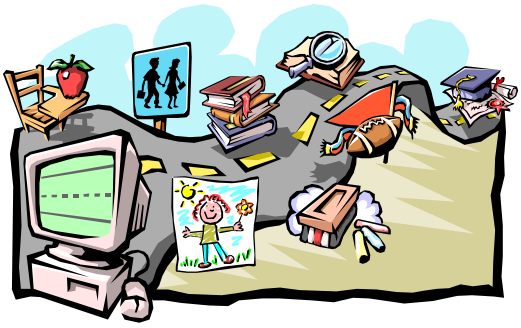

DISTANCE LEARNING DEFINED

by

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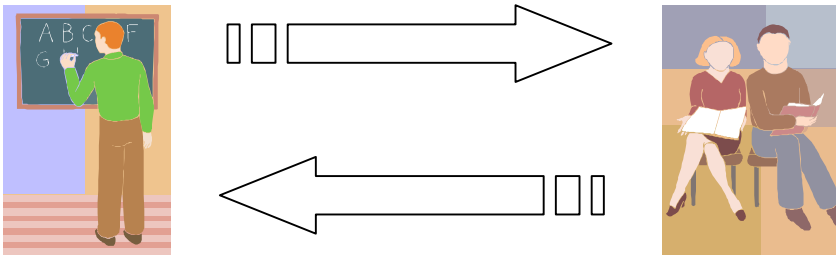
(Full Text: Distance Learning.pdf)

In today's world of rapidly changing technology and escalating competition, employers are finding it increasingly more difficult to keep their workforces technologically current and well trained. Furthermore, impositions of time, distance, travel costs, and other constraints on workers have made traditional approaches to training increasingly difficult. One of the increasingly popular approaches to providing "just in time" delivery of critical information using technology is distance learning.

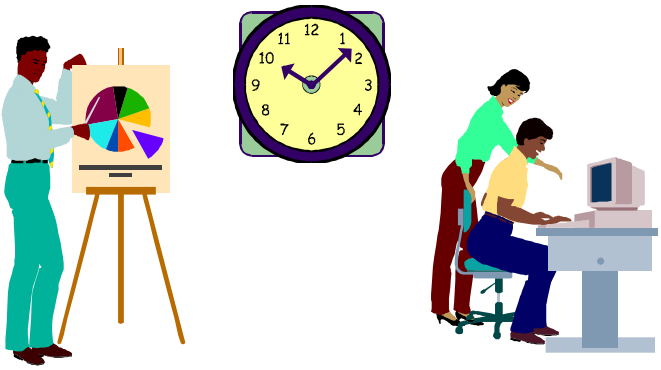
WHAT IS DISTANCE LEARNING?

Quite simply, distance learning is any type of education that occurs while location, time, or both separate the participants. In distance learning, the teacher, through the use of technology, delivers instruction to a student at a separate location. The teacher then receives feedback, either immediate or delayed, from the student.

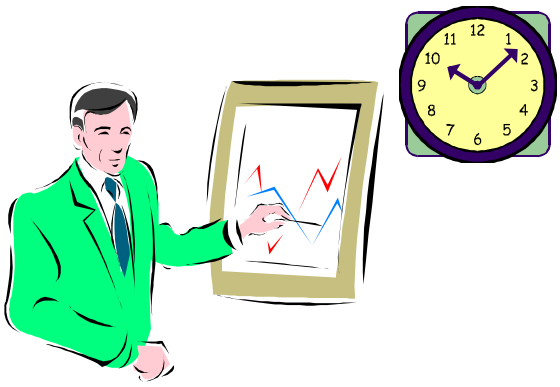


WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF DISTANCE LEARNING?

- Synchronous Learning - implies that the student and trainer interact with each other in real time



- Asynchronous Learning – trainer relies on delayed feedback; student does not interact with trainer in real time.

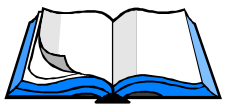


DISTANCE LEARNING APPLICATIONS IN EDUCATION

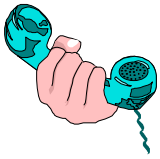
- Knowledge management
  - Collaboration
    - Support of performance
      - Mentoring
        - Tutoring
          - Classical training and education

TECHNOLOGIES NEEDED FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning may utilize any/or a combination of the following four technologies:

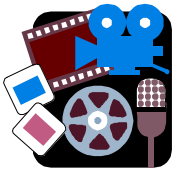


Printed Materials



Audio/voice Technologies

Computer Technologies



Video Technologies

Technologies used for distance learning span a wide range of costs and complexity. It is important to consider the advantages and disadvantages of each type of technology, the cost, and the availability of the technology to both instructor and learner, when designing a distance learning module. It is also important to remember that the bottom line for all distance learning is to deliver instruction to learners in an effective and efficient manner.

SUMMARY

New and innovative technologies have created many opportunities in the arena of distance learning. Distance learning can be an effective and efficient method for delivering instruction and education to a variety of students in numerous locations. For distance learning to be effective, the presenter must know the target audience and select an appropriate technology for the presentation. Considerations in selection include target audience, available equipment, goals and objectives of the presentation, cost, and accessibility. Alternatives and backup plans should also be explored and designed in the event of technology failure.

During the design and development of a distance learning module, ongoing evaluation can provide valuable insight. Once a distance learning event is completed, evaluation and feedback from the students and instructors is also crucial. These lessons learned can be applied to future distance learning endeavors to make them more effective and efficient. By carefully planning and utilizing technology, distance learning can be an effective and timely means for providing educational and learning experiences in both the classroom and boardroom.

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