CHAPTER 1

Design and Developmental Research: Emergent Trends in Educational Research

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Introduction

Design and developmental research (DDR) is a research approach which can provide reliable and usable information to practitioners in the fields of instructional technology and curriculum development. The empirical data collected using DDR assist in developing new theories that contribute to better and informed practice in designing instruction. In this chapter, DDR is discussed from several aspects: background, definition, types and the processes of DDR, a review of some related research as well as the strengths and limitations of this approach. DDR in this book refers to the systematic research processes involved in the development of a product related to education. Developmental research, in this context, should not be confused with research that covers the progress and development over specific age groups in a person’s lifespan.

Design and Developmental Research

Media studies, as a research area in which the systematic process of product design, development and evaluation, was first recorded in 1973 in the Handbook of Teaching (Richey, Klein & Nelson, 2004). Following that publication, research involving product and programme development in specific contexts gained popularity in the field of instructional technology.

DDR focuses on the process of product development and involves the analysis of the context and situation, as well as the evaluation of the product. The product