

# Discussion 8: Theory in Distance Education

For this discussion, read Simonson, pp. 40-58; and Moore, chapters 2, 3 OR 5 (choose one).

Then, address **one** of the following:

**1. Simonson briefly discusses most of the prominent theories in the field of distance education. Which of these theories do you find most compelling? How could you apply that theory in your personal (that is, as a distance learner) and professional practices?**

Moore's theory of transactional distance proposed a system of interaction between three elements: (a) dialogue; (b) structure; (c) and learner autonomy (Moore and Diehl, 2019). The dialogue is established when the teachers and learners communicate to construct knowledge; the level of communication or dialogue would depend on the systems or programs offered by institutions, and if those programs respond to the needs of individual learners (structure) (Simonson, Zvacek & Smaldino, 2019). If all these occur, then the level of autonomy of students would be high creating more independence from instructors.

As a distance learner, I have been able to see the connection between the three elements mentioned by Moore. Zoom meetings and emails are used by instructors to communicate with students. In zoom meetings instructors go over previous assignments, and guide students on what is expected in future assignments. The dialogue between the instructors and students is also effective due to a good course structure, learning objectives are well identified as well as content themes, information is presented in the way learners can understand it, and in addition projects are well structured so all students can succeed. A good interaction between the first two elements of transactional distance (dialogue and structure) have helped me become a better independent learner.

As a teacher, I will use zoom meetings and course structure to create good dialogue with students. If the learning objectives, content themes, case studies, exercises, projects, and tests are well explained, students will communicate with the teacher just when they feel is necessary. This will create more autonomy from students, which is the third element of theory of transitional distance.

## Reference

- Moore, M. & Diehl, W. (2019). *Handbook of Distance Education*. Routledge.
- Simonson, M., Zvacek, S, & Samaldino, S. (2019). *Teaching and learning at a distance education*. (7<sup>th</sup> Edition) IAP-Information Age Publishing