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Assignment #3: Essay

1,375 Words

Globally, how did the earlier transactional distance education theories influenced the current distance education practice?

Distance education (DE) is increasing vastly, and the transactional distance theories have influenced the instructional delivery of DE, with reference to an increase in globalized e-learning programs (Saxena, 2011). In this view, this essay reveals that transactional distance theories are developed to determine the extent to which the theories would be able to be successful with a particular syllabus. Therefore it is important to emphasize that all transactional distance education theories should design holistic methodologies with education resources that have user-friendly tools and re-usable education materials in the academic syllabuses. It is also important to consider the geographic location and pedagogical approach that should be incorporated in the program in order to promote an excellent quality of academic curriculum (Aluko, Fraser, & Hendrikz, 2011; Moore & Kearsley, 2012). The paper also explores the theoretical framework of transactional distance by exploring how a novice adult learner experiences an online environment (Calvin, Stein, & Wanstreet, 2009). Consequently, the theory pertaining to online communities examines the correlation to which the DE environment contributes to the feelings of instructors and students academic and social integration (Baxter & Haycock, 2014).

### **Theoretical Framework**

According to Moore & Kearsley (2012), transactional distance education theories are models that are designed for distance teaching and learning interaction with physical separation of the teachers and learners within a tolerated time and space with academic programs. The structure of the course involves discussion between the instructors and learners to the extent to which learners are independent and self-directed to participate in transactional distance (Calvin, Stein, & Wanstreet, 2009). Moore and Kearsley (2012) also argued that the theory of transactional distance should be developed with a holistic approach to meet the needs of the teachers and learners in geographic distance, as well, as a pedagogical observable fact. It is therefore necessary to pause and think how geographic separation can cause several side effects during the process of an interaction between learners and teachers. These occurrences can take place on the design courses, and on the organization of human technological resources (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Tait (2003) further describes transactional distance as a space where learning activities are also negotiated within a timeframe to complete a given task or tasks. Based on this scenario, the paper highlights it is sometimes challenging for novice learners to use the technology tools that they are required to incorporate in their course assignments, group projects, and conference discussions. Hence, the importance to integrate user-friendly and re-useable technology tools for a widespread population of learners that would sustain the DE teaching and learning environment.

Aluko, Fraser, & Hendrikz (2011) highlighted that most of these theories and models have been tailored to meet the needs of a particular curriculum. Therefore further research and development studies should be considered to improve those models. In this view, the models should be developed to meet the needs of a diverse population of people in both developed and

developing countries. Based on that perception, this essay highlights that the transactional distance education theories should be developed to determine the interaction between the DE teacher and distance learners, who are engaged in distance learning courses and program. This evaluation can be used to discover the extent to which the theory can be implemented or adopted to ascertain an excellent DE program (Aluko, Fraser, & Hendrikz, 2011).

### **Methodology**

In this method of approach, the researchers used questionnaires to conduct a study to determine the answers to the following questions: How does a novice adult online learner experience the transactional distance space? How does he or she negotiate in that space to close the transactional distance gap, which will result in learning? These questions were answered by data gathered through online chat sessions of learners who enrolled in a graduate-level course with interviews from volunteers (Calvin, Stein, & Wanstreet, 2009). In addition, cultural, education, and business designers used several case study approaches to conduct a cultural inquiry of distance learners and their perceptions about how specifically the data can be gathered and used for making design and delivery decisions for a cross-cultural distance education program (Saxena, 2011). In this view, the researchers and designers created patterns in the data. The researchers then discussed the findings of the data, in order to determine the conclusive results that revealed the findings (Calvin, Stein, & Wanstreet, 2009).

### **Conclusion**

Many adult learners are still novices experiencing digital divide and technological struggles in their online learning environments. Some of the instructors, who use education technology resources and tools to teach, are often of the assumption that all or most distant learners are *technology-savvy*. Unfortunately, this is a false assumption; some of the DE learners

are attending courses and program, because online learning is convenient and flexible for them. In some situations, students and educators may not be able to leave their job, or travel from their place of destination to attend a face-to-face classrooms session at a university or college. In this view, the instructors may be unaware of the challenges that novice learners are experiencing in becoming familiar with course management systems and other electronic communications necessary to complete their academic work (Calvin, Stein, & Wanstreet, 2009). Therefore the institution should incorporate a free self-assessment questionnaire to determine the learners' level of knowledge and skills in technology.

In addition, the transactional distance can be a challenging space for adult learners, who are trying to create an identity as an online learner (Calvin, Stein, & Wanstreet, 2009). These adult learners may lack of self-confidence in his or her ability to participate in online learning sessions. Conversely, novice online learners need to learn how to support their fellow classmates learning in the course of sharing resources, with reference to moral support, and how to cope in an online environment (Tait, 2003).

It is also important to highlight that in some instances learners are not necessarily familiar with online educational environments, and they may need additional support to participate in their online classroom activities, particularly if they have cultural and language barriers. In some circumstances the transactional distance is based on the method approach between the instructors-students, students-students, and instructors-instructors interaction. It is therefore necessary that learners receive live support from learners-learners, and instructor-learners for unusual situations. Sometimes novice learners prefer to communicate with a live voice, that they can trust in their learning process courses (Calvin, Stein, & Wanstreet, 2009). This method of approach will inspire learners to learn in a flexible instructional environment, which will reduce

transactional distance learning, and maintain a more comfortable learning environment that will retain learners in online courses and program (Calvin, Stein, & Wanstreet, 2009). The essay concludes that while the transactional distance learning environment facilitates a certain level of academic integration and identity, there is still a substantial evidence of barriers with negative effects on student motivation to participate in their online classroom (Baxter & Haycock, 2014). Therefore the experts should design a holistic methodology with a human approach of use-friendly and re-useable teaching and learning DE resources for a widespread diverse population of people in the DE teaching and learning environments.

## References

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