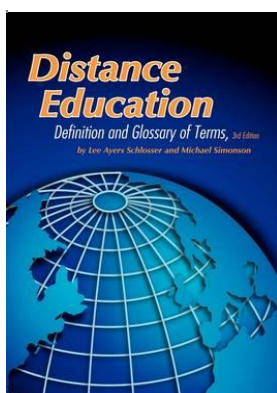# DISTANCE EDUCATION:
Definition And Glossary Of Terms, 3RD EDITION

Schlosser, L. A. & Simonson, M., ISBN: 1607521393, EAN:9781607521396, Publisher: Information Age Publishing, Pages:249, June 2009

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Because *Distance Education* (DE) provides students the new opportunities for accessible and lifelong education, it is getting more and more popular day by day over the entire world, and as stated in the book it has become a major topic of interest in the field of educational communication and technology.

This is one of the basic books in the field of DE. It is written by Lee Ayers Schlosser and Michael Simonson. Lee Ayers Schlosser, EdD, PhD is in Extended Campus Program of Southern Oregon University and an associate professor of Criminology Department at Southern Oregon University. Michael R. Simonson, Ph.D. is a professor of Instructional Technology & Distance Education at Nova Southeastern University. There are three editions of the book.

In 2002 first edition, in 2006 second edition, in 2009 third and last edition was published. If you look at content of first and second edition of the book, you can't see very big difference between them. But in third edition there are considerable changes.

In first and second edition *definitions, brief history and theory of DE, glossary of terms* are given. In addition to these titles, third edition provides information about *effectiveness, status and future of DE, learning outcomes, perceptions and attributes of learners, interaction, barriers, research in DE*. The book is consisted of 249 pages (+vii) and divided into four sections.

In part I, Distance Education is defined as "institutional-based, formal education where the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources, and instructors (Simonson, 2003)".

After that, definitions of Holmberg (1986), Peters (1988), Moore (1994), Keegan (1996) and Garrison and Shale (1987) are given as traditional definitions. Furthermore, emerging definitions are discussed in the light of rapid changes in society and technology. Brief history of DE is provided from correspondence study, to electronic communication, to distance teaching universities.

216

Finally in this part, after an explanation about why theory is needed for DE following theories are briefly explained: Charles Wedemeyer's Theory of Independent Study, Michael Moore's Theory of Transactional Distance, Otto Peters' Theory of Industrialization of Teaching, Börje Holmberg's Theory of Interaction and Communication, Malcolm Knowles' Andragogy, Hilary Perraton's A Synthesis of Existing Theories and Desmond Keegan's Equivalency

In part II, current situation of DE is given in brief. Anadolu University in Turkey, The Open University of Hong Kong, growth in DE in Sub-Saharan African countries, national higher distance education program in China, finally European Union and United States are taken as examples. In this part two of the important management issues of distance education are also discussed. The first one is *effectiveness*.

According to the 248 studies were compiled by Russell (2000), there is no significant difference between distance learning and traditional classroom learning (Schlosser & Simonson, 2009, p. 42). In other words, distance learning can be considered as effective as face-to-face learning (Dean, Stah, Swlwester, & Pear, 2001, p 252). Topics related to effectiveness are presented in the book as follows: i*nstructional strategies which are used designing distance education courses, visualization of ideas and concepts, an adequate support system, interaction, assessments related to learning outcomes*. The second management issue of distance education given in the book is accreditation. Defining standards are critical for accreditation and to ensure quality of educational programs. According to book, generally the same standards are applied to traditional and distance education programs in United States.

In part III, authors focus on learner side of DE and emphasize that there is a shift toward more learner-centered approach. In this part, important topics of distance education which are *attributes, perceptions, interaction patterns, learning experiences* and *barriers* are examined briefly in the light of research studies besides a short review of distance education research literature. According to Biner, Dean & Mellinger, 1994) factors affecting satisfaction are instruction/instructor, technology, course management, at-side personnel, and promptness of material delivery, support services and out-of-class communication with instructor.

In addition, factors affecting learning at distance are content, environment, finances, readiness, time employment, and family support (Jegede & Kirkwood, 1994). Moreover it is stated that distance education learners generally have a more favorable attitude toward distance education than to traditional learners, and *interaction* is a primary component of any effective distance education program (Mahle, 2007) and important for learning experience. Interaction has various definitions; an instructional exchange; computer mediated communication; and social/psychological connections. Different technologies allow different degrees of interaction.

Part IV is glossary of terms. It takes up approximately sixty-five percent of the book. Although glossary of terms contains mostly terms related to technology, there are educational and communicational concepts in it.

In conclusion, this book is clear, informative, and provides distance education terminology in a way that is applicable and easy to understand. As mentioned earlier, this is one of the basic books in the field of distance education. It can be used both experts in the field and anyone who is interested in distance education.

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