



Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Sfax, Tunisia

Laboratory on Approaches to Discourse

Call for Chapters for Edited Volume

E-learning in Higher Education: Models, Instruments, and Perspectives

E-learning designates the association of online technologies with learning and education (Garrison and Anderson, 2003). Using Web as a communication channel, the field of distant education connects geographically distant learners with their teachers and learning resources (Kudu and Dey, 2018). E-learning has many advantages for both learners and professionals (Bates, 2005) who can benefit from online training and courses available to non-experts and life-long learners. It has gained importance as a model of learning and teaching at universities seeking to meet international standards and to improve their rankings (Keengwe and Agamba, 2015).

Because of the novel Covid-19, declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation on March 11, 2020, in-person classes were cancelled, teachers and students were locked down in their houses, and universities worldwide became keenly aware of distant learning as an instructional option. Virtual instruction has been suggested as an alternative instructional model for most universities and less so for primary and secondary schools. It has, therefore, emerged as a leading light for students to monitor and reflect on their learning and for teachers and practitioners to ensure pedagogic continuity and educational support.

The possibility of using E-learning, however, was subject of controversy in Tunisian universities especially after the ministry of higher education's decision (March, 2020) to adopt it for teaching and as an educational support. The Virtual University of Tunis, for example, simulated the problem by making its platforms accessible for teachers to post their courses and interact with students. It has also provided intensive training programs on how to use the platform, which was not accessible to all teachers across the country. Other teachers turned to other platforms including Google classroom, Google meet, and Zoom in order to interact with their students via video-mediated communication tools.

While some teachers and learners encouraged the implementation of online courses, some considered the switch to virtual instruction a daunting task for some learners and teachers who are in the first place unfamiliar with the concept and with its tools. On the one hand, E-learning does not provide students with equal and fair opportunities in terms of logistics, accessibility and affordance. On the other hand, promoting E-learning as a viable option to a community of teachers and learners who may not possess the necessary knowledge and skills to pursue the courses made some practitioners anticipate that an even harder task is awaiting higher education.

Indeed, the intersection of online technologies and learning has positively influenced the disciplines of the humanities. For instance, some telecollaboration partnerships were offered by Erasmus+ virtual exchanges programs to help students learn and exchange cultural knowledge and develop linguistic, communicative, and intercultural skills. Despite the benefits of the experience, however, various are the challenges faced by students and teachers in relation to course design and the implementation of activities including internet connection, logistics, training on the use of the tools, and assessment. Assessing students' learning is indeed an issue to raise when resorting to online courses as teaching and assessment are complementary but require different methods and tools.

The debate over the adoption of E-learning as an alternative instructional model to face-to-face teaching has forced Tunisian universities to rethink the issues that can emerge while designing and/or implementing online courses. Orchestrating an innovative online learning approach, as a result, requires longitudinal research studies and identification of the anchoring problems. Additionally, using E-learning to cope with the ever-changing world of information and communication technologies and respond to the needs of geographically distant students necessitates the collaboration of teachers, learners, and stakeholders to co-formulate the problems and co-explore the outcomes and consequences.

In light of this debate, contributions in this edited book can tackle the following topics/issues:

- The challenges and opportunities provided by E-learning in the context of higher education.
- The efficiency and applicability of E-learning across different disciplines and in teaching humanities and languages in particular.
- The impact of E-learning on course design, curriculum design, and teachers' methodological choices.
- The compatibility/relationship between E-learning methods and face-to-face teaching.
- Cyber security and copyright.
- Assessment of students' learning: feasibility and challenges in terms of methods, invigilation, and grading.
- Post-evaluation of online courses: tools, analysis and interpretation.
- The social and affective impact of E-learning on students.
- The effect of E-learning on the relationship between teachers and students.
- Students' perceptions of E-learning and their own learning needs.
- Virtual exchanges as other forms of e-learning connecting geographically and culturally distant groups of students.

Submission Requirements for Contributions

The proposal of this edited book identifies and examines issues related to virtual instruction as a timely topic that is not confined to Tunisia. Because E-learning features as an intrinsically interdisciplinary field and an increasingly emergent component of most university programs, submissions of papers on E-learning in different teaching contexts and across varied university disciplines will be considered.

Authors are requested to submit their contributions either in French or English and choose one of the following formats:

- (A) Research Articles focusing on the development of theoretical and methodological concepts, case studies, evaluation of platforms, and description and evaluation of teaching practices.
- (B) Narratives and reports on teaching experiences: description and evaluation of tasks that include diverse forms of support and guidance to students in their learning process.

References

- Bates, T. (2005). *Technology, E-learning and Distance Education*. London: Routledge.
- Garrison, D.R., & Anderson, T. (2003). *E-learning in the 21st century. A framework for research and practice*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Keengwe, J & Agamba, J. (2015). *Models for Improving and Optimizing Online and Blended Learning in Higher Education*. Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data.
- Kudu, A & Dey, K.N. (2018). A Contemporary Study on the Flourishing E-learning Scenarios in India. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts* (2) 384-390.

Scientific Committee

Mohamed JEMNI, Université de Tunis / ALESCO
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Mohamed Habib KAMOUN, Université de Sfax – Tunisie
Sylviane BACHY, Université Libre de Bruxelles – Belgique

Coordination and Contacts

French texts:

Mohamed MSALMI, University of Sfax, Tunisia
mohamed.msalmi@flshs.usf.tn

English Texts:

Nadia ABID, University of Sfax, Tunisia
nadia.abid@flshs.usf.tn
Asma MOALLA, University of Sfax, Tunisia
asma.moalla130@gmail.com

Important Dates

April, 30, 2020:

Publication of the call for chapters.

June, 15, 2020:

Deadline for abstract submissions
(Proposals should not exceed 500 words and should include a bibliography and a bio-bibliography of no more than 150 words).

June, 30, 2020:

Notification of acceptance/rejection.

September, 30, 2020:

Deadline for full manuscript submission.

January, 2021:

Review reports submitted by the scientific committee.

March, 30, 2021:

Deadline for final revisions.

May, 2021:

Book submission for publisher.