What are the transformative developments in online learning to watch for in 2015?

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Check the surprising prediction of a select group of world experts and thought leaders in online learning

- **It will be the dawn of the post-LMS era**

  The next new development is the dawning of the post-LMS era where both open and closed learning components and experiences will be crafted into courses to meet current and emergent student, teacher and learning needs.

  The wide variety of "web 2.0" services, and especially those focused on disciplinary topics, will continue to expand. These will include open resources, web and networking sites, commercial products and institutional resources. It won't make sense for an institution to try to contain all these resources and networking opportunities within their own walled garden. Opening will allow both students and teachers the opportunity, and the challenge, of developing their net presence and literacies.

  Even more importantly, it will provide opportunity for us to create our own personal learning environments and to direct our own lifelong learning agenda, while registered in formal education programs.

  Dr. Terry Anderson is the author of Theory and Practice of Online Learning, E-Learning in the 21st Century: A framework for research and practice, E-Research: Issues, Strategies and Methods, Networked learning: A workbook for workshop facilitators.

  Anderson is the editor of the influential online open access journal International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning (IRRODL) and a former Canada Research Chair in Distance Education

- **A winning appeal by a student will send a chill about faculty use of learning analytics**

Learning analytics are increasingly being used as a tool to help faculty predict the likelihood of students in their course succeeding. Their predictive models draw on data not only in the course LMS, but they may also use data from admissions files and student and library records.

While the tools are very useful, we will see in 2015 the first case of a student who fails a course, but wins an appeal because the instructor who was using analytics did not warn him or her that they were in jeopardy of failing. The result will send a chill to faculty and discourage them from using analytics.

Dr. Ron Owston is the Dean of the Faculty of Education and founding Director of the Institute for Research in Learning Technologies, York University.

He has published extensively in the Journal of Computer-Based Instruction, the Journal of Information Technology in Teacher Education, the Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, Internet & Higher Education, and the Journal of Research on Computing in Education

- **Open textbooks will spread and produce huge savings**

In 2015, there will be huge a pressure on government and institutions everywhere to adopt an open textbook strategy for core foundational courses. This depends on the success of a groundbreaking project of 40 open textbooks, which will be available for free download to students in British Columbia, Canada, saving students who use them approximately $1,000 each.

Faculty throughout the world will make or break open textbooks by deciding whether or not to adopt them for their courses. If faculty overall choose not to use these open textbooks, expect to see a big push-back on institutions from students, and possibly government and student aid agencies.

Dr. Tony Bates is the author of twelve books on learning technology and distance education including '[Managing Technology in Higher Education: Strategies for Transforming Teaching and Learning](#)', '[Technology, e-Learning and Distance Education](#)', '[Managing Technological Change: Strategies for College and Universities Leaders](#)', '[Effective Teaching with Technology in Higher Education](#)', '[National Strategies for e-Learning](#)'.

His latest book, [Teaching in a Digital Age](#), is in production and available online as an open textbook.

- **Mobile technology, wearables and the Internet of things will intersect.**

One example of this is the Fitbit, which you wear on your wrist, which monitors your activity and heartrate, and which compiles and shares a fitness profile.

These devices will begin plugging into our devices. ZapTap allows you to learn about a product while you're shopping in the store. At any point where performance can be measured directly by a sensor or monitor, it will be. This means a way to share exemplary practice, instant feedback on student activities, and a mechanism for very precise tutoring or remediation. This will take a few years to roll out, but we will begin to really feel the impact in 2015.

Stephen Downes is with the National Research Council of Canada, Learning and Collaborative Technologies Group, Institute for Information Technology. He designed and taught, with George Siemenst, an online, open course widely considered the first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). Downes is a past winner of the Edublog Award for Best Individual Blog for his blog OLDaily. Downes is Editor at Large of the International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning.

- **Business/Industry looking for training will turn to MOOCs rather than post-secondary institutions**

The MOOCs platforms and other 'digital enablers' (companies or organizations that help post-secondary institutions go online) will gradually take on a new role as brokers between groups in business and industry looking for training and credentials and the post-secondary institutions that might provide them. The point is that business/industry will prefer to deal with an aggregator or broker than going directly to individual post-secondary institutions. A knock on consequence of this will be to speed up the move to shorter courses and new credentials (often in digital form) that will now acquire credibility more rapidly because of business/industry support.

Sir John Daniel is former Vice Chancellor, The UK Open University, and former President and CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning.

Among Sir John's 340 publications are his books Mega-Universities and Knowledge Media: Technology Strategies for Higher Education (Kogan Page, 1996) and Mega-Schools, Technology and Teachers: Achieving Education for All (Routledge, 2010).

- **New ways of doing assessments will have huge impact on faculty**

The most significant developments in online and distance learning in 2015, to have a direct impact on faculty members, will be related to assessment: (a) new ways of developing assessment processes, questions and rubrics; (b) new ways of students to complete assessments, including "online, anytime" assessments; (c) new ways of reviewing and marking assessments using machine intelligence and artificial intelligence; and (d) new ways of connecting learning materials to assessment, permitting individualized learning and differentiated instruction.

Dr. Stephen Murgatroyd is the author of Rethinking Post-Secondary Education - Why Universities and Colleges Need to Change & What Change Could Look Like, Rethinking Education, Total Quality Management in the Public Sector.

Murgatroyd designed, developed and deployed the world's first online MBA as Executive Director, Centre for Innovative Management at Athabasca University. He consulted for forty of the Fortune 500 companies.

- **Predictive analytics will enable faculty to offer personalized learning pathways**

While not new, a development that will increase in importance over 2015 is learning analytics. Specifically, we think that this will manifest itself in the form of predictive analytics that enable faculty to offer incremental learning and progression along modularized, personalized learning pathways. The incremental and personalized learning will be documented by things like badges

and the next generation of LMS grade books.

Dr. Diana Oblinger is President and CEO of EDUCAUSE. She is the editor or co-editor of eight books: The Learning Revolution, The Future Compatible Campus, Renewing Administration, E is for Everything, Best Practices in Student Services, Educating the Net Generation, Learning Spaces, and Game Changers.

- **Faculty will direct students to take MOOCs related to their courses**

MOOCs may assist faculty to enrich they courses. In addition to the list of readings, faculty may choose to direct students to take a MOOC related to their courses. Learners will have the opportunity to interact with a wider audience and share their experience with the class.

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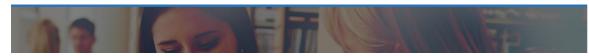
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