

DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Distance education is an emerging global phenomenon that promises to alter fundamentally the nature of traditional education and training. The increasingly pervasive nature of the Net and the Web, and the collaborative infrastructure provided by net-centric computing have led to the growth of distance education. The phenomenal growth of distance education is explained by the fact that over 90% of college students access the Internet, with 50% accessing the Web daily. Also, Indian companies and organizations are spending huge amounts on in-house training and education programs through distance and blended mode. The popularity of distance education programs has further increased with the availability of on-line discussion forums.

The growth of distance education is fast and furious world-wide including in India. The future of distance education has been aptly summed up by Mr. David Gray, Vice President, University of Massachusetts: "Over the next five years, it would not surprise me at all to see the term "distance education" fade or morph into "distributed education" or perhaps simply "education." As the technologies that support distance education mature and become more widely embraced which is happening as we speak, the focus on the tools and the geographic distance at which they are utilized is likely to decrease. Our fascination with the web as an exciting new medium for learning and collaboration will most likely give way to seeing it as a common utility that people make use of routinely. Education and learning will happen, of course, and it will be a rare course indeed that does not take advantage of the tools of technology and high speed networks to aid and abet the learning process."

BLENDED LEARNING

Blended Learning is the process of incorporating many different learning styles that can be accomplished through the use of 'blended' virtual and physical resources. The instructor can also combine two or more methods of delivery of instruction. A typical example of the delivery method of blended learning would be a combination of technology-based materials and face-to-face sessions used together to present content. An instructor can begin a course with a well-structured introductory lesson in the classroom, and then proceed to follow-up materials online. Blended Learning can also be applied to the integration of e-learning with a Learning Management System using computers in a physical classroom, along with face-to-face instruction.

With today's prevalence of high technology in India, blended learning refers specifically to the provision or use of resources which combine e-learning (electronic) with other educational resources. Some of the advantages of blended learning include: cost effectiveness for both the Indian institutions and the students, accessibility to a post secondary education for students, and flexibility in scheduling and timetabling of course work.

American universities have already been recognized as the largest online educational resources for students seeking quality learning experience. Now American universities

are in a position to offer "Blended Learning" programs in India through Indian institutions by combining a vigorous classroom experience, along with comprehensive online learning. Some of the benefits are:

- Blended learning won't interfere with student's current job
- Student will cut down on commuting time and costs – save money on gas, parking, and tolls
- Student can meet and connect with classmates online and in person
- Student can enjoy learning in a hands-on environment
- Taking classes at the Indian institution closest to student's work or home means more convenience and flexibility.

Indian institutions including companies and organizations, in academic collaboration with American universities, will be able to offer an array of degree, diploma, and certificate programs at Bachelor's and Master's levels in a wide range of fields. Distance education can be offered as a dynamic, interactive distance learning method using a diverse array of personal computers, video devices, CD and DVD ROMs, online courses over the Internet, interactive devices, and other modern technological innovations. When each lesson or segment is completed, the student makes available the assigned work for correction, grading, comment, and subject matter guidance by qualified Indian instructors. Corrected assignments are returned to the student. This exchange fosters a personalized student-instructor relationship, which is the hallmark of distance education instruction. Students will be required to take examinations in proctored settings. Assignments will be larger, longer, and more thorough so as to test for knowledge by forcing the students to research the subject and prove that they have done the work. Midterms and Final examinations will be held at common locations so that professors can supervise directly.

The distance education programs to be offered in India by American universities in collaboration with Indian institutions would be graduate and post-graduate degree, diploma, and certificate programs. Students will receive degrees, diplomas, and certificates from the concerned American universities after successful completion of the programs in India. American universities and the Indian institutions will administer the programs jointly.

Following are some of the benefits for Indian students:

- Students will have access to a wide range of graduate and post-graduate programs of American universities in India.
- Tuition and fees will be in tune with the low cost of living in India. Students get valuable degrees, diplomas, and certificates of American universities at low cost.
- Students get first-hand knowledge of latest global developments, trends and techniques.
- Students will have better opportunities for employment and international careers by having degrees, diplomas, or certificates from American universities.

- Students will have opportunity to transfer with credits to American universities for further education.

Given below are the details of American Universities which are interested in offering Distance Education programs in India in Collaboration with well-established Indian institutions. The text used is that of the concerned Universities.

Clarkson University

We have some distance education options, including an online MBA. Recruiting students for our own campus is a higher priority at this time.

Concordia University

Under development: certificates (30 credits undergrad) in Canadian Studies, Global Issues, Introduction to Social Sciences, Introduction to Sciences, Introduction to Business.

D'Youville College

There is a Possibility that D'Youville will have online programs in (Master's) Health Services Administration and International Business (Master's). We would like to investigate the possibilities.

Governors State University

Information Security

Pacific Graduate School of Psychology

MS in Psychology

Roosevelt University

MA Training and Development, and **MS** Hospitality and Tourism Management

The South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

We could consider teaching courses in the graduate curriculum in the Biomedical Engineering Program for distance learning.

Southern Illinois University - Carbondale

Joint M.S. in Engineering, MBA and MAcc programs and possibly Undergraduate Business programs as well

Southern University and A&M College

Undergraduate: Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering programs, Electronics Engineering Technology, program, and Computer Science program.

Graduate: Master of Engineering in CE, ME, EE. Master of Computer Science.

Temple University

We are developing / teaching a number of on-line programs. We would like to explore expansion of such programs in India.

Tufts University

We would consider opportunities for distance learning through our Global Master of Arts Program at the Fletcher School and in our Continuing Dental Education Program.

University of Bridgeport

Computer Science + Computer Engineering.

University of Oregon

We need to learn more about what types of distance education subjects are in demand before we can develop distance education programs specific for India. Currently, we have English teacher training distance education courses that could be available for interested parties.

WVU Institute of Technology

WVU Tech would like to explore partnerships for Distance Education Programs in Accounting and Business Management. Courses would be offered in either online or blended formats.