Online Classes: Advantages and Disadvantages

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Abstract: 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.
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Introduction:

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.

Distance education places students and their instructors in separate locations using some form of technology to communicate and interact. The student may be located in the classroom, home, office or learning center. The instructor may be located in a media classroom, studio, office or home.

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.

In the earlier days of distance learning, it was most common to see distance learning used for rural students who were at a distance from an educational institution. The student might watch a telecourse on a television stations, read texts, mail in assignments and then travel to the local college to take an exam. This model is still in use, but as the technology has become more sophisticated and the cost of distance learning dropped as equipment prices dropped, the use of distance education has increased.

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.

The interchange of ideas requires different communication methods than in conventional classrooms: information technologies are predominantly visual media, rather than the textual and auditory environment of the conventional classroom, the affective content of mediated messages is muted compared to face-to-face interaction, and complex cognitive content can be conveyed more readily in electronic form because multiple representations of material (e.g., animations, text, verbal descriptions, and visual images) can be presented to give learners many ways of understanding the fundamental concept.

Archived video footage and virtual real-time lectures, online assignments and presentations, electronic academic material, multimedia as part of classrooms – all these have been part of higher education for a while now.

However, Online Education means taking entire degree program online, via your laptop.

This means an entirely new experience, yet not everybody is ready for it.

Taking Online Classes via Online education program requires specific learning skills, which some people lack.

Advantages of Online Classes:

The key advantages of using an online class are –

1. Time flexibility

For some people there is nothing worse than getting up before 9 in the morning. Traditional higher education often requires just that. But with online education students have the possibility to adjust schedules to their life, rather than adjust their life to predetermined schedules.

Other people benefit greatly from it too: parents, full-time employees, and anyone else who for this or that reason is too busy to attend traditional classes.

2. Geographic flexibility

Online institutions make possible something unprecedented: it no longer matters where you live. You can live in one of the world and study daily at an institution based in another without ever leaving your native country, or even your room, for that matter. Even in terms of local travel online education is a revolution: there are no more bus, train, or car trips, no traffic jams, no being late for the bus/train, no time and money spent on travel.

3. Class Notes

Not everybody knows how to write great class notes. Online courses provide electronic transcripts of every lecture. This is great for anyone who has short attention spans or does not like to write during lectures.

4. More educational means

Much more so that in traditional classrooms, online education incorporates online multimedia possibilities into instruction.

Possible cons of online classes include:

What are the Disadvantages of Online Courses? Here are some –

1. Credits

Not all online course credits are transferable to traditional degree programs!

2. Require self-discipline

Excellent self-discipline and time management without the aid of strict schedules, attendance requirements, and personal communication.

3. Lack of interpersonal interaction

No interpersonal relationships with ether teachers or students; only via email, message boards, and other online means of communication.

Online Classes VS Traditional Classes

Attendance

Traditional institutions require physical presence and participation in classrooms. This entails extensive travel and expenses. For many only this already makes higher education impossible.

Online education requires no traveling at all, saving time, money, and energy. Busy people will therefore be able to combine extensive studies with work and family. Education is available to sailors on submarines and to astronauts in space!

Virtual classrooms vs. real classrooms

There are two camps around this issue – Those who love attending campus-based lecture and those would rather stay at home.

Virtual education means there are no campuses and no classrooms. For those who prefer to be at home and are comfortable with cyber-space this is a virtual paradise. For those who are technophobic, get confused by online multi-media, and who prefer direct human contact this may be a veritable digitalized hell.

But the amount of people who are uncomfortable with technology and the internet is decreasing exponentially. Most people are addicted to the internet. And video communication is becoming standard nowadays, allowing top-quality group video communication online.

Traditional and Online Schedules

Online institutions deliver many or all courses via modules.

These modules can be scheduled by the student him or herself to be taken virtually at any time of day or night.

This is obviously impossible with traditional classes, however requires a high degree of self-motivation and the ability to meet requirements while enjoying greater freedom.

The Value of online classes/degree earned as compared to the traditional ones

When it comes to quality, going to Online Classes becomes universal as going to a traditional college class.

One has to remember that the world is changed rapidly and the online education is now a great alternative to the traditional one.

Just like a person got used to choose between campus-based colleges and universities, today the online education grows to be an option. Of course, with its different varying quality of degrees, just like any on-campus degrees.

These are just some of the differences between these two educational methods.

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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