

Exploring Equity and Inclusion in the Context of Distance Education Using a Social Location Perspective

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Abstract : In this study, a social location perspective is used to explore the challenges of creating opportunities that will foster lifelong education, inclusion, and equity for residents of rural communities in Ghana. The differentiated experiences of rural adults are under-researched and often unacknowledged in lifelong education literature and distance education policy. There is a need to examine carefully the structural inequalities that create disadvantages for residents of rural communities and women in pursuing distance education in designated cities in Ghana. The paper uses in-depth interviews to explore participants' experiences of learning at a distance and to scrutinise the narratives of lifelong education. The paper reflects on the implications of the framework employed for educators and social justice in lifelong education. It further recommends the need to provide IT laboratories and fully online programs that would require stable and regular internet and access to ICT equipment for potential learning in rural communities. The social location approach presented a number of axes of diversity as comparatively more important than others; these included gender, age, education, work commitment, geography, and degree of social connectedness. This can inform lifelong education policy and programs to sustain quality education.

Keywords : equity, distance education, lifelong learning, social location, intersectionality, rural communities

Conference Title : ICOLDE 2024 : International Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education

Conference Location : Boston, United States

Conference Dates : April 22-23, 2024