

Briefly explain Dale's cone of experience and discuss its implications for distance education offered via a variety of technologies and to a variety of audiences.

Dale's cone of experience is a model that incorporates several theories related to the use of media in instructional design and learning processes (Simonson, et. al., 2009). During the 1960s, Edgar Dale coined this theory by suggesting that "learners retain more information by what they "do" as opposed to what is "heard", "read" or "observed" (Anderson, 1989).

Based on Dale's theory, there is a hierarchy for experiencing real learning. The lowest part of the cone allows learners to use a variety of senses because they are experiencing "direct purposeful experiences" (Simonson, 2009, p.92). As one moves up the cone, direct purposeful experiences are not required as much in the learning process because the events are less abstract and doesn't rely on a person's past experiences.

The cone of experience has great implications for DE. It offers a perspective for DE instructors as they design instruction. If considered, the cone of experience can provide learners unique opportunities at all levels of the cone. The variety of media introduced to the learner has the potential of meeting the learner where he or she is on the cone of experience. The DE instructor can use the cone of experience to guide instructional design for a variety of audiences.

For example, the variety of media provided by Nova Southeastern University allows learners to be engaged in the learning process in many ways (chats, voice direct, Eluminate, etc.).

Anderson, H.M., Ph.D. (1989). *Dale's cone of experience*. University of Kentucky
Assistant Dean for Education Innovation. Retrieved May 18, 2009, from www.pharmacy.mc.uky.edu

Simonson, M., Smaldo, S., Albright, M., & Zvacek, S. (2009). *Teaching and learning at a distance: Foundations of distance education*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.