



Effective Distance Education: Lessons Learned

(or The Few Things I Know for Sure...)

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Effective Distance Education: Lessons Learned

- In the past few years, Distance Education has evolved from being a “quaint irrelevancy” to a lightning rod for educational change




Knowledge Trends

- 10,000 scientific articles published each day
- 1.5 million new Web pages each day
- Traditional “on-campus” students comprise <18% of higher educational population
- Corporate MBA programs taught more students last year than all H.Ed. MBA programs together
- Cost of U.S. H.Ed. has surpassed inflation and the consumer price index by a factor of two each of the past 30 years



Technology Trends

- As of last year...
 - 300 million PCs in the world
 - 18 billion microprocessors
 - Add communication tech: (cell phones, pagers)
 - Networks of microprocessors (watches/washing machines)
 - ...from the practical to the absurd
- MIT & others putting “all” content on the Web



Internet Penetration as a Benchmark...(as of Last Year...)

■ ONLINE:

□ US/Canada:	148M
□ Europe:	82M
□ Asia/Pacific:	57M
□ South America:	12M
□ Africa:	5M
□ Middle East:	4M
□ World:	308M

■ % OF POPULATION

49%
19%
<8%
<6%
<2%
<2%
8%



If You are Competing for Students or Market Share...

- First: Remember it's now an international market
- Only three ways to succeed:
 - Higher quality (Better)
 - Less expensive (Cheaper)
 - Most innovative (Different)
- To survive, you need two
- To thrive, you need all three
- How do our courses/programs stack up?



In a World of Technological Possibilities...What's Going On?

- What I see...
- What you see...
- Ongoing organizational issues



After 30 Years in This Field, What (little) I know for sure...

1. DE is about increasing access, not making money
2. There is no technological “silver bullet”...not even the Web
 - (example: the Overhead Projector)




3. No institution or DE program can be all things to all people. (Find strategic partners or risk irrelevancy)

4. When it comes to Instructional Technology, the only constant is change

- “Just because you can, doesn’t mean you should...”


5. Lasting technological change results from ‘evolution’ not ‘revolution’

- Telecom is an exception: i.e., the growing irrelevancy of “copper infrastructure”
- What about the road system?

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- 6.** Every technology has strengths and weaknesses (even the Web/ “online everything” instruction)
 - Maximize strengths/ Minimize weaknesses

- 7.** Beware of the Counter-Intuitive
 - Bandwidth Availability
 - Broadband Access

- 8.** How you handle technological failures (not just successes) will determine your future role and impact





9. The DE emphasis should be on the quality of the academic program, not on the use of technology

- Know your constraints and (believe it or not) the technology decisions will make themselves

10. Research shows when appropriate technology is used, traditional and non-traditional students perform similarly


- Quantitatively Measured: Yes
- Qualitatively: Maybe Not

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- 11.** We know that feedback interaction is important, we just don't know why
 - Learning is enhanced when interactive technology links students to students
 - 12.** Student and teacher motivation is critical
 - 13.** On-site facilitation is critical...if feasible
 - 14.** Advising/counseling is just as critical as it is on-campus – maybe more so

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- 15.** Resolve library access issues before they become accreditation and equal access/quality issues

 - 16.** Face-to-face instruction is still a valid delivery method...when possible
 - Why?
 - What to do when F2F isn't practical?

 - 17.** Technological innovation attracts students... superior academic/student support services keep them



18. Faculty: Support your best and brightest...avoid the intractable

- Incentives: Time, Recognition, and Money

19. Many faculty are comfortable when distant students from other institutions take their classes, but not the other way around (search for strategic partners)

20. DE is a change process...not a delivery system (IT = Institutional Transformation)

21. Technological Innovation

- What's Here, What's Coming?



Questions?

- Discussion