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OMDE 608 9040
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Assignment #1

1.1. Introduction and Overview of Learner Support

Brindley, J. (2014). Learner support in online distance education: Essential and evolving. In O.

Zawacki-Richter & T. Anderson (Eds.), *Online distance education: Towards a research agenda* (pp. 287-310). Retrieved from

http://www.aupress.ca/books/120233/ebook/11_Zawacki-Richter_Anderson_2014-Online_Distance_Education.pdf

Institutions are much quicker at preparing online lessons and overall curriculum than equally accessible online learner support services. However, lately, the progress in learner support both online and on-campus has been significant. No research says that only one specific study led to the development of online support systems. It is one of those fields that continues to progress and widen every day, and it will continue to encounter future challenges as online community grows and develops. However, support systems are becoming more proactive. It is essential for schools to interfere early to minimize dropouts, but the students' ability to self-discipline is as important. Some students need group work and instructor support while others work just as efficiently with online material on their own (Brindley, 2014).

Baloyi, G. (2013). Learner support in context of open distance and e-Learning for adult students using new technologies. *Proceedings of the International Conference on e-Learning*, 31-37. Retrieved from

<http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.umuc.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=2f58c8f1-b3f0-4f54-a511-82723bddabcf%40pdc-v-sessmgr01>

University of South Africa (UNISA) is the largest and one of the oldest Universities in South Africa. UNISA pioneered tertiary distance education in 1946 and ever since has played an essential role in giving access to higher quality education to previously disadvantaged groups. In 200, Garrison, Anderson and Archer (200) proposed the Community of Inquiry as a model to research what learner support systems UNISA needs to broaden the participation rate in higher education even in remote rural areas. Although the study was lecture and interview-based, 400 students registered to participate (Basloyi, 2013). Learner support might cover learning materials, teaching and tutoring, administrative aspects, guidance and counseling. The study that was done in UNISA refers to all aspects of learner support systems and is defined as of importance, especially for open/distance learning institutions.

The criteria used for selecting these sources was as follows:

1. Well-written and organized
2. Full chapter from a text-book or a full text from a scholarly journal that is peer reviewed
3. In-class text provides theory, while a researched article supports that theory
4. Both resources provide specific details on learner support system
5. Provide data supporting research outcomes
6. Give recommendations for future research and changes
7. Relate to current learner support issues

Source rankings:

Brindley – although in her chapter, the author does not conduct any case studies, it gives a great overview of learner support development, its evolution, and literature. It also explains

deferent theories that led to modernization of support systems today. In this chapter, Bindley talks about different learning theories, student satisfaction surveys and need assessments, guidance for learner support practice, intervention studies, learner characteristics, and demographics.

Baloyi - there are many learner support systems and much research is done to survey and identify what works for schools in specific areas, that it was decided to take a well-known international University, University of South Africa, to look at their learner support systems and research. This source explains that UNISA was one of the oldest distance education Universities with undeveloped learner support systems, which provides an excellent learner support overview of a specific institution. Although it is not as broad as the first resource, it does provide a case study of Community of Inquiry as a model to research what learner support systems UNISA, and probably other institutions as well, need.

1.2. Tutoring, Teaching and Learning, Advising and Counseling

Berge, Z. (2013). Barriers to communication in distance education. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 14(1), 374-388. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286122039_Barriers_to_communication_in_distance_education

Zane L. Berge, Ph.D. Professor of Education explains different barriers to communication. The time difference and distance in distance education makes tutoring, teaching, advising, counseling, and learning processes more challenging than in face-to-face education. Berge talks about various barriers of effective communication which can be technical, psychological, social, cultural, or contextual. Distance education can offer many affordances and challenges. Although technology makes communication between the parties easier, cheaper, and more user-friendly,

the challenges become even more complex. Therefore, Berge describes the hierarchy to communication barriers in Distance Education with all its challenges and clues to how to design online classes by reducing these communication obstacles.

Moore, M.G. & Kearsley, G. (1996). *Distance Education: A Systems View*. Wadsworth Publishing Company, 146-51. Retrieved from http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website00236B/WEB/TUT_01.HTM

Michael G. Moore and Greg Kearsley wrote in their book “Distance Education: A System View” that the primary reason for having online tutors, advisors, and counselors is to provide students with individualized instructions and policy overviews. Often the tutor is the only person the student interacts with throughout the course, and counselors and advisers provide administrative support. They may have many functions: discussing course content with a student, providing feedback on progress, grading of assignment/tests, helping students plan their work, etc. The tutors often serve as a bridge between students and the institution to help the students to interpret policies and solve problems or difficulties they might encounter. Teachers in Distance Education face specific challenges due to separation from the learner. Therefore, the teacher has to take extra measures to ensure the course is very well structured taking in consideration clear objectives and students’ time (Moore & Kearsley, 1996).

The criteria used for selecting this article was as follows:

1. Well-written and organized
2. Full article that is peer reviewed
3. Articles are connected to the topic
4. Both resources provide specific details concerning challenges for tutors, teachers, advisors, and counselors.

5. Give recommendations for future research and changes
6. Relate to current learner support issues

Source rankings:

Berge – this article explains the challenges in Distance Education communication that tutors, teachers, and administrative services face. Although the author does not specifically talk on the teacher-tutor topic, he underlines all the difficulties that may arise in the process. Unlike the second source, it is not a book, and it does not directly discuss tutoring or teaching process; therefore, it receives second rating. However, if it was a well-organized, connected paper, it would provide a good introduction to the next thought process.

Moore & Kearsley – this is a great book on tutoring and teaching challenges for Distance Education learners and staff members. Although only a link to specific pages is provided, the full text of the book can be bought online. This is a great overview of distance education obstacles the learners, institutions, and educators may encounter. This source is directly connected to the topic and receives higher rating out of the two.

1.3. Library and Administrative Support Services

Corbett, A., & Brown, A. (2015). The roles that librarians and libraries play in distance education settings. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 18*(2). Retrieved from http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/summer182/corbett_brown182.html

The library services have to know how to help the students with searching and locating resources for assignments, teach them to learn how to use those resources and support their educational needs. Critical role of online library services is to provide technical support like tutorials on the library Web pages or hands-on training on various programs. Both students and librarians need to know how software programs work to be able to utilize online resources.

Online libraries include not only books and articles but also online instructions on how to navigate to specific sites, videos, tutorials, television, and blogs. Library online services are designed to help students from all walks of life, from different time-zones and financial income. They should be accessible 24/7. Digital library resources often provide learners with information on how to access library resources to be able to meet each school's guidelines (Corbett & Brown, 2015).

Lillard, L., Wilson, P., & Baird, C., (2004). Progressive partnering: Expanding student and faculty access to information services. *Journal of Library Administration*, 41(1-2), 227-242. doi: 10.1300/J111v41n01_17

At University of Kentucky, a distance learning team that included a distance learning librarian and an administrator worked closely together to build a pilot study that included a librarian and an administrator together with an instructor into distance education classes. The librarians designed many services that included instant messaging software, online tutorials, library Web pages, electronic reserves and resources through proxy server. During the semester the students were also given a survey to record advantages and disadvantages of collaborative library and administrative support. The students believed that they had adequate personalized attention with the presence of a librarian and administrative support to give them additional guidance for present and future online classes.

The criteria used for selecting this article was as follows:

1. Well-written and organized
2. Full article that is peer reviewed
3. Articles are connected to the topic
4. Different approach to library and administrative services

5. Studies that support a theory
6. Give recommendations for future research and changes
7. Relate to current learner support issues
8. Include different institutions where the theory is tested and surveyed

Source rankings:

Corbett & Brown - the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) developed “Standards for Distance Learning Library Services”, which were approved by the ACRL Board in July 2008 that states that every college member is entitled to library services regardless of what part of the world they enrolled in, as long as they are members of that institution. It also allowed for an embedded librarian who provides learners with instructions on how to access the library and how to efficiently choose the reliable sources. This source provides an overall overview of online services accessible for everyone. It can serve as an introduction source to the next annotated research article. It is not specific towards a certain school and can be applied to any educational institution.

Lillard, Wilson, & Baird – this resource allows to compare and contrast the role of the librarian and an administrator to teaching technique without their presence to student success in the online classroom environment. The strategies described in the article can be applied to diverse student populations. This source is secondary because to make it a complete paper, a research on University of South Africa and possibly a couple of more examples would have to be added. This article gives an example with data and survey results of University of Kentucky only.

Conclusion: All researched resources were taken from UMUC library and OMDE 608 provided references and required reading lists. Student support services are vital in distance education student success. Every distance education institution has different support systems in place based on their students, geographical position, and available technical services. As online courses become more popular each year, online support services become a vital part of student success.

References

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