Types of Distance Learners

When it comes to knowing your distance or online learners, flexibility is key. One of the flexibilities of distance learning allows learners to work when, for how long, and where they choose. When instructors design e-learning courses and programs, they should consider this range of different learning styles and preferences of their learners (Haythornthwaite & Andrews, 2011).

Cultural Learners
Culture affects distance and online learning. Not only are distance and online learners apart in geography, time, and setting, they are also distributed by culture. Learners in diverse cultures learn in unique ways. Instructors need to understand these cultural differences. E-Learning is a new culture of learning that requires cultural sensitivity (Haythornthwaite & Andrews, 2011).

Experiential Learners
Many distance or online learners prefer experiential learning. Experiential learning allows a learner to experience or try a variety of methods to learn—specifically reflective learning. For example, studies show that African-American students prefer experiential learning in an online environment (Haythornthwaite & Andrews, 2011).

Non-traditional Learners
Many distance or online learners are adults who may or may not have been able to attend college classes in their early twenties and who are now returning to the classroom. The reasons non-traditional students return to school are diverse. These learners may have a learning curve with technology and may need extra help (Curran, 2015).
References
