Best Practices: Distance Education

2022 Annual Meeting Workshop Series
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This is NOT a Workshop on Distance Education and Federal Financial Aid

Please check with your DOE Representative for DE FA Questions
The U.S. Department of Education defines distance education within the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 34 § 600.2, as follows:

*Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (4) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor or instructors, and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously.*

*Note: Distance Education, Distance Learning, and e-Learning are commonly interchangeable in definition.*
Definitions

• Distance Education (cont.)

The technologies that may be used to offer distance education include —

1. The internet;
2. One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
3. Audio conferencing; or
4. Other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this definition.

COE Distance Education Definitions

An educational delivery method that uses one or more technologies to provide instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and support regular and substantive instruction between students and the instructor, synchronously or asynchronously.

Technologies used may include the internet, print-based media, email, one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD’s, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVD’s, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed.

Limitations specified under ‘Contractual Agreements/ Contracts for Instruction’ apply to distance education delivery of instruction.
(Handbook of Accreditation, pg. 86)
COE Definitions

Distance Education Program — A program that makes available 100% of its required instructional hours via distance education.

Distance Education Student — A student who completes 100% of his/her required instructional hours in a program via distance education.

Hybrid Program — A program that makes available less than 100% of its required instructional hours via distance education. (Criteria that address distance education infrastructure and coursework requirements throughout the Conditions and Standards are applicable to hybrid programs.)

Note: For the purpose of this training, it is important to note that the instructor is the individual responsible for delivering course content and who meets the qualifications for instruction established by the institution and the institution's accrediting agency.

What are the Similarities of DOE and COE DE?
What is a Learning Management System?

A Learning Management System (LMS) is a software application for administering, documenting, tracking, reporting, and delivering courses or training programs. It helps the instructor deliver materials to students, conduct tests and other tasks, track student performance, and keep records.
Learning Management System (LMS) Application

Intentionally setting up an online learning environment where everything students need is easy to navigate and access will help students and teachers become successful.

Common practice includes:
• Building a Learning Community
• Providing Relevant Assignments
• Creating Chat Rooms – Breakout Rooms (Interaction/Collaboration)
• Application Sharing
• Using Synchronized Web Browsing
• Providing Survey/Feedback Tools

Learning Management System (LMS) Application

With DE Instructor-Student Interaction is critical!
• Without meaningful interaction with the instructor, students can feel disconnected and become demotivated.
• Course design is critical in creating a learning environment which emphasizes interaction in meaningful ways.
• Increased interaction may include: (Not inclusive)
  • Discussion forums
  • Consistent communication
  • Individual feedback
  • Online office hours
Learning Management System (LMS) Application

Assignments
In creating online assignments, there are some best practices:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Be consistent in how you post your content and share information.</th>
<th>Create a regular timeline for providing information and activities. e.g.,</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use an LMS that meets your schools needs.</td>
<td>Post/share information the same time each day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use a consistent layout for sharing tasks and activities.</td>
<td>Offer multiple means of representation. e.g.,</td>
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<td>o-</td>
<td>- Just like in a classroom, all students will not learn the same way online.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Put learning objectives at the top or bottom.</td>
<td>- Find ways to incorporate images, video, and audio in addition to reading.</td>
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<td>• Keep your structure the same each time you share, with content, reading, actions, etc., each in the same place.</td>
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<td>Remember to use multiple means of action and expression. e.g.,</td>
<td>Introduce new tools in low-stakes ways e.g.,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Offer different ways for students to show what they know, other than formal writing. Video or audio are great options.</td>
<td>- “Low stakes” means a grade is not attached and the content should be light.</td>
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<td>• Consider how discussions can take place online, using tools such as Google Docs, Backchannel, or Flipgrid.</td>
<td>- Example: Before having students use video on a graded task, have them practice recording a video by using it to introduce themselves to the class.</td>
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<td>Provide a structured drop-in option for help, questions, and support. e.g.,</td>
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<td>• Knowing you’re there can ease your students’ anxiety.</td>
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<td>• Consider chatting via text or video for these interactions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Decide if you want to offer a sign-up option or hold scheduled “office hour” times each day/week. For younger children, more contact with you may be comforting.</td>
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Chat Rooms – Breakout Rooms can be used for (Interaction/Collaboration)

- Rooms can increase the natural peer-to-peer interaction and collaboration normally seen in traditional learning settings.
- Rooms can be used for brainstorming, role-playing, group projects, and small-group discussions.
- Rooms allow students to get to know each other better. They enhance the synchronous learning experience and help make the transition from in-person learning to online-learning a smoother one.
## Learning Management System (LMS) Application

### Application Sharing

- A very popular feature in virtual classrooms is application sharing.
- This feature allows the facilitator to share software applications (such as spreadsheets, word processing, or custom applications) with students, even if the students do not have the software installed on their individual machines.
- There are many varieties of application sharing, ranging from “view only” on the participants’ side to allowing participants to interact with applications shared by the facilitator or by other participants.
- A best practice in application sharing is to promote student collaboration and provide the opportunity for all students to learn how to use the app software.

### Synchronized Web Browsing

The online instructor allows the student to follow them as they navigate the entire internet as potential content in the virtual classroom.

- As links are clicked or addresses entered to the URL locator, the websites will be launched on the participants’ machines.
- The web can be used as the basis for scavenger hunt type games that can be used for icebreakers or contests.
- Use the web to teach about current events or industry news.
- By using this method instead of preparing slides, you can ensure you always have the most up-to-date information.
- Excellent means to teach basic research skills, critical thinking, and a means to differentiate content.
Learning Management System (LMS) Application

Survey/Feedback Tools
Gather information on how distance education is impacting the students remote learning.

• What aspects of the course or instruction are helping you learn now that we have shifted to distance education?
• What challenges, if any, are you facing while engaging in distance education?
• Are there changes in teaching approaches that could help address these challenges?
• What strategies are most effective at helping you stay engaged with your peers and the instructor during remote learning?

Coursework Delivered via Distance Education Standard 2

• To ensure that the institution is compliant with relevant elements regarding the delivery of instruction via distance education methods and can document, at a minimum, that academic rigor, faculty interaction with students, currency and quality of courseware and templates used for instructional delivery, student identity confirmation, and measurement of student progress are addressed
• Distance education courses and programs are identical to those on campus in terms of the quality, rigor, breadth of academic and technical standards, completion requirements, and credentials awarded.
• Faculty teaching distance education courses ensure timeliness of their responses (synchronously or asynchronously) to students’ requests by following institutional requirements on response times of no more than 24 hours within the published operational schedule of the program/course.
Coursework Delivered via Distance Education Standard 2 (cont.)

- The institution has processes in place to determine that the student who registers for a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit (with methods such as secure logins, pass codes, or proctored examinations).
- The institution directly verifies the currency and quality of all contracted courseware on an annual basis, is directly responsible for such currency and quality, and maintains curriculum oversight responsibility within all contracts.
- Each course/program has in place a standardized template, course descriptions, learning objectives, course requirements (e.g., standard syllabus, outcomes, grading, resources, etc.), and learning outcomes in order to facilitate quality assurance and the assessment of student learning.
- The institution monitors student progress in distance education activities; such monitoring may include frequency of log-in time, confirmation of student time online, and the percentage of coursework completed.

Best Practices
Common factors in successful implementation:
• Well-designed and appropriate learning materials.
• Student orientation and training.
• Student access to learning resources and instructors.
• Embrace technology.

Application:
• Adjust your teaching style for distance education.
• Focus on active learning.
• As needed, chunk and chain your lessons.
• Implement regular assessments and readiness checks.
• Collaborate with other instructors/teachers.
• Substantive interaction between teachers and students, as well as students to students.

Note: Substantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the instructional content.

Ensure students are familiar and comfortable with navigating within the online platform.

• Social presence of Instructor.
• Continued communication.
• Student engagement.
• Self-Monitoring.
• Accessibility.
• Utilize a variety of technology options.
• Connect to students individually.
• Consider new learning methods.
• Provide collaboration and socialization opportunities.
Online Assignments

- Don’t overload students with extraneous tasks.
- Make connections to previously learned material.
- Ensure students understand the relevance & applicability of the instruction.
- Provide detailed instructions - they must be concise enough that students will actually read them. Consider using video prompts or instructions when you need to convey a lot of information related to an assignment.
- Providing multiple options for completing assignments. Provide flexibility that allows for multiple types of answers or learning approaches.

**Note:** As we develop knowledge and skills, most people can store between 5-9 items at any given time, and 2-4 of those can be processed simultaneously.

Normally, if someone doesn’t use new information within 15 seconds, they will limit the ability to harness it to their long-term memory.

Example Online Learning Environments
Funding/Budget
Access for Students
Effective Communication
Technology- Institution and Student
Computer or access to fast internet
Faculty Training
Student Training

Funding Ideas
• Discretionary Grant Funding Opportunities
• U.S. Department of Education Funds
  • CARES Act Funding to support Remote Learning
  • Broadband USA Federal Funding Guide
  • FCC E-Rate Program
  • Department Funds to Support Opportunities

https://tech.ed.gov/funding/
**Summary**

**Distance Education/Learning** refers to a learning delivery modality where learning takes place between the teacher and the learners who are geographically remote from each other during instruction.

Topics discussed:
- Definitions
- Learning Management System (LMS) Application
- Coursework Delivered via Distance Education
- Best Practices
- Challenges
  - Funding/Budget

**Questions?**
Thank You for Attending
Distance Education:
Best Practices