Distance Education and e-learning: Similarities and differences

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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. Distance education can be used for some aspects of most disciplines. For example, several institutions of higher education already have developed certificate programs, undergraduate programs, and graduate programs in health and physical education that are delivered using distance education methods.
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Introduction:
Distance education is education designed for learners who live at a distance from the teaching institution or education provider. It is the enrollment and study with an educational institution that provides organized, formal learning opportunities for students. Presented in a sequential and logical order, the instruction is offered wholly or primarily by distance study, through virtually any media. 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. When each lesson or segment is completed, the student makes available to the school the assigned work for correction, grading, comment, and subject matter guidance by qualified instructors. Corrected assignments are returned to the student. This exchange fosters a personalized student-instructor relationship, which is the hallmark of distance education instruction. Historically, most distance education courses were vocational in nature, but today courses are offered for academic, professional, and avocational purposes for students of all ages. There are numerous specialized programs, such as those for blind persons and for parents of small children with hearing impairments. Distance education is available in practically any field, from accounting to zoology. Courses are offered in gemology, high school diploma, journalism, locksmithing, child day care management, yacht design, and many fascinating subjects. Distance education courses also vary greatly in scope, level, and length. Some have a few assignments and require only a few months to complete, while others have a hundred or more lesson assignments requiring three or four years of conscientious study. Since 1890, more than 130 million Americans have studied at DETC member institutions, including Franklin D. Roosevelt, Walter P. Chrysler, Walter Cronkite, Barry Goldwater, Charles Schulz, and many other distinguished alumni of DETC members. Unlike 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.

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.

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.

In its original form, teachers using distance education traveled to remote sites and taught a class, or corresponded with students through mail, telephone, or fax machine. Individualized study has been a method of reaching the remote student for some time. Detailed course instructions are sent to the learner who performs the assigned tasks and returns the completed work to the teacher for evaluation and reassignment if necessary.
Technology has raised the quality of individualized distance instruction. The use of various forms of electronic media increases time effectiveness and improves the delivery of information. Video, audio, and computer-based applications may enhance the product received by the independent learner. Electronic delivery can occur using synchronous communication, in which class members participate at the same time, or asynchronous communication where participants are separated by time (Romiszowski, 1993).
Video/audio models of distance education include broadcast television, cable television, satellite, microwave, fiber optics, and audio graphics. The most widely used format is broadcast and cable television (Parrott, 1995). However, developments in satellite and fiber optic systems have produced other successful programs. The interactive capability of many of these networks has produced a distance classroom that is nearly identical to a regular classroom. Teachers and students can interact through both two-way video and one-way video with two-way audio systems. The recent development of Desktop Video Conferencing (DVC) which brings interactive video capability to the desktop computer, further enhances learning opportunities.
The linking of computer technology through the use of the Internet or CD-ROM with television transmission provides a potentially new dimension to distance education. This technique can link university professors to high school teachers, or to physically disabled students, in a distance setting (McLean, 1996).
Another form of interaction is the use of computer conferencing. This method utilizes asynchronous communication in such forms as an e-mail list group, an Internet discussion group, or other types of conferencing software. Asynchronous methods of communication are especially appealing to the

learner who has difficulty scheduling specific time- and place-bound course work.

The main aspects of Distance Education are as follows-

1. Geography: The point of Distance Education is to educate despite geographical differences. Online education effectively abolishes geographical as well as time differences, allowing an unprecedented number of students from all over the world to study in an institution, at any time of day.

2. Why higher education and Why take it from Distance: The world of today requires advanced education. Nowadays, advanced degrees are the standard – Having more than one education is not extraordinary but sometimes a must. Foreign studies are also common.

With the increased penetration of the Internet, Distance Education, offering anything from individual classes to complete doctoral degrees online, is a natural development of modern educational processes and requirements.

3. Distance Education as we know it today: It is a web-based education developed using e-Learning software tools and other distance-communication means. With increasing reliance on information, the demand for better and faster education grew and brought about the Internet.

4. Who Uses Distance Education? More and more people acquire higher education. Even professionals with full-time careers acquire new degrees, without change of pace at work. Distance education is perfect for the Military and for social institutions of all kinds. Parents can now combine higher education with family. Foreign education has never been easier – all it takes now is to log on.

Distance Education reaches out to all those segments of population which only a decade or so ago were almost completely neglected by educational systems.

In the nearest future cultural, educational, corporate diversity will reach never-before-seen peaks.

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

Conclusion:

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.

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.

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.

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