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USING VIDEO AND INTERNET CONFERENCING FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

The concept of distance learning has been around for centuries and it has evolved alongside improvements in communication technologies. Distance education, also called distance learning, is a broad term that applies to any educational process that does not take place between people who are meeting in the same room. And this means that it is a very wide field with many different possibilities and implementation.

It is hard to keep up with the technology associated with distance learning. Nowadays distance learning uses emerging technologies to enhance the traditional way of learning. This has been made possible by evolving information and communication technologies. Telecommunication networks are providing learning opportunities for non-traditional population of learners and individuals who would otherwise be isolated by distance or geographical barriers.

The future of distance learning will be driven primarily by the changing habits and educational needs of today's generation of learners. Now we have a collaborative and flexible learning environment in which students and lecturers can communicate with each other any time, any place. And the aim of teaching online is to foster a community of learners.

It is very important for all of us in education to accept the fact that today students are very tuned in to technology as a way to communicate, inform and entertain. It is their way of life to multi-task and to collaborate, whether it is face-to-face or from apart, synchronously or asynchronously. New media tools are the vehicles for research projects and are easily adapted to the content and curricula of the foreign language classroom.

The challenge of communication is being met by video conferencing. Multimedia boardrooms range in size from small conference rooms to multi-tiered auditoriums. Video teleconferencing offers a unique advantage over old audio technology teleconferencing. It makes distance learning more fun, alive and effective since the remote teacher and student can actually see, talk, react and respond to one another on screen in real time. The heightened sensory awareness of seeing and hearing a real person connecting to you always results in a more enriching and more interpersonal teaching and learning experience.

Perhaps the most practical advantage of video conferencing is that it makes possible the development of new skills, practice or way of doing things using previously inaccessible resources. In the past higher education or simply studying a new language was beyond the reach of many people considering the impracticality of far away distances, the inconveniences of taking a trip and costly expenses a person would incur for the sake of learning.

Nowadays video conferencing has made it possible for experts in specialized fields to simply hook up into the video call and provide mentoring. Students can

take a trip to anywhere around the world and gain knowledge of a new culture directly in the classroom. Students in rural areas can have the benefits of advanced studies from experienced lecturers. Numerous opportunities are now available to nearly everyone.

Distance learning via video conferencing makes use of other approaches to teaching like images, graphs, sign language interpretation, desktop add-ons and application sharing to effectively describe a point, convey ideas, encourage collaboration and further two-way interaction. This approach also benefits both students and teachers as it imparts technological know-how where books, written manuscripts or telephones cannot.

Another alternative for distance learning growing in popularity is internet conferencing which combines both audio and video conferencing with the ease and convenience of internet communications. A number of software companies provide internet conferencing software which allows users to not only interact directly with those on the other end of the connection, but additional software components may be integrated and used as well. This can be useful for distance learning teachers by allowing them to post questions, quizzes, images or a variety of other components which the students may then interact with and response.

Internet conferencing may feature either one or two –way video and utilizes two-way audio to allow teachers and students to converse as needed during the lessons. In many cases software features may be customized to allow certain users to get specific content as well. Thus, such sessions with multiple students' locations may each have content specific to them as a supplement to the material can be discussed by the instructor or other speakers.

With careful planning and the correct design, you can move different components of training into appropriate media for delivery. For example, e-learning is an appropriate media for background and overview information provided in many courses. E-learning might also be considered for some of the basics of computer systems, such as navigation. Internet conferencing could be assumed as supplement e-learning with an opportunity to talk directly to an instructor, a subject matter expert, or other students of the group remotely. It might also serve as a tool for collaborate work on student assignments and applications sharing to learn specific skills. Updates and short learning events can be broadcast via podcast or voicemail, or sent via email as needed.

It should be noted that although video and internet conferencing enable distance learning, they are not the only elements of this kind of learning. In several cases of larger training, a student is essential to engage in a number of video conferences, total the study materials provided and take component inside a practical program. The practical course means truly doing what students might be studying under the supervision of the expert. While video and internet conferencing enable to provide distant learning they are not a substitute for trying out students' skills under the direct supervision of a professional lecturer. This really is still an integral part of any bachelors or masters degree.