

## USING TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM IN E-LEARNING FOR POLITICAL THEORY MODULES IN UNIVERSITIES IN MEKONG DELTA

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**Abstract** -E-Learning is the only way to help people understand, reach the heaven of knowledge, and create the future. Up to now, the learning environment has been changed, and it is also an opportunity for everyone to have equal access to knowledge. Currently, along with traditional training, online training - E-learning is being widely applied which has opened up a new approach and helped learners to acquire knowledge, with flexible schedule and the opportunity to access all learning materials, etc. The fact that the Mekong Delta pioneered E-learning proves the superiority of this training method. Although E-learning still contains inadequacies that need to be overcome, this training method is the future trend, and is gradually being applied by schools and educational and training institutions.

**Keywords:** E-learning online training; indirectly, online; Mekong Delta; training methods; educational and training institutions.

### INTRODUCTION

The term E-learning first appeared in October 1999 in the International Conference on CBT- Computer Based Training. Since that time, the terms “Online learning” or “Virtual learning” has been mentioned more and more. It can be said that these two phrases are the fathers of today's term E-learning. Semantically, E-Learning is understood as the use of Web and Internet technologies in learning (William Horton). Online training, also known as E-learning, is an advanced educational method that uses modern information technology to connect learners and lecturers. By E-learning, lecturers can compile their textbooks in many forms such as video lectures, images, gamification, etc. The lecturers can convey them and interact with learners via the Internet or broadband connection. Lectures are integrated in text form with images, audio, video, etc. to help learners interact with the lesson very easily; moreover, random access allows students to select modules of knowledge and materials arbitrarily according to their knowledge level and network access conditions. Lecturers update course content regularly and innovate to meet learners' needs, and learners can choose courses with the most suitable learning method for themselves, and at the same time communicate with lecturers through the LMS online learning management system. Today, there are also many different definitions of E-learning. In the process of teaching E-learning, through the electronic network system, lecturers and learners can communicate with each other in the following forms: Email, chat, forum, video meeting, etc. In the world, many countries have applied E-learning training, with different forms, degree courses or short-term community courses, and considered it as a training method of the future. Among the leading countries in E-learning training, the UK, USA, France, India, Singapore, etc. all use this learning method.

In Vietnam, E-learning has appeared for a long time, but in reality, there are few schools applying this training method. However, under the impact of technology 4.0, there have been drastic changes in education, so higher education institutions have paid attention to E-learning training methods. Because, this is an important content to build a lifelong learning society, contributing to expanding learning opportunities, improving knowledge for everyone, and developing the education of the country. To be successful, Vietnam has joined the Asia E-learning Network- AEN, ([www.asia-elearning.net](http://www.asia-elearning.net)) with the participation of the Ministry of Education & Training, the Ministry of Science - Technology, University of Science and Technology, Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, etc. This shows that the research and application of E-learning have been being interested in Vietnam. Policy of Ministry of Education & Training in the coming period is to actively implement activities to build a learning society, in which all citizens (from high school students, university students, working classes, etc.) have the opportunity to learn, towards: learning anything, anytime, anywhere and lifelong learning, etc. showing the interest of the Party, the State and the education sector about Vietnam's strategy of “growing people” [1-2].

In Vietnam, there are many higher education institutions that offer online courses in various forms (especially since the Covid 19 pandemic), with completely online forms, a combination of traditional and online learning or a part of subjects. Currently, there has been a change due to the easing of the pandemic situation. Typical online training models include: Hanoi Open University, Post and Telecommunications Institute of Technology, Academy of Journalism and Propaganda, University of Social Sciences and Humanities (Vietnam National University, Hanoi), Hanoi University of Communication and Transport, Vinh Long University of Technology Education, Can Tho University, etc. In which, since 2015, Hanoi Open University started the implementation of E-Learning at Hanoi Open University, aiming at the goal of building Hanoi Open University into a leading University in Open and Distance training, further expanding learning opportunities for everyone to build a learning and lifelong learning according to the strategic direction of the Party and State.

In the Mekong River, since 2015, Can Tho University and a number of other universities such as: Tra Vinh University with the consideration of digital transformation at higher education institutions as a long-term, strategic solution; Dong Thap University with “Promoting digital transformation and rapid adaptation” to adapt to the “digital storm” and to the Covid 19 pandemic, etc., besides organizing according to the traditional method - direct lecturers, they have simultaneously organized the deployment of distance teaching methods via E-learning (in combination with classroom review) in parallel. In distance learning, in addition to the support of the lecturers depending on the form of learning. E-learning training: the learning method has a combination of learning through the E-learning system and part support on the system and in the classroom by the lecturers. At the beginning of each semester, students will receive the Study Guide Outline of each module. Traditional training: students study in class with direct support from lecturers (total support time does not exceed 35% of contact time/module). Vinh Long University of Technology Education (VLUTE) has applied online training for the full-time training and the distance training, from January 1, 2019, including Marxism-Leninism, under the Faculty of Political Theory. Currently, the University (VLUTE) has had a change when the Covid 19 pandemic has temporarily subsided.

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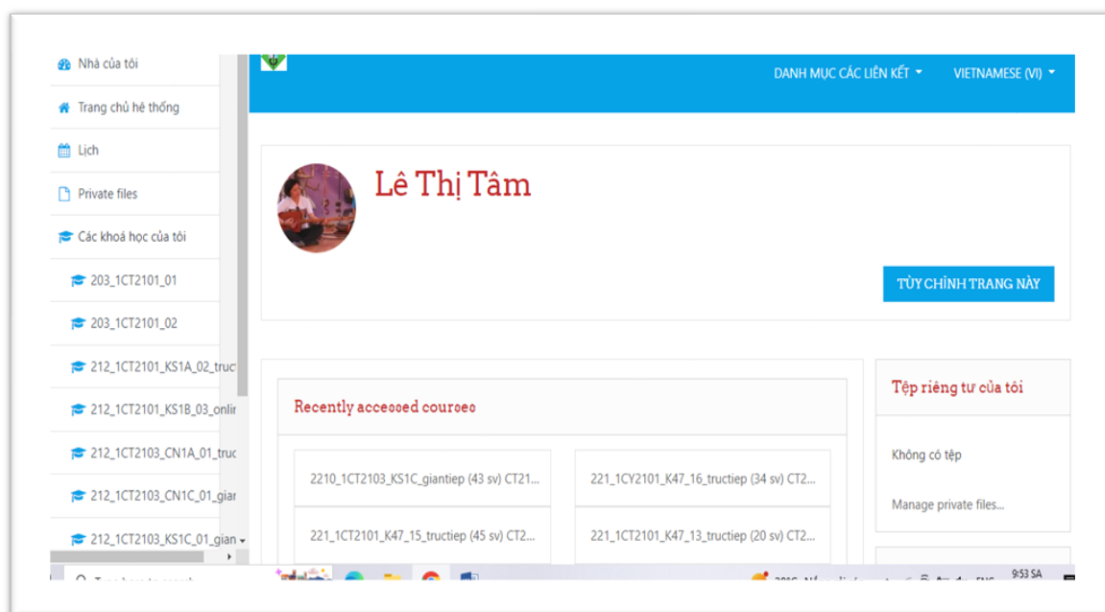
### 1. ONLINE TRAINING - E-LEARNING FOR POLITICAL THEORY SUBJECTS AT VINH LONG UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION.

Pursuant to the Decision No.: 167/QĐ- DHSPKTVL-ĐT dated December 25, 2020. It is applied to the theoretical module, which is taught online 45% and directly taught 55% of the total period, for Political Theory, Law, National Defense and Security Education. In which, there are also forms offered for students to choose: Direct learning in the lecture hall, indirect learning and online learning. During the academic year (2021-2022 and semester 1, academic year 2022-2023), the Faculty of Political Theory (PT) taught students in all three forms of direct learning, indirect learning and online learning. The Faculty of Political Theory is in charge of teaching the following modules: Marxism-Leninism; Political Economy - Marxism-Leninism; Scientific Socialism; Ho Chi Minh Thought and History of the Communist Party of Vietnam, etc.

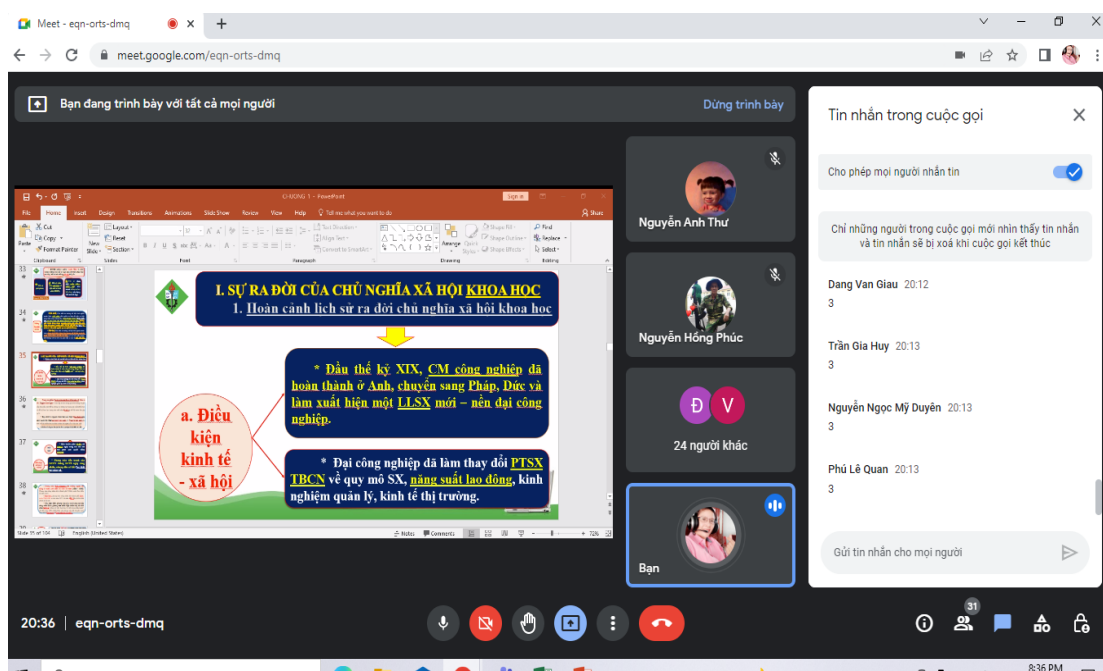
Vinh Long University of Technology Education also had online study guide for students studying subjects as Political theory (because the university does not provide specialized training, online study guide will be taken by the homeroom teachers, the academic advisors).



(Figure 1: Using the E-Learning system for students studying PT subjects)



(Figure 2: Using E-Learning system for students studying PT subjects)



(Figure 3: Students learn PT subjects online)

After teaching the theoretical and practical courses, the university's leaders have received positive feedbacks from learners, students' academic results, parents, lecturers and society. This is a good sign for the university's leaders, as well as lecturers. On the one hand, the above training method both meets the needs of the society, and applies advanced educational methods using modern information technology, connecting learners and lecturers and being in line with the development goals and philosophies of the school: Vinh Long University of Technology Education, "Where there is no boundary between school and reality".

## 2. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF E-LEARNING ONLINE TRAINING FOR POLITICAL THEORY SUBJECTS

### 2.1. ADVANTAGES OF E-LEARNING ONLINE TRAINING FOR POLITICAL THEORY SUBJECTS

As for political theory subjects, students learn right after being freshers, with the characteristics of dry, abstract and difficult subjects to acquire, etc. this method proved more effective, helping students a lot in the learning process. Facilities have been purchased by higher

education institutions for teaching and learning, and parents have also paid more attention to purchasing equipment, in the context that their children can study at home. For content that is not really understood when listening to lectures, students can review through Videos or Powerpoint Slides, main textbooks and references, etc. which have been uploaded to the E-learning system by the lecturer, or through chatText tools, etc., thereby, students can easily access content that they have not understood in the lecture hall. From the practice of E-Learning online teaching in the Mekong Delta, it can be affirmed that the advantages of E-Learning online training are as follows:

Firstly: E-Learning system will help learners save time and reduce training costs. Training time is shortened thanks to the location and schedule which are flexibly and optimally arranged and set for all participants. Shortening training time saves time in travel, organization, and online training helps to quickly set up courses for hundreds or even thousands of students at the same time without time limitation on times or classes.

Secondly, the teaching method is highly interactive. Students can maximize their own potential. Students can also adjust their own learning pace according to their ability and improve their knowledge through online libraries; moreover, contents are consistent.

Thirdly, students can participate in the course at home, at a part-time workplace, etc. through the Internet and supporting devices without having to go to class. Students can also choose from online lecturers-led courses or interactive self-paced courses.

Fourthly, there are no geographical restrictions. Students from different regions or from different countries can participate in the course without restrictions on cultures, customs and practices.

Fifthly, students are facilitated to participate in forums or online debate, and communicate with lecturers and other students. Lectures and courses are diversified and realistically illustrated. Students can register to study online, by SMS, the monitoring of learning progress (attendance) is done via the Internet, etc.

Sixthly, through online training, with preeminent functions such as: flexible Audio support, Video support, friendly lecturer-student interaction function like in traditional classrooms (via chatText tools, Microphone, Webcam, etc.).

Seventhly, saving facilities: Compared to setting up a traditional classroom which is necessary to have a classroom, desk, chair, etc. Online training method helps lecturers and learners to be flexible with electronic devices, laptops, phones, etc. that are more affordable in comparison with other facilities.

## 2.2. DISADVANTAGES OF E-LEARNING ONLINE TRAINING FOR POLITICAL THEORY SUBJECTS

Besides the advantages of the E-Learning online training method, it must also be admitted that E-Learning online training is not entirely rosy. Implementing Resolution No. 29 on fundamental and comprehensive reform of education, the education in the Mekong Delta is focusing on digital transformation with the goal of promoting digital transformation in governance, education and training management. However, one fact must be admitted: The Mekong Delta is still a low-lying area in terms of education compared to the whole country, the percentage of people attending university is still low.

Although online training has many advantages, due to many objective and subjective reasons, it is a new problem for the education system, especially the Mekong Delta with the main feature of being practical training. Therefore, E-Learning online training still has certain limitations. With the characteristic of “learning goes hand in hand with practice” which is considered as the teaching motto of modern education, the development of practical capacity in teaching is very important. Lecturers must actively motivate learners, associate intellectual activities with practical activities, etc., but E-Learning online training is difficult for students to observe the lecturer's sample operations. For political theory subjects, although it is not heavy on “practice”, students also have certain difficulties. Ho Chi Minh affirmed: “Practice generates knowledge, knowledge advances to theory, theory leads practice” [3], because practice is both the foundation connecting the two stages in the cognitive process and the actual path that perception has to go through. The first stage is the sensory, impressionistic stage of knowledge. The next stage is the conceptual, judgment, and reasoning stage - the stage of understanding by reason. Therefore, if students do not directly listen to lectures, but only learn through indirect lectures, Videos or chatText tools, and Powerpoint Slides provided by lecturers, it will also be a huge obstacle for students' acquisition of knowledge.

In addition, there is another obstacle, we realize that there are still students who cannot watch videos produced by lecturers, (because of copyright issues, students can only watch videos produced by lecturers when using the email provided by the university). Some students, for various reasons, still use self-created personal Email. Therefore, they do not have access to the lecturers' video. On the other hand, when teaching indirectly, some students do not participate in forums such as

(facebook, zalo, chatText tools, etc.), so they do not take mid-term exams, attend some training sessions, or questions and answers, etc. When lecturers send emails according to the mailbox provided by the university, some students do not reply. This makes teaching difficult. Moreover, due to indirect training, some students mistakenly register the subjects they have studied, or students who have not yet paid tuition fees are still on the list, so when the course is about to end, it causes many difficulties in teaching, finding out the student's absence or no test of students when entering the scores and publishing on the school's website system, etc.

For the subject, applying online learning, due to the large number of students, the lecturer cannot ask them to open Webcam, so there are many cases where students are still online but doing their own business; therefore, it is very difficult to manage, take attendance, and interact in the teaching process. Another difficulty, when taking the mid-term exam, when the lecturer uploads the lesson to the E-Learning system, specifying start time and end time is the fact that some students, for various reasons (part-time job, power outage, Internet failure, class concurrence, etc.), do not take the test on time, forcing the lecturer to compose a new set of exam questions, avoiding being as same as the exam questions of the students who have already taken the exam, (with the rules accepted by the software, no errors in formatting, spaces, symbols, etc.), so it is very time consuming and laborious. In addition, the efforts of the learners themselves are also one of the difficulties [4-7].

Firstly, there are still many students whose self-study awareness is not high, and their initiative in learning is still limited. Using the E-learning method requires learners to be able to work independently with a high sense of self-discipline.

Secondly, although students are quite active in applying information technology to exploit teachers' lectures, in fact, the family's circumstances, physical conditions, Internet connection, learning space, etc. will greatly influence online learning activities.

Thirdly, when the university and the lecturers deploy online teaching, if there is no specific plan, students will fall into the situation of overlapping between subjects (because there may be many subjects at the same time, assignments). At Vinh Long University of Technology Education, students go to school to both practice and study theoretical subjects, most of them are final year students or those who fails certain subjects).

Fourthly, some lecturers' skills in building lessons according to E-Learning standards have not yet met the requirements (especially older lecturers).

Fifthly, besides, the system of reference materials for subjects posted online is still few, not rich, and the source has not been extracted clearly.

Sixthly, regarding the training unit, the biggest difficulty is managing E-learning teaching assets, because the online repository of lectures and documents is likely to be lost or easily shared outside the system. The school's facilities also need to be regularly upgraded and continuously modernized, in order to meet the traffic, study and work of learners, and issue of copyright and patent right for teaching and learning products of lecturers, etc.

New skills required: this method requires lecturers to have a certain level of technology savvy in designing courses. Learners also need to be proficient in software manipulation skills. Higher requirements for personal consciousness: online learning requires learners to be responsible and aware of their own to bring about high efficiency.

From the practice of teaching Political Theory subjects in the Mekong Delta, the question is, how to check the accounts of all students and know that all learners participate? How to check that learners are really engaged in learning on the E-Learning system? Controlling studying on behalf of, taking attendance on behalf of, doing tests on behalf of, group exercises, essays on behalf of, etc. have been existing? Is the way to evaluate the online learning process of learners accurate and fair? Did learners really acquire the knowledge in the best way as the results they got? How can we ensure that learners' interest is maintained, while the surrounding context (without control) can always induce and dominate learners?

## CONCLUSION

Gender, in recent times, E-Learning teaching of Vietnamese education has increasingly shown its great role in the development of education, contributing to the stability and development of education in the country. From the practice of teaching Political Theory subjects in the Mekong Delta, we realize that teaching E-Learning will help learners save time, reduce training costs, and shorten training time thanks to the location and schedule which are flexibly and optimally arranged and set for all participants; help learners and parents feel more secure sending their children to training institutions; and shape a new training method for the education of the country, etc. In addition, there are certain limitations, such as low self-study and limited initiative in learning. For subjects that are highly dry, abstract and difficult to understand, such as political theory, requires learners to be able to



work independently with a high sense of self-discipline. In addition, the student's family circumstances and physical conditions will greatly influence online learning activities, etc. Thereby, we make recommendations such as:

Firstly, the Ministry of Education and Training, the governing ministry, and universities need to have specific instructions on the organization of online learning, so that universities can deploy, guide and train lecturers to implement and develop detailed plans according to each module. Universities need to strengthen facilities, make the most of mediums and training, to support lecturers as well as students when teaching and learning online. Universities and lecturers need to coordinate well with students to exchange plans and study at home.

Secondly, online and offline curriculum and schedule; form of test and examination; course code and method to join the class, submission form, group assignment, tests, submission time, etc. must be clearly provided, agreed and pre-specified to students.

Thirdly, the role of the academic advisors is equally important to the success of the online training. Academic advisors must follow up and advise students on how to develop a study plan, ensuring it is appropriate to the student's abilities and circumstances. Guide students to register for courses in each semester to complete the set study plan (especially to register for E-learning). Advise students on effective E-learning methods. Guide students to master the training regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training and the school's training regulations on E-learning (such as process scores, mid-term scores, final exam scores, conditions for taking the exam, etc.)./. .

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