

## Education Theories

Simonson's emerging theory of distance education and equivalence of learning experiences states that "the more equivalent the learning experiences of distant students are to that of local students, the more equivalent will be the outcomes of the learning experience (Schlosser & Simonson, 2009)". A statement that we use in our professional development trainings is "fair is not always equal". As a parent, if soccer season comes around and one of my children has outgrown their soccer shoes then I will go out and get them a new pair, but I will not go buy a new pair for my other three children. It is not equal for one child to have a brand new pair of soccer shoes and the other three to use their old ones that fit, but it is a fair expectation that all of the children will have shoes that fit. In a classroom setting if one student has a documented need to have extended time to finish assignments, then the teacher will not give extended time to all students. This same philosophy applies to distance education according to Simonson. If one student is in a local classroom and another is in a distance location then the two students should expect to have equivalent learning but they should not expect to be doing the exact same things.

I agree with Simonson's theory, and I struggle with the implementation of the theory. For instructors who are new to distance learning, it takes a larger time investment to create equivalent learning experiences for the distance learner. Instructors have to create the experiences while they are also learning a new platform for instruction and without adequate support the task can seem insurmountable. It is necessary for instructors to have support in the development of ideas, the creation of the learning in the platform to be used, and in the monitoring of the learning modules.

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## References

Michael Simonson, Susan Zvacek, Sharon E. Smaldino (2011-02-09). Teaching and Learning at a Distance: Foundations of Distance Education, 5/e (Page 52). Allyn; Bacon. Kindle Edition.

Schlosser, L., & Simonson, M. (2009). Distance education: Definition and glossary of terms (3rd ed.). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.