

Equivalence Theory and Distance Education

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The Equivalency Theory states that students need to acquire the same skills, attitudes or knowledge regardless if the learning experience was face to face or long distance. Learning experience is anything that happens to the student to promote learning including what is observed, felt, heard or done. Simonson (1999) affirms that the more equivalent the learning experiences of distant learners are to those of local learners, the more equivalent will be the outcomes of the educational experiences for all learners.

A question presented in the article by Simonson (1999) makes the reader think if classes via teleconference (virtual classroom) where students and teachers can hear and see each other in real time, could be considered distance education or not. Experts still do not know the answer but it is important to consider what Silber and Foshay said.

You would probably find absurd to create a research study on whether students learn better with red cover books or blue cover books right? Silber and Foshay make the same comparison among computers and books. They are two different types of media to deliver instruction. The learning will depend on the teacher and the instructional method he uses not in the media to deliver images, text or sound. Silber and Foshay also urged readers to note that “books or computers do not cause learning; rather the instructional method you use with them causes learning” (Instructional Media versus Instructional Method, e-book chapter, para. 1).

. In my opinion it is not the same because students and teachers are actually separated. In my opinion the interaction is a little difference even if they can see a live feed of the class or the teacher through a screen.

Simonson (1995) defined Distance Education as formal, institutionally-based educational activities where the learner and teacher are separated from one another, and where two-way interactive telecommunication systems are used to synchronously and asynchronously connect them for the sharing of video, voice, and data-based instruction. (Simonson, 1995).

In my opinion this theory applies to all levels of education and it relates to other theories of Distance Education Learning because they all consider the fact that teacher and student are separated from place and time. However Simonson's definition includes the idea of students "connecting" to "share" information via video, voice and exchange of data. This idea is more similar to Constructivists Learning Theories where students share, discuss and create their own knowledge (Leonard, 2002, p.38).

References

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