



## E-Learning Strategy

### What is e-learning?

A number of definitions of 'e-learning' are available but all describe a single activity: the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT), particularly the Internet, to deliver, enable and enhance learning. The European Commission and the Department of Education and Skills provide two useful definitions:

**E-learning: "The use of new multi-media technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services, as well as remote exchanges and collaboration".**

*European Commission*

**E-Learning: "Learning with the help of information and communications tools. These tools may include the Internet, intranets, wireless working, personal computer based technologies, handheld computers, interactive TV...electronic whiteboards and video conferencing".**

*DFES*

### Models of e-learning

There are a variety of ways in which ICT can be used to enable and facilitate learning. E-learning has the potential to be relevant to every person, to all curriculum areas, professional development, workbased learning, full implementation and participation in e-government. It can be applied to formal or informal learning, to gaining accreditation/qualifications at all levels or simply for gathering of information to inform decision making in whatever capacity - work, personal/domestic life, leisure.

Equally, the roles that ICT can play within a learning experience can vary enormously. ICT may be used to support all aspects of learning or training, sometimes termed 'pure' e-learning, or it may be combined with other 'traditional' teaching methods to produce so-called 'blended' learning.

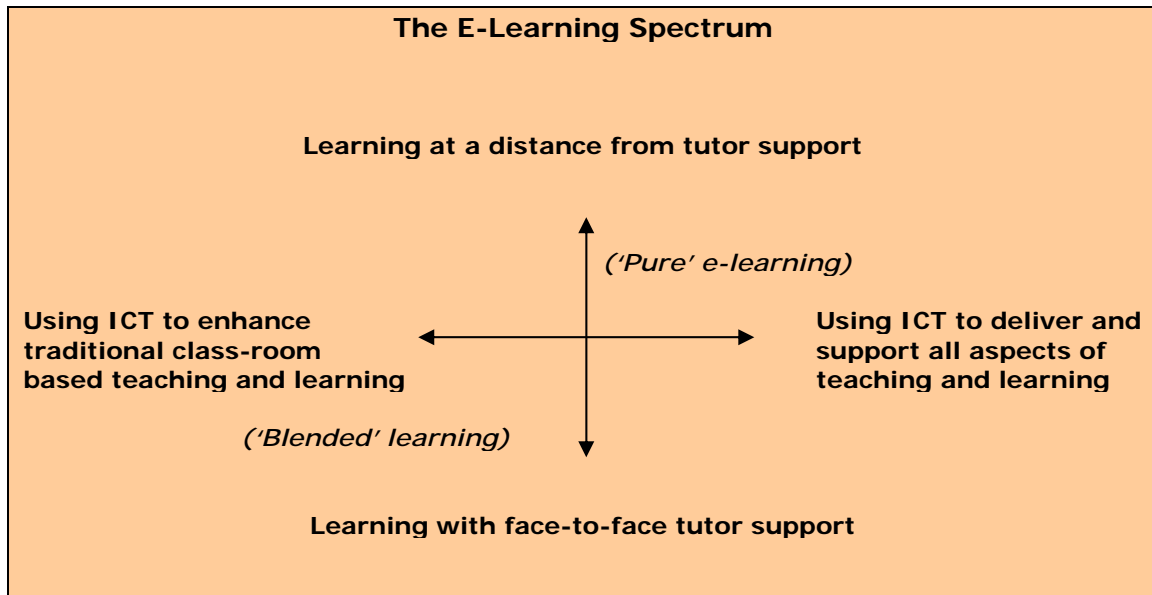
E-learning can support learners wherever they are. E-Learning can take place in a conventional classroom situation with face-to-face support from attendant teachers, or it may involve learners working in relative isolation, geographically and/or physically distant from human support.

#### Points to bear in Mind

E-learning and Virtual Learning Environments can operate at a number of different levels.

E-learning encompasses e-mentoring.

To be genuinely e-learning, the emphasis has to be on role of the learner in the experience. It should not be just a passive experience.



### Perceived Barriers for Thurrock:

- The lack of appropriately trained tutors to support e-learners and to develop e-learning within their organisations
- A lack of awareness of the real potential of e-learning amongst providers, learners and employers
- No specific funding to support a coordinated drive to establish e-learning in the borough
- No source of assistance to guide the implementation of e-learning
- The cost of implementing e-learning, including the cost of creating and procuring learning materials
- A limited understanding generally of how e-learning might be used to address specific skill needs and serve particular markets

### Moving forward

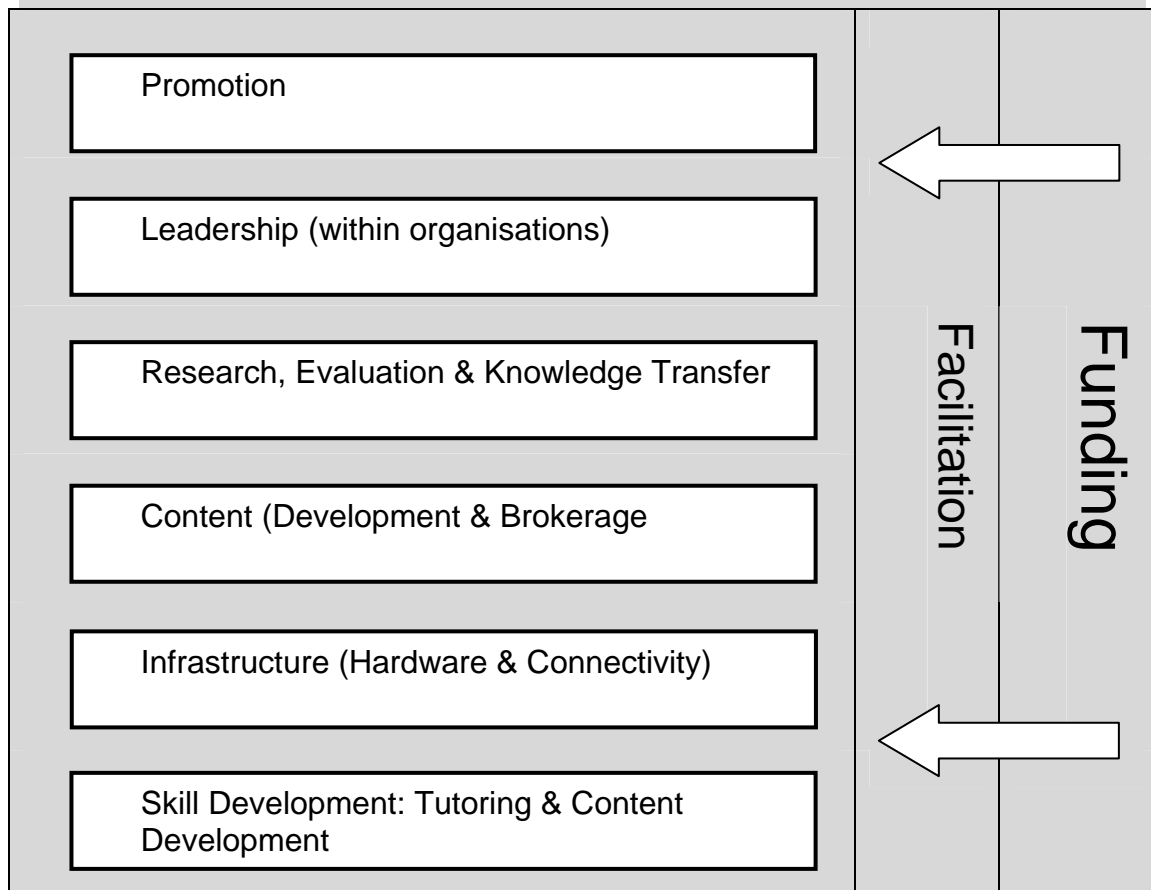
- The promotion of e-learning
- Collaboration between e-learning and learning providers
- Mapping existing provision both external (learners) and internal (CPD)
- The planning, management and implementation of Thurrock's e-learning strategy
- Foster enhancements of learning services, for example, e-mentoring, integration of information services such as IAG into e-learning provision
- Through the TLP ICT Strategy Group create a network of e-learning providers for the purposes of cost sharing and the dissemination of best practice
- To facilitate the efficient use of the existing learning resources (premises, technology and connectivity)

- Consider the different levels of VLEs and consider issues of commonality for shared development and delivery purposes - particularly beneficial in relation to the 14 - 19 agenda.
- To provide information and expertise to providers to inform the development of e-learning products and services
- Canvassing the national LSC/Essex LSC on the required characteristics of funding mechanisms for e-learning development
- To ensure that high quality e-learning is available throughout Thurrock

### Related Issues

- The active promotion of e-learning, including its applications, benefits and potential, to 'front line' teaching and learning professionals. The approved e-learning strategy should also be widely disseminated.
- Capacity building: (1) Clear understanding of all the issues by the ICT Strategy Group as the steering group for Thurrock; (2) The development of the skills of teaching and learning professionals.
- The importance of leadership at every level and within all curriculum areas
- The development and procurement of e-learning materials including consideration of funding dedicated content development facilities directed at the learning and skills needs within the borough, working in partnership with producers of web based resource materials and a web based repository of e-learning resource materials across all the age ranges.
- The affordability of broadband throughout the borough

### The Architecture of E-learning in Thurrock



## Why is e-learning important? Implications for teaching and learning

### 1. Widening participation in learning

E-learning has the potential to revolutionise the way learning and teaching are experienced and conducted. It has the capability to allow a learner to access learning at a time and place of his or her choosing, providing unprecedented levels of flexibility and accessibility. This raises the prospect that e-learning can help engage greater numbers of people in learning, including individuals and groups previously unengaged.

It enables participation in a live on-line lesson where all participants are able to see and speak to each other whilst remaining in their own location, whether this be a school, college, workplace, home, community venue, etc. The live lesson can be recorded and viewed again by participants to reinforce understanding and build confidence.

### 2. Driving up quality by enhancing current provision

E-learning also offers the potential to enhance traditional teaching experiences. Multi-media technologies allow the use of audio, video and text resources to enrich learning materials. The Internet provides access to a range of resources and services. Communication tools can speed communication between learners and educators and support remote exchanges and collaboration.

T-learning is encompassed within our concept of e-learning. We recognise the influence of television. However, we envisage T-learning ultimately merging with E-learning and, in the meantime, wish to exploit the benefits of both.

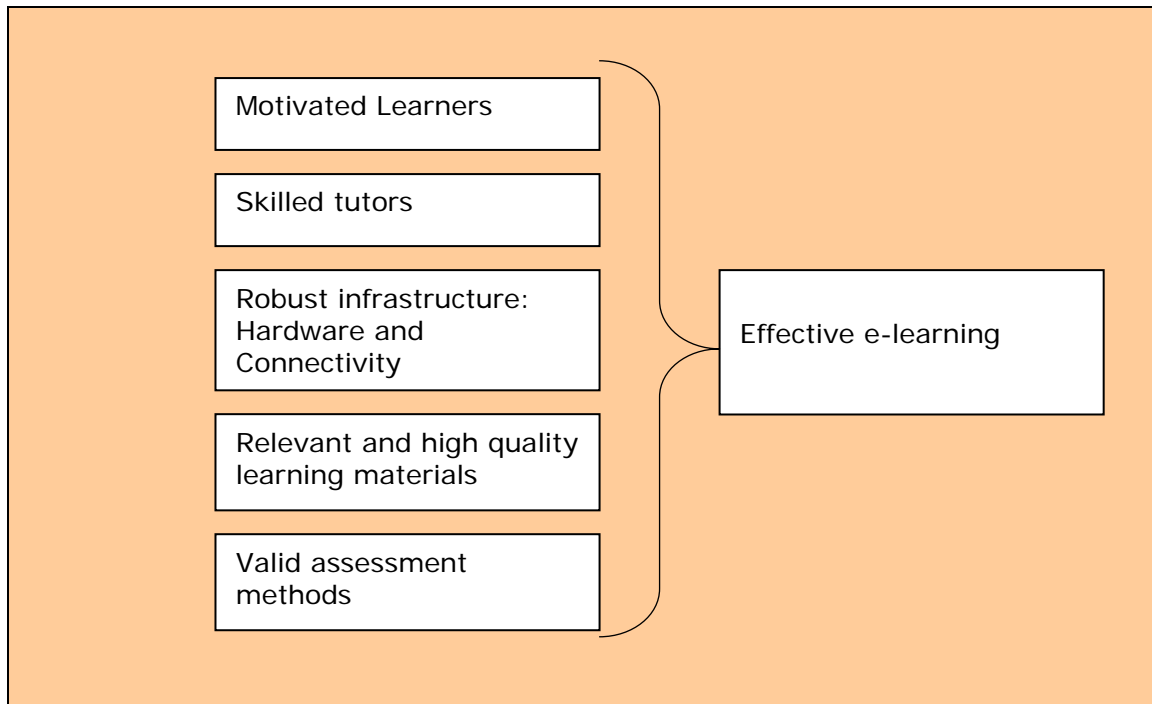
### 3. Promoting common high standards

The learning materials developed for e-learning can be re-used, shared and re-purposed, allowing providers to deliver learning experiences of a uniformly high standard. Learning can also be tailored for individuals, businesses and communities, contextualising learning such that it is relevant and contemporary.

### 4. Offering more choice of subjects and approaches - particularly significant and important in relation to the 14 - 19 agenda.

### 5. Greater flexibility for employers for workforce development.

## The Critical Requirements of Effective e-learning



### Thurrock Learning Partnership:

- **Has a widespread desire not to see duplication of effort**
- **Recognises the need for the active facilitation/coordination of e-learning in Thurrock**
- **A realistic assessment that funding support will be essential for the fullest development of e-learning**
- **A belief that increased levels of cross sector collaboration and co-operation is the key to efficient progress**
- **Recognised that e-learning needs to become just another tool in the armoury of learning**

## Priority Actions

- **Developing e-learning skills (capacity building - teaching staff)** - required to support the staged provision of training in e-tutoring for tutors across all sectors and within all curriculum areas. Training will also be needed to develop the technical skills and capacity to design, develop and adapt e-learning materials. The training to be targeted at individuals and institutions and ideally delivered through a consortium of providers and include training in both online tutoring and content development through workshops and tailored events.

- **Promoting e-learning (delivery and capacity building)**

A comprehensive range of promotional activities including conferences, seminars, publications, advertisements and dissemination of work in progress need to be planned and delivered.

- **E-learning to support the 14 - 19 agenda**

Exploration of how e-learning can support the work related curriculum in schools focussing on how e-learning can support quality and subject choice and the retention of students at risk of disengagement.

- **Promoting participation - Level 2 and 3 skills (delivery)**

A consortium of providers to be engaged in the collaborative delivery of e-learning opportunities to the employed and jobseekers in line with the identified skills needs of the local economy. This would address skill needs and provide accredited learning. It would also extend the experience of e-learning encouraging further participation and flexible independent learning. Those within a learning environment would already be participating to a greater or lesser degree and benefiting from the first 3 actions