

51. Advantages of Distance Learning in Higher Educational Establishments

Olesia Starkova

National University of Food Technologies, Kyiv, Ukraine

Introduction. Distance learning is a term referred to a way of learning, presupposing remote education without being in regular face-to-face contact with a teacher in the classroom.

Materials and research. Defining the notion of “distance learning”, it is possible to outline several features typical for this kind of education. Namely, the separation of teacher and learner during at least a major part of each instructional process, the separation of teacher and learner in space and/or time, the use of educational media to unite teacher and learner in order to carry course content as well as the provision of two-way communication between teacher, tutor or educational agency and learner. Notably, that under such type of learning, the control of the learning pace by the student rather than the distance instructor is observed.

There are two major types of distance education – synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous instruction requires the simultaneous participation of all students and instructors. The advantage of synchronous instruction is that interaction is done in "real time" and has an immediacy. Examples include interactive telecourses, teleconferencing and web conferencing, and Internet chats.

Asynchronous instruction does not require the simultaneous participation of all students and instructors. Students do not need to be gathered together in the same location at the same time. Rather, students may choose their own instructional time frame and interact with the learning materials and instructor according to their schedules. Asynchronous instruction is more flexible than synchronous instruction, but experience shows that time limits are necessary to maintain focus and participation. The self-paced format accommodates multiple learning levels and schedules. Examples of asynchronous delivery include e-mail, audiocassette courses, videotaped courses, correspondence courses, and WWW-based courses.

Uncovering its benefits, it is notable that distance learning proposes lots of flexibility. Primarily, it destroys major existing borders. With distance learning courses, students can complete their course work from just about anywhere, provided there is a computer and internet connection. This allows students to work whenever and wherever it is more convenient for them without having to squeeze in scheduled classes to an already busy life. Among some additional advantages, one may include the gain of extra knowledge and abilities. This is meant by the fact that a person is able to transfer the computer and Internet skills that he or she usually gains in the process of distance learning experience to other facets of their life. It should be outlined that every person has its own pace in doing things. This is especially evident during the educational process. In a usual institution, one may face problems of not being able to cope with the requirements of doing various activities on the same level as other students. Distance learning offers a solution to this problem. As it offers self-paced learning, both slow and quick learners can find the tempo of studying that suits them personally. Subsequently, this encourages more effective learning process as well as reduces stress and increases satisfaction.

Conclusions. A lot of researches and our own experience have shown that distance learning is effective, efficient, available, flexible and rather cheap way of acquiring knowledge.