This chapter outlines the problem of laying the groundwork for building a suitable online training methodology. In the first place, it points out that most e-learning initiatives are developed without a defined method or an appropriate strategy. It then critically analyzes the role of the constructivist model in relation to this problem, affirming that this explanatory framework is not a method and describing the problems to which this confusion gives rise. Finally, it proposes a theoretical and epistemological framework of reference for building this methodology based on Greek paideia. The authors propose that the search for a reference model such as the one developed in ancient Greece will allow us to develop a method based on the importance of a teaching profile “different” from traditional academic roles and which we call “tutor.” It has many similarities to the figures in charge of monitoring learning both in Homeric epic and Classical Greece.
INTRODUCTION

The Failure of E-Learning without a Method

Online training or e-learning is an authentic revolution in its way of conceiving learning experiences compared to how we thought of them until very recently. It would take too long to list all the changes that have taken place in this new educational modality, which have affected technological elements, communication dynamics, social factors, and new teaching and learning roles, as well as the teaching-learning relationship itself, the value of the contents, and the methodology of the process.

However, despite the euphoria unleashed by online training in recent years, and the fact that the development of tools, training systems, and digital contents has been and still is extraordinary, we cannot hide from the fact that there is a certain skepticism or even disappointment when the level of user satisfaction and the outcomes attained in online training are analyzed, if we limit ourselves exclusively to the learning objectives actually attained. What is important in any educational intervention, whatever its type, electronic, at a distance, or face-to-face, is none other than achieving certain learning objectives: the proof of having taught them does not suffice; we need to be sure that they have actually been acquired.

Since e-learning is a type of learning characterized by technological mediation (this is not its only peculiarity, but for the time being we will focus on this aspect) and since what is apparently different with respect to other kinds of training seems to lie in the elements of this mediation, when we analyze the causes of this skepticism (or failure) we usually focus exclusively on the technological factors: the learning environments are not appropriate, the digital contents are not well-structured, and so forth. Consequently, an enormous amount of material and human resources are devoted to perfecting these elements in the hope of improving the learning experience, without our realizing that the solution to the problem lies in another direction.

Logically, the evolution of these technological mediation factors will contribute to improve the context, just as we would improve the learning experience if we renewed the blackboards, the lighting, or the equipment of a classroom in a traditional context. However, we all know that this is not the main thing for achieving quality training. And looking back on our own experience, we all remember that we learned nothing, or very little, from the technical or logistic elements in our schools but we did learn a lot with our good teachers and classmates. Thus, technology must be improved but we cannot fall into the trap of only blaming the tool for not being able to reach the desired objectives. Technological mediation in e-learning is precisely that, a medium, and in any case it is a mistake of training strategy not to have had suitable resources, or not to have been capable of adapting ourselves to the means available. The tool is, or we should make it be, as neutral as possible.

All in all, if we study the brief history of e-learning we can already speak of “generations” that have marked its development up until now, and whose evolution allows us to predict (assuming that this is possible) where we are going in the future (Seoane, García, Bosom, Fernández, & Hernández, 2007). After a first generation marked almost exclusively by the development of technological environments and digital contents, we have moved towards a concern, in recent years, for the e-learning “model” and, consequently, to a concern for the development of implementation strategies and the interoperability of online training environments with an institutional model for the university, the public administration, and business firm. Thus the question of a model of efficiency and quality appears. However, we are witnessing a moment in which a strange paradox is occurring: the greater the technological media-