

Chapter 3

The Academic Views from Moscow Universities on the Future of DEE at Russia and Ukraine

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ABSTRACT

Distance higher education has been growing rapidly all over the world and the importance of understanding psycho-pedagogical issues of learners studying in Distance Education (DE) has been growing too. Moscow universities have always had and are crucial to the development of education in the vast area covering the entire territory of the former Soviet Union. In this chapter, an attempt is made to investigate the current studies on components of individual differences like self-actualization, self-regulation, locus of control, and motivation, and their influence in DE setting, academic views, and development visions for Cyber U-learning model on the future of distance education in Russia and Ukraine. The current review of the literature indicates that physical and psychological separation of learners and teachers initiate various psycho-pedagogical issues and special attention must be given to accommodate this in content development, pedagogical, instructional, and cyber ubiquitous learning design of DE.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, there are more than a dozen definitions of DE. From a simplified, for example, DE - distance learning using information and communica-

tion technologies, to the definition proposed by us and takes into account the essential features of the process to: DE in general - is targeted specifically organized all-pervading the interaction of students with the teacher, with the means of information

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-8119-4.ch003

and communication technologies and among themselves. It is not critical in the space, time, and specific educational institution and flows in a specific educational system whose elements are the purpose, content, tools, methods and forms, the teacher and students (Andreev, 2013).

DE in Russia and Ukraine started in the mid-nineties of the last century. Now DE is formalized in the relevant laws on education. For the last two decades the general concept of education has been changed dramatically, more specifically, DE has emerged as not only a reliable alternative to traditional education but also a unique integrated system where learners can actively participate, create, and share in the educational process without being physically present at the school, university, or any other institutions (Moore, 2003). The term 'distance learning' is often used as a synonym of 'distance education', however they are not identical. DE is a system and process of presenting learning materials to the students. Distance learning can use varieties of form and usually characterized as the following:

1. Separation of the teacher, the learner and learning materials in space and time;
2. Interactions (teacher – learner, learner – learner, learner – materials) with the help one or several technologies (it is not necessary to use only electronic technologies).

DE has recently been revolutionized by the recent development in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and it has emerged as a unique and integrated phenomenon of learning and teaching. Although many researchers have tried to define different forms of DE, the words distance education, online learning, eLearning, and online education are often used interchangeably in the contemporary distance education literature.

As information is becoming accessible for free or with minimal cost for people across the globe, the traditional concept of institution as a knowl-

edge hub has been facing a major challenge from pedagogical and psychological aspects. Downes (2013) argues teachers are no longer considered as only source of knowledge; learning is no longer about content transfer; teaching takes place in an authentic environment; learning consists of engagement, experiment and communication. Moreover, education is getting out of the classroom and into the community where it belongs.

DE is considered as an emerging sector of education all over the world. For example, only in the USA 6.7 million students were taking at least one online course in 2011. It comprised 32% of total enrollments in higher education which was 11.7% in the year 2012 and has been growing at the rate of 10%. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have already been implemented in 2.6% of the USA universities, 9.4% are planning to offer their own MOOCs; 77% educators in higher education consider distance education as equivalent to traditional classroom education. Moreover, 65.5% believe distance education as one of the critical success factors for their institutions in the coming years (Allen and Seaman, 2013).

Distance education has also been growing rapidly in Russia for the last decade and so. According to the latest government statistics, there are 3.05 million distance learners; it was 1.8 million in 2012. Distance learners constitute 48% of total enrollments in higher education. It's not surprising that one third of 1,046 (609 state-owned and 437 private) higher education institutions are located in Moscow and St. Petersburg. At present, distance learners constitute 45% of total enrollments in state-owned institutions and 79% in private higher institutions (Andreev, 2013).

The concept of distance education has dramatically changed from mainly paper based instruction in correspondence course to multimedia integration to the extensive use of Internet and ICTs. F. Saba argues that the commonly accepted concept of distance education is that it is a practice in which the learner and the instructor are separated

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