


Chapter 2

Distance Education in Higher Education: Modern Applications and Management Courses

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ABSTRACT

Distance education became a reality, increasingly based on higher education. The pandemic context (COVID-19) that devastated many countries and the whole world in general proved this reality and presented a different proposal in education and even in people's lives. It has changed the educational system, and there has been much discussion about e-learning and remote teaching in digital learning environments, yet they are quite different terms. This chapter aims to study what exists to date about distance learning in higher education, with a special focus on business administration courses. To get the full benefit of online learning, new strategies and learning methodologies are applied, and information and communication technology can play a fundamental role here.

INTRODUCTION

Distance Education (DE) has already existed for more than 150 years, although its practices have been more commonly adopted in training and learning contexts during the pandemic period by Higher Educa-

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tion Institutions (HEIs) focused on face-to-face teaching. This new context brought new challenges to the management of these HEIs, as well as to the adaptation of the academic community, teachers and students, to this new teaching-learning model (technology, assessment systems, teaching strategies, etc.).

This chapter seeks to briefly describe the main phases that gave rise to DE and, in addition, it also seeks to present this concept in a comprehensive way from the perspective of Higher education. Throughout this approach, several similar terms associated with DE are presented and a relevant distinction is also made for a term that is naturally suited to the pandemic context of Covid-19. In addition to the general definition of the concept, the characteristics that distinguish it from others are presented as well as possible barriers that may limit it. After a brief exploration of the topic and their modern applications, this chapter seeks to contextualize theory with management courses, such as accounting, marketing, and human resource management.

The meaning of the word “teaching” highlights the role of the teacher in the learning process and comprises all activities that impart knowledge, facts, ideas or skills (Anohina, 2005). However, Higher Education has changed in recent years. In fact, teachers are no longer the center of the learning process. It is therefore important to situate teachers and students in Higher Education in time and space. Currently, students are at the center of this process, and the preference for traditional methodologies begins to be questioned and, therefore, teachers use new methodologies to stimulate creativity, teamwork and skills. Thus, within the classroom, students do their activities with due preparation beforehand, using active methodologies (Martínez-Jiménez & Ruiz-Jiménez, 2020). In this sense, throughout the approach followed in this chapter, traditional and active methodologies are presented, both of which are currently applicable in the teaching learning process. Regarding these methodologies, a clear distinction is made between the role of the teacher and the student in the process, and a parallelism is also made between the DE modality and its alternative, which naturally offers another type of advantages. Furthermore, there is an attempt to elucidate the change in thinking and resource management, especially when the more active perspective is referred to, and two different types of methodologies (flipped classroom and blended learning) are mentioned.

In the context of HEIs that offer management courses and whose relationship with the environment is a recurring practice, this teaching modality, especially during the periods of confinement in this pandemic context, proved to be particularly challenging. In fact, such context had repercussions in a set of limitations in terms of contacts within the scope of applied research in co-creation, particularly in the initial period, in which there was no established protocol of action. However, there has also been a mutual learning between the parties, in order to enable new practices that involve digitalization. It is therefore important to relate the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and with the interaction and communication between teachers and students of Higher Education management. This chapter will list some possible strategies regarding the VLE, in order to make the teaching-learning process more effective.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to analyze some scientific publications on DE in Higher Education, attending management courses. Initially, a list of documents was prepared in a database (Scopus), based on some criteria that justified the validation of those documents, like the procedure for choosing certain keywords in the search area. Thus, some “direct” terms to the study were used, such as “distance”, “education”, “online”,

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