



QUALITY ISSUES OF ONLINE DISTANCE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Distance learning and its relationship to emerging computer technologies have together offered many promises to the field of education. This paper discuss about the problems which hinders the users to learn from distance education in best possible way and also give its solutions. The first section of this paper shows the brief history of distance education from 18th century to 21st century.

Keywords: problems faced by distance, Distance education, electronic education, self organization, frequent revisions.

INTRODUCTION

It also tells what are the things that led to change in the methods of distance education. The second section define the conceptual framework for distance education. The third section shows the problems in distance education from maintenance of academics to communication problem and all other problem related to distance education. The fourth section shows the solutions which are possible to resolve these problems, to these problems. The next part of this paper shows a real world example of a life of children in developing and underdeveloped countries when he/she have not taken the classroom program. The last part is based on future possibility of distance education.

MAIN PART

Studies are the important part of life ,but what happen when a student is not getting sufficient study material as per his requirement ,or if the student is not allowed by the society to go to a institution to carry on his studies(as in some countries women are not allow to study, and physical disability).Also what would happen when one is not having enough money to pursue his studies in the college ,orthere is no teaching institution in one's area provided that one is not having enough money to move to other place and study there. It led to the need of education in which there may be no require to go anywhere and it led to the development of distance education. Started in 18th century ,distance education is made with the motto of "education to all" at whatever distance is he/she is present.

The insight of our paper are;

1. To study the problems faced by distance learners.
2. To find out problems associated with distance education.
3. To suggest solutions for these problems

If we look at European experience a steady expansion of distance education, without radical changes in structure, but with gradually more sophisticated methods and media employed. Audio recordings were used in instruction for the blind and in language teaching for all students. Laboratory kits were used in such subjects as electronics and radio engineering. Virtually all large-scale distance teaching organizations were private correspondence schools. In the United States, advances in electronic communications technology helped determine the dominant medium of distance education. In the 1920s, at least 176 radio stations were constructed at educational institutions, although most were gone by the end of the decade. The surviving stations were mostly at land-grant colleges. Western Reserve University was the first to offer a continuous series of such courses, beginning in 1951. Sunrise Semester was a well-known televised series of college courses offered by New York University on CBS from 1957 to 1982. Satellite technology, developed in the 1960s and made cost-effective in the 1980s, enabled the rapid spread of instructional television. Federally funded experiments in the United States and Canada, such as the Appalachian Education Satellite Project (1974–1975), demonstrated the feasibility of satellite-delivered instruction. However, these early experiments were loudly criticized for being poorly planned. More recent attempts at satellite-delivered distance education have been more successful. The first state educational satellite system, Learn/Alaska, was created in 1980. It offered 6 hours of instructional television daily to 100 villages, some of them accessible only by air. The privately operated TI-IN Network, of San Antonio, Texas, has delivered a wide variety of courses via satellite to high schools across the United States since 1985.

Distance education is the general term that includes the range of teaching and learning strategies used by Correspondence colleges, Open universities, Distance education departments of conventional universities and Distance education training units of private sector organizations. Thus, the term is used to refer to the education of those who, for one reason or another, choose not to attend conventional schools, colleges, or universities but study at home. attend conventional schools, colleges, or universities but study at home. One of the most comprehensive definitions is by Keegan separation of learner and tutor as opposed to face-to-face teaching, the influence of an educational organization which distinguishes distance education from private study, the use of technical media, e.g. print, audio, or website to unite tutor and learner, the provision of a two-way communication so that the student may engage in dialogue with the tutor, the possibility of occasional meetings for purposes of interaction and the self-directed nature of the learner's involvement.

This leads to a host of issues for administrators to debate such as the impact of electronic education on tenured teaching, redefining what it means to have a teacher present in the classroom, and other personnel issues". The impacts of distance education to the institution, current and potential students, and faculty is evident enough to ensure that analysis at every level needs occur, the question remains which analysis should be used and should all administrators be using the same one? It is also evident that there have been some very good experiences with distance education at the institutional, student and faculty levels. However, despite all of the advances, tools, and methods of delivery, issue remains as a constant reminder of how different distance education and/or learning are still viewed and it is the issue of quality. While technology has changed the issue of "what makes for quality" in an online course or program continues to resound throughout literature. The reasons for this continuous debate are many, yet they can all be compiled into three categories, 1) distance education is still continued to be viewed as different from the traditional form of education, and 2) many are still skeptical of online programs and view them as having little or not quality, and 3) there is no consensus on

what constitutes for quality in distance education courses and/or programs. With the increase use and improvement of technology distance education and e-learning will continue to be utilized in higher education and in organizational training. Recently organizations have replaced traditional classroom training with some form of e-learning and/or web-based training. A study conducted by the Sloan Consortium, a “collection of institutions and organizations”, reported that “an overall growth rate for enrollments in online courses is expected to be 20%, for-profit institutions expect a growth rate that is faster than that of other institutions, private, non-profit institutions expect to use online education less than other institutions, given an option, students will enroll in online courses, and overall attitudes of faculty remain conservative about the quality of online education” . Unfortunately, the increase of deceptive practices resulting in diploma mills has also continued to plague the Internet as well. “Since trends indicate that distance education is on the rise and will continue to do so, further research on the development of applicable and effective evaluation instruments for measuring quality” based on an agreed set of criteria is warranted. Areas for further research are in determining the features and/or criteria that would differentiate accredited, quality instructional institutions from diploma mills for the development of a pre-evaluation instrument that could be used to gauge the quality of instruction in a course and/or degree program.

Problems Associated With Distance Education 1) Lack of the presence of a teacher: One may say in this matter that teacher will reply for the e-mail of the students ,but if we think of it then how the teacher could reply the 1000 of students who post their query through e-mail. 2) Low Status of Distance Education Institutes :Lots and lots of institutes have been opened for distance education today

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the research findings demonstrate a relatively high students’ satisfaction with their distance learning. At the same time, we found that there are some controversies in the ways, in which students evaluate the effectiveness of their distance learning compared to other education patterns. Being positively motivated to take an online course of study, they, nevertheless, face a number of challenges while learning at a distance. These involve low self organization, lack of control on the instructor’s side, lack of effective interaction and sense of isolation, which obviously decrease their satisfaction with online learning experience. These findings prove the thesis that to be highly successful and effective distance learning requires considerable attention and commitment on the part of faculty.

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