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Internet and Distance Education Delivery Models

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Internet and Distance Education Delivery Models

Technological developments over the past twenty years have given people across the globe the ability to interact and obtain information at a tremendous rate. Due to these developments, the field of distance education is also growing at an exponential rate, as is the research conducted on the availability, effectiveness, and best practices for distance learning. This increased interest has led to a variety of options in distance learning systems and the primary methods for course delivery. Distance education courses are primarily taught via one of three course models: synchronous, asynchronous, or blended; choosing the best model requires consideration of course management and communication preferences.

The first model of distance learning is synchronous. Synchronous courses are conducted in “real time,” which means the instructors and students are online and typically interact via streaming video, live chat, or an Internet meeting. Students can post or ask questions and receive immediate responses from the course instructor. Synchronous courses require students to be online at the same time as the instructor.

In the asynchronous course model, the instruction is conducted when the students and instructor are not online at the same time. These classes typically occur through a distance-learning system that allows users to post and respond to messages in a specific location within the course. For example, Ashford University conducts online classes using the asynchronous method. Students and instructors are assigned to specific online courses. Within these courses, students participate in discussion forums, post assignments, and retrieve learning materials. Correspondence with the instructor is conducted primarily via the online course discussion forums and email. When the instructor and learners are separated by time and geographic location, asynchronous communication occurs. Asynchronous communication does not require

Here, the student has a clear [thesis](#). The reader knows that this essay will be about three models of distance learning and how to choose the best one for a class.

The key words in this thesis should then be repeated throughout the essay, especially in the topic sentences of each paragraph.

the participants to interact simultaneously. Asynchronous learning is used in a variety of teaching and workplace situations.

The **first sentence of each paragraph** clearly states the topic of the paragraph. Here, we know that this paragraph will define blended learning.

The final model is blended learning. The blended learning model is a combination of both synchronous and asynchronous delivery. The instructor may have a set lecture time during which all students log into the system to listen and interact with the class. The remainder of the week's instruction may then be conducted asynchronously by having students post additional discussions and questions to a specific location within the learning system.

All three models have strengths and weaknesses. Course designers, instructors, and other stakeholders have to choose the best model for their specific situation. Course management and communication needs are two of the factors decision-makers have to keep in mind when choosing the best distance education model for their class.

First, regardless of the delivery method, all distance-learning systems include **course management**. Within the **course management** system, instructional designers, course authors, and instructors have the ability to edit content, administer assignments, and interact with learners. The **course management** features of a distance education system are the key elements in the successful delivery of a distance education program. These features include accessing course materials, following a calendar, location of assignment dropboxes, use of discussion threads, and other features within the chosen **learning management** system. Students' success is often related to their experience with the course technology (Caplow, 2006). If students are to be successful in learning at a distance, they must be comfortable with the media used to transmit the content of the course. Ultimately, the **course management system** should enhance the learner's experience.

The main idea of this paragraph is "course management." The student sticks to this main idea throughout [the paragraph](#). Having **one idea per paragraph** creates focus and organization.

An effective synchronous delivery, or course management, system motivates the learner,

provides sufficient time for learner and facilitator interaction, and operates the course at a steady rate, allowing the learners time to reflect and ask questions. Synchronous delivery requires use of some sort of meeting software. If choosing this model of instruction, course developers must consider the ease and compatibility of accessing and using that software (Caplow, 2006). For example, if students are geographically diverse, synchronous instruction may be difficult due to varying time zones. Also, if students are international, they may not have the same access to software. These could make the synchronous model difficult to use. On the other hand, this model may be preferable for students as synchronous models often provide students with a streamlined course without the bulk of asynchronous features.

Course management for asynchronous models is more complex than synchronous models, with many different course features including discussion threads, course materials, and other widgets. The distance education boom has led to the development of a management system capable of delivering courses and sharing information, while managing the varied and often complex learning tools. As discussed by Caplow (2006), the most significant aspects of the course management system include the ability to provide course materials in a web-based format, access to online exams, and links to course materials in addition to a system that supports student and faculty interaction in discussions and evaluation. Given the increasing number of options available in distance education, the task of finding a course management system that offers the necessary options, along with the ability to interact with other technology solutions, can be daunting. The decision to implement a courseware management system cannot be pieced together. All distance learning systems, from blended learning systems to content

Here, the student is providing an example. **Examples** help to show the reader details about the main idea.

If a writer makes a claim, it can help to give an example to illustrate what that looks like. Examples can come from real life, research, or even hypothetical situations.

management, must have the capability and the resources necessary to interact with the course management system.

Blended learning is in the unique situation of having to consider course management options from both the synchronous and asynchronous point of view. While asynchronous and synchronous learning systems each offer a specialized approach to distance learning, a blended learning system can combine the tools of both systems to present an effective and convenient learning experience. According to Watson (2010), "...blended learning combines online delivery of educational content with the best features of classroom interaction and live instruction..." (p. 4). For example, training for supervisors may be divided into various sections. One section's content may be taught via CD-ROM with the learners interacting through a newsgroup or discussion board. The next section may be taught in the classroom setting. Fundamentally, current blended learning models represent a transfer in instructional strategies, similar to the way in which online learning demonstrated a change in the delivery and instructional mode of learning at a distance (Watson, 2010).

The next major point to consider when choosing a distance education model is **communication**. Communication is key to education. Historically, distance learning involved only the student and instructor. Learners did not have the opportunity to communicate with one another. Fortunately, technological advancements have brought much to the field of distance learning. In the teaching arena of online learning today, asynchronous communication can be accomplished by way of email, newsgroups for discussions, streaming video, and audio.

According to Witt and Mossler (2010), "Online classes also make it possible for students to learn from working professionals in their fields who may be scattered across the country or around the world," (para 1). In a synchronous setting, this communication takes place in "real time" which most closely mimics the traditional classroom setting. Online synchronous course delivery offers

The **key words** in this topic sentence not only state the main idea of the paragraph, but they also connect back to the key words of the thesis.

students and instructors a for
instructor and students are n
at the same time. Within the

Although there are many ways to integrate and introduce research, one way to do this is to name the article or book, as the student does here.

Naming the authors is another way to introduce research. Sometimes students can include a summary or paraphrase without this type of introduction.

communication and transmission of course content. *In Transforming Learning Methods through*

Online Teaching (Bach, Haynes, and Lewis Smith, 2006) the authors address the role of

technology in improving academics, including the benefits of synchronous learning, particularly

for younger students due to their familiarity with “chat room” technology. *Bach, Haynes, and*

Lewis Smith (2006) state, “Synchronous communication develops its own curios and quite

different type of narrative when compared with face-to-face discussion, and there is often a text

based ‘stream of consciousness’” (p. 135). Synchronous delivery of course instruction also

allows for immediate feedback.

Here, the student has supported her point by including **evidence** from a source.

She has also correctly **cited** this information by using the [In-Text Citation Helper](#).

On the other hand, asynchronous communications allow learners to select the time and

participation. Through emails and other asynchronous learning tools, students

learning community, set goals, and complete course work. In the workplace,

interact without concern for time differences or the high cost of international

phone calls. With the asynchronous model, the user has greater control over the acquisition of

information and the ability to set a convenient time for completing coursework, training, or job-

related activities (Watson, 2010). In the asynchronous delivery model, learners must often wait

for feedback or answers to questions.

Within each paragraph, the student [is integrating research](#). Strong academic writing is research-based. When possible, any ideas or claims that are made should be backed up with proof from the research. On this page, we can see a few different methods for including research. It is important to note that all research, whether quoted or paraphrased, is cited. Research is also used inside the paragraph, and not to begin or end it. The writer has control over the paragraph that way, as they are able to state the main idea in the topic sentence and wrap up the paragraph in their own words.

Blended learning must again consider both the considerations of asynchronous and synchronous models. However, blended learning is able to tap into the strengths of both, while possibly avoiding the downsides, provided students have the flexibility to choose which communication channels to use (Picciano, 2001). Communication is an important factor to consider for each possible model.

Learning technologies have opened the doors to a wide variety of options for distance education delivery, and each learning model has benefits and limitations. The Internet and learning technologies provide the means for transmitting content, managing courses, and promoting the interaction of the instructor and learners. When selecting technology for a distance-learning program, the system that provides the best learning approach should be utilized. Around the world, students can join the same class, share information, and learn together. The field of distance education and the various learning systems are continually being revised and improved. Ideally, the most effective distance learning system is one that provides students with the resources to be successful distance learners.

Writers can choose to name the author as part of the sentence, and then follow the name with a citation, or they can choose to cite the end of the sentence, without having named the author previously.

A [conclusion](#) restates the main ideas of the essay. A strong conclusion will also state what is important or interesting about the research and topic. Including the significance of the topic leaves the reader with something to think about.

References

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A reference page lists all of the sources used in the essay.

This student has followed [APA guidelines for formatting the sources](#).