

## Five Things You Need to Know About Distance Learning

July 24, 2007

Epsilon Sigma Phi National Workshop

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(As an Extension Professional, what are the)

## Five Things You Need to Know About Distance Learning

(to get started.)

1. There is History
2. What It Is...and What It Isn't.
3. Follow the Learner-Driven Path
4. How to Get Started.
5. Understand the Motivations

### 1. There is History.

- FACT—Future Applications of Communication Technology, July 1991  
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/eesc/documents/fact.pdf>
- Patterns of Change—Distance Education Report, March 1991  
[http://extension.oregonstate.edu/eesc/documents/patterns\\_of\\_change.pdf](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/eesc/documents/patterns_of_change.pdf)
- ADEC Report on Knowledge Marketplace and Module Development  
[www.adec.edu](http://www.adec.edu)  
<http://www.adec.edu/admin/papers/knowledge-marketplace.html>
- JOE, JAC, and Other Articles  
<http://www.agriculture.purdue.edu/agcomm/AgCom/EXTonBrink/>

<http://www.joe.org/>



#### [Interactive Distance Learning Effectively Provides Winning Sports Nutrition Workshops](#)

Journal of Extension October 2001 Volume 39 Number 5 joe home contents search archive subscribe info Interactive Distance Learning Effectively Provides Winning Sports Nutrition Workshops Jennifer Ricketts Instructor, Department of Nutritional Sciences University of Arizona Tucson, Arizona Internet . . .  
<http://www.joe.org/joe/2001october/a1.html> , 10/30/01, 29908 bytes



#### [Distance Education: Perceived Barriers and Opportunities Related to Extension Program Delivery](#)

Journal of Extension October 2006 Volume 44 Number 5 Article Number 5RIB1 joe home contents search archive subscribe info Distance Education: Perceived Barriers and Opportunities Related to Extension Program Delivery Darrell A. Dromgoole District Extension Administrator Coastal Bend--District . . .  
<http://www.joe.org/joe/2006october/rb1.shtml> , 63659 bytes



#### [The Effectiveness of Extension In-Service Training by Distance: Perception Versus Reality](#)

. . . Volume 45 Number 1 Article Number 1FEA4 joe home contents search archive subscribe info The Effectiveness of Extension In-Service Training by Distance: Perception Versus Reality Brian M. McCann Assistant Research Professor Mississippi State University Starkville, Mississippi [bmccann@ext.msstate.edu](mailto:bmccann@ext.msstate.edu) . . .  
<http://www.joe.org/joe/2007february/a4.shtml> , 31995 bytes

 [Distance Education--A Case Study in Practical Application](#)  
Journal of Extension October 2002 Volume 40 Number 5 joe home contents search archive subscribe info **Distance Education--A Case Study in Practical Application** Kyle Cecil Extension Unit Educator Agriculture and Natural Resources Management University of Illinois Galesburg, Illinois Internet Address . . .  
<http://www.joe.org/joe/2002october/tt4.shtml> , 21096 bytes

- American Journal of Distance Education  
<http://www.ajde.com/>
- SLOAN Foundation Resources  
<http://www.sloan-c.org/> (go to resources)
- Educause  
<http://www.educause.edu/resources>

## 2. What It Is...What It Isn't.

*Distance Learning* continues to be the term applied to a digital environment in which you offer access to learning opportunities. It includes for the purposes of our discussion things you may have heard about in other places...blended learning, e-Learning, distributed learning, and other descriptors that come and go. The term distance learning continues to resurface in relation to any learning opportunity other than Face-to-Face.

**IS**...a way to improve your effectiveness as a teacher, instructor, and provider of expert information.

Al Turgeon's Learning Modules  
<http://turfgrass.cas.psu.edu/education/turgeon/Modules/directory.html>

**ISN'T**...just a place to post your notes on-line.

**IS**...made up of a variety of approaches from interactive information and learning modules, to full-blown courses of study.

**ISN'T**...an opportunity to make an excessive amount of money.

**IS**...an opportunity to effectively tailor learning experiences for your clients that makes it relatively easy to collect user fees in-synch with the value gained by the learner.

**ISN'T**...so difficult that you should hesitate to incorporate into your overall program.

**IS**...a way to provide educators real-time feedback on individual learner progress

**ISN'T**...a panacea; there will continue to be real Internet access and bandwidth issues in rural America.

**IS**...as close to F2F interaction as we can get while rapidly expanding our programs into new and non-traditional audiences...and getting richer all the time.

**ISN'T**...*just* a technology issue

## 3. Follow the Learner-Driven Path.

- Competitive marketplace
- No longer sole source
- Distribution vs. Access—New Paradigm
- History (legacy) of F2F provides an opportunity to capitalize
- Science-based Objectivity v. Timeliness and Access
  - To follow the path...must follow the map drawn by the learner audiences
  - Path leads to access points...heads away from distribution paradigm
  - To develop access points that attract within this competitive marketplace, must know your audience.
- HE=Experts...Audience analysis and segmentation have never been more critical to success. PET: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/eesc/pet/>

#### 4. How to get started.

Outline:

- It's not a technology project...yet
- Don't make it harder than it has to be
- Focus on being learner-driven
- Consider eXtension's spectrum
- Then consider the technologies

#### Not a yet a technology issue...yet.

- Organize your message
- Dig deep into your audience information and descriptions of segments
- Segment your content to match

#### Don't make it harder than it needs to be.

- Start simple...a place in your program that needs more detailed and perhaps graphic explanation. Look for opportunities where what you can do will enhance the learners' chance of success...especially when their success is improved when they can return to the information or find other references and resources.
- Consider multiple uses—example: College/HS/Workforce multi-use.
- Resource: *The Roadmap for Effective Distance Education Instructional Design*  
<http://www.umsl.edu/technology/frc/DEID/1introduction/1aindex.html>  
 (rtelg@ifas.ufl.edu)

#### Remember this is an issue of satisfying learner needs and expectations.

- Augmented audio and possibly video
- Consider all interactive and collaboration tools.
- Could be as simple as “Chat” to start—for people that type fast.
- Discussions forums
- Case Studies
- Learning modules for self-directed learning
- Course Management Systems...think BlackBoard...providing seamless access to additional resources referenced in your learning program.

eXtension Spectrum

Basic Info—FAQs—Ask Experts—Learning Modules—Multiple Modules—Certificate Courses—Course of Study

- Don't be slavish to the spectrum...but remember where you are going and who are charting the course with you...your learners
- Think about partners along the spectrum.

**Then think about technologies that get you there.**

- PowerPoint—great place to start because of the vast amount of available and reusable material—also remember PPT is not just about text.
- PDFs
- Video tape...then audio conferencing.
- Web 2.0...connecting people with collaborative tools
  - Learner-centered approach offers continuous feedback and assessment
  - Our learners will soon (if they don't already) expect to provide feedback that alters the course of the discussion as well as personalizes it to their individual needs.

Web-based collaboration tools...from basics like email to:

- Connect (Breeze) <http://www.adobe.com/products/connect/>
- YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/>
- Podcasting <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting>
- RSS feeds [http://www.educause.edu/content.asp?page\\_id=7495&bhcp=1](http://www.educause.edu/content.asp?page_id=7495&bhcp=1)
- Flickr <http://www.flickr.com/>
- MySpace <http://www.myspace.com/>
- Second Life <http://secondlife.com/>

All offer opportunities to develop learner communities...communities of interest.

Does everything work...the way you might like...all the time you would like? Probably not...it's a messy environment, but it's an environment rapidly being embraced by the learner communities we need to engage.

Not so much the "Sage on the Stage"...more facilitators and conveners in places where learner-to-learner interaction has a more significant role.

Technology is just the enabling tool in this process...in part because of that, old tools never go away. For example, radio is still here...and it may look a lot like Pod-casting.

Consider a matrix or combination of tools that will fit the needs and expectations of your audience most closely. (That's why we start with audience analysis rather than technology adoption.)

Look around at what others outside of education are doing. With the collaboration tools available like Wikis etc. they are "listening" to the audiences, and then "publishing" the audience messages back to larger groups.

**5. Know Your Motivations.**

## **Know Learner Motivations.**

### Your Motivations

- Professional Development
- Not always money
- Release time
- Challenge of something new
- Status within your organization
- Driving change within your organization
- Being part of the team
- Recognition for success

### Learner Motivation

- Learning is the key descriptor
- Not all looking for credit
- Many want to better at their job tomorrow
- Intrinsic motivation, such as personal health or making the world a better place, or a focus on renewable resources.

## **Conclusion**

On our campuses there is a spectrum of outreach and engagement upon which Extension needs to find its place or niche

Info access/Non Credit-----Credit courses  
Fertile middle ground where success will be measured in  
learner satisfaction and demonstrated success in work and life

This fertile middle ground can be very attractive to new and non-traditional Extension audiences. This is where our competitors are setting up.

Don't be afraid to step up...try it...nothing is a failure unless you give up. With the new tools available you will be adapting your messages alongside with your learner audiences.

Learn...Adapt...Improve...Expand.

Good luck in Charleston.