

CONFIGURATION OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN NEW ENVIRONMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Configuration of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in New Environments is a position paper aimed at sensitizing stakeholders of the ODL system of delivery as a qualitative alternative of providing education, at all levels, and mainly at higher education level. The paper begins with clarification of key terms, namely, 'configuration' and 'new environments'. Practitioners and stakeholders of open and distance learning need to conceptualise that higher education institutions in new environments would be different from those well-established ones. This foregrounding knowledge helps them develop distance education aspects of management, curriculum development, support services, and information communication technologies, from an informed position. The brief history of ODL and related concepts are explicated in the process. Importantly, emerging theories of ODL are discussed, bearing in mind that this mode of delivering the benefits of education is not as well established as conventional education. The significance of the paper is that it promotes better understanding of the often misunderstood mission of ODL as an alternative of conventional education systems.