or in another industry where similar processes exist, and compare the results and processes of those studied (the “targets”) to one’s own results and processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Competence is about sharing knowledge, implying the relation of competence to performance, which links competence to action in social situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design-based research</td>
<td>Design-based research is a research methodology commonly used by researchers in the Learning Sciences. Within Design-Based Research methodology, interventions are conceptualized and then implemented in natural settings in order to test the ecological validity of dominant theory and to generate new theories and frameworks for conceptualizing learning, instruction, design processes, and educational reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deutero-loop learning</td>
<td>Deutero-loop learning takes place where the learning process itself is examined and improved upon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distance Education</td>
<td>Distance education or distance learning is a field of education that focuses on teaching methods and technology with the aim of delivering teaching, often on an individual basis, to students who are not physically present in a traditional educational setting such as a classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eCompetence</td>
<td>eCompetence is at its core dealing with the development of personal competences in the creative use of ICT. Personal eCompetence of an individual academic teacher describes the teacher’s ability in using ICT in their teaching and course delivery. Institutional eCompetence describes the structures, processes and policies in place, by which a university aims to embed the ICT use into its core tasks of research and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-Maturity</td>
<td>e-Maturity indicates the extent to which organizations make strategic and effective use ICT in order to improve educational outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-Readiness</td>
<td>e-Readiness is the ability to use information and communication technologies (ICT) to develop one’s economy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and to foster one’s welfare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework</th>
<th>In this study, the development of a framework was justified as the result of the existence of (i) significant identifiable existing uncertainties, (ii) clear short term requirements for action, (iii) possibilities to address uncertainties through distinct interventions, (iv) a need for continuation of effort and persistence during intermediate phases of transition where (v) proceeding actions are dependent on evolving perceptions, maturing attitudes and commitments (vi) assessment of initiatives and evaluations of performance target attainment and (vii) reflection and research to perform cyclic review of long term goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G-20</td>
<td>The Group of Twenty, or G20, is the premier forum for international cooperation on the most important aspects of the international economic and financial agenda. It brings together the world’s major advanced and emerging economies. The G20 includes 19 country members and the European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT (according to the South African Government White Paper on e-Education)</td>
<td>Information and communication technologies (ICTs) represent the convergence of information technology and communication technology. ICTs are the combination of networks, hardware and software as well as the means of communication, collaboration and engagement that enable the processing, management and exchange of data, information and knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT literacy</td>
<td>ICT literacy can be primarily defined as the mastery of technical skills and broadened to include critical cognitive skills such as reading, numeracy, critical thinking and problem solving and the integration of those skills with technical skills and knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructivism</td>
<td>Instructivism incorporates a teacher-directed planned curriculum, with purposeful teaching at its core. It follows two basic assumptions. First, the purpose of instruction is to help the learner understand and interact with the world; and, secondly, learners should be directed by instructors who make the decisions about the content and sequence of the learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>Kindergarten to twelfth grade: used for talking about the 13 years of school before university education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning technology</td>
<td>The application of technology for the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Lifelong Learning is the ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, but also competitiveness and employability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media literacy</td>
<td>Media literacy is the understanding of the role of media in teachings, requirements in different situations and implications for lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmaticisim</td>
<td>Pragmaticisim is used to indicate (a) the acceptance of reality; (b) the role of the future as the space within which things may be known; and (c) a purport, or a commitment to purposive action, following a plan with an end or highest good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pragmatism</td>
<td>This study was performed from a position of methodological pragmatism as a method of inquiry. The researcher as pragmatist aims to be functional while concentrating on what is considered important to study in a way that is congruent with his value system, including variables and units of analysis that</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
he feels are most appropriate for finding an answer to the research question

| Seamless support | Seamless technology support is effective when participants in the learning experiences are unaware of the efforts and costs involved in the provision of enjoyable and lasting learning experiences |
| Teaching skills | Teaching skills refers to duties and responsibilities in terms of the subject, as well as knowledge on instructional models, teaching methods and didactical planning |
| Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) | Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) is a framework to understand and describe the kinds of knowledge needed by a teacher for effective pedagogical practice in a technology enhanced learning environment |
| Technology Acceptance Model | Technology Acceptance Model consists of two types of beliefs: the technology’s perceived usefulness and its perceived ease of use |
| Technophilia | Technophilia refers generally to a strong enthusiasm for technology, especially new technologies such as personal computers, the Internet, mobile phones and home cinema |
| Technophobia | Technophobia is the fear or dislike of advanced technology or complex devices, especially computers |
| Underqualified teachers | Underqualified teachers’ qualifications are inadequate for appropriate teaching positions and need upgrading |
| Unqualified teachers | Unqualified teachers do not have any teaching qualifications |