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## WHAT IS DISTANCE EDUCATION? AN OVERVIEW FROM CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE

***Annotation.** Distance education is a multidimensional process involving education conducted over long distances and mediated by instructional technology. Distance education has been made possible in recent times because of the convergence of the growing interest in life long learning and unprecedented rapid developments in information and communication technology. These developments have had great impact on teaching and learning in general and distance education in particular. Distance learning, one of the virtual environments, has eliminated the time and place dependence for the individuals and appealed learning style of each individual. However, the role of technology in education is mostly controlled or directed by the teacher. Distance education is nowadays almost entirely has evolved into an educational activity carried out over the internet. In this study is explained distance education from conceptually perspective.*

***Key words:** distance education, distance learning, internet, student, distance instruction.*

***Research Type:** Review.*

***Анотація.** Дистанційна освіта - це багатовимірний процес, який включає навчання, що проводиться на великих відстанях та опосередковане освітніми технологіями. Дистанційна освіта стала можливою останнім часом завдяки зближенню зростаючого інтересу до безперервного навчання та безпрецедентно швидкого розвитку інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій.*

*Ці розробки вплинули на викладання та навчання в цілому і на дистанційну освіту зокрема. Дистанційне навчання, одне з віртуальних середовищ, усунуло залежність від часу та місця для окремих осіб та залучило стиль навчання кожної окремої людини. Однак роль технологій в освіті в основному контролюється чи спрямовується вчителем. В даний час дистанційна освіта майже повністю перетворилася на освітню діяльність, що здійснюється через Інтернет. У цьому дослідженні дистанційна освіта пояснюється з концептуальної погляду.*

**Ключові слова:** *дистанційна освіта, дистанційне навчання, Інтернет, студент, дистанційний інструктаж.*

**Тип дослідження:** *огляд.*

**Introduction.** Information and communication technologies (ICT) usage levels of countries are accepted as among the most important indicator parameters of development today. Especially in the developing countries, number of academicians and the infrastructure of physical university campuses are not proper enough for an effective education (Koyunoğlu, 2008: 6) [17].

Distance education is one of the newest forms of education that basically depends on these communication and information technologies. As a new and modern approach to deliver instruction, many corporations and organizations for both formal and non-formal educational settings in Turkey and all around the world have increasingly used distance education (Rüzgar, 2004: 22) [22].

Distance education is a multidimensional process involving education conducted over long distances and mediated by instructional technology. These developments have had great impact on teaching and learning in general and distance education in particular. Technological innovations and developments, which continuously affect the educational environments, have improved the previous ones in each time and also brought about occurrence of new concept and techniques. Distance education it includes programmed texts, TV programs, computer software and entire courses of web-based instruction. Communication technology promotes students' interactivity,

collaboration and social networking. Effective cognitive and social presence are created in technology-mediated learning environments; consequently, opportunities for effective dialogue and bridging of the transaction distance within the community of inquiry (Johnson, 2003; Saba, 2000) [15; 23].

**The aim** of this article is to explain what is distance education.

**Method.** In this study the data is obtained by study the literature.

**Literature Review.**

***Defining Distance Education.***

Because of the popularity of distance education all around the world today, first of all, it is necessary to know what distance education is. There are some definitions, which describes distance education. Moore (2005) defines distance teaching as «*the family of instructional methods in which the teaching behaviors are executed apart from the learning behaviors*» [19].

According to Barker and Hall (1994) the concept of — Distance Educationl or — Distance Learning; «*includes the use of the Internet and web-based materials, interactive television, computer conferencing, and multimedia modules*» [1].

According to Fleming & Hiple (2004) and Schlosser & Anderson (1994) distance education defined as a «*formal education process in which the majority of education is conducted without the instructor and the learner being in the same place*». [8; 25]. According to İřman & Dabaj (2005) and Yalın (2005) distance education is the «*process of educating students and teachers in different environments, learning and teaching activities, communication technologies and postal services refers to an education system model that they realize*» [11; 28].

According to Hızal (1983) a system of specially prepared written materials, mass communication programs and short-term face-to-face teaching without being bound by the limitations of traditional educational practices in terms of age, time, place, method, objectives, etc. are educational activities carried out by using them in their entirety. Distance education is an opposite form of face-to-face, or conventional, education. But, distance education is not an opposite form of face-to-face, or conventional, education [9]

Keagen (1986) argues that the main features of distance education are as follows:

- Physical separation of teacher and student;
- A planned curriculum like formal education;
- An affiliated educational institution;
- Use of technological tools;
- Two-way interaction;
- Individual learning (cited in Oral, 2009) [20].

According to (Rüzgar, 2004: 23) there are six elements to be considered for a unifying definition of distance education:

1. The separation of teacher and learner, which distinguishes it from face to face lecturing,
2. The influence of an educational organization, which distinguishes it from private study,
3. The use of technical media, usually print, to unite teacher and learner and carry the educational content,
4. The provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or even initiate dialogue,
5. The possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialization purposes,
6. The participation in an industrialized form of education, which if accepted, contains the genus of radical separation of distance education from other forms [22].

Learning environment is a system that consisting of instructors, students, course materials and technology etc. (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright & Zvacek, 2009) [24]. Learning in a higher education institution that applies an open and distance learning system requires the students to study as independent learners. Learning in an open and distance higher education system requires the students to adjust their learning habits (Puspitasari & Oetoyo, 2018: 189-190) [21].

### **Type of Distance Education.**

In Distance Education, delivery types are classified as asynchronous and synchronous.

***Asynchronous Distance Education:*** Asynchronous distance education is an alternative model of learning where students and teacher aren't able to be in the face to face interaction and be located in the same environment at the same time (Carswell, 2002) [6]. Asynchronous online communication provides to students the possibility to interact anywhere, at any time to ask questions, share ideas, and freedom of inquiry (Lobry de Bruyn 2004) [18].

Asynchronous media tools, such as:

- Electronic Mail - Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, etc.
- Web Resources-virtual libraries, web sites and web pages.
- Learning Management Systems (LMS)-Moodle.
- Interactive environment-Moodle discussion forum.
- Social Interconnectivity-Twitter, MySpace and Facebook, all these provide suitable platforms for effective online distance education.

***Synchronous Distance Education:*** Synchronous distance education connects students and instructors via real-time communication. As a director, guide and organizer, teacher is one of the crucial parameters in a face to face educational environment, so it is in the distance education environment. It should be added rubrics to gauge participation of students. Synchronous media tools that provide real-time, audio-video communications are necessary social, teaching and learning platforms for effective interaction and interconnectivity for distance education delivery (Boz-Yüksekdağ, 2012) [3]. Beldarrain (2006) stated that interaction and collaboration can be provided asynchronous and synchronous learning networks through technology (cited in Fakindele, 2013) [12]

### **Advantages of Distance Education.**

Distance education which is one of the most dynamic and enriching forms of learning opportunities available when the possibility of applying face-to-face education becomes difficult, was the available alternative. Distance education is a planned systematic educational technology application in which the source and the

receiver are in separate (remote) environments in most of the learning-teaching processes, providing “individuality, flexibility and independence” to the recipients in terms of teaching. (Uşun, 2006) [26]. Distance education can enrich traditional face-to-face instruction and make it more individualized, valid, accessible, and economical (İşman, & Dabaj, 2005: 59) [11]. Distance education is revolutionizing education.

Through live and interactive programs/courses with multiple sites interconnected for group learning, learners can be given current knowledge and skills while they stay at their worksite. By using distance education technologies, access to remote experts around the country and indeed around the world can be made possible, bringing information from the original resources into the classroom. Connecting many students from different sites with instructors/experts allows the exchange of perspectives on the subjects so that new ways of looking at problems, productivity, motivation, etc. can be achieved.

According to Girginer (2002), Elitaş (2017) and Bunker (2003) distance education provides time and space independence to all those who aim to learn, providing education and training. ensures a democratic educational environment and equality of opportunity in access to resources [14; 7; 5].

Distance education has many features such as personalization, customization, providing education to students who are not suitable for traditional education, mobility, and being cheaper than other education systems (Yadigar, 2010: 10) [27]. The information to be learned, the individual to be educated and the importance attributed to distance education are increasing day by day (Garrison, 1993) [13].

### **Considerations in Distance Education.**

There are some issues to be considered when developing distance courses:

- Determination of content;
- Configuring and sequencing of the materials;
- Selection medium;
- Determination of teaching strategies;
- Ensuring interaction;
- Evaluation of learning;

- Giving feedback to students.

The choice of production methods to create course materials (Moore & Kearsley, 2005) [19].

### **Distance Education Methods.**

Development stages of distance education, parallel to the development of communication technology as distance education. According to İşman (1999) distance education methods can be categorized under four headings can be collected.

These are:

- Letter education;
- Education with Radio and Television;
- Education with computer/Internet;
- Education with Information Technologies [10].

**Conclusions and Evaluation.** Distance education is an alternative to traditional education in various parts of the world. has been developed as an alternative. Distance education is an inclusive and diffusionist education in terms of its structure and purpose understanding. Distance learning, one of the virtual environments, has eliminated the time and place dependence for the individuals and appealed learning style of each individual. Distance education programs worldwide use a variety of technologies that include print materials, audio and videocassettes, audio and video teleconferencing, one-way and twoway television, computer-mediated communication (e.g., electronic mail, computer conferencing), and more recently, the Internet (Bates, 1995; Elitaş, 2017: 90) [2; 7]. It is imperative for countries to provide quality education that would empower their people to compete and benefit from the growing socio-cultural global exchanges of the 21st century. It should be measured in technological knowledge of students. Each lesson should begin with activities that require students to become acquainted. Connection should be established once a week for each student through e-mail, discussion board reply and assignment response. The effectiveness of an online instruction is mainly measured by how much interactive the process is, how much it satisfies the students' needs, and how it eliminates the communication barriers between the involved participants.

Cooperation among students is an important component of activities. Learner-learner support and encouragement are also needed and should be promoted for successful, effective and efficient learning to take place in distance education. The students need to combine their forces to learn more. Brownrigg (2005) said there is a strong relationship between student-faculty interaction and web-based classes [4]. Moore & Kearsley (2005) [19] stated after presentation of content, lecturer supports students to interaction with content. Teachers can organize technology-related projects or assignments for the students. These technology based assignments may represent independent or cooperative work. There is a need for a standard that will determine the quality of distance education applications that are becoming increasingly widespread in our country (Kaban, 2013: 124) [16].

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