

# **E-learning and challenges in a global discourse**

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The rapid development of computer technologies can be seen as a miracle in modern civilization. What computer technologies have brought to us now was unthinkable several decades ago. Computer, particularly the Internet, has permeated virtually every aspect of a modern society and its powerful presence is usually marked with the prefix e- as in e-commerce, e-education, e-health etc. While its vigorous permeation into certain domains such as science, business and communication tend to be warmly received without serious challenges, it may not be so in education as learning has always been profoundly complex due to the mysterious nature of human mind and cultures which have intrigued scholars for centuries. Numerous software and hardware developments have flourished in education and their contribution to e-learning is undoubtedly significant. They are not just tools for teaching and learning but also create dynamic e-learning discourses at various levels of education, particularly in higher education. However, it is not all smooth sailing as there are challenges to be considered and dealt with. The perception of effectiveness of certain e-learning tools, models and environments depends heavily on the theoretical perspectives and educational ideologies of educators and learners. Thus the concept 'learner-friendly' may not be easily applied and interpreted due to varying educational backgrounds of the e-learning participants. A great challenge for e-learning is to create some harmonious co-existence between computer education and cultural discourses, particularly in the current context of globalisation as it can enhance global interaction but also can be perceived as a threat to cultural identity.