Summary of unit 1 discussion

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Great job everyone on the first discussion in our course! Already we saw fine examples of sharing of resources, of budding identification of DE topics you would like to investigate further, and of enriching collaboration to help everyone in the group move ahead.

Several threads emerged over the week:

- A definition of DE seems to be challenging to nail down, maybe because of the complexity of blended courses. While it might be hard to keep technology in any definition of DE as a component, not the center, we're reminded that approaching DE as multifaceted format of education allows us to address the "consequences" of the temporal and physical separation of the learner and the teaching resources system.
- What's the relationship of learning, teaching, and responsibility? In week 2, you're exploring some historical roots of DE. You'll note its strong connection to adult education as it developed to provide access to education for those who did not have access to traditional educational opportunities – those "at the back door" as Wedemeyer would have said. Has the technology boom "opened" up DE to the point where basic notions of "adult learning principles" (go ahead and jump to pages 141-143 in our text) are no longer guiding principles? Lots we can discuss further there!
- Who has/doesn't have access to the digital world (Digital Divide [http://www.digitaldivide.net/]) is still a concern. Originally DD was about not having a computer/Internet also concerns limits of access because of skill level.
- The growth of DE over the past decade is complicated by not new, but surely more visible challenges to traditional educational institutions to the point that they're increasingly under scrutiny by governmental and accrediting bodies.
- Some theories relating to interaction among components of DE were touches on. We'll surely revisit that discussion!

Enjoy reading/reflecting/discussing the history of DE now in unit 2.

~Kay