

E-Portfolio Task - Questions for Reflection - Wave 2

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1. Review your group's (r)evolutionary grid. What aspects of Wave 2 did you find to be the most interesting? Why? What was the least interesting?

I was surprised that I did not know that it was the Soviet Union that implemented widespread correspondence course-based distance education by 61 universities in the 1920s. Later, Soviet-supervised German Democratic Republic adopted these efforts. I knew that after Serfdom was eliminated in Russia, the education was on its rise trying to give education to those people who were not allowed and did not have an opportunity to study before (Tutt, 2013). In 1921, the Latter-Day Saints' University of Salt Lake City was endowed with the first educational radio license (Moore & Kearsley, 2012), and it continued to spread all over the world.

At the end of the 20th century, Moore and Thompson (1990) gave the following definition for distance education:

” (...) communication between learners and teachers (...) through print and writing or by electronic media such as broadcasts, recordings, narrowcasts by cable, satellite, ITFS,³ and fiber transmission, interactive telecommunication by computer, audio and video teleconferences or, as is increasingly common, combinations of these media” (Tutt, 2013)

This definition above was already trying to convey what DE education was really about. Nowadays it is even more complicated. I thought the definition was an interesting perspective for the foundation of the Third Wave of DE.

The least interesting was when Tony Bates mentioned the involvement of political figures. I know they played a considerable role in DE foundation, but they had to rely on pedagogy and researchers to be able to put it to life.

2. What were your "a-ha!" moments during this wave? What incited these moments and how did they influence your understanding of DE?

The “a-ha” moment was interdisciplinary classes that the Open University (OU) UK has developed as a third-generation distance education model. It was based on an interdisciplinary approach to teaching - a supported open learning model specifically for teacher education that had a rich range of multi-media resources and, importantly, was both school-based and school-focused (Mayes & Young, 2000). OU class modules were developed by multi-disciplinary course teams comprising academics, educational technologists, and media specialists contributing pedagogic and technical expertise (Bates, 2011).

I thought the interdisciplinary course was a brilliant idea. However, I am wondering how they worked. If before I felt that DE is very close to the traditional way of teaching and learning, now I consider it a unique approach to education that can have multiple ways of delivering knowledge.

3. After what you have read, learned, or experienced in studying this second wave, how might you revise your original definition of DE? What specific readings/experiences have influenced your understanding of DE?

My initial definition was: “Distance education is a systematic process of interaction between instructors and students that allows two-way communication, instant or non-instant, that provides necessary learning material and expertise in a virtual environment employing technology.”

Now I can add that “Distance education is a unique way of teaching and learning that uses multiple approaches and theories combined to provide an effective interaction between

instructors and students allowing a two-way communication, instant or non-instant, in a virtual environment employing technology and all the necessary adjustments to its rapid progress and development.”

I think Otto Peters and Tony Bates videos were the most engaging. It was interesting to listen to two different views on DE and how their understanding of it changed over time.

4. Consider the expert video from Tony Bates. What left a lasting impression on you? Tell us about your impression and how it affected your views about DE.

The fact that the first DE courses at OU were interdisciplinary, and they covered a couple of disciplines at a time is impressive. The academics themselves had to decide on the curriculum of these courses. Quite many staff members had to work on the contents of the subjects because those classes were complicated. Who would think that first DE classes were interdisciplinary? Now I am wondering how they were evaluating them at that time, what rubrics they were using if any, and how they decided on what disciplines to combine in one class. And here I thought DE is a simple structure, but it is way more complicated in ways of delivering than I thought before.

5. Go back to the course objectives listed in the Syllabus. Do you feel the objectives are being fulfilled and if so, how and to what degree? Are there objectives that are not being met? If so, which ones?

If by objective you mean course outcomes in the syllabus, then I think all “knowledge” objectives have been met, because we did identify characteristics of DE, we also described significant influences, identified vital authors and theorists, described different types of institutions, and analyzed technologies and theories. However, I am still working on some specific skills that include building my site, but I am getting there.

References

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