# Cognitive Dissonance Theory and Distance Education: Faculty Perceptions on the Efficacy of and Resistance to Distance Education

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## Abstract

*This paper explores current perceptions of distance education among faculty members in a state flagship university. We theorize that cognitive dissonance theory is at play in scenarios where faculty have had either a positive or negative experience with distance education and that experience determines faculty perceptions about distance education. A survey was distributed among all 600+ faculty members with a response rate of 115. Results were primarily consistent with prior studies showing a mix of attitudes towards the quality of the distance education experience, and the requirement for administrative and technology support. Resistance stemming from workload issues, pedagogical issues and quality remain high in this survey.*

**Key Words:** distance education, faculty perceptions, cognitive dissonance

## *Introduction*

While distance education continues to grow, there remains a stigma about its efficacy among faculty in higher education. According to Schulte (2010), "a statement released by the counsel of the American Association of University Professors cautioned, "Distance education raises a host of educational quality and integrity issues that have yet to be answered in this rapidly changing environment." While many faculty have embraced distance education as a means of reaching people in distributed environments, the Schulte study confirms the reservations of many other faculty members. We propose that the majority of faculty still view e-learning as sub-optimal and detrimental to student's education. This negative view of distance education we theorize is related to cognitive dissonance theory (CDT). CDT Suggests that once a faculty has a positive or negative experience with distance education, their mind is made up about distance education even when evidence of improvements in the delivery or pedagogy of distance education technologies is present. This paper, explores perceptions and attitudes towards distance education to understand why this view continues to persist.

There has been a clear trend towards increases in distance education in colleges and universities. Major motivating factors have included the desire to reach more students irrespective of geographic constraints as well as time limitations for working professionals. While some faculty have embraced the opportunities that distance delivery provides as well as new, emerging technologies that can enhance the learning experience, many faculty remain resistant to exploring it. In fact, many faculty still perceive that distance education delivers lower quality in student learning as well as significantly more preparation time and headaches associated with the technologies used to deliver distance education. While this topic has been a source of significant study over the past few decades, with the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies, social media and mobile applications, we were interested to see whether perceptions and attitudes have changed over time. Therefore, this paper reports the results of a survey of faculty at the flagship campus of a state University to assess faculty perceptions as a snapshot in time.

## *Literature Review*

Dooley and Magill studied faculty perceptions at a large state University, Texas A&M in 2002. At that time, they found that while faculty perceived a need to incorporate technologies into their classes, they did not perceive institutional support to do so. This lack of support included lack of technical support, lack of direct rewards for teaching distance courses in their P&T reviews, and lack of preparation time provided for distance courses. At that time, faculty reported that they needed support, training and incentives to teach distance courses. Interestingly, their research on comparisons of faculty teaching live vs. distance classes provided evidence that course evaluations were higher for the distance sections of the same courses.

They may suggest that inaccurate attitudes towards distance delivery represented a major barrier to faculty acceptance and willingness to try teaching distance courses.

In Maguire's 2005 literature review of faculty perceptions of distance education, she found that the major motivation for faculty to engage in distance education was intrinsic; the intellectual challenge, job satisfaction, and convenience of teaching from anywhere for asynchronous course delivery. Extrinsic motivators included Promotion and Tenure reviews that considered distance delivery as important. The ability to collaborate with colleagues was also seen as a positive motivator. The perceived ability to reach and engage students effectively with new technologies was also a positive motivator. Technological support and financial incentives also played a role in providing positive motivation to teach distance courses.

In contrast, negative intrinsic factors included a fear of technology, resistance to change, and fear of loss of their intellectual capital by archiving course content. From an institutional perspective, many faculty believe that online teaching does not deliver the quality of education as live, face-to-face classes, especially for younger traditional college students. A major barrier was workload where a majority of faculty perceived that preparation and teaching time were significantly greater with distance classes (Pachnowski and Jurczyk, 2003*)*. Lack of recognition in the P&T policies was also a significant inhibitor. Finally, lack of technical support reMd an obstacle to faculty for distance delivery of courses. Online courses also infer a 24/7 expectation by students in terms of accessibility and turn-around time, which places additional stress on faculty (Gabba et al, 2005).

A similar study about the perceptions of online learning by faculty and students by Tanner, Noser, and Totaro (2009) found that perception of distance education varied by respondents in both faculty and students. For example students who were information systems majors or financial information systems majors found that distance education was "more fun" and appeared to be a "better quality learning experience" than classes that were not enhanced by distance education technology. Students who had previous experience with distance education classes also showed greater acceptance of distance education than students who have not had any experience with distance education classes. Additionally, as stated previously, experienced faculty were found to want to participate in distance education for the purposes of updating their curriculum vitae and or learn new teaching skills while less experienced faculty were just more likely to embrace distance education in general relative to their more experienced peers.

A more recent literature review (Hattangdi et al, 2010) did a similar analysis of faculty perceptions, motivation and inhibitors with regard to distance education. They supported the contention that enthusiasm for distance education represents the driver of faculty's willingness to try this delivery method. However, even in this most recent study, many faculty still perceived that the time requirements for preparation and teaching were dramatically higher than for a traditional class. Many faculty also still believe that the technologies are daunting to learn, that the quality of the learning experience are inferior, and that technical and administrative support was not adequate. Many faculty also believe that a distance class cannot replicate the rich discussions, group work and analyses in live classes.

On the other hand, they reiterated motivating factors including the ability to reach students across large geographic areas as well as working, non-traditional students. They reaffirmed the positive factors of adaptability, flexibility, interest in using technologies, some financial incentives, and reduction in travel in some cases. They also reinforced the contention that comfort levels with technology and the availability of training and support represented important factors in faculty willingness to teach distance classes.

This is where we find ourselves today. Faculty appear to be saying that while they appreciate the greater reach of distance education in relation to time and space, they also are not yet completely satisfied with the technologies currently being used to deliver distance education and feel that its current implementations lack the ability to deliver the same quality learning experience to students that occurs in traditional "brick and mortar" based classrooms facilitated by professor led discussions. In distance education research these issues of; *difficult to use technology, greater preparation time, and lack of technical support* continues to be a barrier to greater faculty acceptance and participation in distance education. Previous research on distance education has investigated several issues that influence the acceptance or lack of acceptance of distance education by both students and faculty. This research includes distance education acceptance based on gender and age done in a study by Tanner, Noser, and Langford (2003).

In that study neither age nor gender played a significant role in distance education acceptance. Another study by Tanner et al (2004) look at differences in distance education acceptance based on business faculty and business students compared to other majors faculty and students. This study found that not only were there differences in responses towards distance education between business students and business faculty from non-business majors and non-business faculty, but also significant differences between how male and females and differences in responses based on age. These contrary research findings based on gender and age demonstrates that perhaps a closer look needs to be done about how gender and age do indeed influence distance education acceptance.

### *Cognitive Dissonance Theory*

According to Festinger (1957) cognitive dissonance simply means that: "people do not like to have attitudes and behaviors in conflict." This conflict causes dissonance. Ho (2010) found similar conclusions in his study about continuance intention of e-learning platforms. Ho's study found that both attitude and satisfaction toward e-learning platforms greatly influence a user's intention to continue using e-learning platforms. Initial review of this studies data analysis seems to reflect the theory of cognitive dissonance addressed by both Festinger and Ho in that respondents who have had a positive experience with distance education report that they'd continue to use distance education as part of their teaching pedagogy and those respondents that have had a negative experience with distance education report that they would not use distance education as part of their continued teaching pedagogy.

This study will attempt address this gap and investigate other factors from a faculty perspective. We specifically are researching what role *age, gender, area of expertise, faculty rank,* and *years of teaching experience* play in the acceptance of three distance education delivery platforms. These distance education delivery platforms are: 1) synchronous distance education, 2) asynchronous distance education, and 3) hybrid distance education.

From the literature and our study design, we propose several hypotheses based on respondent descriptive factors:

- H-1. Prior positive experiences with distance education and technologies are correlated with positive attitudes towards distance education.
- H-2. Lack of technical support is correlated with negative attitudes towards distance education and related distance education technologies.
- H-3. Lack of administration support, including lack of Promotion and Tenure (P&T) emphasis on distance teaching, lack of reward structures, and lack of time provided for distance education preparation and teaching are correlated with negative attitudes toward distance education and technologies
- H-4. Area of expertise (field) is correlated with attitudes towards distance education and technologies
- H-5. Age is correlated with attitudes towards distance education and related distance education technologies
- H-6. Faculty rank is correlated with attitudes towards distance education and related distance education technologies

Additionally we propose an additional hypothesis based on cognitive dissonance theory:

- H-7. Faculty that report a negative experience with distance education will not use distance education technologies for future classes

### *Study Methodology*

A web-based survey was developed (Appendix A) to assess faculty perceptions of different forms of distance education. An e-mail message was sent to every faculty member at the flagship campus of a state University. Approximately 600 faculty received this e-mail. The link to the web survey was included in the e-mail and faculty was asked to please take a few minutes of their time to complete the survey. Table 1 shows an approximate breakdown of the faculty who received the e-mail message.

Requirements for Voluntary Participation in the Study

In order to participate in the study, subjects had to complete a 14 question survey. The 14 questions were;

1. Have you ever taught any type of distance education class in higher education?

- YES
- NO

2. What methods did you use? Check all that apply

- Polycom (or similar) video conferencing
- Online using Blackboard or similar course management system
- Asynchronous online using other systems
- Synchronous online using Skype, chat or other
- Other

3. If no, why not? Please check all that apply.

- Not interested
- Belief that distance education does not deliver the same quality of education as live classes.
- The opportunity did not arise
- Belief that distance education is not appropriate for the classes I teach
- Other. Please explain why.

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below? (Likert Scale 1 Strongly Agree to 5 Strongly Disagree)

- Distance education requires a change in teaching methods
- Distance education technology is difficult to use
- Assessment methods are more difficult to manage
- Asynchronous course delivery means there is NO interaction between participants.
- Asynchronous course delivery provides the same quality in the learning experience as a live class
- Asynchronous course delivery provides a better learning experience than a live class
- Asynchronous course delivery is better for older, non-traditional students.
- Other: Please tell us your thoughts about asynchronous courses:

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below? (Likert Scale 1 Strongly Agree to 5 Strongly Disagree)

- Live video-conferencing course delivery provides the same learning experience as a live class
- Live video-conferencing course delivery provides a better learning experience than a live class
- Live video-conferencing course delivery is better for older, non-traditional students

6. Other: please tell us your thoughts about video-conference course delivery.
Assuming that hybrid course delivery can combine any combination of asynchronous, synchronous or live classes, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements below? (Likert Scale 1 Strongly Agree to 5 Strongly Disagree)

- Hybrid course delivery provides the same learning experience as a live class
- Hybrid course delivery provides a better learning experience than a live class
- Hybrid course delivery is better for older, non-traditional students.
- Other. Please tell us your thoughts about hybrid course delivery.

7. Please tell us if there is anything that would motivate or inhibit you in teaching a distance learning course (comment field)

Descriptive Data about Respondents

8. Gender
- Male
- Female

9. Area of Expertise
- Arts and Humanities
- Business
- Engineering
- Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Other (Please specify)

10. Years of Teaching
- <3
- 3-10
- 11-20
- >20

11. Age
- <30
- 30-50
- >50

12. Rank
- Full Professor
- Associate Professor
- Assistant Professor
- Instructor
- Adjunct Faculty

13. Your comfort level with computer and Internet technologies
- Not at all comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Comfortable and confident using these technologies
- Great expertise with these technologies

14. Please share any other thoughts on distance education that you may have. (Comment field).

## *Results*

The next few tables illustrate the analysis of the completed survey. The analysis first provides an analysis of how respondents answered the survey questions followed by descriptive statistics about the respondents themselves.

Question 1: Have you ever taught any type of distance education class in higher education?

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Yes | 68 | 61% |
| 2 | No | 44 | 39% |
| | Total | 112 | 100% |

Question 2: What methods did you use? Check all that apply

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Polycom (or similar) video conferencing | 26 | 38% |
| 2 | Online using Blackboard or similar course management system | 39 | 57% |
| 3 | Asynchronous online using other systems | 25 | 37% |
| 4 | Synchronous online using Skype, chat or other | 11 | 16% |
| 5 | Other | 13 | 19% |

Question 3: If no, why not?

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Not interested | 14 | 30% |
| 2 | The opportunity did not arise | 18 | 39% |
| 3 | Belief that distance education is not appropriate for the classes I teach | 24 | 52% |
| 4 | Belief that distance education does not deliver the same quality of education as live classes. | 21 | 46% |
| 5 | Other. Please explain why. | 7 | 15% |

Question 4: to what extend do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below where 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree?

| Statistic | Distance education requires a change in teaching methods. | Distance education technology is difficult to use. | Assessment methods are more difficult to manage. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Min Value | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Max Value | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Mean | 1.63 | 2.92 | 2.55 |
| Variance | 0.55 | 1.03 | 1.19 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.74 | 1.01 | 1.09 |
| Total Responses | 110 | 110 | 110 |

Question 5: To what extend do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below where 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree?

| Statistic | Asynchronous course delivery means there is NO interaction between participants. | Asynchronous course delivery provides the same quality in the learning experience as a live class | Asynchronous course delivery provides a better learning experience than a live class | Asynchronous course delivery is better for older, non-traditional students.. | Other: Please tell us your thoughts about asynchronous courses: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Min Value | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Max Value | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Mean | 3.66 | 3.58 | 3.95 | 3.20 | 2.00 |
| Variance | 1.12 | 1.19 | 0.75 | 0.91 | 1.14 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.06 | 1.09 | 0.86 | 0.95 | 1.07 |
| Total Responses | 109 | 109 | 109 | 108 | 43 |

Question 6: To what extend do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below where 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree?

| Statistic | Live video-conferencing course delivery provides the same learning experience as a live class | Live video-conferencing course delivery provides a better learning experience than a live class | Live video-conferencing course delivery is better for older, non-traditional students | Other: please tell us your thoughts about video-conference course delivery. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Min Value | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Max Value | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Mean | 3.59 | 3.99 | 3.34 | 2.42 |
| Variance | 0.83 | 0.63 | 0.72 | 1.51 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.91 | 0.80 | 0.85 | 1.23 |
| Total Responses | 110 | 110 | 110 | 39 |

Question 7: Assuming that hybrid course delivery can combine any combination of asynchronous, synchronous or live classes, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements below where 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree?

| Statistic | Hybrid course delivery provides the same learning experience as a live class | Hybrid course delivery provides a better learning experience than a live class | Hybrid course delivery is better for older, non-traditional students. | Other. Please tell us your thoughts about hybrid course delivery. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Min Value | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Max Value | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Mean | 3.18 | 3.20 | 3.11 | 2.67 |
| Variance | 1.06 | 0.88 | 0.59 | 2.05 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.03 | 0.94 | 0.77 | 1.43 |
| Total Responses | 109 | 110 | 110 | 37 |

The following questions provide descriptive information about the survey respondents

Question 8: Gender

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Male | 73 | 68% |
| 2 | Female | 34 | 32% |
| | Total | 107 | 100% |

Question 9: Area of Expertise

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Arts and humanities | 14 | 13% |
| 2 | Business | 6 | 6% |
| 3 | Engineering | 17 | 16% |
| 4 | Sciences | 37 | 34% |
| 5 | Social Sciences | 19 | 18% |
| 6 | Other: please specify | 15 | 14% |
| | Total | 108 | 100% |

Question 10: Years of teaching experience in higher education

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | < 3 | 2 | 2% |
| 2 | 3 - 10 | 22 | 20% |
| 3 | 11- 20 | 28 | 25% |
| 4 | > 20 | 59 | 53% |
| | Total | 111 | 100% |

Question 11: Age

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | < 30 | 1 | 1% |
| 2 | 30-50 | 40 | 37% |
| 3 | >50 | 68 | 62% |
| | Total | 109 | 100% |

Question 12: Rank

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Full Professor | 44 | 41% |
| 2 | Associate Professor | 38 | 35% |
| 3 | Assistant Professor | 10 | 9% |
| 4 | Instructor | 16 | 15% |
| 5 | Adjunct faculty member | 0 | 0% |
| | Total | 108 | 100% |

Question 13: Your comfort level with computer and Internet technologies

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Not at all comfortable | 2 | 2% |
| 2 | Somewhat comfortable | 18 | 16% |
| 3 | Comfortable and confident in using these technologies | 59 | 54% |
| 4 | Great expertise with these technologies | 31 | 28% |
| | Total | 110 | 100% |

## *Discussion and Conclusions*

What did this "snapshot in time" study tell us? A correlation analysis of our data did not show any significant results except for a slight difference in attitudes between men and women where women were a little more negative in their responses to distance education. Therefore, in examining the hypotheses below, we cannot statistically validate any of them.

H-1. Prior positive experiences with distance education and technologies are correlated with positive attitudes towards distance education.

H-2. Lack of technical support is correlated with negative attitudes towards distance education and related distance education technologies.

H-3. Lack of administration support, including lack of Promotion and Tenure (P&T) emphasis on distance teaching, lack of reward structures, and lack of time provided for distance education preparation and teaching are correlated with negative attitudes toward distance education and technologies

H-4. Area of expertise (field) is correlated with attitudes towards distance education and technologies

H-5. Age is correlated with attitudes towards distance education and related distance education technologies

H-6. Faculty rank is correlated with attitudes towards distance education and related distance education technologies

H-7. Faculty that report a negative experience with distance education will not use distance education technologies for future classes

However, when you examine Appendix A, which shows many of the personal comments about distance education, you get a sense that the majority of respondents did not see online education in any of the forms explored; asynchronous, video-conferenced or hybrid as a quality substitute for the traditional face-to-face class experience. The responses also validate prior research showing that lack of administrative and technical support as well as lack of meaningful incentives, especially in the promotion and tenure reviews, still had a negative impact on perceptions of distance education. Faculty still report that distance classes tend to take significantly more time to prepare and develop, often without the necessary institutional and technology support. While many acknowledge that distance education is more convenient for them and some of their students; primarily non-traditional working students, they also say that the quality is just not the same as the richness of the personal class experience.

Looking at the demographics of the respondents, it was interesting that the major were older (62% older than 50) and in higher, tenured ranks (76% Associate or full Professor). Does this make a difference in the responses and attitudes? Would a younger respondent population have more positive attitudes? A doctoral dissertation study by Sumrall (2002) with about 200 responses from Louisiana State University showed no statistically significant differences among age groups in their responses to similar questions. Therefore, while this dimension could be studied further, we speculate that the responses would be similar.

The question now is whether college and universities should continue to promote distance education? From an administrative perspective, distance education is attractive in terms of providing education to people who have geographic, work or physical challenges. It also represents an additional revenue source in a tight economy. However, given prior studies as well as this one that reinforces prior attitudes, it appears that most faculty view distance education in a more negative light. The good news is that the reasons for these negative attitudes can be corrected. Lack of administrative and technical support as well as little or no incentives for distance education via P&T criteria can be changed. Top administrators can invest more resources in all of these areas if they wish to promote distance education.

Further research exploring factors including age, gender, and specific pedagogical issues in distance education can also be explored.

In conclusion, this study reaffirms prior research in distance education and points to a need for greater investment in areas under the control of top administration.

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Appendix A: Comments by faculty respondents about distance education

1. Why don't you use distance education?

| |
|---|
| lack of training |
| It's called distance education because it's a long distance from education. |
| Didn't have the time to set a course up or to maintain the course once established |
| Lack of time and financial support to develop such expertise. Plus, I already spend too much time looking at a screen! |
| experience doing Polycom/Skype/iChat conference meetings, doesn't scale well |
| my discipline has a large hands-on aspect |
| Not sure I have the skill to do it well. |

2. What are your thoughts about asynchronous courses?

- Students' lifestyles have changed so asynchronous is a good option for them.
- Asynchronous course delivery does not provide an environment for peer teaching and learning, nor does it give students a convenient forum to establish study groups.
- The first order of reality in a classroom, asynchronous or in a classroom, is the student's point of view (Paley). Therefore, such judgments depend greatly on the student, the instructor, the classmates, the offerings, and more. I believe it's possible to have a brilliant asynchronous course and a poor on campus class with the same students and same instructor... that's the brilliance of learning and teaching: we never know.
- most U courses of this type are taken largely by resident students who would be better served by live instruction
- Like any pedagogic tool, if used wisely it can be very effective. If used poorly, it can provide a very poor learning experience.
- It would have helped to define asynchronous to some of us...what is it?
- Some types of courses work better and other types do not. Any student, traditional or non-traditional can benefit from incorporating some online courses into his or her education.
- ITV, chat groups and email allow connection among students and professors...but does not replace the experience of being in a classroom.
- Difficult to manage
- no experience
- time consuming preparation
- Need face to face contact with students to "connect" with them; I feel the content I teach would not be presented as meaningfully online as it is in person.
- These are silly questions. Something is lost and something is gained; terms like "quality" and "better" lead to loaded questions.
- faculty need time and support to develop these courses. Also students need to be informed of the time commitment in doing distance ed.
- Not a fan
- students routinely tell me that such courses are unquestionably INFERIOR to in-class courses
- it provides greater access to the disabled, the homebound, and those who have no means to traditionally delivered education
- Should be used only sparingly to supplement live classes.
- To be effective they take a lot of preparation. It is not enough to simply record lectures and deliver them online.
- certain subjects and styles work well, others don't
- I think it is different type of learning experience for students; it does require a great deal of preparation prior to design your course. For students, it requires discipline.
- depends on the technology
- I do not record session for asynchronous content (only if a student is missing a class, I record them).

- They are prone to cheating on tests, e.g., U's calculus classes. Students who get good grades on them often don't know calculus at all.
- I have taught the same course both in a classroom and online. Online requires more work for me but offers some students advantages, such as time to think about what they want to say before participating in online discussions.
- It has some advantages over live teaching (e.g., my students' interactions with one another are much more thoughtful in my online asynchronous class) and some disadvantages (e.g., absolute no face to face interaction results in some feelings of disconnectedness). On the whole, I think they are equally effective when executed properly.
- sometimes difficult to manage workload, having to check back frequently to see if students have responded
- should be a last resort
- we already do asynchronous in "live" classes, called homework. It's a question of how it is used in ANY class.
- A large part of learning is the relationship that is established with the teacher. To a large extent, we learn from someone because we believe that 1. they have knowledge that is useful to us, 2. they have the skill to decide what and how we should learn the content, 3. We believe that the teacher has our best intersts at heart. For all of this to happen, we must know and trust them, and believe that they know us well enough to figure out how best to teach us and what is important for us to learn.
- Asynchronous Clases Require Very Dedicated and Motivated Students
- I like to combine asynchronous activities and assignments with on line classes.
- gives much more mentoring work
- Students do not have the opportunity to learn from class discussions and creative ideas that some may bring to the discussions
- totally depends on the student
- Convenient for complicated schedules and eliminates the need to drive.
- helpful when students live a great distance
- My answer to the second, third and fourth questions are all "it depends!" Each of these generalizations can be either true or false, depending on the individuals, but also on the mix of students in the class.
- tends to demand more self-discipline, initiative of students - a good thing
- Asynchronous classes will work for some students much better than for others, just like live classes.

3. What are your thoughts about video-conferenced courses?

- As always, it depends on the students and instructor....
- It disrupts the flow of the class and you lose actual class time.
- The experiences are not the same, but whether one is better or not is a value judgment best left to the student in the situation and the options they have in front of them.
- For older, non-traditional students who are my advisees I have found that online courses have not been as effective as the classroom, due to the fact that they remain isolated from the class cohort and have difficulty finding help if they need it.
- Older students may have challenges that make class attendance difficult, but the benefit and greatly contribute to class interactions.
- Technical problems are a nightmare
- to be good it requires an active student, not a quiet passive one
- better than nothing, but not the same
- Synchronous live videoconferencing can disadvantage those who work or do not have access to sites and centers, who cannot drive or who cannot afford the price of gasoline, childcare, etc. There are also those who may be disabled and unwilling to appear on camera for a variety of reasons.
- Approach has its own value when used in the right context.
- The only advantage is reduced travel
- I have never used it in my class.
- Live is better than asynchronous, but there has to be a two-way communication possibility. My distance students typically show up in class once in a while, which helps to make them part of the class.
- It is OK, but holding a few classes in person adds tremendously.
- I have not taught this kind of course.

- I admit I'm not terribly familiar with this method but find it off-putting. If I'm going to teach live, I'd MUCH rather do it in person.
- should be a last resort
- Having done conference meetings over video, it's just a different environment, less "live," losing much in communication and body language interaction
- Live Video-Conferencing Needs Asynchronous Components and Benefits from Live-Classroom Integration
- In my department we have had many problems withthe technology on campus
- My experience with this method (polycom or ATM) is that the technology can have interruptions and disruptions that really interfere with teaching and learning.
- distracting / less interaction / less focused / technology not "smooth" yet as desirable in theory
- video meetings certainly do not have the same quality as face-to-face
- it is the next appropriate technique because the students cannot observe the entire class environment, especially the facial expressions and body language of the group
- depends upon the student
- access to U education even when driving is too far
- sometimes you have to deal with technological difficulties
- It is useful but not equivalent to a live classroom.
- I haven't taught using live video-conference, although I had sat in on a few classes that colleagues have taught using polycom, which I'm guessing is one such system. I observed some limitations, but I'm preparing to teach a course with polycom in 2012.

4. What are your thoughts about hybrid course deliver?

- Lots and lots of possibilities....
- I have no idea what this question even means since I don't know the definition of the terms.
- See the comments above.
- Hybrid is better than asynchronous, but not a replacement for live instruction.
- know little of this
- This would appeal to me more than a totally online class
- Not a fan
- Once again, if those who require asynchronous course delivery for any variety of reasons are factored into the course design, this can be a good model.
- Even non-traditional students still benefit tremendously from the personal interaction that occurs in a hybrid course and is not available in the other formats.
- The best of both worlds
- I am considering switching to a hybrid course delivery next time I teach and will be better able to answer this question next time.
- They all can but not necessarily do
- My classes are hybrid, but on snow days I also sometimes teach from home and it is all distance. I would say teaching only distance with no live class is not really that great.
- It depends on the topic and the hybrid.
- My experience with hybrid courses has been very positive -- best of both worlds!
- graduate students want the face-to-face contact but have distance and time commitments; hybrid meets both needs
- I think this is a poorly posed question. If the hybrid course adds both Asynch and synch to live classes, then obviously it is a superior model--but the time and resources would be overwhelming.
- appropriate for some content, but not all
- I have marked the 'neither agree nor disagree' for all of these because it very much depends on the design of the hybrid and the skill of the instructor to use the best of both practices.

  But I will say for sure that this is often used as an excuse to fill the course to the roof with students and expect that they will each get a quality experience from the professor, even with support (TA's etc) which is frequently not the case.
- Hybrid Classes Allow Faculty to Draw on the Largest Variety of Effective Pedagogies
- I think a hybrid model might be a good alternative

- This is appropriate for certain courses that I teach and works well--especially if managed well. I have finally gotten it down!!
- depends upon the student
- It is the best of both worlds
- Again, "It depends!" Each of these generalizations can be either true or false for any given individual. However, I've used Blackboard with three class sessions per course, and prefer that to Blackboard alone. When I use polycom, I plan to have a few face-to-face sessions as well.

5. What would motivate or inhibit you from teaching an online course?

- I have heard and overhead a number of negative comments about online courses at UM. Further, we have recently offered some online graduate courses in my department to accommodate off-campus students, and the course was perceived very negatively by our on-campus students. I have serious reservations about on-line courses, at least in my discipline.
- Elements of a hybrid course may be found in a live on-campus class... so, it's tough to answer these questions.
- Is that really the right question to be asking? How about asking first what the learning outcomes and audiences are for a course and then ask what the appropriate pedagogy is, the least important component of which is the delivery mechanism. We really have the cart before the horse on this.
- I prefer to teach classes with significant hands-on component, which is currently difficult to do using distance learning.
- if I have students who want to take my class from distance
- Some subjects seem better suited to on-line courses that others. I have trouble imaging how to do the type of interactive/active learning teaching approach I use in my undergraduate courses in an on-line environment because I rely quite a bit on having students talk with one another. I can, however, see ways of offering on-line or hybrid versions of the graduate courses I teach. I don't think that merely videotaping a lecture and posting it on-line makes for a good on-line learning experience for students, especially in the lower division, gateway courses for majors. Many beginning college students need to learn how to learn college-level material and it is more challenging to create those opportunities in an on-line environment.
- A reliable technician who you could count on to be in the room and make sure everything is up and running every class period would go a long ways.
- Until the technology exists to truly replicate a face-to-face classroom experience, including facilitating interactions between students for discussion, distance ed will always be a very, very poor substitute for a real course. To pretend otherwise does a disservice to the students.
- Did it once. Never do it again. The software delivery system was so cumbersome it made my experience a disaster. The so called "help center" was useless. Once past the basics of login a basic page set up I was able to discover the answers to my questions faster than they were. It was very frustrating to ask "Can I do this?" and get the response "Gee, I don't know. NO one ever asked that before. I will look into it."
- I prefer to teach online courses that can be arranged as asynchronously as possible, using writing as the means of communication between students and the instructor. I do not enjoy teaching classes that require video conferencing, skyping, or other pseudo classroom experiences.
- As you can see above, I am not a huge fan of distance education. I have taught courses through ITV that received high, positive reviews. I would consider online/distance ed if I had support to set up the class, and TA support to help with the grading portion of the course. Answering individual emails from students is much more time consuming than individual conversations. Emails + grading, and the time required to adapt a live course to online makes this huge investment of time.
- Nothing would motivate me to do so.
- I need to be able to do it myself not wait for technical people.
- money to teach motivates. I dislike the lack of human contact, however, so avoid this. Cannot do labs and field work easily.
- Lack of training and familiarity with various models; no prior experience; technology glitches
- If a student can be in a live class, that is best. I'm sure distance learning, especially when incorporating live video can be reasonably effective, but I doubt it could be as good as in a live classroom. Online courses, as most are taught without live interaction between teacher and student, I think are total garbage and should not be allowed at the university. Not only are these courses difficult to learn from and not worth the money that a live course is worth, it is ridiculous for the university to pay professors to "teach" online courses at the same rate as for live courses.

- time commitment in learning
- You couldn't pay me enough to do another. It is a disruptive, completely substandard way to try to form a productive learning environment. This approach should be used only in extreme cases (disabled students, presentations froma remote field location, etc.) and NOT as an expected norm for University instruction.
- Case study approach that requires group presentations are difficult to be done with distance learning.
- I have been involved with distance education for over 20 years. As I age and acquire various health conditions, I find that asynchronous teaching allows me to continue in my career in ways that traditional teaching would not. As long as the pedagogy is adapted to the whatever learning environment is used, and is simply not canned lectures, which are boring and do not reult in a good educational experience, I believe that distance education invites students and instructors from a variety of situations to gain a good education. With the price of gas and automobiles going up, the need for retraining in the state increasing, and the number of elderly and disabled increasing, due to the wars we have engaged in, as well as the foibles of life, this is an excellent solution that provides good service to all. That said, unless people are trained in distance pedagogy, they may not realize that it requires a different use of time, resources, and approaches than traditional teaching.
- Nothing would motivate me (again - once was enough) - serious professional and educational-quality misgivings inhibit. In my view, it's essentially a cash cow for professionally (or ethically) challenged administrators and low-status, unserious faculty at unselective (and thus low-status) institutions; and incompatible with the values imparted by my own liberal arts education and professional training at a real university.
- Motivate: Sport in setting up and maintaining the course and especially tech support. Inhibit: Lack of admin support in having a class be part of teaching load (i.e. it must be an overload)
- I already use some distance technology, have experimented a fair amount, and am open to more.
- 1. You have to be much more organized with your material (which is both good and bad for me since I am not that organized and worse I am a procrastinator). 2. Assessment of how well the students are doing is different. Are the students reading the material? Are they "showing up for class"? I can usually tell how a student is doing by whether they come to class, pay attention in class, come in late or leave early, etc. I can usually tell if my explanations of a concept are not being understood by the students in class, and I can immediately switch to trying to explain in a different way. I am not sure if and how I would do this in a distance learning class. 3. I find that I lose touch with my students if I don't see them.
- Greatest hindrance to overcome is the lack of dialogue between instructor and student, inability to assess student learning/understanding in real time, and an inability to faithfully assess outcomes. These are all issues that I am trying to correct in my online course.
- I have really enjoyed teaching online. It is a lot of work. This year I took a large number of students in my course which ended up being an extra 10 hours of work a week. The lack of policy that defines an appropriate faculty -student ratio for online course that are writing intensive is needed. Faculty should be compensated for taking on extra students.
- I find blackboard to be a challenge. I think there needs to be much more training for faculty and there needs to be 24 hour help available to students particularly with blackboard issues
- It would definitely help if the equipment and software were more reliable. They are easy to set up now than years ago (we use adobe connect pro) but all that extra equipment of cameras, speakers, microphone array, scribble board and projector for the live class pretty much guarantees that something does not work. I guess it will be better in a few years. My experience with live/distance class is positive. But also our distance graduate students are typically people who are older and in a professional environment, so they are more disciplined. I am not sure how well it would work with undergraduates. I am also not sure how this works with large classes (up to 20) but I might depend on the subject.
- What's the incentive?
- I have taught in a class taking place simultaneously here on campus, at J. Lab, and at M Medical Research. It was, and is, ridiculous.

  I never got to meet with students outside of class; I couldn't demonstrate hands on how to use some of the important databases and software. It is almost impossible to read facial expressions to learn how involved the students are. The sound quality is poor making vocal inflections difficult to hear. I am an award winning teached and get the best student evaluations in my department largely because I can read the students, and work with them individually when that is what they need.

Interaction with the instructor in person cannot be replaced by any mode of technology. Whatever happened to Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other?

- I already teach literature courses online and will continue to do so. One advantage for me and the traditional college students who take my online literature courses is that we benefit from the insights of older, nontraditional students who simply wouldn't be in a regular classroom with us.
- While I have taught online courses, I feel my online teaching could be improved if I had more time to familiarize myself with the many technical options. I'm a bit of a techno-phobe. I think I've done well w/ online teaching despite that fact but I'd like to improve my online classes and I don't feel I have the skills or resources to do so. Sure, the campus occasionally offers training on various tools but these occur during the week, during the school year -- as an active researcher with a high teaching load, I find it nearly impossible to block the time to attend these sessions. I'd be much more inclined to attend a focused, intensive retreat or a conference focused on improving online teaching but I'm not aware of any such options.
- If there was a need for a distance learning course and I was given the time to develop one then I may be motivated to set one up.
- the challenge for me teaching on-line courses has been ongoing issues with technology; for example my most recent Blackboard course there were times where students could not open my attached files and there were times where I could not open students' files; in spite of attempts by IT to help we were not able to resolve that problem.
- My impression is that distance learning is a money saving scheme that hurts the quality of education, for the most part. The personal interaction with the students is limited. Even the students on campus are inhibited when the course it taught simultaneously on line and in front of them. If it takes a culture shift then we are not there yet.
- Above all, I prize face-to-face interaction with students. Since I already spend more time online and on email than I like, I am not at all interested in teaching long distance courses. Moreover, I am already overwhelmed by my teaching, research, undergrad and grad advising, public service, and administrative responsibilities that I perceive distance education course development as a time demand that would require significant reductions in my other work areas. I also see distance education as largely (though not exclusively) driven by bottom line goals of using more adjunct faculty and that financial resources committed here have already depleted the former excellence of the UM campus.
- I don't want to lecture to a camera any more than I want to lecture to a room. Finding interactive methods is essential.
- Distance education done right takes much time and effort. Release time to get the course going would be very helpful.
- Pay me more money to learn how to do it. Give me a course alleviation so that planning the new course and implementing it isn't too onerous. Why work put in this extra work - to the detriment of my research agenda - for no obvious benefit?
- I realize that for some areas of study, hybrid courses could be useful--certainly in some sense easier for the instructor. There probably aren't weird behavioral problems that they have deal with at all--which frankly must be a relief. But this is insufficient to outweigh what I believe is the best way for students to learn in my subject area. Relationships matter a great deal, especially in areas in which there is the necessity to create situations in which failure is part of the process or where you attract a lot of 'non-traditional' learners, especially those who learn best from hands-on activities under the direct supervision of an experienced mentor, as I do in my area.
- I would be more motivated if we had more technological support, both in infrastructure and in support staff.
- If I thought that all this technology genuinely reached students who can't come to the University, then I might be more interested. The facts seem to be that most students using this expensive technology are already on campus. For them, this is a waste of time and money. For the few students who really are not able to attend University campuses this is obviously a good thing, but there don't seem to be that many of them actually taking classes. This technology is not equally beneficial in all disciplines.

Evidence that those who are pushing this technology understand that and are willing to address this issue in a nuanced way would be helpful. I am not in favor of replacing face-to-face traditional interactions between faculty and students. The more we do so through distance education, the more there is a precedent for doing less on campus. At some point the threshold is crossed and we lose the rationale for having a physical university. Some may enjoy that prospect. I think it's a disaster.

- Incorporation of student-centered, (guided) inquiry pedagogy is important. If the distance courses can achieve that pedagogical goal - student-student interactions that drive learning - then maybe it's helpful. But that still needs live, small-group activity (in my experience).
- I'm open to trying it; but, would need some training. I also have never taken a course through distance ed. I know there have been problems with the technology here on campus. And, I hear a lot of complaints from my advisees who have taken distance courses.
- If we are going to do more with videoconferencing, we must have technical support on site to manage that aspect. Too much time is wasted and it is too frustrating to deal with technical malfunctions while teaching.
- FULL TECH SUPPORT. TERRIBLE TO HAVE TO ADD THAT HURDLE TO THE EDUCATOR. PROF HAS ALREADY TO PREPARE THE MATERIAL, PREPARE LAB, PREPARE SPACE AND TOPICS, ASSIGN ASSIGNMENT, CORRECT, PREPARE EXAM. TO LEARN ABOUT VERY DYNAMIC SOFTWARE MODIFICATIONS IS NOT REASONABLE.
- Lab experiences are difficult in a distance setting.
- If I thought my courses could be taught by distant ed I would do it. I have a lab course which makes it more difficult.
- Personal financial incentive for the extra time and effort to develop online content and to spend time emailing and corresponding with students; grant or stipend support to hire a student to handle the entry and organization of the online content.
- Exam will need to be proctored as there is potential for cheating with exams.
- The technology of video conferencing often ended up delaying the class by 10 minutes trying to get it to work even with getting there early. It would have to be demonstrated to me the technology is a lot less quirky and unreliable for me to try it again. It was an enormous hassle that I feel decreased the experience for the students actually taking the class in person too.
- The primary motivation for me is to provide access to more students by reducing the impediment of distance and travel (and thereby saving gasoline and time). All my experiences with Blackboard have been with classes for adults who are employed full time and students part-time, in most cases living at some distance from Orono.

  For these students, distance learning may be the only way they will pursue a degree. In the near future, I will be using polycom to offer a "virtual field experience" for undergraduate students at UM to experience a racially and ethnicly-diverse urban environment without having to spend a lot of time and money traveling to and staying there. I do plan some brief exchange visits as a course option. I'm not sure how this "virtual field experience" will work out, but it seems to be the only way to provide this experience to students for whom travel is prohibitive. I'm willing to make the effort, and see how it works out. As regards inhibiting factors, using distance learning is a change that takes time and new skills, and that needs to be factored into workload calculations and staff development supports. As of now, I think those incentives are available in my unit and this campus. Technology is an essential tool. In addition to Blackboard and ploycom, I'm involved in using Moodle to supplement courses that are not distance learning courses, Mahara for student portfolios, and a data management system for accreditation. All of these electronic systems are useful tools, and allow us to do things that could not be done at all, or as well, without them.

- more acceptance of distance education from college leadership
- Would need lots of help and guidance getting started.