What’s a theory?

“Theory is very, very valuable. A theory is a representation of everything we know about something. Theory gives us a common framework, a common perspective, and a common vocabulary that help ask questions in a sensible way and make sense of a problem. By summarizing what we already know, theory helps us identify what we don’t know, and so is the starting point for deciding what really needs to be researched. Because most people do not read theory, a lot of information collected about technology in education are not very important, while questions that are important are neglected.

Moorse, 1996 A Systems Approach to Distance Education