

Opportunities and Challenges for Using Technology in Distance Learning

By Prof Josiah Tlou and Dr. Ndalapa Adrian C. Mhango

Presented at the Malawi STEM Education Workshop: Development of


a Certificate Program for

Secondary School Agriculture and Science Teachers

28 – 30 September 2015

Wamkulu Palace Hotel, Lilongwe, Malawi

1.0 The Philosophy behind ODL

- ▶ **Open Learning:** is a *philosophy* of making learning accessible to all; regardless of age, gender, or time constraints etc
 - ▶ **Distance Learning:** is a *mode* of delivery that separates learners and facilitators by time and space
- 

2.0 ODL DELIVERY TOOLS

- ▶ There are two forms of ODL delivery tools:
 - a. Print materials
 - b. Electronic media

2.0 ODL DELIVERY TOOLS (CONT)

a. **Non electronic tools**

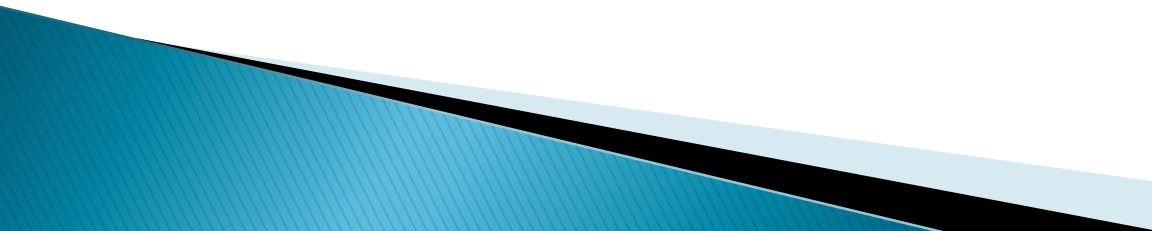
- The traditional method
- Delivered via print materials e.g. modules/manuals

b. **Electronic tools**


- Is the most recent tool
- Delivered via electronic media e.g. Internet, intranet, extranet, satellite broadcasts, audio–visual interactive TV, CD–Rom

2. ODL Delivery Tools (Cont')

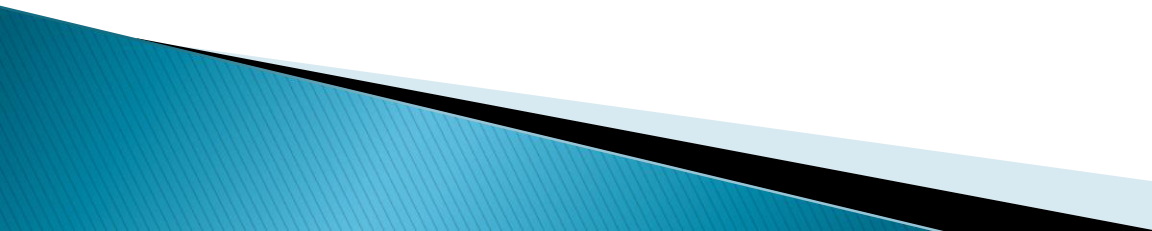
The mode of delivery, more than the philosophy, has earned ODL with various names: e.g.

- ▶ Distance learning
 - ▶ Open learning
 - ▶ E-learning
 - ▶ ODeL
 - ▶ On-line learning
 - ▶ Modular learning
 - ▶ Virtual learning
- 

2. ODL Delivery Tools (Cont')

- ▶ Delivery through electronic tools is popularly referred to as e-Learning
 - ▶ In modern times, e-Learning is confined to use of internet and computers (ICT)
 - ▶ Thus, e-Learning is a subset of ODL, hence the use of ODeL
- 

2. ODL Delivery Tools (Cont')

- ▶ Which way for STEM education at LUNAR: Print media or E-learning or both?
 - ▶ This question can best be answered with respect to:
 - a. nature of targeted students
 - b. staff capacity to use the form
 - c. availability of resources–e.g. internet infrastructure
 - d. benefits and limitations of each form
- 

2.1 Benefits and Limitations of Print Media

Benefits	Limitations
1. Accessible to all	1. Escalation of printing costs
2. Cost sharing makes cost of the learning materials cheap	2. Rigid– does not give learners flexibility
3. Does not require special training to use the materials	3. Makes learners work in isolation
4. Supports learners of different learning abilities	4. High initial costs

2.1 Benefits and Limitations of Print E-Learning

Benefits	Limitations
1. Easy distribution of course materials	1. Many potential learners have no access to computers
2. Cost sharing makes cost of the learning materials cheap	2. Many computers are not hooked to internet with adequate bandwidth
3. Flexibility learning to the learner	3. Many learners have no skills of using ICT
4. Supports learners of different learning abilities	4. High initial costs
5. Encourages communication between learners	
6. Students have greater access to information	

GROUP ACTIVITY

- ▶ How can ICT technologies help in ODL delivery in Malawi?
 - ▶ What challenges are associated with using technologies in ODL in Malawi?
- 