

### Online Education: definitions and advantages in adult education

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**Abstract:** Distance education delivers classes (live or pre-taped) to students in their home, office, or classroom. It is used by K-12, higher education, continuing education and business. Historically, its predominant medium of instruction has been printed materials, although non-print media is becoming more and more popular. It may also incorporate or make use of videotapes, CD or DVD ROM's, audio recordings, facsimiles, telephone communications, and the Internet through e-mail and Web-based delivery systems. As the cost of delivering quality education increases, institutions find that limited resources prevent them from building facilities, hiring faculty, or expanding curricula. They are using distance education to maximize resources and are combining their assets with others to produce programming. Distance education is offered internationally, nationally, regionally, and locally over all forms of conferencing technology. Distance learning is expanding and examples of it are increasing dramatically. Fewer than 10 states were using distance learning in 1987; today, virtually all states have an interest or effort in distance education. Distance learning systems connect the teacher with the students when physical face-to-face interaction is not possible. Telecommunications systems carry instruction, moving information instead of people.

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#### Introduction:

Distance learning is expanding and examples of it are increasing dramatically. Fewer than 10 states were using distance learning in 1987; today, virtually all states have an interest or effort in distance education. Distance learning systems connect the teacher with the students when physical face-to-face interaction is not possible. Telecommunications systems carry instruction, moving information instead of people. The technology at distant locations are important and affect how interaction takes place, what information resources are used, and how effective the system is likely to be. Technology transports information, not people. Distances between teachers and students are bridged with an array of familiar technology as well as new information age equipment. What sets today's distance education efforts apart from previous efforts is the possibility of an interactive capacity that provides learner and teacher with needed feedback, including the opportunity to dialogue, clarify, or assess. Advances in digital compression technology may greatly expand the number of channels that can be sent over any transmission medium, doubling or even tripling channel capacity. Technologies for learning at a distance are also enlarging our definition of how students learn, where they learn, and who teaches them. No one technology is best for all situations and applications. Different technologies have different capabilities and limitations, and effective implementation will depend on matching technological capabilities to education needs. The

student may receive information via satellite, microwave, or fiber optic cable, television (broadcast, cable or Instructional Television Fixed Services (ITFS), video cassette or disk, telephone - audio conferencing bridge or direct phone line, audio cassette, printed materials - text, study guide, or handout, computer - modem or floppy disk, and compressed video. Recent rapid development of technology has resulted in systems that are powerful, flexible, and increasingly affordable. The base of available information technology resources is increasing with dramatic speed. Much has been learned about connecting various forms of technology into systems, so that the ability to link systems is growing. Most distance learning systems are hybrids, combining several technologies, such as satellite, ITFS, microwave, cable, fiber optic, and computer connections. Interactivity is accomplished via telephone (one-way video and two-way audio), two-way video or graphics interactivity, two-way computer hookups, two-way audio. Interactivity may be delayed but interaction provided by teacher telephone office hours when students can call or through time with on-site facilitators. Classes with large numbers of students have a limited amount of interactivity. Much of the activity on computer networks is on a delayed basis as well. Possibilities for audio and visual interaction are increasingly wide.

High front-end costs prevented an early widespread adoption of electronically mediated learning. Distance learning has been aggressively

adopted in many areas because it can meet specific educational needs. As the concept of accountability became accepted and laws required certain courses in high school in order for students to be admitted to state colleges, telecommunications was examined as a way to provide student access to the required courses. Many rural school districts could not afford the special teachers to conduct required courses. Distance education met this need by providing courses in schools where teachers were not available or were too costly to provide for a few students. It also fulfilled a need for teacher training and staff development in locations where experts and resources were difficult to obtain. These systems link learner communities with each other and bring a wide array of experts and information to the classroom.

Challenges which faced the early users of distance education are still with us today. If distance education is to play a greater role in improving the quality of education, it will require expanded technology; more linkages between schools, higher education, and the private sector; and more teachers who use technology well. Teachers must be involved in planning the systems, trained to use the tools they provide, and given the flexibility to revise their teaching. Federal and state regulations will need revision to ensure a more flexible and effective use of technology. Connections have been established across geographic, instructional, and institutional boundaries which provide opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing among many groups. In the pooling of students and teachers, distance learning reconfigures the classroom which no longer is bounded by the physical space of the school, district, state or nation.

The key to success in distance learning is the teacher. If the teacher is good, the technology can become almost transparent. No technology can overcome poor teaching which is actually exacerbated in distance education applications. When skilled teachers are involved, enthusiasm, expertise, and creative use of the media can enrich students beyond the four walls of their classroom.

Teachers need training in the system's technical aspects and in the educational applications of the technology. Areas for assistance include the amount of time needed to prepare and teach courses, how to establish and maintain effective communication with students, strategies for adding visual components to audio courses, ways to increase interaction between students and faculty, planning and management of organizational details, and strategies for group cohesion and student motivation.

#### WHAT IS DISTANCE EDUCATION?

Distance education is a method of education in which the learner is physically separated from the teacher and

the institution sponsoring the instruction. It may be used on its own, or in conjunction with other forms of education, including face-to-face instruction. In any distance education process there must be a teacher, one or more students, and a course or curriculum that the teacher is capable of teaching and the student is trying to learn. The contract between teacher and learner, whether in a traditional classroom or distance education, requires that the student be taught, assessed, given guidance and, where appropriate, prepared for examinations that may or may not be conducted by the institution. This must be accomplished by two-way communication. Learning may be undertaken either individually or in groups; in either case, it is accomplished in the physical absence of the teacher in distance education. Where distance teaching materials are provided to learners, they are structured in ways that facilitate learning at a distance.

#### Types of Distance Education Programs:

There are two types of programs offered by distance education schools: synchronous learning programs and asynchronous learning programs. With synchronous learning, distance education students must log on to the school's website at a set time. Often, they interact with their peers and professors via group chats, web seminars, video conferencing, and phone call-ins. With asynchronous learning, distance education students complete all coursework on their own time. They often learn via assignment sheets, message boards, email, pre-recorded video lectures, mp3s, and traditional mail correspondence.

Distance education began for the delivery of courses to students who live in remote areas. Over the years, though, this form of education has become the preferred method for learning outside of the classroom.

Distance Education is now undertaken by people with busy schedules, hectic lifestyles, special needs, and also those living in isolated areas. What's more, with such flexible learning options you can choose to study at any time and from any location you like.

There are a number of different **forms of distance education** and it's important to know which method you prefer:

- **Correspondence learning:** your course materials are printed and sent out to you by mail/courier. The advantages are that you have a printed set of reference materials, you can study anywhere and you are not reliant on a computer, you can learn for long periods of time.

- **eLearning:** your course materials are provided to you in multimedia format; that is, on

CD/DVD. In this way you can choose to take your study materials within you and learn anywhere in the world with just a laptop.

- **Online learning:** no materials are sent to you and you do all your learning online. The limitation is that you need to be logged onto a computer (though you may be able to download and print some of your materials yourself, though this can cost you more in ink), there is a limit to how much you can absorb and do online, and most people's attention span on-screen is limited to 20 minutes (your eyes get tired after that).
- **Broadcast learning:** where you tune into a series of television, radio or Internet broadcasts (e.g. podcast, YouTube, etc.).
- **Teleconferencing:** where your lessons are conducted in real time through an Internet connection. Limitations are that streaming can be slow, connections can cause problems (students and teachers generally need to be computer literate) and there can be delays in talk-time, depending on software, hardware and connection capabilities.

### Online Education Pros

Of the many advantages and new possibilities of online education, here are some of the Strengths:

#### 1. Greater flexibility

Online students have more freedom in choosing their programs and schedules. This allows many busy adults to adapt online courses to their already established everyday life of work and family.

For many, this is simply the only way they can study for that degree which will take them farther in their career and life.

#### 2. Saves Time and Money

Online education saves an enormous amount of time and money which in traditional education is wasted on commuting. Commuting is also very tiring, while online education means you can study from home, in a comfortable environment with everything you need close at hand.

Tuition also costs less for most online institutions.

#### 3. Logistics

Traditional education is restricted due to logistical issues; there is only this amount of students who can be in a place at a given time, whereas in online classes, there is no question of paucity of space. As long as the online classes have the necessary bandwidth, an unlimited number of students can study, all over the globe. Then again, traditional classes would turn up expensive to maintain, because the educational institution needs to maintain a place and its

facilities.

When it comes to online education, all they need to do is to set up E-learning tools, an Internet connection and a website where people can learn. While this is not cheap too, but it is definitely cost less as compared to the costs of a place to carry on.

### Online Education VS Traditional Education

This article reviews the differences and the pros and cons of online VS traditional education.

Gone is the world where only traditional, campus-based education existed and you only had to choose the university or college you wanted to study in.

Someday, probably in the near future, Online Education will replace traditional institutions. At least, many degree programs will combine the on campus courses as well as online classes as a standard educational approach.

But for now, the future student has to decide first whether he/she wants to study online or on a campus degree.

Here are some points to consider the pros and cons of online and traditional institutions:

### Differences between Online and Traditional Education; Comparison

#### 1. Convenience

One of the most striking, innovative, and unprecedented features of online education is their convenience for almost anyone. Persons busy with careers or families will be able to compose their schedules so that they fit their individual time constraints. This is possible because courses are delivered in the form of electronic-based modules online.

It is also convenient because it requires no commuting, saving a great deal of time and money.

It allows to study from home, with the only requirement being the possession of an adequate computer and internet connection. Basic computer skills only are required to acquire higher education online.

#### 2. Expenses

Tuition costs less for most online institutions. Online education also eliminates the additional expenses usually entailed by traditional "campus life", commuting, and the purchase of study materials.

#### 3. Feedback

Feedback is somewhat better in traditional education. Students can interact directly face to face with both classmates and teachers, which makes feedback easier to understand and faster to

get.

Some online institutions do offer chat rooms and video/audio meetings.

#### 4. Accreditation

The credit of online education depends on its purpose and context. If you only have online degree(s) and are just trying to find work, employers may prefer traditionally educated candidates.

If you are already an employed and valuable professional, online learning will be seen favorable as a way to improve your skills, expand your professional knowledge, and thus contribute more at work.

#### 5. Ecology

Online education has obvious positive effect on the environment.

It may not be measurable now, but if online education largely replaces traditional institutions in the near future it will mean that less paper will be used for books and writing material and fewer campuses will be built while the number of students and employed teachers will only increase radically.

#### Conclusion:

Emergence and development of information societies is the consequences of industrialization. Despite the diversity of information in various forms of media in local, national and international, access, exchange and use of various information easier than last time is. Information society, a member of your buddies know that open information system in terms of geographical location and the last 25 years, organizational development, are limited. Distance learning faster than other forms of training has been.

Growth factor in the economic interests of this type of educational approach, flexibility and remove the distance can be named. The methods of distance education, required for building physical education is not providing services. Teachers and trainers in this method - compared with traditional methods - and have more opportunities to more people than are being trained. In this type of teaching style of each person in each academic field, and each job can be arbitrary in time and space, trained without having to leave the house for work or business is education. This method requires that students are dispersed over long distances provides. Distance learning advantages of distance education in comparison with traditional education, the need for physical locations and training programs limited to no specific time period. In this type of teaching style, learning for life without possibility of spatial and temporal constraints for each individual there. In distance education, problems related to lack of qualified teachers and appropriate educational environment - as it posed in the traditional method of M is - is resolved. In this way the use of advanced features in digital libraries and search the various sites during the

study, time and cost savings are.

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