

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND STRATEGIES FOR AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

THE AUTONOMOUS LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION.

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## **ABSTRACT**

In the present document, theories of various authors are presented, which contributed to the definition of concepts related to distance education, autonomous learning, and the relationship present between both concepts, as well as the strategies involved in each process, and the importance of using them while carrying out a distance learning process.

This model of learning allows students to have the possibility of getting access to educative programs, develop skills aimed to the knowledge management and implement communicative processes by means of technological tools, besides of being the main actor in their learning process. In a distance learning process, learners, as mentioned before students are who control the way in which the learning is carry out.

The application of autonomous learning strategies is aimed to foster in students self-regulation capabilities, being so, the learner's role, more important than teacher's role. Hence, to know and apply the autonomous learning strategies it is a good way to carry out correctly an educative process inside of a distance learning model.

Therefore, the aim of this document is to explain the characteristics proper of each concept, distance education, and autonomous learning, besides identifying why it is important to keep a permanent relationship between autonomous learning strategies and distance education.

*Keywords:* Distance Education, Autonomous learning, strategies, self-regulation, learner's role.

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CHAPTER 1  
**INTRODUCTION**

As a complement of education, it has been developed new strategies to bring more people the opportunity to get access to learning processes. In this sense, this document is organized to outline the education as an evolutionary process, which involves processes where students are who decide how to carry out their learning process, related to the place, time and environment.

In first place this document tackles the distance education concept, which according to Sacristan R (2006), “obviate the time and space boundaries, distance education unlike traditional education when using communication media that facilitates the contact between learners, teachers, and contents no matter what they are in different place and time” (p, 5). In this sense distance education is shown as a great way to carry out a learning process when people lack the time and are far away from educative institutions, in this sense, learners can select and organize knowledge besides of having contact with mates and tutors by using the technological tools.

As the second factor of this document is the acknowledgment of autonomous learning as a critical factor in the development of a learning process, in this concept Bornas (1994. p,13) stated that "autonomous people are those whose self-regulation system works of a way that allows fulfilling successfully both internal demands as external demands proposed” (As cited in Manrique V. 2004, p.3). It is in this sense that autonomous learning processes allow learners to succeed in their academic proposes by means of self-regulation, where the responsibility of learning is mainly on them.



The last topic tackled in this document, intends to deep in the strategies present in the autonomous learning, which can complement and support learners when they are carrying out a distance learning process, it is in this regard that Manrique V. (2004) suggested that “distance education is characterized by developing autonomous learning in students, which poses to the learners the challenge of taking advantage of ICTs, to be more aware participants of their learning process and their role in regulating it” (P, 7). The development of autonomy on learners intends that they apply strategies that enhance their performance and be aware of the role they play in the distance learning process.

The objectives set in this document intend to describe, determine and analyze the characteristics, challenges and advantages present in a distance educative model related to the autonomous learning and its strategies, apart from the answer to the question objective this research, which intend to describe the relevance of keeping a relationship between autonomous learning and distance education by means of strategies that can benefit a learning process in students.

### **Significance of the Study**

One of the aims of the National University Open to a Distance, Colombia (UNAD) "Is to foster and accompany the autonomous learning, generator of culture and entrepreneur spirit, that in a global context fosters the economic, social and human development sustainable" (As cited in Bravo C. 2016, p, 9). It is in that way that a study of autonomous learning can be developed as a strategy that can improve and contribute to a better development of many aspects of the social life, from a formative action focused on the self-development.

This study will be useful and relevant, in the measure in which actors of the distance education interpret the importance of establishing a relationship between this useful modality of education and the autonomous learning.

By means of this research, students can deep and understand concepts related to autonomous learning strategies and its relationship to distance learning, the effect that a correct application of them can have in their learning process, besides of understand the role they play on distance education, and how this modality of education gives them the opportunity to continue with their studies, get access to the education no matter where they live in, students save both time and money, etc. These kinds of opportunities can enhance their quality of live, while at the same time, they carry out successfully their learning process, using strategies suggested by some authors such as Bransford, Stein, and Castellano among others in the autonomous learning field.

For Contreras (n.d), autonomous learning encourages a mayor participation of students to determine aims, procedures, resources, assessments and learning moments. (As cited in Velasco E. 2011. para, 2). Students will recognize how important and helpful is to be autonomous,

besides the knowledge that they can get by means of self-regulation, the necessity to go further in the ability to learn, and strategic teaching.

We can conclude according to (Fumin and Li. 2012. p,51-52). That teaching and learning actors accept that both play a role in the learning process and recognize the characteristics that each role must have, and the importance of meeting some specific functions within this process, given that autonomous learning applied in distance education requires different skills from students and teachers. Since it is not enough to recognize the autonomous learning characteristics in every educational process, especially in distance education. It is necessary that students understand the necessity of applying such characteristics about autonomous learning, in their distance learning process to develop a better role and get the knowledge of a better and more useful way.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Mailaret (1985) Suggests that “social evolution and education are inseparable, the object of education and its methods must be checked constantly, as science and the experience raise the knowledge of the child, the adult and the society” (As cited in Camors, 2008). The education consists in the development as complete as possible of the aptitudes and skills of each person, as individual or member of a society governed by solidarity. Education promotes the development of individual at the same time that the society grows and evolves, the object of the education has come suffering some changes, as well as its methods, education is not the same that some years before. Currently educative systems have developed different and new educative models, which try to solve all the necessities that people can have. Evolution, development and education are

inseparable, and almost everybody is benefited with it.

Distance education is one of the current strategies that allows people to get access to the education by using the new technologies, because of different live conditions: economic, labor, place, time, physical incapacity, among others.

Holmberg (1989) suggests that:

Distance education is a concept that covers the learning-teaching activities in the cognitive and/or psycho-motor and affective domains of an individual learner and a supporting organization. It is characterized by non-contiguous communication and can be carried out anywhere and at any time, which makes it attractive to adults with professional and social commitments (p, 168).

Taking the above into account, it is necessary to reflect on this concept as facilitator of the education process; although, it is important to recognize that the most important factor in this kind of education is the student, since he/she is, the only one who controls and regulates the advance and the way the learning process is carried out. We can identify this role as “Autonomous learning”, this means that student must make the decisions about how he/she will develop the learning process, using the resources that he/she has at hand.

Martínez (2005) suggests that “The pedagogic effort is aimed towards the formation of individuals focused on solve concrete aspects of their learning, this means, guide the student to question, review, plan, control and assess his/her own learning action (as cited in Camors, 2008). Having in mind the previous considerations, the problem object of this research it is present in the distance educative model, which are supported by technological tools and requires the autonomy of learners, it is so that learners must comprehend and internalize the possible learning strategies and the effects that their implementation can have in their distance learning process.

The central question of this research is: What are the benefits of applying autonomous learning strategies in a distance learning process?

### **Objectives**

#### **General Objective**

- To describe the benefits of applying autonomous learning strategies for adult learners in an educative distance environment.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- Identify the characteristics, challenges and advantages of distance education.
- Determine some characteristics, factors and strategies of autonomous learning process.
- Annalise autonomous learning strategies and its influence on distance learners.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the O'Connor statement (1971), in the education process is expected that people develop abilities that help them evolve in a labor environment, while foster on them a critical thinking (As cite in Abarca, 2001)., Education generates on people, desires of become part active part of the processes that look for the enhancement of cultural and moral achievements.

Purkayastha (2012) suggests some characteristics of an educative process.

- Education is a long process.
- Education brings about integrated development
- Education is a tri-polar process: Environment – Students – Teachers.
- Education is the need of today
- Education preserves the culture & transmits from one generation to another
- Education brings changes in the behavior.
- Education is the development of mental faculties.
- Education brings out the latent within individual.
- Education has a specific goal of improving one's capabilities, capacities and performances
- Education is a continuous reconstruction process
- Education teaches the art of reasoning and analyzing.
- Education is the nurturing process of personality

- Education should be related to life, not bookish or irrelevant
- Education should be job oriented & skilled based.

Considering the above, it is important to recognize education as a continuous process, in which students should be accepted as individuals with different needs, also an educative project must be governed by values that allow the students to have opportunities that assure them, equity, attention, fair assessment and the promotion required to continue with higher studies. At the same time that students are considered as individuals who take part in a community, besides of modeling the behavior of people, and so be able to live together in a community.

Reda (2015) suggests, there are some reasons for the importance of the education.

- For a happy and stable life
- Money
- Equality
- Makes you self-dependent
- Turns your dreams into reality
- Makes the world a safer and more peaceful place
- Makes you confident
- Society
- For economic growth of the nation

According to this, education is intended to make an impact on the general social development, not only in people development, taking into consideration that a benefit for one, could be a benefit for a society, this is possible since the economic and personal growth are directly related.

**Distance education.**

Kiryakova (2009), “Distance education is a form of education in which the participants in educational process – teacher and learners are physically separated and communicate by different means and at different times” (p, 29). Distance education is an educative process which allows learners the use of technological tools to continue with their learning processes, by means of using these technologies applied for academic purposes, learners can manage the way in which is internalized and organized the knowledge, in addition to applying different and new communication ways mediated by technological resources. Unlike traditional learning, students, and teachers do not have the necessity to get together in a classroom. Distance education allows the people to carry on with their studies, using strategies intended to facilitate their lives, by means of time and resources optimization.

Nirmalani. G. & Stock M. (n.d.) report that:

The early efforts of educators like William Rainey Harper in 1890 to establish alternatives were laughed at. Correspondence study, which was designed to provide educational opportunities for those who were not among the elite and who could not afford full-time residence at an educational institution, was looked down on as inferior education. (p. 2).

According to this statement, although nowadays the traditional education model is still predominant, a long time ago have been developing different strategies to provide access to the education increasingly to people that before did not have it, because of different reasons, among them, long commutes and a highlight economic difference, at that time education was a privilege for few ones.



Kiryakova (2009), “Distance education used available communication technologies in these years – correspondence via mail” (p.1). Distance education appears to encourage the social equality, and so, bring down the remarked difference between social classes. In spite of this kind of education and the opportunities that it could give to people with limited resources, because wealthy people can undervalue them. This situation was because of the way in which distance education began, by means of correspondence via mail.

Pittman (1991), affirms that “Correspondence education offended the elitist and extremely undemocratic educational system that characterized the early years in this country” (As cite in Stock M. & Nirmalani G. n.d). According to the communicative advances of the age, the easiest way to reach all the possible learners was the correspondence via mail, although this strategy and method of education was not well seen and accepted by every social classes, especially by wealthy people. The fact that more people could have access to some kind of education was not a pleasurable issue for high elites, culture and education just should be for a privileged few.

Considering the distance education evolution, Kiryakova, (2009) stated that “The introduction of new technologies such as radio and TV set a new stage for the development of distance education. Audio and video materials became part of education along with printed materials” (p.29). Distance education carried on with an evolution that would reach increasingly to people from different places and strata, reducing the education difference in the society, this evolution involved the technological advances of the age. Education is a process that is constantly changing and evolving, in distance education model has been important the harnessing of technological development, radio, T.V, telephone, audio, and video cassettes, while are conserved traditional elements like print material "books, flashcards, etc...".

Keegan (1983) stated that “technology and distance education are inextricably linked. This link is evident considering the use of technical media, is one of the essential characteristics of distance education” (p. 9). Communication media technology is an essential part of distance education, because the using of this technology allows the students and teachers to keep an effective communication, develop a better educative process, and fulfill with the aims proposed.

The model of distance education has experienced different moments of evolution, in which each time involved new elements, which provided the learner with more opportunities to have access to knowledge.

Given the previous arguments, Garcia A. (2001) stated that:

Learning not always was to a distance, with the support of the current electronic media, this way to teach and learn has evolved in the last century and a half, along three great generation of technological innovation that Garrison (1985) identifies as Correspondence Generation, Telecommunications Generation, Computer generation. (p, 10, 11)

According to Garcia and Garrison statement, it is remarkable how distance education has incorporated different strategies and tools that can improve the way in which education is offered to more people, and make an impact in the social development, this means that not only a person can get the benefits that a distance learning process may offer, people from different communities and places can get access to the education, each time with better conditions, thanks to the evolution if this form of learning.

### ***Generations of distance education.***

To extend the distance education development concept, Garrison G. R. (1985) suggests that “The development of the generations of distance education represents in systems

terminology, a hierarchical structure with an increasing differentiation of technological capacity for integrating unique delivery systems” (p. 235). Through the time, the distance education is more common as a useful way to study, get knowledge and fulfill with personal goals.

Technologies have advanced and played an important role in the improvement of the study techniques, along the distance education history it is possible to evidence how each technological advance has been applied in favor of the educative process.

In this regard, Garrison G.R. (1985) suggests that distance education has advanced over the next three generations:

*Correspondence Generation.*

The first technology of distance education was performed by combining the printed word and the postal system as a medium of two-way communication. Correspondence education represents a significant shift from face-to-face interaction in the delivery of traditional instruction. Correspondence studies provide educational opportunities to vast numbers of people by providing the freedom to choose when and where to study. (p. 236, 239).

Throughout this first generation, suggested by Garrison, many people were benefited by the shift made in the educational system, correspondence generation, based its strategy on delivering print academic resources to students by using the postal system, it is this way like more people had the chance to get access to an educative process.

In his contributions to distance education, Garrison G.R (1985) also suggested a second generation known as:

*Telecommunications Generation.*

The term, telecommunications, refers to the “use of wire, radio, optical or other electromagnetic channels to transmit or receive signals for voice, video, and data communications” In short, telecommunications refer to the electronic transmission of communications over a distance. The use of telecommunications in distance education includes the telephone and teleconferencing (audio, video and computer). The use of telecommunications to facilitate two-way voice communications among three or more individuals at a distance characterizes audio teleconferencing. (p. 236, 239).

Telecommunication generation, the second generation suggested by Garrison, had an evolution and changed to electronic aids such as radio, T.V, among others. Later, people had the opportunity to have synchronous meetings and so have better communication between mates and teachers. It is in this generation where learners and teachers had direct contact in the distance education model for the first time from different places.

Finally, Garrison G.R (1985) suggested the third generation.

*Computer generation.*

Dramatic new possibilities are opened to distance education through the capabilities of computer assisted learning. After 25 years of research it has been concluded that computer assisted learning can be a more efficient or effective means of instructional delivery than traditional face-to-face instruction. With this technology, getting the mix of interaction and independence right may not necessitate combining more of one at the expense of the other. In fact, it is possible to maximize both interaction and independence in the delivery of education at a distance. (p. 236, 239).

According to this argument, it is possible to evidence how distance education has used all the communicative technological advances in order to get to more people at the same time that

improve the knowledge transmitted and its effectiveness, a reliable knowledge, with the possibility of clarifying solving doubts immediately. These are some of the distance education generations known, as the communicative technology advances, the distance education actors apply them to make more effective and comfortable as possible the learning process. For this reason, there are some that think that distance education has had two more generations.

One of these people is Taylor (2001) who suggested five generations of distance education:

First, the Correspondence Model-based on print technology; Second, the Multi-media Model based on print, audio, and video technologies; Third, the Tele-learning Model, based on applications of telecommunications technologies to provide opportunities for synchronous communication; Fourth, the Flexible Learning Model based on online delivery via the Internet; and Fifth, Intelligent Flexible Learning Model based on the interactive nature of the Internet. As this model was originally suggested before social media and Web 2.0 came into scenes, it is understandable that this model does not include the emerging generation of distance education, which utilizes Web 2.0 extensively. (As cited in Aoki, 2012).

Taylor explains how distance education has applied progressively the advance that communicative technology has presented, and the impact that such advances have had on each of distance education process moments, this author added to Garrison suggestions on distance education generations, two new generations, which apply online delivery via the Internet and the interactive nature of the Internet. Below it is exposed the five-distance education generations, suggested by Taylor and Garrison.

Table 1

*Models of Distance Education - A Conceptual Framework (Tailor, 2001)*

Models of Distance Education and Associated Delivery Technologies	Characteristics of Delivery Technologies					
	Flexibility			Highly Refined Materials	Advanced Interactive Delivery	Institutional Variable Costs Approaching Zero
	Time	Place	Pace			
<b>FIRST GENERATION - The Correspondence Model</b> - Print	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>SECOND GENERATION - The Multi-media Model</b> - Print - Audiotape - Videotape - Computer-based learning (eg CML/CAL/IMM) - Interactive video (disk and tape)	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	No No No Yes Yes	No No No No No
<b>THIRD GENERATION - The Telelearning Model</b> - Audioteleconferencing - Videoconferencing - Audiographic Communication - Broadcast TV/Radio and Audioteleconferencing	No No No No	No No No No	No No No No	No No Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes	No No No No
<b>FOURTH GENERATION - The Flexible Learning Model</b> - Interactive multimedia (IMM) online - Internet-based access to WWW resources - Computer mediated communication	Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes No
<b>FIFTH GENERATION - The Intelligent Flexible Learning Model</b> - Interactive multimedia (IMM) online - Internet-based access to WWW resources - Computer mediated communication, using automated response systems - Campus portal access to institutional processes and resources	Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes

Considering the above, it is important to take into account that Kiryakova (2009) suggested that “Distance education is a form of education in which the participants in the educational process – teacher and learners are physically separated and communicate by different means and at different times” (p, 29). Taking into consideration the author statement, distance education gives learners and teachers the chance to play their role of a more comfortable way, they do not have the necessity of moving from faraway places or expending certain amounts of money, also they can keep in contact by means of asynchronous meetings. The aim of distance

education is to facilitate the learning process avoiding the mandatory contact between learner and teacher by means of some elements proper of distance education model.

***Elements and characteristics of distance education***

Regarding the previous statement, Keegan (1996) identified elements of distance education, the first of them is “*Separation of teacher and learner*. The analysis of this definition shows this characteristic is the main difference and distinguishes between traditional learning and distance learning” (p, 44, 48). The separation of teachers and students is given as the main characteristic of distance education, this is because of the nature of this kind of education in which learners learn from different places and distant from the educative centers.

The second element identified by Keegan (1996) is:

*Influence of an educational organization:* It is important to delineate distance education not only from what happens in lecture classrooms but also from the private study at home. It is clear that people learn a lot throughout their lives. Distance education is an institutionalized form of provision (p, 44, 48).

According to Keegan, in distance education, learning is gotten by the development of daily activities and tasks, that are provided by the educative institution, to make the student more organized when developing those activities, and so enhance and control the way they are carrying out their learning process in.

The third element identified by Keegan (1996) is:

*The Use of media to link teacher and learner:* Distance education replaces the interpersonal communication with some form of mechanical or electronic

communication; all the communication must take place by the use of one or a number of technological mediums (p, 44, 48).

This element of distance education allows the students and teachers to be connected and communicated; this communication is mediated by using of the several technological means, which optimize the quality of the interpersonal communication, making it more effective, easier and wider.

The fourth element identified by Keegan (1996) is: “*Two-way exchange of communication*: It is important that the student can profit from dialogue with the institution that provides the learning material, the student should be able to initiate this dialogue and not just be a recipient of it”. According to Keegan, students must take an active part in the dialogue proposed in the distance education process with the educational institution, students here must benefit from this interaction and harness of all the tools that the institution can provide them.

The fifth element identified by Keegan (1996) is: *Learners as individuals rather than grouped*: Some definitions of distance education tended to emphasize the teaching of students as individuals, and the importance of individualization in this form of education. (p, 44, 48). This element according to Keegan, is intended to recognize the students as individuals, it must be recognized his/her necessities, skills, and knowledge, in distance education, it is important the individualization of students.

The last element identified by Keegan (1996) is:

*Education as an industrialized form*: Distance education must be pre-planned, prepared and organized since there is a growing use of technical equipment and the necessity of formalized evaluation. It is that way that students find a certain relationship between



these characteristics of distance education and other industrialized production processes. (p. 44, 48).

Considering what was suggested by the author, distance education is a process which is integrated by different elements, which together contribute to the development of an educative process, each one of these elements plays a specific and determinant role in such process, from the separation of teacher and learner, which is the first element suggested by Keegan, until the last element suggested by the author, the industrialization of this educative model, in which education is designed, organized and planned in such a way that follows parameters that resemble production processes.

Besides the above elements suggested above, (Duran R. 2015) stated that some authors, have suggested that distance education has characteristics different from traditional education. The next table shows some characteristics suggested by different authors, including a description, importance, advantage, and disadvantage of the characteristic.

Table 2

*Characteristics of distance education Durán R. (2015).*

Característica	Descripción	Importancia del modelo en la educación a distancia	Características que ayudan a describir la educación a distancia	Bibliografía relacionada / revisada/vinculada	Ventaja	Desventaja	Fuente
1. La mediación estudiante – profesor/tutor es multidimensional.	A diferencia de la educación presencial, en la que la interacción depende en gran medida del docente, en esta modalidad, la interacción está mediada por múltiples variables.	Reseña sobre la Educación a Distancia.	La mediación docente – alumno se caracteriza por: 1.1 Definición de canales de comunicación adecuados. 1.2 La participación efectiva de los planificadores, expertos en contenidos, pedagogos, especialistas en producción de materiales didácticos, de tutores, consultores y evaluadores.	Artículo publicado en Perfiles Educativos, publicación perteneciente a la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Centro de Estudios sobre la Universidad).	Un buen dimensionamiento de cada una de las variables que juegan un rol importante en la mediación estudiante – profesor, garantizarán el éxito del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje bajo esta modalidad. Ejemplo: Un buen diseño instruccional.	El mal dimensionamiento de una o más variables haría peligrar el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje bajo esta modalidad.	Torres (2004).
2. Organización apoyo (tutoría).	El soporte de una organización / institución que planifica, diseña, produce materiales (por sí misma o por encargo) y realiza el seguimiento y motivación del proceso de aprendizaje a través de tutoría.	Concepto integrador de educación a distancia.	2.1 La estructura u organización de los contenidos que formarán parte del material instruccional del curso reemplaza la clase magistral del docente. 2.2 Canales de comunicación  asincrónicos o sincrónicos (tradicionales y/o tecnológicos) que permitan darle seguimiento al estudiante y motivarlo en los casos que se requiera.	Bibliografía especializada sobre la tecnología en la enseñanza abierta y la educación a distancia.	a. Si el diseño y organización de los contenidos es la adecuada, se logrará reemplazar en gran medida la presencia física del docente en el proceso de aprendizaje. b.- Los canales de comunicación debidamente configurados garantizarán el éxito en el seguimiento y motivación en los casos que se amerite.	a.- Un diseño pobre y/u organización deficiente de los contenidos afectará el proceso de aprendizaje del estudiante, lo cual afectaría este tipo de modalidad educativa. b.- Una inadecuada configuración de los canales de comunicación asincrónicos y/o sincrónicos de la organización podría mermar el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje.	Bates (1999).
3. El trabajo independiente potencia el aprendizaje del discente universitario.	El trabajo independiente debe concebirse con gradación sistemática, donde todas las tareas estén armónicamente entrelazadas entre sí y dirigidas al logro de objetivos inmediatos y mediatos claramente definidos. Las tareas deben planificarse en una graduación sistemática de complejidad de manera que la realización de la primera ponga al estudiante en condiciones de abordar la segunda y no se produzcan saltos bruscos en el paso de lo conocido a lo	Experiencias recopiladas de educación a distancia.	3.1 Individualista. 3.2 Autónomo. 3.3 Flexible.	Bibliografía especializada sobre el estudio y trabajo autónomo del estudiante.	Verdadera independencia cognoscitiva de darse una planificación científica que recaerá en el tutor bajo esta modalidad.	No se dará independencia cognoscitiva en el caso que el docente no realice una planificación científica adecuada.	Frailé (2006).

Característica	Descripción	Importancia del modelo en la educación a distancia	Características que ayudan a describir la educación a distancia	Bibliografía relacionada /revisada/vinculada	Ventaja	Desventaja	Fuente
4. Comunicación bidireccional es requerida para garantizar el ciclo cognitivo.	desconocido. La comunicación organizada de ida y vuelta tiene lugar entre los estudiantes y una organización de apoyo. El medio más común empleado es la palabra escrita; sin embargo, con las nuevas tecnologías de información y comunicaciones, se cuentan con otras opciones como el foro, el chat y el correo electrónico, por citar algunos.	Reseña sobre la Educación a Distancia.	La comunicación en ambas vías depende de: 4.1 La intermediación (presencial o no presencial). 4.2 Del tiempo (sincrónico o asincrónico). 4.3 Del Canal (Real o Simulado).	Artículo publicado en Perfiles Educativos, publicación perteneciente a la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Centro de Estudios sobre la Universidad).	El estudiante recibe realimentación de sus dudas por parte del docente, lo que refuerza en gran medida sus aprendizajes significativos.	Una inadecuada configuración del canal de comunicación produciría errores en los mensajes transmitidos, lo cual podría afectar el ciclo cognitivo.	Gil (2000).
5. Comunicación masiva.	Se puede atender, en general, a una población estudiantil dispersa geográficamente, en particular, a aquella que se encuentra en zonas periféricas que no disponen de las redes de las instituciones convencionales.	El aprendizaje estratégico en la Educación a Distancia.	5.1 Abierta. 5.2 Flexible. 5.3 Accesible.	Literatura especializada sobre el aprendizaje en la modalidad a distancia.	Permite la mundialización de la educación superior.	Una inadecuada implementación de esta modalidad generaría su rechazo por un segmento importante de la población que requiere de este tipo de educación.	Areño (1991).

Regarding to the information offered by author in the above table, it is possible to summarize that distance education is a process that involves communication principles, from different manners, which increase the possibilities to the learners of carrying on successfully their learning process, this is possible in the measure there is a bidirectional communication and massive, besides the support from teacher towards students, and the student awareness of being independent and autonomous in their learning.

In essence, the communication facilitates the interaction among the actors of distance education, Kiryakova (2009) stated that “Distance education requires interaction between participants in the learning process. The interaction determines to a certain extent the effectiveness of distance education” (p, 30). In this sense, distance education does not mean isolation, to have success in distance education there must be a relationship and interaction among the participants of the process, these participants must be related from different places and interacting to each other.

Considering the interaction importance, Moore (n.d), specifies three types of interaction.

*Learner-teacher interaction:* provides motivation for education, feedback, and dialogue between these participants. Learners consult teachers in various ways. The feedback is very important and gives teachers indication about the level of learning. Feedback should be timely to let the teachers correct and adapt the learning content based on the circumstances and the needs of learners. *Learner-learner interaction:* includes formal and informal communication between learners. Isolation is an essential problem in distance education. It can be overcome by the exchange of information among students: the exchange of ideas and dialogues through discussions, working together and solving issues. *Learner-content interaction:* includes the methods of delivering content, various ways for navigation through it, and searching for specific information. (As cited in Kiryakova, 2009).

According to the types of interaction suggested by Moore previously, it is possible to conclude that interaction and communication are indispensable factors that help to have an adequate learning process. It is that way that distance learning involves two ways of keeping communication between participants of the process.

Making reference to this type of communication, Kiryakova (2009) affirms that:

Communication between participants in distance learning is given in two ways synchronous and asynchronous. *Synchronous communication* allows participants to take part in learning at the same time. Feedback is immediate. Synchronous communication is realized by tele courses, teleconference, chats, etc. *Asynchronous communication* gives an opportunity for learners to connect to the teacher or connect with each other at a convenient time and place.

Asynchronous communication is realized by email, audio courses, discussion boards, etc. (p, 30)

In this sense, an important advantage that distance learning has, is the possibility that students and teachers have to keep in contact with each other, and to keep this contact it is not necessary that students arrange a date to a determined time or place "synchronously", they can be communicated by messages sent any time "asynchronously", and so harness more effectively time, and resources. It is here where learners must show a grade of autonomy to take advance of these possibilities they have.

It this way, how distance education involves a degree of autonomy on the achievement of goals, To Manrique (2004) "Autonomous learning is the faculty for a person to lead, control and assess his or her learning way, of an aware form by using of learning strategies to attain the aim desired" (p. 2). According to Manrique statement, autonomy is the way for students to regulate how they are developing their learning process, in distance education, the autonomy of students is as important as the teacher role.

In addition to this, Mendoza A. & Molano A. (n.d) concluded that:

Distance education is a learning modality, which generates more than other modalities, autonomous learning in which students must overcome by using and appropriation of methodological and pedagogical strategies, the time and space boundaries, as well as the lack of a teacher in a classroom. (p. 7)

According to the above conclusion, distance education gives students the opportunity to develop autonomy strategies that help them to overcome different challenges that may be presented in this educational modality, such as place and time for developing the activities proposed without the mandatory presence of a teacher.

### ***Challenges of distance education.***

In spite of the distance education characteristics and elements mentioned previously, Garcia Arieto L. (2016) stated that “distance education can face some challenges, related in three levels, 1) Macro-level, when the external conditions the learning, 2) Meso-level, when institutions and leadership institutional are essential, and 3) Micro level, when the most important are teachers" Considering the above statement, it is possible to understand that distance education as an educational process faces challenges, which sometimes condition how is seen, implemented and accepted the distance learning.

According to Garcia Arieto L. (2017).

The first challenge of the macro-level is determined in the way in which the distance education gains credibility, this is because of some views, which question that distance education processes can have a similar quality compared to the traditional education processes.

For some, distance education is a process that lacks credibility when validating results and quality compared with the traditional educative model, due to its different models and procedures, it is that way that distance education efficacy is constantly compared with traditional education and the results it can get.

In the macro-level, “the second challenge that distance education faces is to be able to give inclusion and equity, this educative model must cover universally and favor the inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as handicapped, inmates, ethnic groups and forgotten rural groups” (Garcia Arieto L. 2017). As a fundamental right, everybody must have access to the education, and the distance education model must seek that each time more and more people can have

access to it, distance education must find ways to reach and facilitates education accessible to more people.

Besides the above challenges in the macro level, for (Garcia Arieto L. 2017) “distance education institutions must have the accurate recognition, which shows the quality and reliability of this educative model”. It is important for distance education model, and institutions, that public administrations support and certify the quality of this educative model in order to give distance learners the confidence they need, to be sure they are involved in a real and certified educative process with the same characteristics and benefits of traditional education.

The second level is the meso level, according to Garcia Arieto L. (2017) “at the level the institutions and its leaders are essentials”. For the author, at this level, the role, that institutions and its leaders play is fundamental for the viability, reliability, and effectiveness of the distance education model.

For this level, Garcia Arieto L. (2017) stated that " Institutions must be in a permanent process of actualization regarding the technology and systems requirements, it is necessary to adjust constantly the institutional models and methodologies to integrate the new technological resources". The current distance education model is mainly carried out by means of the technology use, is for this reason that educative institutions must be updated on the best resources that can help to the accurate development of the educative process, besides facilitating the way in which learners carry out their process.

The second challenge in the meso level, "It is to look for a strategic planning with the wise use of the technological tools and a rigorous appraisal in order to be sure whether the quality is the required" Garcia Arieto L. (2017). It is necessary that institutions integrate the use of technological resources to a curricular planning, to carry out the teaching process to favor the

way in which students internalize the knowledge, to validate it later through an appraisal that certifies the knowledge quality and effectiveness of the process.

Another important challenge present in the meso level according to Garcia Arieto L. (2017) “is that distance education model must overcome the change resistance from many social sectors, traditional educative systems, and traditional teachers”. Distance education has the critical task to shift in many sectors and people followers of the traditional education model, the wrong perception they have about the distance educative model and its results compared to the educative model they defend and validate.

The last challenge suggested by Garcia Arieto L. (2017) in the meso level, refers to "how must be fostered scenarios aimed at the formation of teachers in the distance education field" According to the author, even although the distance education is a process in which the most important role is that of the student, it is necessary that teachers are prepared to be able to guide the students about how they can carry out their learning process and use the tools they have in hand.

The next level suggested by Garcia Arieto L. (2017) is the micro level, in which the author identifies as first challenge the necessity of "enhance the flexibility in the process, the institutions must be flexible and understand the distance learners, develop their learning process at a different time, space, with a different rhythm, and also the have a different learning way". Unlike traditional education where the moment, place, rhythm and learning way were the same for most learners, distance education must allow students to carry out their own learning process in the way, time, space and way they consider is the best for them to do it, in a comfortable environment where they feel quiet and without stress.



In this micro level, (Garcia Arieto L. 2017) identifies that "one of the greatest advantages of distance education was the possibility to get to more people than traditional education, here the problem is to try to make the learning more personalized due that contents are the same for all". Due that distance education is a model that intends increasingly to get to more people, the challenge here is to try of making the teaching process personalized and treat students as individual more than a group with the same needs and ways of learning.

### *Advantages of distance learning.*

As well as challenges, distance education also has advantages, Sacristan R, (2006) suggested some benefits that distance education has, the first of them is.

Having access to the educative technology, one of the benefits that distance education provides, is the possibility of using the telecommunications technology, be able to educate and put at the service of people the great cluster of information that today exists (p, 4)

Thanks to the distance education model and its resources, it is possible that currently more people have access to several kinds of information, which can be used in order to generate new knowledge and so balance the differences presented in the society.

Regarding to this benefit Janice (2017) suggested that "this is one of the primary advantages of web-based learning. You can simply contact the lecturers in the chat rooms and get the required remote classroom guideline from the teacher regarding any matter" (para, 6). In this sense, it is possible for learners to have access to any academic matter, besides having the respective guidance from teachers, who are in charge of leading the students through the topics they are working in.

For Sacristan R (2006), another benefit that distance education offers is the possibility to "obviate the time and space boundaries, distance education unlike traditional education when using communication media that facilitates the contact between learners, teachers, and contents no matter that they are in different place and time" (p, 5). Unlike the traditional education model, for the distance education, the fact that the participants of the educative process are separated by time and place, it is less relevant thanks to the communication that can keep by using of the communicative technologies, obviating the limitations the can be present because of the different place and time between the educative actors.

According to Garcia A. (2003) "distance education not only offers benefits for students, for the author this educative model gives benefits to students, enterprises, and governments" (p, 14) distance education is an educational model that brings benefits to different sectors of the society this is not a process that just involves and benefit the learners.

In this way, Garcia Arieto L. (2003) suggested that students have the possibility to:

- a) Have a wider access with more possibilities of learning knowledge, competencies, attitudes, and relationships.
- b) to combine the study with labor and familial obligations, be the authentic protagonist of the learning process since this is focused on the student.
- c) Choose the contents and the own organization of their learning. (p, 14-15)

For distance learners, this educative model can have and bring some benefits that perhaps traditional models cannot give, this is possible, since the main fact in the distance educative process are the students, the aim of this process is to support learners, and make them aware of the role they play, and what is expected they achieve and learn.

On the other hand, the other sector that can be benefited is the enterprises, Garcia A (2003) suggested that companies have the possibility to:

a) Organize the formative actions directed to the acquisition of new professional competences, in the workplace, what means more flexibility. b) Share the investment, money by the company and time by the employee, in the research of common objectives which will raise the productivity and will facilitate the communication and other labor skills. c) Give the same formation to all employees of a determined level, although they work from different places for the company. (p, 15).

Thanks to distance education programs, companies can get some benefits in the measure that their employees acquire new knowledge and skills related to the function they have in the company, in this sense having prepared employees can result in the achievement of the company goals. It is that way, supporting the employees to study, can be a great investment for companies related to the productivity they can get from their employees.

For Garcia Arieto L. (2003), the other sector that can be benefited by the distance education system is the governments. For the author these sectors have the possibility to: “a) offer to the citizenship more opportunities for the permanent formation, recycling, cultural promotion, and the personal enrichment. b) reduce the education costs. c) diversify the educative offers, raise and consolidate the permanent training” (p, 15). According to this, governments can reduce some costs related to the educative programs, this is because of the fact that they do not have to invest more economic resources, in the building of huge infrastructures, besides the design of academic programs that allow the citizens to be prepared to face the several social challenges.

### **Autonomous Learning.**

The concept of autonomous learning is not a new concept, Betts & Knapp (1981) define autonomous learning as “one who solves problems or develops new ideas through a combination

of divergent and convergent thinking and functions with minimal external guidance in selected areas of endeavor.” (As cited in Furman, 2017). Autonomous learning is a way in which learners are capable to deal with the possible inconvenience that can be present in their learning process, by means of the creation of strategies that they are able to carry on by themselves, without the constant support of others "teachers".

Regarding the above concept, Bornas (1994) stated that "autonomous people are those whose self-regulation system works of a way that allows fulfilling successfully both internal demands as external demands proposed” (p. 13). In a learning process, there are many aspects that must be developed, and inside of an autonomous learning, students have the skill to carry out their learning process successfully meeting all factors involved in such a process.

### ***Dimensions of autonomous learning.***

Likewise, Manrique Villavicencio (2004) suggested that it is important to recognize that for the achievement of autonomy in the learning process it is necessary to consider some dimensions presented in such a process, the first dimension is:

*From learner to expert:* It refers to the level of mastery that the student demonstrates in the handling of metacognitive strategies, A) Awareness, the student must "stop to think" about of the consequence of one or other option. B) Adaptability, Conditions in which the learning is carry out, are not static but, changing, therefore students must regulate constantly their performance. C) Efficacy, it refers to an evaluation of the conditions and objective to be achieved to apply a strategy and not another regarding of the cost-benefit. D) Sophistication, a strategy must be "maturing" through its repeated application becoming more ductile and effective, which leads to a higher quality student performance (p, 6)

This first dimension suggested by the author, refers to the way in which students are developing a level of mastery by using certain metacognitive strategies such as the development of awareness, adaptability, efficacy, and sophistication, that together lead to a good autonomy process, harnessing the resources they have on hand.

The second dimension suggested by Manrique Villavicencio. (2004) is:

*From a technical domain to a strategic use of learning procedures:* It is necessary that the student exercises in the necessary procedures to learn in the specific conditions of distance education, dominating the techniques related to reading comprehension, writing, use of technological and computer media, among others to progressively achieve a strategic use of the same ones in which he is able to select the most appropriate strategies to achieve his learning goals in a conscious and intentional way. (p, 6)

Students must have the accurate preparation which allows them to incorporate strategies that help them the use of the diverse resources and apply the best strategy they can apply in order to be able to have a great performance in the process and so fulfill the aims proposed consciously and intentionally.

The third dimension according to the author is:

*From an external regulation towards self-regulation in learning processes:* In the first stages of the study, the student will need more presence and guidance from the teacher as well as from more experienced colleagues to identify the conditions of the tasks and activities, as well as what is expected in their performance as an apprentice. This initial situation must progressively be assumed and controlled by the student himself. (p, 7)

Students are not autonomous from the beginning, nor have the skill to self-regulate, reason, why students have the support of teachers and colleagues in order to identify the processes, which they participate and so, be able to develop the skill to self-regulate without the support of others.

According to Manrique Villavicencio. (2004) the last dimension present in autonomous learning is:

*From Internalization to the externalization of the processes followed before, during and after learning:* The student at the beginning will develop a series of actions and tasks that he will learn and increasingly he will become more aware of how he learns, so that he will be provided opportunities to communicate orally or in writing the processes and decisions he has been making based on learning, achieving its externalization (p, 7)

Throughout the process, students develop skills that allow them to understand the meaning of the learning process, the sense of the knowledge they are getting and the way they are learning, to afterwards been able of express by different ways the decisions they have come making towards their own learning process.

### ***Teacher's Role in Learners Autonomy.***

As it has been evidenced above, students do not develop autonomy by themselves, is that way that Richards and Rodgers (1986, p.77) refer to Breen and Candline classification about the roles of teachers into the next categories: teacher as manager and organizer; teacher as facilitator; The third role is that teacher as counselor. (As cited in Yan, 2012, p, 560). For students to be autonomous, it is important to have the support of teachers at the beginning of the process, for this reason, it is critical the knowledge of the teachers to help students to get the autonomy they

need to be independent enough and carry on with the learning process. Below are explained the above roles of teachers suggested.

According to the Breen and Candline (n.d) classification cited by Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, T.S. (1986) below is the first role.

1. *Managers and Organizers:* In a learner-centered system, the teacher should take the responsibilities of organizing various kinds of activities and games which are appropriate, effective and relevant to the classroom teaching and which will best meet the students' needs and expectations. The goal is to respond to the students' interests and abilities so that they will be highly motivated to perform in each stage of classroom activities. But the teacher should bear in mind that he or she should give clear instructions as to why they are done because of the success of many activities, no matter if it is a specific role-play or a group discussion, depends on good organization and on the students "knowing exactly what they are expected to do. Otherwise, it is impossible for the two parts of teaching-learning process to achieve their objective. The role of the teacher as manager and organizer is the first and foremost role teacher must play in class (p. 77).

Teachers are expected to organize and incorporate the accurate strategies, that bring students close to a certain level of autonomy in the development of the proposed activities, while at the same time inform students about the importance and meaning of the activities proposed, the relevance that these activities have, and the activities that students are expected to do.

Below it is exposed the second role suggested by Breen and Candline (n.d), cited by Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, T.S. (1986)

2. *Facilitator* In order to make the progress more flexible and successful, it is necessary for teachers to serve as a facilitator.

2-1. *Features of Facilitator* What are the features of a facilitator in autonomous learning? A facilitator provides psycho-social support and technical support. Psycho-social support refers to the capacity of motivating learner, as well as the ability of raising learners' awareness. Technical support refers to helping learner to plan and carry out their learning, helping (p. 77).

To support the development of the autonomous learning on students, teachers must have characteristics that motivate the learner, at the same time that generate on students enough awareness about the sense of the activities, and the importance of a correct development of these. On other hand, teachers must accompany and help students on the way they must develop the activities and to enrich their knowledge.

The second feature of teacher as facilitator suggested by Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, T.S. (1986) is:

2-2 *Teacher as a facilitator: a guide to motivate in learning.* In focusing on the role of teacher as a facilitator in autonomous learning, this part makes clear that autonomous learning does not mean learners simply learn on their own. Learners in the process of becoming autonomous need a teacher to support them to reach the highest possible achievement. As facilitators, teachers need to do all the efforts to help make the learning easier and motivate learners to play to the best of their potentials, which includes: helping the learners to plan and carry out their independent learning; helping learners to acquire the knowledge and skills and motivate learner to learn actively and autonomously. In the process of facilitating, it involves teachers' encouragement and assist. Teachers encourage learners' commitment, helping them to get rid of the uncertainty and anxiety and overcome the obstacles. (p. 77).



Teachers are who must keep learners motivated, students need the company and support of teachers to face the possible challenges that learning process can have, teachers are who encourage students to continue, assist them to get the knowledge, besides of getting confident on what they are doing and how they are doing it.

The third feature of teacher as facilitator suggested by Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, T.S. (1986)

*2-3 Teacher as a facilitator: a guide to resource.* During the participation in classroom activities, the teacher is expected to be the learning resource. It is obvious that the teacher is responsible to ensure necessary learning input and to offer help whenever it is needed. During this process, the first role of teacher is to motivate learners to produce their own learning and to advisably correct students' errors to help students develop their own learning strategies and techniques. As a guide to resource, teachers could also introduce some learning materials as: Some useful websites to learners. To motivate learners, teachers should be capable to select the materials which can be used to arise learners' interest and cater to their learning level so that this ensures the learners' satisfaction and confidence. And thirdly, when the students had difficulty in learning, teachers would get ready to provide information. (p. 77).

Related to this aspect, is expected that teachers look for the necessary information about the topic proposed, teachers must collect enough materials to give the students for the development of the activities, this is because students can feel motivated to develop the tasks, instead of feeling frustrated or disappointed for not being able of find the necessary resources to get the knowledge.

The last feature of teacher as facilitator suggested by Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, T.S. (1986) is:

*2-4. Teacher as A Facilitator: An Evaluator to The Results:* It is generally believed that it is another major part of a teacher job to assess the students work. Teachers should focus on success of students or progress so that a success-oriented learning atmosphere could be created. At the same time the students will be more confident in autonomous learning. (p. 77).

The role as evaluator of teachers, it is important in the measure that provides the necessary information to students about the results they are getting, by means of this information students can be conscious about their results throughout the learning process, having this information, students can feel confident about how they are being oriented.

The third role of a teacher according to Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, T.S. (1986) is: 3. *Teacher Role as Counselor* “The teacher-counselor is expected to exemplify an effective communicator seeking to maximize the meshing of speaker intention and hearer interpretation, through the use of paraphrase, confirmation, and feedback.” (p. 78). It is expected that teachers to establish a communicative relationship with students that allow, the interchange of information where students can ask questions or express doubts, and teachers can solve such questions or doubts, at the same time that feedback the student development, give advice to students and so attain more efficient learning.

### ***Student-centered learning***

In this sense, Kember (1997) refers to “autonomous learning as student-centered learning, shifting the focus of education from teaching to learning” (As cited in Mc Cabe, A. 2014). According to the statement of Kember is clear that the main actor in this educational modality is

the students, the spotlight of this is focused on how students get ahead all the issues presented in the process, instead of having the teachers as the main actors of the learning process.

According to the above, Insuasty (1999) suggest that “Autonomous learning is a process that stimulates the students to be the authors of their own development and specially to build by themselves the knowledge” (p, 9). Hence by this learning model, students most of the time are encouraged to generate new ideas and solutions for the possible inconveniences presented throughout the learning process, looking for a relationship between theory and practice.

Autonomous learning, as some other educational models have some characteristics, Mendoza Afanador. R. E., y Molano Avendaño L. N. (n.d) suggest the next characteristics of autonomous learning:

- Personal.
- Responsibility is an important factor, as well as the management of cognitive structures.
- The collaborative job is key for solving own necessities and from others integrant.
- It allows identifying necessities of study, as well as the capacity for assessing the achievements of the learnings.
- It facilitates the identification of human and material resources and the management of effective strategies to take advantage of them in accordance with the study objectives.
- It implies the tolerance to the risk in the learning process.
- It allows self-regulation in learning.
- Maintaining high levels of motivation.

On the whole, all the above characteristics suggested by the authors, lead to a process that is supported by different characteristics, where each of them contributes to a certain skill which must be fostered in this learning model, to improve the way in which learning is carried out. Considering the student as the main responsible for the learning process.

In regard to the "student-centered" definition, authors like: (Geven and Santa 2010; Attard et al. 2010; Maclellan 2008; Macauley and Ngaley 2008; Elen et al. 2007; Hybels and Weaver 2005), suggested that "A student-centered approach can be characterized by four fundamental features: students assume active responsibility for their learning; they pro-actively manage their learning experience; they construct knowledge independently; and teachers act as facilitators, designing relevant programs" (As cited in Mc. Cabe 2015, p, 4). Unlike traditional education, in which teachers play an important role as managers of the teaching and learning process, in student-centered approach students are who regulates how is developing the learning process.

In this regard, Crispin et al. (2011), talked about the self-regulation of students and suggested that:

Autonomous learning is a self-regulation process of the learning, you get to plan, self-manage, and evaluate the search for learning, with the aim of achieving goals, and generate awareness about the own learning, this way of learning is not limited to process information, but to recognize the reasons of the learning, and recognize the consequences of using it (p. 49-50).

In this sense, a self-regulation process, allows students to monitor and identify whether the learning process is carried out correctly, and whether it is possible to get the aims proposed,

and if it is not so, there is the possibility to shift or adjust the strategy to optimize the process, and the results of the process.

Regard to self-regulation process Mace, F. C., Belfiore, P. J., & Shea, M. C. (1989). stated that "Are critical aspects of self-regulated learning, the election between several possible alternatives, and the different reinforcing value of the different responses that the subject can emit" (p. 30). According to the above statement, students have the possibility to choose the strategy they consider the best to develop successfully their learning process.

In this order, to make possible the self-regulation McCombs (1989) affirms that "students are who must determine or choose goals, to select strategies, develop the projects, and assess the results. (p. 53). Is in this way, that learners as actors of the autonomous learning are who make the decision about how the learning process will be developed, what will be the results they want to get, and finally they will assess these results after the developed process.

More specifically, Karoly (1993) suggested that "self-regulation includes five interrelated and iterative phases: 1) selection of goals, 2) knowledge of goals, 3) maintenance of effort with a certain orientation, 4) change of direction or re-prioritization, 5) achievement of goals" (As cited in Lamas R. 2008, para, 3), The success of the learning process is due to the relation and development of some characteristics, that allow the students to be abreast on the effectiveness of the process they are carrying out.

It is important to recognize that self-regulation involves other aspects suggested by Winne P. (1995) who stated that "The self-regulated learning requires students to become aware of the difficulties that can impede learning, the use of procedures (strategies) aimed at achieving their goals, and the detailed control of affective and cognitive variables" (p. 173). Students not only have to be in charge of the procedures and strategies chosen in the learning process, to come

the set goals, but also understand and be aware of the possible situations they can face throughout the process, and the consequences these situations can have.

Considering the above, Lamas R (2008) refers to "the importance to attend motivational and affective components involved in the learning process and not only the cognitive" (para, 4). It is that way that learners must be involved not only in a learning process but, they must be supported by a motivational process in which they feel comfortable and have desires of participating actively in such a process.

Bearing in mind the motivational component, Alonso Tapia (1997) suggested that "motivation seems to have an impact on the way of thinking and so with the learning" (p. 15). Considering this suggestion, it is possible to understand that a motivated student can develop activities because of the interest and curiosity these awake on them, having different results on the learning process.

### ***Development of strategies for autonomous learning.***

Linked to motivational strategies, Massié (2010) stated "there are more strategies which are required for the autonomous learning in a distance education modality" (p, 2). Besides, having motivated students, which is very important, according to Massié's statement on the autonomous learning field, there are more strategies which can help to have a good development of the learning process.

According to Massié (2010), the first strategy for the development of autonomous learning is:

*The development of motivational affect strategies.* Strategies that orient the students to be aware of their capability and way to learn, strategies that motivate students to develop

tasks and activities of learning they must do, strategies that teach students to overcome difficulties, and develop confidence on their own skills and capabilities. (p, 2)

It is in that way, that application of motivational strategies can help students to have self-confidence by means of the development of activities, allow them to have the facility of facing and overcome different situations, while they get the confidence of the capabilities and skills, by means the developing of the activities proposed

As the second strategy for the development of autonomous learning, Massié (2010) suggested “*The development of strategies of self-planning: Strategies developed and related to different aspects whose only purpose is to achieve the design of a realistic plan of study*” (p, 2). The aim of the implementation of this strategy is to encourage in students the faculty of knowing real aspects of the task and the context in which it must be developed, to be able of design the best way and moment to carry out on a real way determined task or activity.

As a complement of the development of self-planning strategies Manrique V. (2004) suggested that:

The development of this plan, allows the student to know aspects related to the task and conditions in which it must be developed, students here must be able to: Identify the learning goals proposed, these can be individual or collaborative, to identify physical and environmental conditions for the study, (study time, resources that student has, environmental variables), to analyze task conditions, difficulty, the sequence to follow, kind of activity and conditions expected as result and selecting the best strategy to tackle the study, these strategies refers to how to face the lecture, analysis, and interpretation of the information. (p, 5)

Therefore, with the development of this strategy, students are able to identify the main characteristics of the activities they are going to develop and take into account the information students get. Then, it is possible for them the design of a plan of study that allows them the correct development of specific activities to get successful results after carrying out of the tasks proposed.

To Massié (2010) the third strategy for the development of autonomous learning is:

*The Development of self-regulation strategies:* Strategies selected for the study and learning, continuous assessment of their progress, problems, and success of the task according to the aim proposed, the making of decisions for the actions to do or change to get the aim proposed. (p, 2)

This strategy is aimed to generate and improve in students the sense of regulation, which helps them to check the way in which they are carrying on their learning process, by the application of these kinds of strategies students can identify possible inconveniences through the learning process, and at the same time make decisions to continue with it or make changes that allow the achievement of the aims proposed.

The last strategy suggested By Massié (2010) for the development of the autonomous learning as “*The development of self-assessment strategies:* Strategies that guide students to self-assess the way that they are developing their activities and so their learning process" (p.3). The use of these strategies allows students to have a control over how they are developing the learning process and the results they are getting on it. Below, the next table summarizes the above strategies.

Table 3



Manrique Villavicencio (2004) Autonomous learning in distance education (As cited in Massié 2010)

	ESTRATEGIAS DE MOTIVACIÓN	ESTRATEGIAS DE PLANIFICACIÓN	ESTRATEGIAS DE AUTOREGULACIÓN	ESTRATEGIAS DE AUTOEVALUACIÓN
<b>C A P A C I D A D E S</b>	<p>Valora positivamente su capacidad para aprender.</p> <p>Desarrolla confianza en sus capacidades y habilidades.</p> <p>Identifica condiciones emocionales que pueden influir en el estudio y sabe controlarlas.</p> <p>Demuestra motivación intrínseca por aprender a superar sus dificultades.</p>	<p>Identifica metas de aprendizaje (intrínsecas y extrínsecas).</p> <p>Se compromete a lograr metas de aprendizaje.</p> <p>Identifica condiciones físicas ambientales que pueden influir en su estudio y sabe manejarlas.</p> <p>Analiza condiciones de la tarea: tipo de actividad, complejidad, secuencia a seguir, condiciones dadas, entre otras.</p> <p>Analiza las estrategias de aprendizaje más convenientes para lograr metas de aprendizaje.</p> <p>Determina el tiempo necesario para cumplir sus metas.</p> <p>Formula su plan de estudio.</p>	<p>Se inicia en la toma de conciencia de su capacidad de control sobre su aprendizaje.</p>	<p>Sobre la planificación del estudio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evalúa la efectividad de su plan</li> <li>• Analiza errores, fallos, aciertos</li> <li>• Utiliza lo aprendido en la formulación del siguiente plan.</li> </ul> <p>Sobre su actuación</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evalúa su actuación en función de las metas y plan formulados.</li> <li>• Introduce cambios o mejoras en su actuación</li> </ul> <p>Sobre sus resultados de aprendizaje.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Se autoevalúa a partir de criterios dados.</li> <li>• Participa con idoneidad en procesos de coevaluación.</li> <li>• Utiliza la retroinformación dada a sus trabajos y pruebas para mejorar su aprendizaje.</li> </ul>

As well as Massié, there are other authors who suggested more strategies for autonomous learning one of these strategies is the cognitive, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) stated that "cognitive strategies 'operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning" (p. 44). According to the above, this strategy make emphasis in the way the information students get is handled.

*cognitive strategies*

Regarding the strategies for autonomous learning, O'Malley & Chamot (1990) stated that "the term cognitive strategy refers to specific measures or steps that learners take in order to fulfill learning tasks" (p. 17). It is so, how cognitive strategies influence in the way in which

students develop their learning process, following some steps and strategies to fulfil the learning tasks.

In the cognitive strategies, Pintrich et al. (1991) suggested different strategies that come into play in the learning process, the first of these is "the review strategies, these strategies do not intend to generate new knowledge, nor integrate the new information to the previous knowledge, which is why it only allows a superficial processing of the information" (p. 17). According to this, the aim of the review strategy is to analyze the information in a less deep way, here is not important to deepen in the context of the information gotten.

Different to the above strategy, Pintrich et al. (1991) suggested two strategies more which are "Elaboration and production strategies, which enable deeper processing of study materials" (p. 18-19). Here the aim of these strategies suggested is to let students the use of all the different resources that can have in hand, repetition, resources didactic, and questions, among others, to internalize the new knowledge.

### *Metacognitive Strategies*

According to Wenden (1998) "metacognitive knowledge includes all facts learners acquire about their own cognitive processes as they are applied and used to gain knowledge and acquire skills in varied situations" (p. 34). Considering the above, students get new knowledge and develop new skills while applying the knowledge they have previously learnt, and it is applied in different situations.

In relation with Wenden statement, (Cook, 1993) suggested that "In a sense, metacognitive strategies are skills used for planning, monitoring, and evaluating the learning activity, they are strategies about learning rather than learning strategies themselves" (p,114).

These strategies are directed to the learning itself, students do not learn new strategies, instead of it, they control their learning process.

Regarding to the above, Thanasoulas, (2000), exposes some of the metacognitive strategies.

- Directed attention, when deciding in advance to concentrate on general aspects of a task.
- Selective attention, paying attention to specific aspects of a task.
- Self-monitoring, i.e., checking one's performance.
- Self-evaluation, i.e., appraising one's performance in relation to one's own standards.
- Self-reinforcement, rewarding oneself for success.

Through the learning process, students go through some stages which enable them to organize the development of their own learning process since the general aspects of the tasks proposed "at the beginning of the process" until the reward by the results gotten "at the end of the process".

It is in that way, that according to authors like (Klimenko & Alvarez, 2009; Manrique, 2004; Muria, 1994;)

The metacognitive strategy refers to the awareness of one's own cognition, in order to improve learning, the metacognitive refers to the person (knowledge about what learners know and their skills), to the task (knowledge of tasks and strategies) and to the context; where the actions themselves are planned and evaluated through self-regulation. (As cited in Bravo Cisneros, 2016, p, 20).

In this sense, metacognitive strategies are focused on the cognition of learners, and makes emphasis on what students know about themselves and the skills they have, the knowledge they have of the tasks proposed and strategies they apply to develop them, and the actions they must design to develop such tasks.

Now "teaching the development of metacognitive strategies to students may contribute directly for them to advance in the autonomous learning process required in the educative process" (Ramirez, n.d.). Students capable of applying metacognitive strategies are students who are able to be autonomous to the moment of producing new knowledge and fulfilling the aims required in the learning process.

Regarding the teaching of strategies to students, Baker (1995) suggested, "'the best way of getting these aims is transferring gradually to students the responsibility of regulation". (As cited in Gil Ramirez H.n.d). To have autonomous learners it is important for students to have an adequate formation on how they can develop and adopt strategies that foster in them the responsibility of regulating their own learning process.

It is that way that Bernabé & Pozo (as cited in Klimenko and Alvares, 2009).

They made to know that are present the so-called resource control strategies, which make possible the process of adaptation to the task and the environment, considering the changes in the environment, carrying out an autonomous and self-directed learning, within a context. (As cited in Cisneros, 2016, p, 21).

It is so, that students by means of the use of control strategies can adapt in a better way to the tasks and environment they may have, carrying out a process where they are autonomous and self-lead learners.

In regard to the above, Ruiz (2002) stated that the metacognitive strategy in education "does not only limit to the knowledge transmission but takes into account the self-direction and self-regulation in the learning process in which of a dynamic way, where are carried out the interaction and significative learning" (para. 5). A metacognitive strategy allows the learners to carry out a learning process, where they are who self-direct and self-regulate the way in which is developed their own learning process, it is in that way, that students can get a significative learning.

To support the concept of significative learning, Ramirez (n.d) stated "the metacognitive strategies allow the student to develop a self-regulated activity with the aim of planning the research process of new resources of information and solving problems". In this process, the metacognitive strategy that fosters in learners the faculty to find a new way of getting knowledge is a strategy that encourages autonomous learning on students, and so be able to solve problems.

### ***Importance of autonomous learning.***

Continuing with the autonomous learning, the strategies, and concepts above proposed, for J. R. Kidd (1999) "the aim of adult education of any other kind of education is make the student a learner continuously self-directed and develops knowledge by himself" (As cited in Velasco Escamilla L., 2011). Autonomous learning is aimed to encourage in students, skills that allow them to control their own learning process while they are fostered to design different strategies that lead them to get new knowledge.

That is why "the learning conception is based in a new model which is characterized for considering the student as the spotlight and main factor of the educational process, unlike the

traditional model where the main actor was the teacher" (Velasco Escamilla L. 2011). It is so that autonomous learning becomes more important for changing the way in which the learning process is carried out, giving more importance to students, and giving them the responsibility of take care of their own learning.

In fact, and in the words of Contreras (1999) "autonomous learning favors a major participation from students in the determination of goals, procedures, resources, evaluations, and learning stages" (As cited in Velasco E. L, 2011). The importance of an autonomous learning is given since students can be an active part in the learning process at the moment of making decisions that will affect them directly in the learning process.

Considering the above, where students are most important than before in the learning process, Velasco Escamilla L. (2011) "emphasizes the shift in the roles of the process in which teachers are no longer just the transmitters of the knowledge, but they now are who guides students through the learning processes" (para, 4). As it has been exposed above, there has been a shift in the roles that teachers and learners have come developing, where students are the spotlight of the learning process and teachers are there for guiding learners to achieve their aims.

### **Autonomous learning strategies for distance education**

It is also important to identify the relationship between distance education and autonomous learning. According to Manrique V. (2004) "distance education is characterized by developing autonomous learning in students, which poses to the teacher the challenge of taking

advantage of ICTs to make participants more aware of their learning process and their role in regulating it" (P, 7). To succeed in a distance educative process, students must have a certain grade of autonomy. It is here, where the relationship between distance education and autonomous learning is important; because of the fact that one is the support of the others, as the author suggested distance education, fosters the autonomy that learners need.

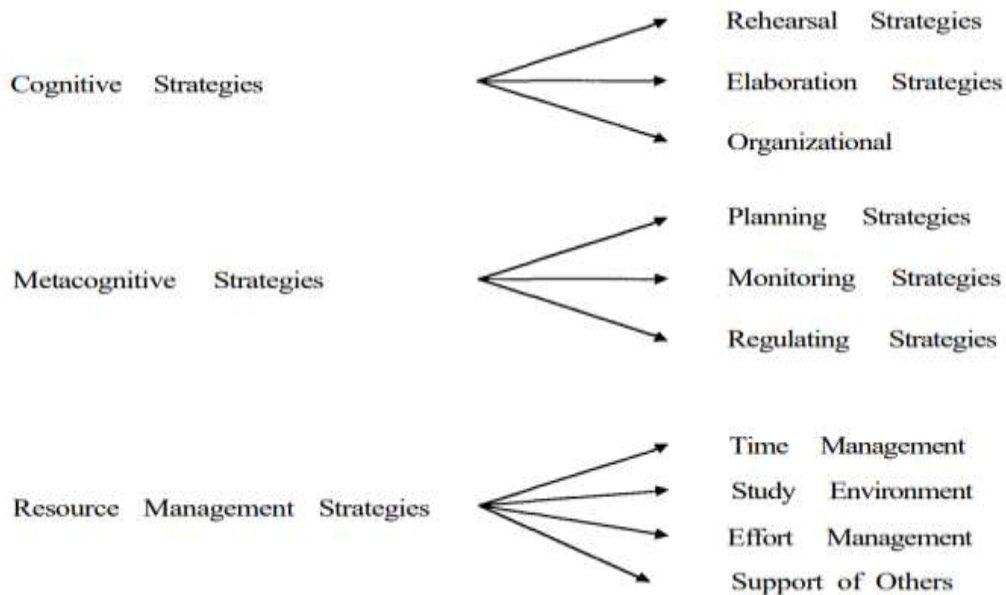
Taking into account the above suggestion Manrique V. (2004) stated that "This relationship requires joint work of who is responsible for the pedagogical design and the technological design that can incorporate the above strategies: affective-motivational, planning, regulation and self-evaluation in the structure of the learning environment". (p, 7). It is that way, the application of the strategies mentioned above, support the design of the study plan addressed to a determined content.

Another critical aspect related to the development of autonomy through distance education is suggested by Del Mastro (2003), who stated that "the autonomy development not only depends on the interaction between students and contents by means of using ICTs in a learning environment, but also, the teaching actions that motivate and support students to acquire autonomy in the learning" (As cited in Manrique Villavicencio L., 2004). In the distance education process, students can develop autonomy, combining the technological resources they have on hand, but also, but also it is important to understand the role that teachers and mates have in this process and the dynamics they can implement to foster in students autonomous thinking.

Other authors implemented a classification of learning strategies, to Weinstein & Mayer, (1986) suggested “learning strategies from a cognitive perspective. This cognitive approach identified specific strategies and methods available to learners to assist them with the selection, acquisition, construction, and integration of knowledge”. (As cited in Filcher & Miller, 2000). The aim of the strategy suggested by the authors, it is to assist the students to identify the path to follow in their learning process, focusing on the knowledge they are going to get and develop.

In addition to Weinstein and Mayer suggestion, other authors incorporated elements of several learning models, McKeachie et al. (1986) proposed "a taxonomy which encompasses the cognitive, metacognitive, and resource management aspects of learning" (p. 24). According to this, there is not only a learning model which assist the learning process, besides the cognitive model, there were suggested more strategies that help learners to get autonomy in their distance learning process. the next figure outlines such strategies.





*Figure 1.* Taxonomy of Learning Strategies. This figure shows the strategies to follow in an autonomous learning process. (G. Miller & Cl Filcher 2000. P,62)

According to McKeachie et al. (1986), "cognitive strategies, are important for understanding how information is processed and encoded in a learning environment" (p. 25). The importance for students to apply this learning strategy according to these authors, is the possibility to control the process they carry out focused on the knowledge available for them.

On the other hand, for (McKeachie et al., 1986). "Metacognitive strategies allow a student to monitor his/her performance through planning, monitoring, and self-regulation" (p. 27). In this sense, for distance learners the implementation of metacognitive strategies in the learning process, it is useful to the extent that makes them aware of how they are carrying out their own process.

In third place, for (McKeachie et al., 1986) “Resource management strategies assist the student in managing the learning environment and available resources” (p. 29). According to the author, this strategy is aimed to foster in students the proper management of the resources they have on hand in their learning environment.

*Cognitive strategies.*

According to the strategies proposed above, (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986) stated that "the cognitive component of McKeachie's taxonomy focuses on the methods by which students actively process information and structure this information into memory" (As cited in Filcher & Miller, 2000). The cognitive component emphasizes, on how students develop processes which help them to internalize and appropriate the knowledge in the memory.

For McKeachie et al. (1986), "Specific cognitive strategies, include rehearsal, elaboration, and organization" (p. 25). In this sense, this first strategy is composed by sub strategies that allow students to carry out a process of internalization and appropriation of knowledge by means of using different methods at different moments.

Rehearsal strategies according to Olgren (1998) “are employed by learners to remember material using repetition” (As cited in Filcher & Miller, 2000). The aim of these strategies is to achieve the learners’ internalization or appropriation the knowledge using tactics where students are constantly repeating the information they get.

In this strategy Weinstein & Mayer (1986) stated that "specific rehearsal tactics include repeating the material aloud, copying the material, taking selective verbatim notes and underlining the most important parts of the material” (As cited in Filcher & Miller, 2000).

Learners through these tactics are constantly repeating the more relevant information of several resources for them generating so, a way to memorize and internalize the knowledge.

The second strategy proposed is elaboration, which according to McKeachie et al. (1986) “It is the process by which the learner builds an internal connection between what is being learned and previous knowledge. Specific tactics include paraphrasing, summarizing, creating analogies, generative note-taking, and question answering” (p. 27). Students can link their previous knowledge to the new one applying strategies or tactics that allow them to acquire and internalize the knowledge, trying to relate new material to familiar ideas, and translating material into their own words.

In this field through a study Miller (1997), determined “that 87% of adult students in distance education courses delivered by video file used an elaborative strategy by taking notes while viewing the video file” (p. 23). According to this statement it is important to remark that a high percentage of adult distance learners apply at least one of the elaboration strategies to get the result they expected.

On the other hand, Bernt and Bugbee (1990) determined that “elaboration strategies were used by 50-75% of the adult students in distance educational environments”. (p. 10). In this regard, the results gotten for the author, show that a good percentage of distance education learners, apply elaboration techniques disposed in distance education environments.

The last tactic mentioned is organization, for Olgren (1998) “this is the process by which the learner organizes and builds connections with the information received in the learning environment” (As cited in Filcher & Miller, 2000). In distance education, the organization gives the students, the opportunity to organize the information of several resources, applying process

that allow them to select the main idea of determined topics through outlines, networking, charts, diagrams.

According to a study conducted by Miller G. (1997) “21.2% of the adult distance education students in videotape situations employed organizational strategies by outlining class notes” (p. 23). Unlike organization or elaboration strategies, this study shows how learners did not apply organizational strategies to internalize the knowledge.

### *Metacognitive strategies*

On distance education, the metacognitive model according to (Everson, Tobias, & Laitusis, 1997) "it is a component of the theoretical model focuses on the skills students use to plan their strategies for learning, to monitor their present learning, and to estimate their knowledge in a variety of domains" (p. 2). With the application of this strategy, it is expected that students develop skills that help them to be in charge of their own learning process of an adequate way, looking for success in the learning process.

Inside the tactics that students can carry out there is, planning, which according to McKeachie et al. (1986) “includes such tactics as setting goals, skimming the material, and generating questions” (p. 63). In a distance educative process, it is critical for the students to implement a schedule of the steps they should follow to get the knowledge, and so, controlling constantly they way in which the process is developed.

According to a study applied to adult distance learners by Bernt and Bugbee (1990), “89% of the high passing students reported very frequently or almost always skimming each chapter before reading it. Conversely, only 35% of the failing students and 29% of the low passing students reported using this tactic”. (p. 11). Regarding the result gotten by the authors, in

higher percentage students who applied planning strategies got better results, showing the relevance of using this kind of strategies.

Other strategies that are involved in the metacognitive strategy are According to (McKeachie et al.,1986) "Monitoring and regulating which utilize self-regulation" (p. 27). In this model of distance education, it is necessary that learners are capable of monitoring and regulating their own learning process.

In this sense and according to Wang & Lindvall, 1984, (as cited in McCombs, 1988) "This process of self-monitoring has been found to contribute to improve acquisition, generalization, and transfer of knowledge" (As cited in Filcher & Miller, 2000). Distance learners by means of the application of this tactic are able to generate, acquire and internalize new knowledge.

The second strategy is regulating, which for McKeachie et al. (1986) "Regulating involves such processes as adjusting reading rate, rereading, reviewing, or utilizing test-taking tactics" (p. 27). Distance learners can regulate their learning process in the same way that they monitor how it is carried out. The learning process regulation is the way students have to identify whether such a process is developed in the correct rhythm or need adjustments.

#### *Resource Management Strategies*

The last learning strategy suggested in this case is the resource management which according to (McKeachie et al., 1986) "it concerns the quality and quantity of the task involvement" (p. 28). This strategy refers to the way in which learners make use of the several resources they have on hand inside a distance educative process.

Regarding this strategy, McKeachie et al. (1986), suggested that "resource management strategies include resource management, study environment management, effort management, and support of others" (p. 27). In this sense, the author mentions the possible factors that distance learners must manage through their learning process related to the resources, environment, effort, and contact with others.

Regarding the resource management Filcher & Miller, (2000) suggested that "it involves the process of developing well-defined goals and scheduling the course to obtain the best results"(p. 64). It is in that way that scheduling is a process where students define times and routines to develop the activities they must develop to get determined aims.

In a qualitative study conducted Eastmond (1995) "determined that most adult students scheduled distance education courses into their agenda and developed study patterns to help them succeed" (As cited in Filcher & Miller, 2000). According to the above statement for distance learners it is important to set up and schedule that allows the students to manage the moments in which they can develop their academic activities.

Related to the manage strategy McKeachie et al. (1986) suggested that "the nature of the setting is as important as the fact that the student recognizes that this particular location is set aside for studying" (p. 29). Study environment management refers to the development of an environment and place that is conducive to learning.

In a study conducted by Bernt and Bugbee (1990), it is shown that "72-75% of students reported very frequently or almost always studying in a quiet place without interruption" (p. 10). According to the study it is possible to infer that adult learners in a distance program, apply this strategy set up the best environment to carry out their learning process.

The third strategy involved in resource management strategy according to McKeachie et al. (1986) is the effort management who suggested that “this is the process by which a learner utilizes tactics such as attribution to the effort, mood, self-talk, persistence, and self-reinforcement” (p. 29). These tactics are aimed to keep the learner motivated, fact that is very important in a distance educative process.

As the final strategy involved in the resource management strategy, is the support of other strategies, which according to McKeachie et al. (1986) "Students must learn to utilize this support by seeking help from other students and the instructor" (p. 29). For distance learners it is important to use all the tools they have on hand, in this case it is possible that learners learn from the contact with mates and tutors.

### CHAPTER 3

#### METHODOLOGY

The present monograph is based on the qualitative investigation model, which allows a series of investigative processes, with a thematic and a common axis of problems of documentary research; this approach is present in the Education and Human Development Line, established in the Research Statute of the UNAD

For Martínez J. (2011) "The qualitative research is interested in the context of the events and focuses its inquiry on such slots in which humans being are interested, assess and experiment directly. This kind of research works in natural contexts or analyzed just like they are, more than rebuilt or modified by the researcher" (p, 11).

It is in that way that a qualitative research model, is focused on analyzing and interpreting the possible slots of knowledge, which represent an interest for the human beings, analyzing and assessing real contexts that have not been transformed or modified by them.

The qualitative research is influenced by the epistemological current known as hermeneutics, which according to Martínez J. (2011) "pretends to find the meaning of the diverse human expressions, as texts, words, gestures, preserving their singularity" (p. 16), this kind of research just pretends to give a meaning to the human expressions without the necessity of altering or changing their essence as unique

In this sense, López y Téllez (1999) "made known how the interpretation of texts, it is taking into account aspects related to the understanding and reflection of documents". (As cited in Bravo Cisneros J. 2016). The qualitative research intends to generate a theory since the comprehension and analysis of documents and other expressions own of the human beings.



Monograph as modality of degree project.

The monograph as degree modality becomes in an important bibliographic research, which according to the UNAD (2014). "tackles thematic border areas in the curriculum of a formal program. The developed works must be registered in one of the research lines of the program" (p, 4). The monograph as a degree project pretends the development of the analysis and arrangement of investigative references.

In this modality "It is present a process of interpretation of the sources interviewed, printed and/or electronic used, where the implementation of a critical knowledge regarding the phenomena of interest is sought" (López y Téllez, 1999, as cited in Bravo Cisneros J, 2016). For the development of this text was applied a methodology of research and interpretation of the different sources consulted accompanied a critical thought related to the information gotten about the topic suggested.

#### *Data collection strategy*

The data collection strategy applied in the present monograph took into account the informative aim of the present research. For the development of the present monograph where consulted, 7 websites, 11 e-journals, 1 monograph as degree project, 1 printed article, 1 doctoral thesis, 1 e-article, 5 e-books, 5 research pages, 17 pdf files, 1 video, 1 printed journal, 1 research congress, 7 printed books and 1 virtual blog. Found on a virtual level, related to the problematic proposed in the present monograph.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS**

The development of the present documental research allows the comprehension, discussion, and reflection of different documents, where the authors tackle fundamental topics as distance education, autonomy, self-regulation, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, among others.

Following the aim of this project, it was searched in different resources as well as the information given by several authors, in order to find relevant information about the topics proposed related to distance education, the development of autonomy and strategies involved in an autonomous learning process inside of a distance education environment.

In this regard and in first place, I consulted different sources about distance education and found that distance education as an educative process was implemented as a way "to provide educational opportunities for those who were not among the elite, and who could not afford full-time residence at an educational institution, was looked down on as inferior education" (Nirmalani Gunawardena, C., & Stock McIsaac, M. n.d. p, 2). Distance education was designed as an educative method, which intends to reduce the gap between social elites.

In the same field according to the sources consulted, I found that currently distance education, "not only offers benefits for students, for the author this educative model gives benefits to students, enterprises, and governments" (Garcia Arieto L. 2003. P, 14) In this regard distance education since its beginnings, have given opportunities not only to students, but more social sectors that are benefited of it as companies and governments.

As the second topic, I searched about autonomous learning concept and I found that autonomous learning is a process that enhance in learners the skill of be in charge of their own

learning process, largely without the help of third parties, regarding to this, authors like Betts & Knapp (1981) define this concept as "the possibility of solving problems or develop new ideas through a combination of divergent and convergent thinking and functions with minimal external guidance in selected areas of endeavor" (As cited in Furman R, 2017). This concept shows the importance of the learners' aware at the time of taking part in a learning process based on autonomy.

The gotten results in this research show that "Autonomous learning is a process that stimulates the students to be the authors of their own development and specially to build by themselves the knowledge" (Insuasty 1999. p, 9), it is in that way that learners involved in this process are encouraged to self-regulate the rhythm, the way and the results they pretend to get in their learning process.

For the development of autonomy in a distance learning process, (McKeachie et al 1986). Have been established some strategies, "which involve, cognitive processes, metacognitive and management of resources" (As cited in Filcher & Miller, 2000). These strategies are aimed to help to distance learners to implement processes directed to the generation, management and internalizing of previous and new knowledges.

In a study made by Bernt and Bugbee (1990), was identified that adult distance education learners applied in a major percentage such strategies by means of the different tactics expose above (As cited in Filcher & Miller, 2000). In these sense through the research of determined sources, was found the autonomous learning strategies help adult distance learners, to succeed in their distance learning process.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

Along the development of this project, was defined distance education as an appropriate educative process that allows the students to obviate the time and place limitations. For Sacristan R (2006), the aim of distance education " obviate the time and space boundaries, distance education unlike traditional education when using communication media, that facilitates the contact between learners, teachers, and contents no matter that they are in different place and time" (p, 5).

According to the previous consideration, distance education has been shown as an excellent way to continue with educative processes, by means of the technological tools, that facilitates and enhance cognitive processes in people, distance education model also fosters in learners new communicative skills and the aware of the process they are carrying out. This is due to the fact that currently social circumstances can hinder the attendance to an education institution, Despite of theses good aspects and regarding to the concepts given by authors like (Garcia Arieto L. 2003, Sacristan R. 2006, Janice. 2017 et al.), who contributed with positive statements about this topic. It is important to question whether the knowledge acquired in a distance education model compared to the traditional educational model has the same level, and the performance of distance learners is like traditional learners.

In second place, this document by means of a documentary researching states the importance of the learner's autonomy in a distance educative process, authors like (Insuasty 1999, Manrique V. 2004, Bravo Cisneros J. 2017 et. al) suggested that autonomy in learners is a great resource to get knowledge by means of motivation, self-regulation, and self-assessment, in a distance education environment where students are far away from others who can support them

frequently, and the major contact they have is by means of communicative technology. But, it is also important to consider if the distance learners are ready to develop correctly the autonomous learning strategies mentioned above in this document. Are students prepared and have the knowledge and aware enough to carry out a learning process without the constant support of teachers or mates.

Specifically, this monograph details autonomous learning strategies, which are aimed to lead the learners through their distance educative process, the steps to follow in order to regulate and monitor the effectiveness of the process they are carrying out (McKeachie et al. 1986) suggested a classification of these strategies, Cognitive, metacognitive and resources management, each one of these have a specific impact for learners in the learning process.

According to the author cognitive strategy is aimed to the management of the previous knowledge and the new one, the metacognitive and resources management strategies are aimed for processes of self-development where students monitor and lead their own learning process. It is necessary to question if learners get enough preparation from distance educative institutions to understand how must be applied the strategies proper of autonomous learning.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The context and the diverse social situations play an important role in the learning, where are taking into account the possibilities for people to get and generate knowledge, it is in that way that the implementation of different strategies of learning can contribute to the social development, by means of the preparation of people to face social issues.

According to the different social situations, education results in an important fact for people to satisfy their necessities. It is here where distance education and autonomous learning play an important role, to the extent that together help people get and generate knowledge that will also help them to satisfy their necessities.

On the one hand, distance education helps people to have access to education systems Kiryakova (2009), defines this concept "as the process in which students do not need to share the same place or moment with tutors" (p, 29). this educative model supports people with different possibilities to access the education.

It is important to conclude that distance education needs the complement of autonomous learning strategies, classified according to McKeachie et al. (1986) as cognitive, metacognitive and the resources management, which encourage autonomy on learners, to be able of self-regulating, and monitor their learning process (p. 24), it refers to how students handle knowledge, and the way they apply it to solve their own necessities.

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