



OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING, AN ACADEMIC JOURNEY: YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

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INTRODUCTION

- ODL: Didactic and pedagogical train
- Passengers belong to ODL an academic nuclear family

Family members and their roles:

1. University/higher education managers/leaders (head of the family)
2. Lecturers
3. Students
4. Instructional designers
5. Information Communication Technology specialists
6. Researchers
7. Community

Expectations of family members

- Love each other;
 - Unite
 - Support;
 - Liaise and interact with each other.
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Cont: Expectations of family members

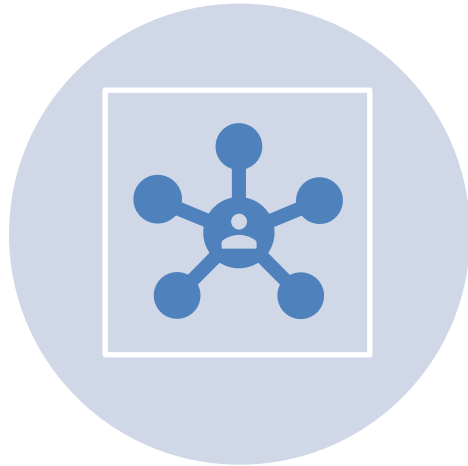
- Collaborate
- Consult
- Communicate
- Caring for each other

PURPOSE



To share the academic journey in an ODL context of what has happened in the past, today, and the unforeseeable future.

DEFINITION OF ODL

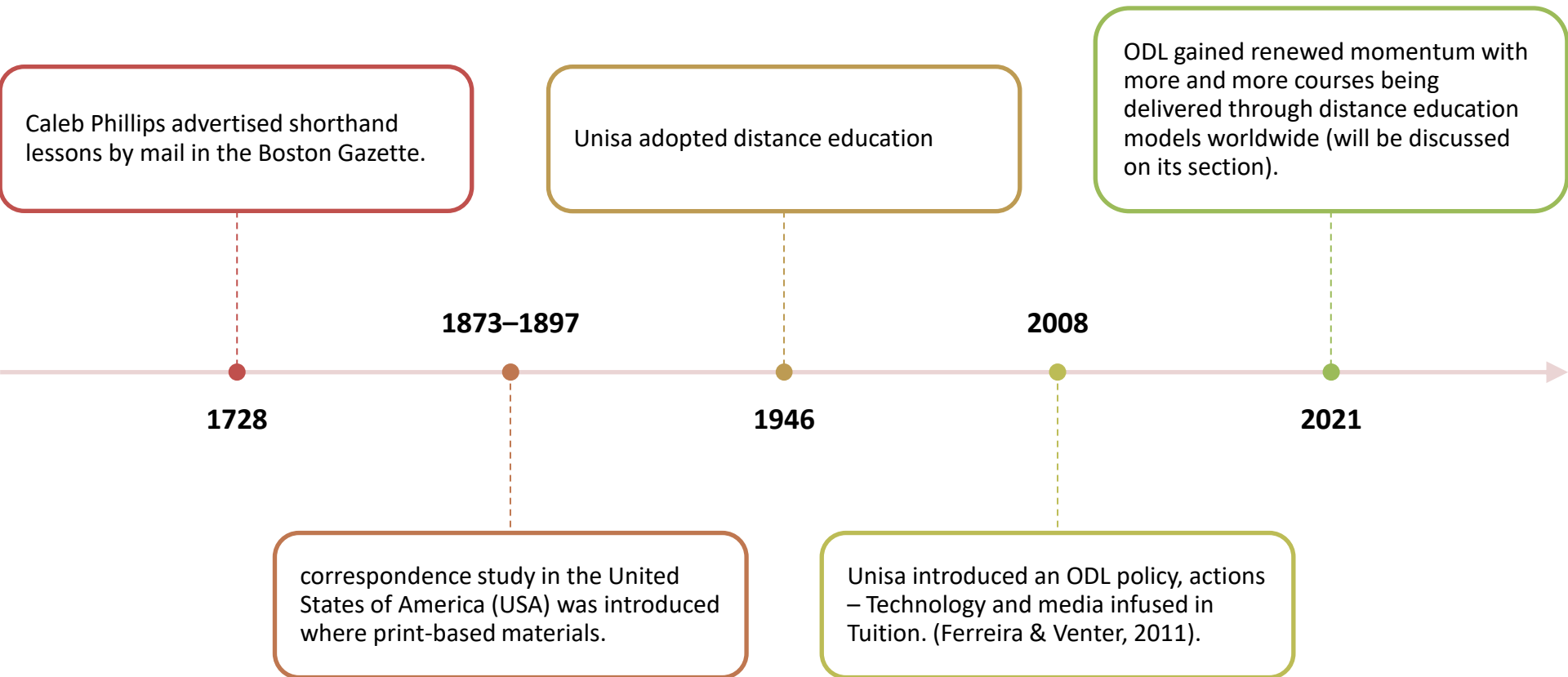


A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CONCEPT AIMED AT BRIDGING THE TIME, GEOGRAPHICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNICATION DISTANCE BETWEEN STUDENT AND INSTITUTION, STUDENT AND LECTURER, STUDENT AND COURSEWARE, AND STUDENT AND PEERS.



FOCUSES ON REMOVING BARRIERS TO ACCESS LEARNING, FLEXIBILITY OF LEARNING PROVISION, STUDENT-CENTREDNESS, SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND CONSTRUCTING LEARNING PROGRAMMES WITH THE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE STUDENTS TO SUCCEED (UNISA 2008).

WHAT WAS HAPPENING YESTERDAY ?



WHAT IS HAPPENING TODAY ?



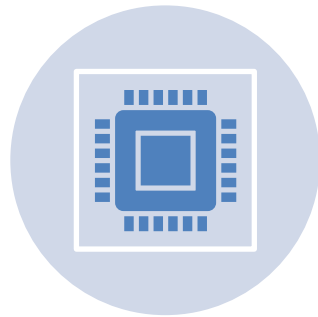
ODL, BEING AN ACADEMIC JOURNEY, IS NOT AN IMPOSSIBLE DESTINATION TO REACH.



ANTHONY ROBBINS STATED: "THE ONLY IMPOSSIBLE JOURNEY IS THE ONE YOU NEVER BEGIN."



THE MORE AFFORDANCES NEWER TECHNOLOGIES INHERITED, THE MORE POSSIBILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION DELIVERY BECAME POSSIBLE (ANDERSON & SIMPSON, 2012).



SAYKILI (2018) INDICATED THAT DISTANCE EDUCATION HAS BEEN ENGINEERED AND REENGINEERED BY THE TECHNO-SOCIAL CHANGES IN SOCIETY.



EVEN, TRANSFORMATION IN PEDAGOGY, ECONOMIC AND HEALTH ISSUES AFFECT ODL ACADEMIC JOURNEY.



THE PHILOSOPHICAL, EPISTEMOLOGICAL, AND PEDAGOGICAL ROOTS ADOPTED BESIDE TECHNOLOGIES UTILISED HAVE ALL SHAPED THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES.

Tuğtekin in Turkey (2023) examined the use of Advanced learning management systems (ALMS) and the Moodle learning management systems (LMS) in learning settings, as well as online exams, within the framework of the Transactional Distance Theory.



1. Moodle and ALMS both receive relatively similar assessment ratings for online exams, Moodle scored better in terms of the learning setting.



2. When factors of the Learning Management Systems Evaluation Scale (LMSES) based on the Transactional Distance Theory were compared, the dialogue and autonomy factors were significantly higher for Moodle LMS than for ALMS.



3. When online exams in the LMS were compared, there was no significant difference between ALMS and Moodle LMS, and for both LMSs, the reliability factor was a more determinant indicator than the other factors.

Maboe and Tomas (2023), in their qualitative study on online assessments and COVID-19, explored and described undergraduate nursing students' experiences with regard to online assessment amid the COVID-19 pandemic in two universities in Southern Africa. One was residential and the other was Unisa. The findings revealed that students from both universities encountered more difficulties and obstacles than advantages while completing their online assessments.

Indicated studies revealed the **benefits of online assessment.**

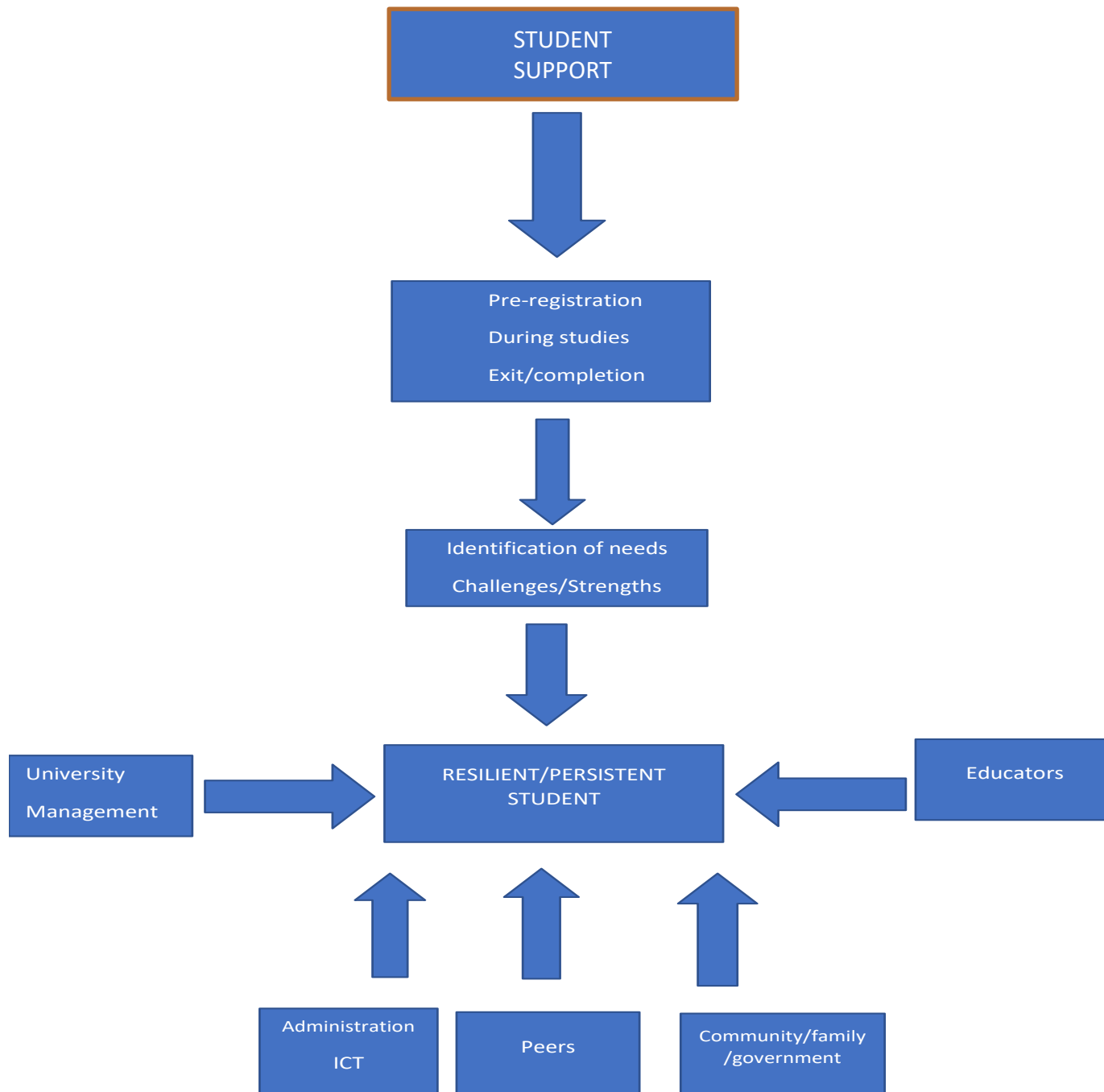
- Moodle LMS scored better in online setting as compared to Advanced LMSs
- In online assessment the reliability was a determined factor of the 2 LMSs

Challenges revealed: Online assessment

- Lack of technical expertise
- Unreliable internet connectivity, power failures and load shedding
- Problem with App

Maboe (2016), study on the “Perspectives of distance higher education students on online interaction”, alluded that there is a need for vigorous socialisation of students on the systems that are used. The university at large should collaboratively and continuously socialise the students to the systems that they using.

Steve Job: “Technology is nothing. What’s important is that you have faith in people that they are basically good and smart, and if you give them tools, they will do wonderful things with them.”



INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS OF ODL

- Why are models used in teaching and learning even in ODL context?
- Answer: utilise existing instructional materials where possible to ensure continuity of learning for students in a distance by using technology.

They are the following:

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY



E-learning model

Romi (2017) :

Model for e-Learning
Systems Success:
Systems, Determinants,
and Performance- solve
performance problem
and **accessibility to
educational
technology**

CONT: INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS OF ODL



Hoods' (2020)

- Digital Model
- Hybrid Model

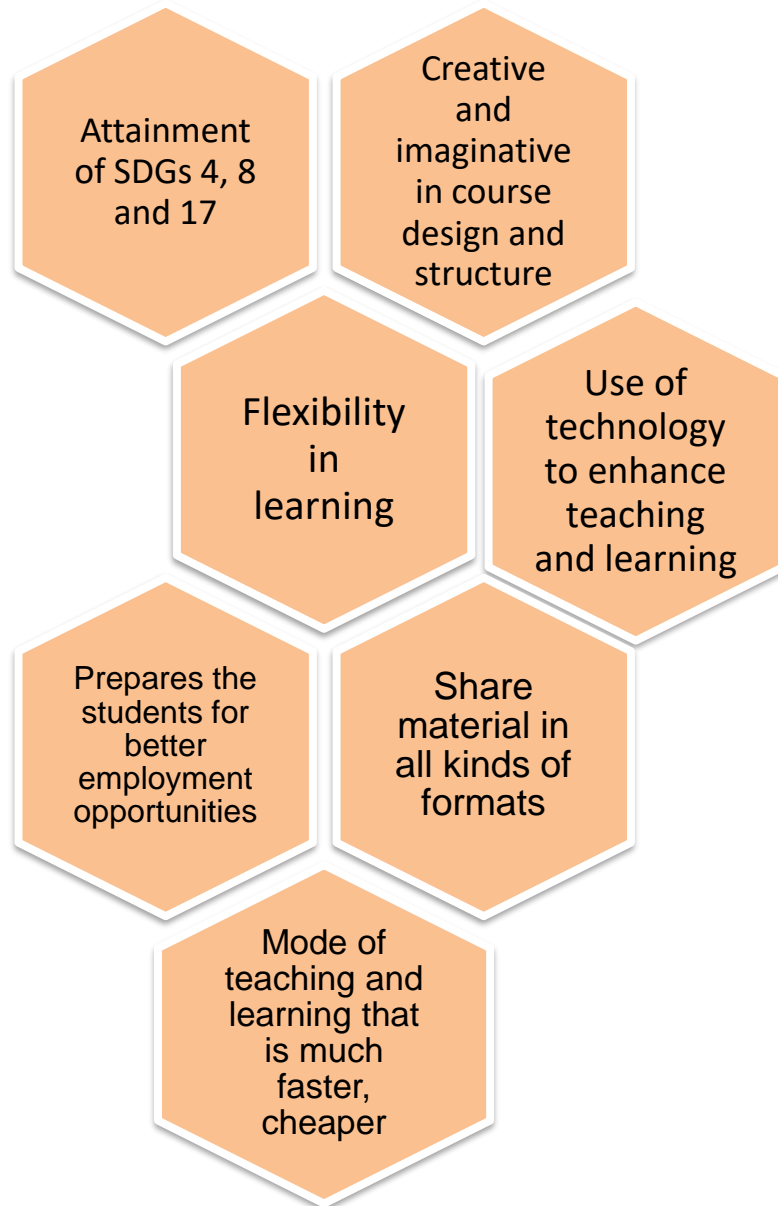
Abuhassna and Alnawajha (2023) conducted systematic literature review on Instructional Design Models review suggested combining ID models with broader theoretical frameworks

THEORIES RELATED TO ODL

Abuhassna and Alnawajha (2023), these are learning theories which might be adopted in designing instructional models

- Transactional Distance (Moore & Kearsley 2012)
- Connectivism (Siemens 2005)

BENEFITS



Academic,
cognitive,
technological,
and
administrative
challenges.

Technical
issues:
systems
offline,
erroneous and
non-
functioning
systems and
internet
connection.

Working
anywhere
may
destruct
teaching
and learning

Isolation
and
boredom

Lack or
insufficient
skills of using
technology

Not
receiving
timely
feedback
from the
lecturers

Poor time
management

STUDENTS' CHALLENGES

Students experiencing stress due to the uncertainty of their future in the ODL

Multiple roles of students leading: to lack of time to go online regularly

Online teaching and learning and assessments specifically online assessment: Stress of noise occurring unintentionally leading to disciplinary action

Distraction, for instance, the issue of poor networks

Use of Invigilator App, which is distracting during exams

Cont: STUDENTS' CHALLENGES

LECTURERS' CHALLENGES

- Being overwhelmed by interaction (large numbers of students).
- Insufficient pedagogical and technical skills, which are supposed to be used online.
- Online training that clashes with other academic related activities.
- Exhaustion due to long working hours because of the demand of academic work.

CONT: LECTURERS' CHALLENGES

- Working in isolation online may have a psychological impact.
- Institutions' ICT challenges; lack of staff.
- Integration of technology to match teaching and learning from the ICT side.
- Anxiety of ever-changing technology and unforeseen circumstances impacting negatively on teaching and learning.
- Changing of instructional designs, specifically the practical component

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF TOMORROW

Elbert Hubbard: “*The best preparation for good work tomorrow is good work today.*”

R. Saadia Gaon: “*The more valuable a thing, the more effort to attain it.*”

Why do we still need distance education in the future? What's next?

- Need for resolution of challenges. How?
- Consider 5Ps: Predicting, Projecting, Prophesising, Promoting and Persisting by all family members in the ODL academic train
- Leadership to initiate and lead:
Collaboration and partnerships with national and international stakeholders

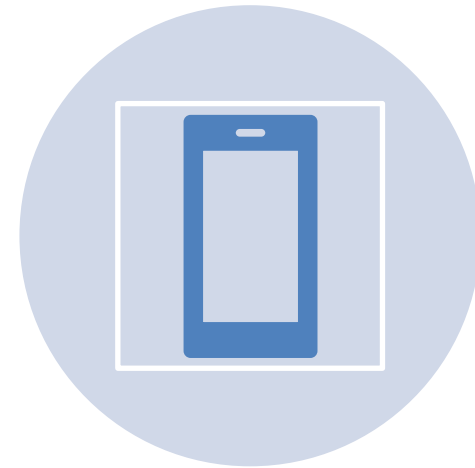


- Creation of common online platforms at college/faculty levels for all students and lecturers to present technological challenges they encounter in teaching and learning.
- ICT systems that are always functional.
- The adopted technology for teaching and learning to be able to reach a bigger audience.





AWARENESS OF THE STUDENTS
AND LECTURES REGARDING
PILOTING OF A NEWLY
INTRODUCED LEARNING
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM BEFORE
USE AND CAPACITY BUILDING .



STRICT MEASURES TO ENSURE
CHEATING BE AVERTED BY USING
A USER-FRIENDLY APP.



Develop and continuously reviewing policies that learning analytics.



Involving the student in the decision-making process in course instructional designs.



Provision of resources to enhance teaching and learning



Provision of student support, academically, administratively and psychological.

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- Lectures to support students both pedagogically and technologically.
 - Combined psycho-educational support strategies for students, administrators, programme planners, instructional designers and student support personnel, students themselves, the community, and stakeholders

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Utilisation of the student support framework (Maboe, 2019)

Darinskaia, LA & Molodzva GI 2019. *Modern Technologies for Teaching and Learning in Socio-Humanitarian Disciplines*. Chapter 6 Maboe KA Student Support in ODeL Context: Students in ODeL. Hershey: IGI Global

Copies of the book are in the Unisa library.

ISBN for the e-book is 9781522578420 you can find it <https://www.igi-global.com/book/modern-technologies-teaching-learning-socio/210237?f=e-book&i=1> if you would like to purchase the e-book you can refer to the link on our WEB page and use the discount code IGI35 to receive a 35% discount at check out.

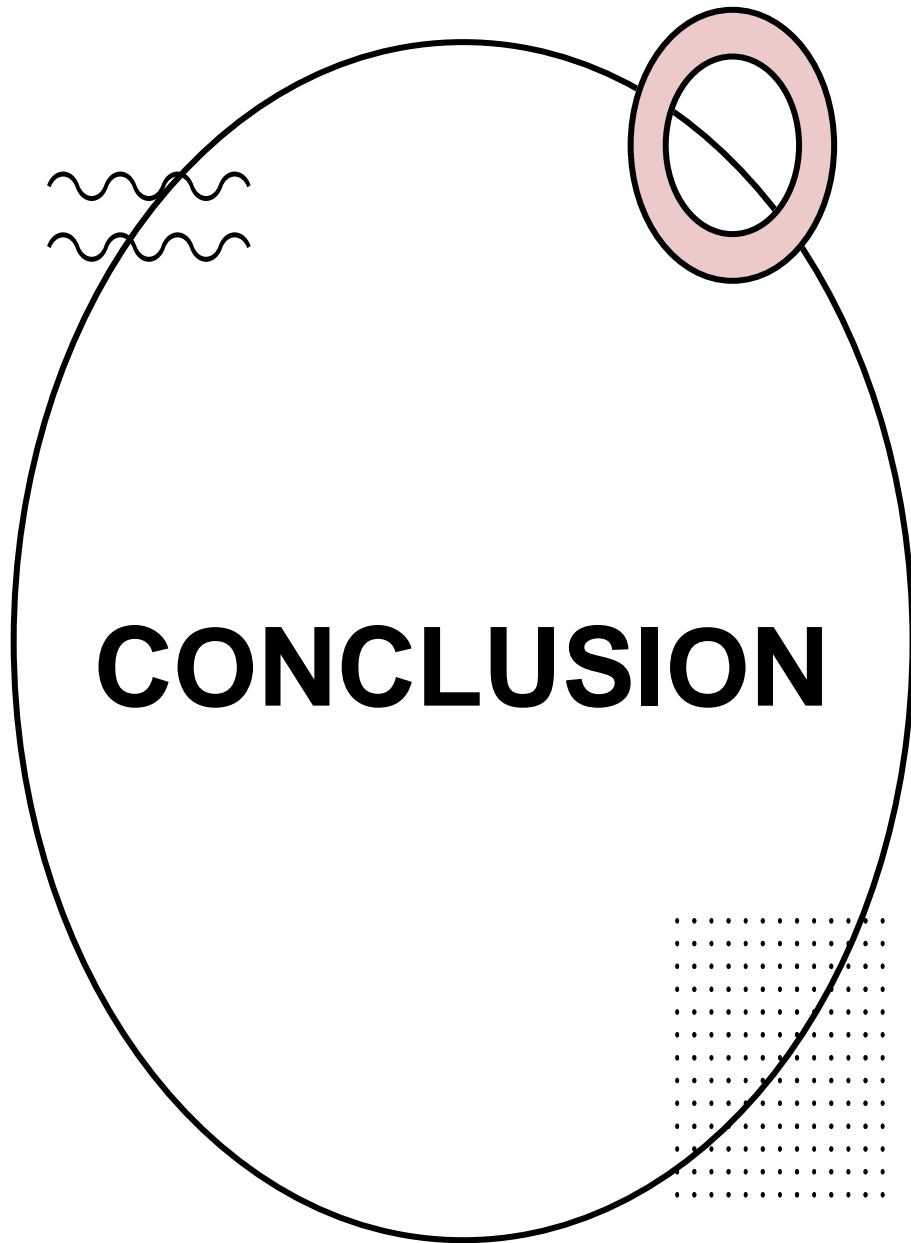
CONT: FINAL THOUGHTS

- Use of Generative artificial Intelligence such as ChatGPT, Open EdTech's EduBot Moodle research lab- dedicated for researching, experimenting and prototyping new technologies to inform Moodle's roadmap – future AI in education.

You are welcome to join the Research Lab (<https://moodle.org/course/view.php?id=17254>) and become a part of future AI studies in education.

CONT: FINAL THOUGHTS

- Universities should consider using ExamOnline which is a remote proctoring solution for online exam – To be piloted.
- Enhancing achievement of SDG 4 (quality education) SDG 8 (Decent work and Economic growth)



Based on what has happened yesterday and today, let us continue to dream and remain visionaries. I quote Walt Disney: *“All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them.”*



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