

Moore's Transactional Distance Theory posits that the channel of communication is equally important to the teacher and learner. It is more concerned with pedagogy than geography and its key variables are structure, dialogue and learner autonomy. Structure is established through course design, the organization of instruction and the integration of communications media. Two-way and real-time communication is utilized and the student autonomy rests largely on the student's degree of personal responsibility. Since first defined by Moore in 1972, these definitions have been refined, but the basic principles remain the same (Shearer, 2010, p. 2).

Although it can be said that historical theories on distance education have contributed to the development of the field, the Transactional Distance Theory has and continues to serve as the philosophical framework. Unlike Garrison, Keegan, and Peters, Moore's theory is dynamic in that it provides all of the elements essential to the learning process. And, is regarded as having "first and foremost served to ensure that distance education is taken seriously as a field of study in the United States, which was not the case before 1972" (Bernath and Vidal, 2007, 446).

While Transactional Distance Theory has contributed significantly to the continued development of distance education and theories associated therewith. Broader implications of its ability to potentiate innovative instructional approaches, promote the sustainability of distance education, and drive policy development" are that much more promising (Gokool-Ramdoo, 2008).

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The Framing of Distance Education: Transactional Distance Theory

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