

Lecture № 14

E- learning: on-line teaching and training

Plan

1. Virtual and distance learning. E-learning.
2. Teaching and learning online.
3. Course design for online learning: examples and considerations
4. How to get started with online learning.
5. Teacher training and online learning.
6. Discussion lists and online groups.
- 7.

Although the label "distance learning" could be applied to any situation where students are learning at remote sites, the term is normally restricted to teaching via satellite or long-distance telecommunication technology. One author defines distance learning as "an educational process in which a significant proportion of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space and/or time from the learner" (Perraton, 1980, p.10). Two-way communication between teacher and student can take place through writing, television phone-in programs, two-way video, or telephone (Davis, 1988). The label "distance learning" is catchy, but, unfortunately, easily over interpreted. Most systems to which this label is applied are simply one-way broadcasting stations that transmit audio and video signals to students at one or more remote sites. However, other systems are available that provide two-way audio, and, in some cases, even two-way video between the teacher and the students.

Distance learning technologies present many new options for teaching foreign languages that will further expand the range of instructional techniques in the same way that language labs, television, and computers have augmented the standard classroom. It is important in reviewing these distance learning options to distinguish among their various levels of capability as these systems place different constraints on the instructional process. For instance, one-way, presentation-only systems have been criticized as providing nothing more than a video distribution system that could be replicated by mailing video tapes to students. The lack of immediate two-way interaction that characterizes many distance education programs seems contrary to the aims of foreign language teaching. However, with this interaction appropriately used, distance technologies can support the goals of foreign language pedagogy. Instructional strategies that encourage student-teacher and student-student dialogue and learner autonomy in distance learning situations must be incorporated into instruction (Davis, 1988).

The strongest argument for distance education is its potential to provide instruction to students who, because of distance, time, or financial constraints, do not have access to traditional learning opportunities or specialized courses (Davis, 1988). Distance learning courses have been developed to provide equal access to an educational opportunity for schools, especially rural ones that have to operate with a limited curriculum and staff (Wohlert, 1989). The objective is to provide courses in

foreign languages to schools where it would not otherwise be possible for students to study them. The potential for providing instruction in the less commonly taught languages is particularly enhanced by distance technology. In many cases, the guiding principle is for distance learning courses not to become permanent, but to serve as a stepping stone to hiring a regular classroom instructor by laying the basis for a viable language program, especially in the less commonly taught languages (Kataoka, 1987).

The success of distance learning in developing students' foreign language skills depends on the ability of the instructional program to provide language learning in face-to-face settings. This capability can now be provided through two-way satellite communications that allow teachers to communicate with students at each site and to provide the interaction needed for development of second language skills.

Problematic questions:

1. Define the role of Virtual and distance learning in FLT in your country
2. Which online language learning programmes have you learned? Describe it.
3. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of E-learning.
4. How to get started with online learning in FLT?
5. What online teacher training programmes have you done? Describe it.

Literature:

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