

Murphy, E., & Rodriguez-Manzanares, M. (2007). Deviations from the script: An Activity Theory perspective on the practice of the e-teacher in the virtual high-school classroom. In V. Uskov (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 10th IASTED International Conference on Computers and Advanced Technology in Education, Beijing, China* (pp. 121-126). Anaheim, CA: ACTA Press.

In the case study reported on in this paper, we identified deviations in the practice of the e-teacher that point to germs of new forms of teaching. Our case was distance education at the high-school level within the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Participants were 13 of the 28 e-teachers employed by an organization responsible for the delivery of distance education as well as seven of its management and support personnel. Our theoretical framework was Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). Data collection relied on semi-structured interviews conducted primarily online. Data analysis involved identifying contradictions, categorizing them, and, from within the categories, identifying visible manifestations of deviations in the e-teachers' practice leading to innovation. These deviations were clustered and labelled thematically as follows: from controlling to engaging student attention; from e-teacher-preferred tools to student-preferred tools; from e-teacher instruction to independent student learning; from a single e-teacher's voice to multiple students' voices. Use of Activity Theory provided an explanatory lens to appreciate a case of how the introduction of new tools can bring about positive change in teachers' practice.

Murphy, E., Rodriguez-Manzanares, M., & Ciszewska-Carr, J. (2006). Perspectives on Virtual Schooling in a Canadian context. *Proceedings of the 6th International Educational Technology Conference, Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta, North Cyprus* (pp. 1241-1247). Famagusta: Eastern Mediterranean University.

Abstract

This paper presents early findings from year one of a three-year study of virtual schooling in a Canadian context. Interviews were conducted with e-teachers and managers of an organization charged with delivering distance education to 1,000 students in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Findings revealed that e-teachers overcome physical and temporal distance to collaborate professionally, build community, and form personal connections. The perspective on distance that emerges from the preliminary findings of this study validates Moore's Transactional Distance Theory in that the case highlights the possibilities of personal relationships more so than the limitations of physical and temporal separateness and isolation. The interactions between the teachers and their collaboration and collegiality are a function, not of the affordance of being near each other, but a function of shared values. Use of online synchronous communication helps decrease transactional distance.

Murphy, E., Ciszewska-Carr, J., & Rodriguez-Manzanares, M. (2006). Validity, reliability, unitizing, and latent content in analysis of online discussions. *Proceedings of the 6th International Educational Technology Conference, Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta, North Cyprus* (pp. 1231-1240). Famagusta: Eastern Mediterranean University.

Abstract

This paper presents early findings from year one of a three-year study of virtual schooling in a Canadian context. Interviews were conducted with e-teachers and managers of an organization charged with delivering distance education to 1,000 students in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Findings revealed that e-teachers overcome physical and temporal distance to collaborate professionally, build community, and form personal connections. The perspective on distance that emerges from the preliminary findings of this study validates Moore's Transactional Distance Theory in that the case highlights the possibilities of personal relationships more so than the limitations of physical and temporal separateness and isolation. The interactions between the teachers and their collaboration and collegiality are a function, not of the affordance of being near each other, but a function of shared values. Use of online synchronous communication helps decrease transactional distance.