

The Changing Face of the Distance Education Learner

When designing and developing learning materials, most instructional designers use a model that involves the phases of analysis, design, development and evaluation.

During the first phase, they analyse who the learners are and what their needs are. "Who is your target audience?" is therefore a key question. To answer this question, a detailed learner profile is compiled.

With the merger of the major distance education institutions in South Africa, namely Unisa, Technikon SA and the Vista University Distance Education Campus (VUDEC), to become the new Unisa, the face of the distance education learner studying at this new institution has changed. In compiling the learner profile, greater cognisance needs to be taken of the myriad situations and workplace environments in which the learner finds or may find himself/herself. And in a dynamic world of rapidly changing technology, countless opportunities and an expanding network of mobile and wireless devices, the impact of the changing learner profile cannot be ignored.

This poster illustrates the possible impact of the changing learner profile on the design and development of mLearning materials, and aims to contribute to future research in the field of technology-enhanced learning.

Christo du Preez, Institute for Curriculum and Learning Development, University of South Africa, South Africa

Griff Smith, Institute for Curriculum and Learning Development, University of South Africa, South Africa

Dr. Christo du Preez was born and raised on the West Rand. His qualifications include a B.Com, B.Ed and M.Ed from RAU. He also holds a D.Ed from Unisa in the field of Instructional Management.



His professional career started in 1984 as teacher. In 1995 he joined Technikon SA as Instructional Designer. Currently he is Project Service Manager at the Institute for Curriculum and Learning Development (ICLD) at Unisa.

Dr. Griff Smith, ICLD, Unisa, South Africa