

Carver, R., King, R., Hannum, W. H., & Fowler, B. (2007). Toward a model of experiential e-learning.

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While e-learning has experienced rapid growth, it is hampered by being based on classroom models of learning. This article demonstrates how concepts of agency, belongingness, and competence that are central to experiential education can explain difficulties students encounter in e-learning courses. This article documents an inter-institutional graduate course on instructional design that was designed as a problem-based, service-learning course taught entirely online. While the underlying model for this course featured more active learning than simple, knowledge transmission models and while considerable learning resources were made available to students, at times students experienced difficulties similar to what has been reported in other e-learning courses. By applying concepts from experiential education, adjustments were made in the course design to support learners developing a stronger sense of agency, belongingness and competence. Typical e-learning environments require students to abandon their familiar ways of achieving agency, belonging, and competence that had been comfortable and effective in traditional classrooms. When stripped of this in e-learning courses, students often flounder. The addition of concepts from experiential education can bolster e-learning environments because these concepts attend to some of those factors that cause students to struggle in e-learning courses.