Choosing a Modality

Distance Education

Remote and online learning are different modalities of delivery for distance education approved by the U.S. Department of Education for students receiving federal aid. When institutions participate in Federal Student Assistance programs, the U.S. Department of Education provides a clear definition of distance education.

Distance Education Technologies

Distance Education uses one or more of the following technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously (see CFR 34, § 602.3). The technologies may include:

1. The Internet;
2. One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices;
3. Audio-conferencing; or
4. Videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of these technologies.

Correspondence Education

Another form of distance education is correspondence education. Correspondence education is not eligible to participate in federal student aid. Correspondence education, as defined by the U.S. Department of Education, "means:

1. Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor;
2. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student;
3. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced; and
4. Correspondence education is not distance education."

This Toolkit focuses on remote and online instruction, both of which are covered as a viable modality for educating students and are supported by Financial Aid.

Remote Instruction and Online Courses

This Toolkit presents two general approaches for ensuring instructional quality and continuity: remote and online instruction as well as online course development. Colleges may elect to use remote instruction, fully online courses, or a mix of both. Some colleges and departments may centrally determine an approach, while others may elect to have instructors determine the approach that works best for their course and students.
**Remote Courses**

*Remote Courses* can be the most efficient way for an instructor to transition from the physical classroom in the event of a campus closure or emergency. Courses using remote instruction strategies may be synchronous and/or asynchronous. Like online, these courses are usually developed in advance of teaching the class, however, the remote synchronous environment can also prove helpful as the instructor may tweak the class along the way. These courses most often involve using the D2L course shell for hosting the essential course materials to provide announcements and track performance; the most common tools used are the syllabus, course schedule, announcements, and grade book. Synchronous (set times when the students meet together with the instructor) tools such as WebEx can effectively be leveraged for remote instruction as well as asynchronous recorded materials. The remote modality has been the most common distance instruction style during this time of COVID. The syllabus is developed with graded academic activities aligned to learning outcomes and there are set schedules, deadlines, and classroom engagement requirements; typically students are required to log in at a certain time and date. Attendance is determined by showing up and engaging in the course. Students remain connected with each other and the instructor through visual contact and by mirroring the classroom experience at a distance. CCCS Faculty and instructors have produced high-quality courses using remote instruction techniques.

**Online Courses**

*Online Courses* require that the course be developed and built in advance of beginning the course. It takes longer to convert from a traditional classroom to a developed online course because the design treatment and development of these courses are completed well before the teaching session begins. Online courses at CCCS are delivered asynchronously, online, and through the D2L learning management system. The design and development of these courses are completed well before the teaching session begins. While some online courses may have some synchronous activities, the majority of online courses are asynchronous. The online **asynchronous** modality is the most common distance instruction style and is predominately used for distance education at CCCS. With online asynchronous instruction, there are set schedules, deadlines, and classroom engagement requirements, however, students are not required to log in at a certain time and date. Attendance is determined through regular and substantial interactions between instructors and students with graded academic activities aligned to learning outcomes.

Generally, in an online course, instructional materials such as lessons, instructions, and audio or video materials are pre-recorded; electronic announcements can be posted in the LMS; instructors and students interact in an asynchronous discussion board; assignments, quizzes, and exams are submitted and evaluated electronically; and assessment grades are recorded in an online grade book.

**Hybrid Courses**

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Hybrid Courses. Traditionally, a hybrid course combines face-to-face, on-campus class sessions with online coursework. Students meet in person for lecture and group activities and the remaining assignments are completed online. In emergency situations such as campus closure or emergencies, the face-to-face time can be replaced by converting the course for either remote instruction or an online course.

Additional Resources

- Remote in a Time of Pandemic: Six Considerations As We Adapt to COVID-19, Sasha Thackaberry, (The Evolllution)
- Student-Centered Remote Teaching: Lessons Learned from Online Education, Shannon Riggs, (Educause Review)
- The Difference Between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning, Charles Hodges, Stephanie Moore, Barb Lockee, Torrey Trust and Aaron Bond (Educause)

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