Assessing Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Learning

[1] Ali Badragheh, [2] Mohammad Abedi

[1,2] Department of Agricultural Extension and Education, Varamin Branch, Islamic Azad University,
Varamin, Iran
*Corresponding author: abedi114@yahoo.com

Abstract: most distance education courses offered by traditional colleges and universities that are semester and classroom oriented, with courses offered by most of the DETC-accredited institutions you can study any time and anywhere. Distance education is especially suited for busy people who wish to increase their knowledge and skills without giving up their jobs, leaving home, or losing income. You learn while you earn. Many courses provide complete vocational training; others prepare you for upgrading in your present job, without losing wages, experience or seniority. You receive individual attention, and you work at your own pace. In recent years, technology has played a significant role in transforming the traditional distance education school into a dynamic, interactive distance learning method using toll-free telephone lines, as well as a diverse array of personal computers, video devices, CD and DVD ROMs, online courses over the Internet, interactive devices, and other modern technological innovations. The future for distance study promises to be exciting.
[Ali Badragheh and Mohammad Abedi. **Assessing Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Learning.**
 Journal of American Science 2011;7(5):45-51]. (ISSN: 1545-1003).
Keywords: Distance Learning, education

Introduction:

When the standardization and the requirements for training by the third millennium will be talking, unconscious form, design and construction to provide context and use tools and indicators to teaching the principles of community-based knowledge to the mind is centered. . No doubt these requirements and identify the correct tools and proper utilization of their functions according to accelerate the development expected in the knowledge-based information society will be effective. Such concerns and problems that any country in its development plans in motion to the information becoming a knowledge based society means a society would be faced with the centrality of knowledge, Dealing with existing tools and how these tools are used.

Led the way when dealing with those massive training programs available to speak to the technological tools that we expect to occur that planners and decision makers that planners and decision makers of large structures, especially university education according to the image Access to the development of community information are available on these tools are selected and used.

Massive wave of data produced in today's world it nicknamed the "information age" has all day and through various means of communication in the world will move on its size are added. Other hand, as we're not the world witnessed the development of the role of information communication devices transporting feedback fast and absorb the information around the world, we forget

Therefore, information and communication as the main lever or two important move in developing wings, we learn. Meanwhile, proper utilization of the capacities of these two valuable and effective indexes in the general development concept for any society and the principles of a critical need is considered. With a view to clarifying this issue can be paid in the best way to create a platform for developing data standards and access to a knowledge based society, what really can be. To achieve a clear and practical answer in this area before all the existing definitions and indicators mentioned placed.

Definition of distance learning:

in distance education teachers often are separate and comprehensive. Preparation of educational materials, supporting learners under the supervision of a training center takes place almost never do as a group are not**.** For services to education and electronic learning aids such as printed materials, computers and the Internet rely on.

Another look at the educational system of a new e-business and artistic and is a comprehensive solution to the institutions that want to move in the direction that technology and change their teaching methods and environments are possible to achieve the new educational approach provides**.**

Distance education is any type of schooling that takes place away from a physical campus. Distance education is also known as:

- distance learning
- virtual learning
- online learning
- e-learning
- online education
- web-based training

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.

Benefits of Distance Learning:
Benefits and opportunities that distance education provides, include:
- training a wide range of audiences.
- meet the needs of students and students who can not attend in place.
- Possible connection between students and students with cultures, beliefs and experiences are different.
- Benefiting from coaches and speakers who do not live in the country.

Educational methods in distance learning:
Today, under the new system replaced the traditional systems of learning and learning week (ie tutoring methods, lectures) are:
- **Multimedia courses:**
These courses and widely used elements of image, communication, graphics and simulated components, animation and communication elements for guidance and tips, and talk back on course and curriculum issues are held.
- **Enhanced communication mechanisms:**
The mechanism of any texts simultaneously, and asynchronous audio-visual communications to protect you. This case allows students to practice on topics learned will give.
- **Written test:**
thus, question and test via a distributed communication network, are corrected and returned. These exams through video conferencing support and runs**.**
-**Virtual Seminar:**
thereby different groups of students in different geographical environments linked together makes.
- **Collaborative virtual laboratories:**
the laboratory of the Group's activities are supported. Workshops such as software engineering.
-**Smart academic factors:**
academic factors that inform intelligent, support and guidance students pay.

Remote educational tool:

distance learning tools and supplies various uses. These tools in four main courses are:

A - Audio Tools:

Audio tools include training such as two-way interactive telephone, video conference, shortwave radio and a strain of tools such as audio tape and radio.

B - Image tools:

including slides, films, video tapes and video conferences.

C - Data:

computers as electronic data are sent and received. Because the data word description for a wide range of educational tools is used.

Computer applications for distance education are varied and include the following:

1- Training to Computer Management.

2 - Computer Assisted Instruction.

3 - through PCs.

4 - e-mail, telegraph, computer conference and the World Wide Web simultaneously.

D - Print:

The main element of distance education programs, particularly in the exchange and delivery system information tools are considered.

Key factors in the process of distance education:

the process of remote training, the following factors contribute:

- Students:

Regardless of educational content, role and main element in the learning process students are responsible.

- Coaches and Teachers:

Success depends on a lot of educational activities the ability, skills and knowledge are the coaches and professors.

- Facilitators of communication:

Facilitator bases, as the bridge between students and mentors are. Must base expectations of teachers and educational needs of students and service coordination and communication to create.

- Support staff:

One of the important pillars of any development of distance education programs, by development group finds. Operational support staff such as student registration, copy and distribute their resources, order textbooks, security and copyright, and are responsible for the report.

- Management:

The group decision makers, builders and judges are considered to be educational and should be considered among the factors above, establish the correct relationship formation.

Advantages of Distance Learning: Benefits of Distance Learning

Since distance learning has emerged as a new learning option, many students consider it. However, because it is new, they hesitate before opting for this education path.

This article lists and discusses about the Distance Learning key advantages.

Like everything in life, what works for on doesn't work for other people.New technology sounds confusing for many as it one of these new "techy things". After reading these 5 benefits of distance learning, you may get the idea of its advantages. Read further..

Benefits of Distance Learning: Advantages to Consider

Here are the good things with it -

1– The Flexibility: You utilize it in a convenient manner – Distance learning gives you the autonomous decision on the learning program and its schedule.

You are the one who decide on the time of taking the online courses.

You also set your own pace and control how fast you want to go over material.

Because these are online courses, you set your learning times. You take the decision on where to complete your learning duties and when to have more readings. In some degree programs, you can plan the syllabus and design the set of courses – You can even set the pace of your learning.

2 – The Availability: Almost every degree today is available online. Distance learning becomes an option for many students who cannot take the on-campus rout for any reason. Even a well known universities and college combine distance learning for some of their traditional campus education programs. Many of these online degrees are accredited regionally.

Distance education is a great option for those who aren't able to leave their jobs/careers and/or family for a traditional education.

3 – The Accessibility: Another benefit of distance learning is that wherever you have a computer access you may learn. Since you're not required to follow certain classroom/class work schedule, you are able to plan a flexible timetable of any given online class you take. Choosing distance learning gives you the ability (and flexibility) to study anywhere, anytime. You can also make quick decision down the learning process – How long you would want to learn in any given time.

4 – The Cost effectiveness: A key distance learning advantage for many people is the cost. In most cases the prices of online degree programs are lower than traditional campus college or university.
In addition, other education's costs factors are – travel time, housing, meals and time spent in classroom for every course. When selecting distance learning, you save money on each of these factors.

5 – The Efficiency: You effectively use your time. Distance learning actually saves your precious time. You don't waste your time on travel to class, walking, talking etc. No time is spent on traveling to classrooms and there is no dead time before/after courses.

As it is in any decision taken, distance learning may fit the needs and work best for one while not work for the other.

Disadvantages of Distance Learning: Drawbacks of Distance Learning

Though distance learning sounds appealing for many people, it doesn't necessarily work for all of us – It has its disadvantages. This article provides the key disadvantages of distance learning.

If you consider this method of learning, you may want to know more about certain issues/aspects of this new technology.

Distance Learning Disadvantages & Drawbacks

While distance learning has many good advantages, it also has some drawbacks that require your attention as follows :

1 – Educational Support: Since it is an on-line method, distance learning doesn't provide face to face interaction with teachers or other students. It might be that no teacher is available for answering questions.
In distance learning you have little to no support – you have to work hard for finding own resources for completing learning assignments. If your learning style is to use assistant from instructors (and other students) for discussing/understanding things in the material studied, then distance learning might not work for you.

2 – Accreditation: Many online degree programs still do not have the higher accreditation (regional accreditation) as the mainstream colleges and universities would give you.

3 – New technologies: Distance learning is a new technology and like with new techy things, it doesn't fit many people who have technology fears and cannot adopt new technical skills easily. It requires having technical skills such as – Computer knowledge, working with new software and experience Internet tools.

4 – Responsibilities: Believe it or not, many of us need to follow discipline for things we do and it is also true with taking education, otherwise we would not learn. Many people need an extra push to complete tasks and studies. When you opt for distance learning, you are the master of your domain for the bad and good things of it – You responsible for your plan and time.

5 – No Socializing: A downside of distance education is that it takes away an important aspect of the learning experience – Socializing and Interacting with others. If you enjoy meeting new people while learning don't go for distance learning. Be it teachers, students or the campus itself, some people essentially need the campus atmosphere and the interaction with others to get the right spirit of studding. With distance learning, you would need to get along by yourself. Education is a lot more of just learning experience. It is also a great opportunity to meet other students. Having distance learning, you lack opportunities to interact face-to-face with others

Pros and Cons of Distance Learning:

It is important to weigh the pros and cons of online learning, though the pros already seem to outweigh the cons.

In the future, there is little doubt that online education will become a standard part of our lives, whether traditional institutions disappear completely or not. Here is a list of both advantages and disadvantages for you to consider and compare:

The Pros of Distance Learning

Some of the advantages it provides include:

1. Saves time and money: Distance learning saves time and money by eliminating the need to commute to and from the campus. This is tons of free hours, allowing you to sleep more, study more, or accommodate your studies better to your full-time professional life.

2. Convenience: Asynchronous classes and extremely flexible schedules are perfect for many people. They allow time to absorb and respond. And they make it possible to study when it is most convenient to you, like during work, or on the train home, or even while on a cruise in Hawaii.

3. Geographic availability: Online education abolishes geographic limitations. Anyone can study anywhere. There is not need to travel abroad anymore. You can simply log on to your chosen institution from the comfort of your room.

Education Quality: For now, traditional institutions of great quality are more numerous than equivalent online ones. But there are already a number of online programs which combine revolutionary online methods with uncompromising quality. Soon there will be many more.

The Cons of Distance Learning

Some of the most often cited disadvantages include:

1. New Technology – Confusion

High-tech environments are not for everyone.

Some people are disoriented by absence of face to face contact. Online multi-media may confuse, unless you are a hardcore cyber-space resident.

2. Being self-disciplined

The degree of freedom allowed by online courses may as easily turn to your disadvantage if you have no self-discipline.

3. Lack of Feedback

Most of distance learning classes are asynchronous. This may allow time to think before responding, but it also means that you probably get less feedback than you would have in a traditional classroom.

4. Accreditation concern:

Not all online-course credits are transferable. Not all the employers are willing to hire candidates that have online degrees. Some online institutions accreditation still subjected to questions.

Conclusion:
In general, new methods of educational systems to countries around the world as a necessity and need for learning and training opportunities to study in areas with different climatic features and conditions of learning and education according to their gender and cultures, has been. Each method is mentioned with regard to changes in features and creates an education system, and evaluation is used. Judgement of distance education in an educational way, first as a necessity to eliminate barriers to educational climate and geographical areas, age and gender restrictions learners began their work And more in a death education system, especially in the philosophy and goals based on theories of learning theories have evolved to find and promote professional growth. Approach to distance education with regard to the necessity of education in countries formed.
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.

*Corresponding Author:
Mohammad Abedi
Department of Agricultural Extension and Education, Varamin Branch, Islamic Azad University,, Varamin, Iran
E-mail: abedi114@yahoo.com

References:

1. Alharthi, Mohammad A (2003). a High quality portal frame work for asynchronous learning networks: intellectual capital aggregation and organization, doctorate thesis, Vanderbilt university.
2. Allison. chlin.& others (2002). an integrated framework for distributed learning environments.
3. Almogbel. Ali N (2002). distance education in Saudi Arabia: attitudes and perceived contributations of faculty, students, and administrators in technical college, doctorate thesis, university of Pittsburgh.
4. Armstrong, Amy Jo (2002). an investigation of personal – social contextual factors of the online adult learner: perceived ability to complete and succed in a program of study. Doctorate Thesis, Virginia commonwealth university.
5. Barron, D (1996). Distance education in north American library and information science education: Application technology and commitment. journal of the Ameraican society for information science. Vol.47 ,No.11.
6. Bates,T (1995) .Technology, open learning and distance education London:Routledge.
7. Beetham. H., & Sharpe, R. (eds.) (2007). *Rethinking pedagogy for a digital age: Designing and delivering e-learning.* London: Routledge.
8. Boltone , sharon Bauer (2002). Developing an instrument to Analze the application of adult learning principles to world wide web distance education courses using the Delphi technique. EdD.university of lousville.
9. Bonk, C., & Graham, C. (eds.). (2006). *Handbook of blended learning: Global perspectives, local designs (pp. xvii - xxiii).* San Francisco: Pfeiffer.
10. Carter , A (2001). Interactive distance education: implication for adult learner, Interautional Media, 28(3), PP: 249-261.
11. Chizari, M, Mohammad ,H and linder ,J.R (2002). Distance education competencies of Faculty members in Iran
12. Crossfield, N. L. (2001, May/June). Digital reference: the next new frontier. *Latitudes,* 10(3). Retrieved July 16, 2005, from *http://nnlm.gov/psr/lat/v10n3/digitalref.html*
13. Dodds, T., Perraton, H., & Young, M. (1972). *One year's work: The International Extension College 1971-1971.* Cambridge, UK: International Extension College.
14. Faulhaber, C. B. (1996). Distance learning and digital libraries: Two side of a single coin. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 47(11), 854-856.
15. Garrison, R., & Vaughan, N. (2008). *Blended learning in higher education: Framework, principles, and guidelines.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
16. Garrison, J. A., Schardt, C., & Kochi, J. K. (2000). web – based distance countinuing education: a new way of thinking for students and instructors. *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association,* 88(3), 211-217.
17. Grimes, G. (1992). Happy 100th anniversary to distance education. Retrieved August 25, 2005, from http://www.macul.org/newsletter/1992/nov, dec 92/going.html
18. Husler, R. P. (1996). Digital library: content preservation in digital world. DESIDOC-

Bulletin of Information Technology, 16(1), 31-39.

19. Jeffres, M. Research in distance education. Retrieved August 20, 2005, from http://www.ihets.org/distance-/ipse/fdhandbook/research.html

20. Katsirikou, A., & Sefertzi, E. (2000). Inovation in the every day life of library. *Technovation*, 20(12), 705-709.

21. Lebowitz, G. (1997). Library service equity issue. *The Journal of Academic* Librarianship, 23(4), 303-308.

22. Lipow, A. G. (1999, January 20). Serving the remote user: reference service in the digital environment. In *Proceedings of the ninth Australasian information online & on disc conference and exhibition.*

23. McLean, D. D. (1996). Use of computer-based technology in health, physical education, recreation, and dance. ERIC Digest 94-7. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education. ED 390 874.

24. Moore, M. (ed.). (2007). *Handbook of distance education.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

25. Oliver, M., & Trigwell, K. (2005). Can blended learning be redeemed? *Elearning, 2 (1),* 17-26.

26. Strain, J. (1987). The role of the faculty member in distance education. American Journal of Distance Education, 1 (2).

27. Summers, M. (1997). From a distance: Or, how I learned to love my "tv" class. Faculty Development Papers. Available online at: Indiana Higher Education Telecommunication System (http://www.ihets.org/distance_ed/fdpapers/1997/summers.html).

3/16/2011