

TECHNOLOGY IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM

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Abstract :

The objective of this paper is to review open and distance learning in the context of present challenges and opportunities, examine relevant contributions. This paper tries to discuss about the computer generation brings forth the effort to maximize interaction and learner autonomy in order to achieve quality and cost-effective instruction and new generation and role of ICT in distance education. This paper describes the Characteristic of open learning. The computer made a lot of difference to the teaching-learning strategies. The present paper tries to discuss that how computer can be used for communication for disabled.

Key words : Distance learning, open learning, computer in distance learning

Introduction :

Technology within distance education produces a multimedia environment consisting of the exchange of information, ideas and opinions that encourage learning outside of the traditional classroom. This categorizes the technology-influenced evolution of distance education into three generations: correspondence, telecommunication and computer. Currently, the developing mobile-learning generation showcases the emergence of wireless technology and the various pedagogical structures that accompany such change.

The computer generation brings forth the effort to maximize interaction and learner autonomy in order to achieve quality and cost-effective instruction. Instructors must encourage collaborative learning and constructive conversation while utilizing computer generation technologies in order to protect the integrity of course design and quality of education. Distance education currently integrates and incorporates technological advancements into the curriculum but

struggles to maintain a balance between interactivity and scalability due to necessity of faculty involvement for scalable distance education

Open and Distance Learning Systems :

The Computer made a lot of difference to the teaching-learning strategies to be followed in the open and Distance learning systems.

Many leading universities from the developed world have, on their own or as a part of consortia, not only transcended their national boundaries for offering education abroad (on-line or off-line) but are also vying with each other for market space. It is important to realize that such efforts should supplement the growth of local educational institution, particularly in small nation states by raising standards of their offering and contextualization of content rather than being dictated by economic considerations.

Characteristic of Distance and open learning through computers :

- **Interactivity :**

Advancements in distance learning have expanded the art of instruction through delivery methods while allowing a more diversified audience to receive such information. There are two forms of distance learning: individual (asynchronous communication) and group (synchronous). Asynchronous technologies have allowed for new and different forms of enhanced learner-content, learner-instructor and learner-learner interaction. The correspondence generation gave the learner freedom to interact with the content at anytime and anyplace.

Computer mediated communication assist the learner to higher order thinking through language and conversation. Distance education must not minimize the impact social interaction and the technological advancements during the telecommunication and computer generations continue to prevent such an occurrence from happening.

- **Flexibility:**

Flexibility is an intrinsic characteristic in any strategy of instruction and various methods of delivery in the distance classroom allow for the achievement of course objectives and application of learned material. Contextually, the correspondence generation offered previously unknown flexibility by removing the student from the traditional classroom. The telecommunication generation offered minimal flexibility in relation to time place and pace for the student while the computer generation is exponentially improving learner flexibility

with the Internet, computer-mediated communication and interactive multi-media. Teacher-content tools within web-based learning systems (a computer generation technology) allow instructors to quickly amend materials and post new content. The opportunity for staff to quickly navigate and control online instruction promotes a flexible environment unseen in previous distance education generations.

- **Access:**

The correspondence generation provided education to those who would otherwise not be able to access the information due to distance or other limitations. The telecommunication generation allowed students learn abstract, hazardous, or unfamiliar concepts by interacting with the instructor and other students with the use of interactive television. Through social interaction, telecommunication gave students access to ideas, material, and emotional support that may have otherwise been absent in the traditional and correspondence classroom.

- **Scalability :**

Pedagogy, audience, program type interactivity and profitability all affect distance education scalability. All the distance-learning generations have struggled with quality vs. quantity and technological advancements have increased the concern for meaningful cost-effective education. The correspondence generation allowed for numerous students to learn at low-cost to the providing institution due to the mass production of instruction materials. Quality was questionable due to the lack of meaningful interaction other than student-content. The telecommunication generation increased interaction but compared to the correspondence generation, distance learning became less cost-effective for mass instruction.

The point is that ICTs are helping us to achieve a major goal of capacity building by integrating people, societies, cultures and nation, promoting international understanding through bilateral and multilateral strategic collaborations and partnerships between educational institution and bridging the digital divide.

To meet the challenge, computer based system is being mandated to increase its share to about 40% and accommodate the flux arising out of universalization of elementary education. That is, we are going through a time of greater expectation and need to give impetus to open learning based knowledge revolution.

Through catering to large numbers brings associated challenges, education for more students from this system means greater contribution towards nation development. The fact that every tenth student seeking higher education in the country is studying with IGNOU is a

great motivating factor and source of satisfaction for us.

Benefit for Disabled :

New technology can educate or train even visually impaired by using speech software and communication disabled by using visual software. Open University developing materials for the visually impaired in collaboration with National Blind Association, New Delhi and hearing impaired with All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysore.

Open University has many programmes spread over 1,100 courses using front-ended technology like video-conferencing and Internet. There are video or teleconferencing facilities. The University is the process of providing broadband connectivity to all its LCs so as to bring the vast e-resources within the easy reach of its learners and facilitate faster interaction.

Characteristics of Virtual University :

One of the most striking shift introduced by the use of ICTs in education is the change in the role of teachers from being “repertoire of knowledge” to ‘facilitator for access to and comprehension of learning resources’ as well as of institutions from ‘ivory towers’ in four walls to ‘globally distributed’ classrooms. In fact campus based institutions are likely to fast become ‘obsolete and unsuited’ to present day requirements and pave way for virtual universities. Which can provide rich-computer simulated learning environment where difficult to visualize phenomena can be demonstrated convincingly and the latest findings can be shared synchronously as well as asynchronously with value addition.

Other important characteristic of virtual universities shall include year round operations, interdisciplinary market-driven courses on demand anywhere on the globe. Moreover, the student, as customer, shall be at the focus of all operations. The knowledge society shall create a new paradigm powered by capacity for innovations.

Conclusion :

Open universities distance learning is full of endless unorthodox possibilities to provide meaningful education and assisting students in their pursuit of education. The examination the generations within distance education demonstrates that in many cases, the desired outcomes are tremendously similar if not the same: to give students the opportunity for maximum exposure to educational concepts regardless of location.

The terms open learning and distance education represent approaches that focus on opening access

to education and training provision, freeing learners from the constraints of time and place, and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of learners. Open and distance learning is one of the most rapidly growing fields of education, and its potential impact on all Education delivery systems has been greatly accentuated through the development of Internet-based information technologies.

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