

Chapter 83

The Future of Curriculum Development in Distance Education

Figen Kılıc

Mersin University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Today, extremely fast developments take place in science and technology. These changes and developments reflect upon all systems and give rise to changes in some concepts and processes. Lifelong learning is one of the concepts affected by these changes. Educational institutions are considered to be responsible for spreading knowledge through e-learning, virtual university, Web-based education, distance education, which offer professional development. Therefore, distance education institutions have an important place in the education system of the future. However, innovations and developments have to be followed closely and operationally used for adaptation to the education system of the future within the distance education system as well. A scientific and realistic way of adapting to these developments is possible only if program development efforts are constant. Looking from this framework, teaching design, internationalization, entrepreneurship have given rise to differentiation in the program development of distance education. This is explored in this chapter.

INTRODUCTION

With rapid advance of information and technology in today's world, learning-teaching environments, methods and techniques have begun to differ. Learning is an inherently social activity and requires a well arranged, strong content. Learning experiences can be possible not only through content but also online communities and networks. Besides, difference in space and time,

rapid increase in population and differing needs of the increasing population, rapid change in the knowledge learnt are among the realities of today. Therefore curriculum development efforts are advanced in line with these new developments and curriculum development concept has started to be frequently used in the distance education practices. Program development studies are processes which continue constantly and have an interaction between the items. Thus, it can be

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said that program development process is a study addressing those principles and activities utilized in order to realize the objectives covered by the program in a sound, effective and realistic manner in a manner that has been put into practice (Varış, 1996). Since there is a positive correlation between realization of the education objectives designed and carrying out the education activities within scope of a program, elements that affect the result should be considered within wholeness of a system and should be developed consistently with one another in order for changes in behavior expected by way of education to take place (Sezgin, 2000). Practices in the distance education which began with learning by mail and continued with radio, video conference, teleconference, computer and Internet use have changed with the advances and developments in the advances and developments at mass communication means. On other words, education programs will constantly renew themselves and develop.

This part has focused on how program development studies can be shaped within framework of lifelong learning under the light of the new knowledge and technological developments.

BACKGROUND

Lifelong Learning and Reflections on Life

Rapid change in information and technology causes individuals to feel the need for lifelong learning, and to meet such needs, they need to have certain knowledge, skills and attitudes within “lifelong learning” skills. European Commission (2007) describes such knowledge, skills and attitudes as “proficiency of communication in mother tongue,” “proficiency of communication in foreign languages,” “basic competencies in mathematical thinking and science and technology, ” “digital competence,” “ proficiency of learning to learn, ” “ awareness of becoming a social citizen ” as

well as “cultural consciousness and adequacy of expression ” . When looking separately at these skills specified within framework of lifelong learning, ability to orally express the emotions, views and facts in the mother tongue and ability to use the language effectively at the social and cultural environments from a linguistic point of view is defined as proficiency of communication at the mother tongue (Candy, 2003) while proficiency of communication at the foreign languages describes ability to express the emotions, views and facts in a foreign language verbally and in writing, ability to use the language in the social and cultural environments effectively and have the ability of intercultural perception skill (Bruce, 1999). It is also specified that mathematical thinking and digital competence is effective use of data communication technologies, effective use of computer in acquisition, production, evaluation, presentation of the knowledge, communicating via Internet; competence of learning to learn is individuals’ taking on responsibility of learning and ability of realizing their self-learning ; consciousness of being a social citizen is realizing one’s responsibility, entrepreneurship is putting the ideas into practice, taking risks, cultural consciousness and expression proficiency is explanation of emotions, views and ideas related to a group of media including music, painting, literature and visual arts (Wain, 2000; Walters and Walters, 2001). When looking from the perspective of definitions made, attitudes, behaviors and views expected from the individuals within scope of the lifelong education competencies clearly indicate clues as to what might be expected from the education system. Also, especially education of individuals who can think critically, solve problems, make independent decisions, work cooperatively, can be creative and learn all life long is considered important from functions of education. When looking from this framework, educational institutions are considered to be responsible for spreading the knowledge through means such as e-learning, virtual university, Web based education, *distance*

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