

Chapter 6

Developing On–Campus and Distance Learning Systems in Higher Education: On–Campus and Distance Learning Systems

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to argue that developing on-campus and distance learning systems in higher education will depend largely on developments in mobile technology. Structuration theory will be used in understanding on-campus and distance learning systems in higher education. It can assist institutions to consider questions of why the use of technology must not be taken for granted and what might be the challenges and opportunities of technology. Developments in mobile technology are widening the space of learning in on-campus and distance learning systems in higher education by allowing flexible and instant access to rich digital resources. Mobile learning can also play a significant supplemental role within university education. Challenges facing on-campus and distance learning systems is meeting the ever increasing and diversified demands for higher education. Universities, which adopt on-campus, distance learning systems, and become dual-mode institutions, consider the mode to be one of the strategies through which they can achieve increased enrolments.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, technology will mean any product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form. Examples of technology amongst others comprises personal computers, digital television, email, digital camera and other electronic hardware and software that these systems could access. The chapter will be structured as follows: The first section deals with the Introduction. The second section deals with Structuration theory. The third section deals with ‘The

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on-campus and open education system.’ The fourth section deals with the ‘Distance learning system in Higher Education. The fifth section deals with the ‘Opportunities of technology in on-campus and distance learning systems. The sixth section deals with the ‘Challenges of technology in on-campus and distance learning systems.’ The seventh section deals with the ‘Implications’. Finally, the eighth section will be the Conclusion.

On-campus and distance learning systems need to focus on the instructional use of computers, television, and other kinds of electronic hardware and software on their programs. Developments in mobile technology are widening the space of learning in on-campus and distance learning systems in higher education by allowing flexible and instance access to rich digital resources. Mobile learning can also play a significant supplemental role within university education. Technological advancement can play a vital role in developing an on-campus and distance learning systems in higher education. Thus, cloud computing and its applications are important to on-campus and distance learning systems of distance education worldwide. In higher education, cloud-computing services are used to provide the means for students to collaborate and interact in a distributed learning space. It enables institutions to communicate with their students, particularly to discuss and learn certain learning tasks through technological programs (Al-Samarraie & Saeed, 2018, pp.77-78). Technology can be a viable tool in providing multiple modes of learning delivery modes and communication that can meet the needs of students and institutions, at low cost, and the demand for continuing education.

In the design of technology-driven learning programs, citizens as stakeholders need to be consulted and to have a say within the collaborative process in all phases in decision-making, designing, planning, implementing and evaluating of programs (Lember, Surva & Tönurist, 2017, p.81). The participation of citizens as stakeholders ought to be initiated by both the on-campus and distance learning institutions and government. There is a need for a multi-directional communication and a shared trust between citizens, the institutions and the state within the institutions. Therefore, digital technologies can create new social practices and interactions in and within the institutions.

The next section deals with Structuration Theory.

STRUCTURATION THEORY

It explains how the structure and agency are related in the development of social behaviour. An on-campus and distance higher education settings take the shape they have because of the interplay between social structures and human actions. In an on-campus and distance higher education settings structures ought to be seen as having functional properties, and how students negotiate social structures, their knowledge and the way they act is of importance (Jack, 2017, p. 213). Structuration theory can assist institutions to consider questions of why the use of technology must not be taken-for-granted and what might be the challenges and opportunities of technology. In essence, it is about the influential actions of certain actors and the practices they are able to embed in an on-campus and distance higher education settings, from within or from outside. It helps the analysis of those situations where people might be able to alter their own or others’ internal structures whilst external structures stay ostensibly the same (Jack, 2017, p. 215). The building and development of a flexible and responsive IT infrastructure was the most important issue of IT management in any system (Byrd & Turner, 2000, p. 168). IT infrastructure is a multifaceted concept that seems to include two related but distinct components.

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