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Asia-specific Scaffolding Needs in Grounded Design e-Learning : empirical comparisons among several institutions

Paul Kawachi

kawachi@open-ed.net

Open Education Network

ABSTRACT :

The implementation in Asia of open and distance learning stimulated through the use of telecommunication technologies has been investigated over the past three years within a theoretical framework based on transactional distance. Institutions were examined in fifteen regions including Bangladesh, (mainland) China, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. Grounded design was developed, and the Asia-specific scaffolding needs were identified. The design was drawn from the four categories of transactional distance determined by the deployment of structure (S) and dialogue (D) :- (S- D-), (S+ D-), (S+ D+), and (S- D+). Scaffolding is the use of tools, strategies and guides to enable students to achieve a higher level of learning within their zone of proximal development, that they would otherwise be unable to achieve unassisted. The institutions were broadly using e-learning for adding desired dialogue for cooperative learning in groups. There was discovered a clear need for scaffolding to provide the needed structure to assist in the collaborative learning stages, for developing learning autonomy. The specific scaffolding needs are given including which learning interactions and explicitly which are the optimal media for supporting these needed interactions.