E-Portfolio Task - Questions for Reflection - Wave 3

Olga Usova

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Instructor: Lisa Blaschke and Don Olcott

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1. Did you experience any "a-ha!" moments during this wave? Tell us more about them and what specifically made them "a-ha!" moments.

While the twentieth-century education was mainly based on behaviorist, cognitivist, and developmental constructivist theories, the twenty-first century brought a completely different mindset. The development of technologies and a faster life pace required a better way to solving problems and educational obstacles rather than following simple instructions or using a textbook to obtain knowledge. Knowledge is becoming more dynamic and evolving; it is not like mathematical equations that are static and finite but rather full of new ideas and inventions that are often discovered through group collaborations (Harasim, 2012).

My "a-ha!" moment was how different scholars – T. Bates, T.Anderson, L. Harasim, A.Tutt etc. were incorporating theories of constructivism and collaboration into Distance Education. According to Tony Bates, "The key point here is that for constructivists, learning is seen as essentially a social process, requiring communication between learner, teacher, and others. This social process cannot effectively be replaced by technology, although technology may facilitate it" (Bates, 2017). However, over a period of time, with technological interventions in all spheres of lives, both collaborative and constructivist approaches proved that they could lead to profound, academic online learning. The amount of knowledge the instructors give online, and the amount of work they put into an understanding of the material for online students in both approaches often compensate for the lack of physical activity. They can also directly support the development of a range of high-level intellectual skills, such as critical thinking, analytical thinking, synthesis, and evaluation through Online Collaborative Learning when students find answers and come to conclusions on their own with the teacher. Constructivism and

Online Collaborative Learning influenced more than one study because it is a form of behavior pattern that cannot be referred to pedagogy only. Jean Piaget defined constructivism as an experiential learning. Often the differences of background and skills of learners are what constitutes to collaboration among learners (McLeod, 2015).

2. Go back to your original definition and consider again how it has changed (and if it has). What specific readings, interactions, and/or discussions influenced the change?

My original definition of DE was: "Distance education is a systematic process of interaction between instructors and students that allows two-way communication, instant or non-instant, that provides necessary learning material and expertise in a virtual environment employing technology."

Then, during the 2nd Wave I expanded it: "Distance education is a unique way of teaching and learning that uses multiple approaches and theories combined to provide an effective interaction between instructors and students allowing a two-way communication, instant or non-instant, in a virtual environment employing technology and all the necessary adjustments to its rapid progress and development."

Then I asked Terry Anderson to give his definition of DE, and he said that it is "a form of formal education in which the students and teacher are separated by physical distance and/or in time. The definition is contests because the nature of the technology used to support both content delivery and interaction is always changing, and people love to give a new name to any new venture, thus the mobile learning, e-learning, online learning all are just variations of DE."

I completely agree with T. Anderson; therefore, I will live my 2nd Wave definition the same for now. However, I am sure it will change dramatically in a couple of years, because the technology is always of delivery are constantly changing as well.

3. Think of a real-world situation, perhaps your current work environment, where you could apply something that you have learned in this module. Describe this situation in your journal.

Since I focused on constructivist and collaborative approaches of this Wave, I think when teaching military students, the main weaknesses of both constructivist and collaborative approaches would be the fact that these approaches do not scale easily. To form a current knowledge based on experience that the students develop themselves requires very skilled instructors and very few students to educated thoroughly and mainly. Each student's thinking process is different. To allow them to form their knowledge can be challenging in big auditoriums. Collaborative learning can be even more challenging for teaching online than constructivist approach on its own because group learning online requires a lot of work. A constructivist approach can bring even more in-depth knowledge because it often allows the students more thorough learning techniques.

The main strength of both collaborative and constructivist approaches is the fact that both can lead to profound, academic learning if not better than in a classroom. The amount of knowledge the instructors give online and the amount of work they put into an understanding of the material for students on their own in both approaches often compensate for the lack of physical activity. They can also directly support the development of a range of high-level

intellectual skills, such as critical thinking, analytical thinking, synthesis, and evaluation. In my

e-Journal I will post the whole class I composed for high school students based on collaborative

learning. It is long to post it here. I am already on page 5.

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