UMD Distance Education Think Tank -- August 17, 2004
Synthesis of input from participants

This document represents a synthesis of the results of the Think Tank that met on August 17th, 2004. Material obtained here was obtained through a combination of small group discussions and large group sharing. Small groups provided material through one of the group members taking notes on a computer and submitting these to the Think Tank coordination group. Large group input was obtained by notes being taken on the computer during the session and projected to the large group on the screen (so that all participants could see what was being recorded and provide suggestions on the wording of what was recorded). Following the Think Tank, the Think Tank Coordination Group were provided with a copy of all the written materials that were gathered. The group met to discuss the results and give input on how best to analyze and synthesize these. Barbara Johnson, Jennifer Frahm, and Helen Mongan-Rallis then met to develop the written synthesis that is provided below. Responses to each question have been organized into categories. As far as possible the actual words of participants have been used and every effort made to keep the integrity of individuals’ original meaning.

What is Distance Education?

Distance education means different things to different people. Even the name may be a misnomer because the audience may be on campus students (who are thus not at a distance but who are taking a course through an online format). What emerged in the Think Tank discussion in response to the question, “What is distance education” was the following:

a. that definitions of DE are based in part on the role of the person using DE and on the teaching approaches & beliefs of the instructor. For example, administrators may define it in terms of how students are registered for the course, or distance from campus. Instructors who teach in a more traditional, lecture mode, may see it as a means of delivering content from instructor to students. Instructors who follow a more constructivist approach may see it more as a means of creating a virtual community of co-learners. Students may define it in terms of classes that can be taken anywhere, anytime, rather than in a real time, face-to-face format.

b. It would be unwise for us to come up with one definition because “one size does not fit all.” What will be more helpful is to develop a framework that identifies different definitions and implications of each for the different players.

c. It is important for all involved in DE to be aware of the different definitions to avoid the pitfall of thinking that we are all following the same approach for the same reason.
The key factors that participants shared in defining DE were as follows. These have been organized into categories on which different definitions can be based. Items raised in the Think Tank in many cases are relevant in more than one category and thus appear more than once.

Definitions based on:

1. Characteristics of teaching methods
   a. formation of online community of learners
   b. traditional correspondence course
   c. anytime anywhere learning
   d. any time a course is delivered in asynchronous manner (not ITV, but web courses)
   e. delivery method that can be in combo with face-to-face
   f. not necessarily online (e.g. ITV, INI, correspondence, sending out CD)
   g. instructional delivery system that connects learner with educational resources
   h. a method of learning that is developed in one place and distributed geographically through time

2. Location of learners & instructor
   a. formation of online community of learners
   b. traditional correspondence course
   c. students not in room with instructor or not physically at the institution
   d. a place away from home campus where person completes 50 or more credits
   e. delivery method that can be in combo with face-to-face
   f. an alternative way to teach classes other than conventional in classroom teaching
   g. a method of learning that is developed in one place and distributed geographically through time

3. Access to and transmission of learning materials
   a. students getting restricted resources from off campus and/or sending them to campus
   b. library shipping materials to greater than 50 miles
   c. not necessarily online (e.g. ITV, INI, correspondence)
   d. instructional delivery system that connects learner with educational resources
   e. a method of learning that is developed in one place and distributed geographically through time

4. Synchronous vs. asynchronous
   a. anytime anywhere learning
   b. any time a course is delivered in asynchronous manner (not ITV, but web courses)
   c. an alternative way to teach classes other than conventional in classroom teaching
d. a method of learning that is developed in one place and distributed geographically through time

5. Types of interactions
   a. formation of online community of learners
   b. traditional correspondence course
   c. students not in room with instructor or not physically at the institution
   d. an alternative way to teach classes other than conventional in classroom teaching
   e. a method of learning that is developed in one place and distributed geographically through time

6. Administrative issues (such as registration, in vs., outstate)
   a. a place away from home campus where person completes 50% or more of the credits needed for a particular academic major
   b. how many credits can be transferred in
   c. in or out of state tuition
   d. student status (degree seeking vs. non-degree seeking; CE vs. non-CE)
   e. faculty workload definition
      - an alternative way to teach classes other than conventional in classroom teaching
   f. faculty inload vs. overload
   g. students getting restricted resources from off campus and/or sending them to campus
   h. library shipping materials to greater than 50 miles
   i. a method of learning that is developed in one place and distributed geographically through time

What methods/formats of Distance Education are there & what are the purposes of each?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Method or format</th>
<th>Formats of delivery/teaching</th>
<th>Expectations of students</th>
<th>Purposes &amp; advantages Why is this course offered in this particular format? Why teach in this way? Why learn in this way?</th>
<th>Disadvantages of this method</th>
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<td>Hybrid models</td>
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| a. Traditional F2F for content, online component for discussion. | • Face-to-face class (F2F) that uses web-based tools and resources as supplement:  
   o web readings & resources  
   o online quizzes  
   o WebX for students to share ideas | • Attend all F2F class sessions  
   • Share ideas related to F2F class topics with peers using WebX | • Online sharing enables all students to participate in class discussion in equitable way.  
   This is especially helpful to shy students and those who like to take longer to think about and | • Can significantly increase workload for students and instructor if web based component becomes in addition |
| b. Mostly F2F, with some seat | Online component replaces some of F2F class sessions (e.g. instead of class meeting) | • As for Hybrid (a) but students attend | • As for Hybrid (a) but greater emphasis on non F2F | to, rather than in place of these elements being used in F2F class. |

- **F2F used for presentation of information by teacher & students, for developing fundamentals.** Web-based tools and resources used as supplement and for moving beyond for foundation/basics introduced in F2F class (ie: for analysis, synthesis and evaluation of material).
- **Seat time required for all class sessions just as in complete F2F model of teaching.**
- **Credit load for faculty as well as number of credits assigned to the course based on number of F2F contact hours.**

- **Use Internet for accessing class syllabi & course materials, readings & other resources**
- **Take online quizzes**
- **formulate their answers before contributing to discussion. Reduces F2F dominance of one or a small group of students.**
- **Discussion can be more student centered and not have instructor be “in front” of the classroom.**
- **More efficient use of F2F time because:**
  - Class time can focus more on instructor presenting material and group activities. Deeper analysis of what is taught in class then happens in online discussion.
  - Includes more than can be covered in the classroom.
- **Assessment of student learning and understanding through online discussion and quizzes enables instructor to begin next class knowing where problem areas are and thus able to use class time to focus on these areas.**
- **Enables instructor and students to use a wide variety of resources – both hard copy and online.**
- **Greatly reduces or eliminates need for paper copies of handouts and readings (as these are posted on or linked to course web site).**
- **Students provided with immediate feedback on performance via online quizzes to, rather than in place of these elements being used in F2F class.**
| Time replaced by online. | 3 times a week, it meets twice a week and third class is replaced by students participating in web-based discussions). | Fewer F2F sessions; flexibility as well as increased responsibility to complete out-of-class sessions at any time (within specified time period) | Component.  
- Non F2F replaces as well as supplements F2F component.  
- Enables more flexible use of time by students and instructor. Reduces travel time to campus. |
|---|---|---|---|
| c. Limited F2F, emphasis on online for content and discussion. | Mostly online, with monthly F2F meetings where seat time is required. F2F used for presentation of information by teacher & students, for developing fundamentals, for building on issues raised in online discussion forum, and for F2F group work by students. Shift in responsibility for teaching and learning so this is shared more equally by instructor and students. | Students take greater responsibility for their own learning; requires more self-discipline in setting aside time needed for online participation and for doing outside readings.  
- Students learn more through independent reading and from discussion with peers, guided by instructor initiated discussions and building on framework/content introduced in F2F sessions.  
- Students still attend F2F sessions (but only for limited percentage of overall course time) | Geared more to students who have significant off-campus commitments and/or who prefer flexibility of not attending F2F real-time class sessions, but who like to/need to have F2F contact with peers and instructors to clarify concepts and learn from others.  
- Better suited to students who are able to take more responsibility for own learning in terms of learning through independent reading and online discussions.  
- Students may let online discussion responsibilities slide, preferring to wait to ask questions and engage with others in the F2F sessions. |
| d. Interactive television (ITV) | An extension of face-to-face teaching that enables the instructor to teach simultaneously students at remote classroom sites as well as at the classroom site in which the instructor is located (the host site). Cameras at the host site enable | Same as would be the case for face-to-face teaching (seat time, attending class on physical campus). However, | Enables one instructor simultaneously to teach multiple groups of students at different locations.  
- Reduces cost of paying for instructors at each site or for |
| | | | Less personal than face-to-face in same space classroom. More challenging for students to participate in |
remote sites to see and hear the instructor, the students at the host site, and also to see any multi-media used at the host site (such as videos, DVDs, computer projections, and Elmo projector). Similarly, cameras at remote sites connect those sites with the host sites and with each other, so that the participants at all sites can switch views to see the other sites. This method of teaching simulates face-to-face teaching for students at remote sites.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Learning community model</th>
<th>students at remote sites attend class in classrooms not on the host campus. • Students have to learn different techniques for participating in classroom discussions in order for the instructor and students at other remote sites to be able to hear them (such as raising hand so remote students can see who is speaking; being more sensitive to taking turns in speaking) • Requires more self-discipline of students at remote sites (as instructor not in same physical space) • Remote students have to submit &amp; receive assignments electronically or via mail.</th>
<th>instructor to commute to remote sites. • Enables students at remote sites to take classes without having to commute to host campus. • Increases the outreach of the university and draws in a wider range of students. • Alternative way to deliver electives.</th>
<th>discussions (large group and small group) • More challenging for instructor to involve remote students, to monitor their involvement. and to check for their understanding. • Cost of maintaining multiple classrooms and paying for ITV connection and support.</th>
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<td>Learning community model.</td>
<td>Online interactive discussion using web resources to enrich understanding of assigned materials, engaging students in examination of themselves to reach conclusions about themselves in terms of new experiences, readings, quizzes, written work, post in discussion groups and evaluate the postings.</td>
<td>Students self-motivated, self-responsible, and able to learn without much and frequent direction. • Some independent papers submitted electronically, some</td>
<td>Develops self-responsible and self-directed learners. • As for Hybrid (c), but without the elements of F2F except for introductory class. Thus designed for students who are not able to or prefer not to attend F2F, real-time classes. Can be taken by students who</td>
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<td>Learning community model.</td>
<td>Students bring content and experience</td>
<td>Some students may post just to get points • Some students may think it is a waste of time • Separation from peers • Many students</td>
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to discussions. Teacher guides learning through suggested readings and in-depth questions to initiate questions.

- Emphasis is on learning through a combination of analysis and discussion of outside readings and other students’ posts, as well as on every student participating in all discussions. (differs from face-to-face courses, where emphasis tends to be on direct input of the instructor). In other words, requires full participation of all students.

- Teacher guides learning through suggested readings and in-depth questions to initiate discussions.

- May be real time meetings via ITV as needed during the course.

- Students may engage in group work with each other in real-time using WebX chat or other real-time, web-based conferencing options.

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<th>Assignments done in groups</th>
<th>Live at great distance from physical campus.</th>
<th>Prefer to listen rather than talk.</th>
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<td>• Emphasis is on learning through a combination of analysis and discussion of outside readings and other students’ posts, as well as on every student participating in all discussions. (differs from face-to-face courses, where emphasis tends to be on direct input of the instructor). In other words, requires full participation of all students.</td>
<td>• Eliminates travel costs and time needed to commute to campus.</td>
<td>• Can’t get or give immediate feedback (students and instructor)</td>
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<td>• Students expected to apply their learning to their own lives (and to incorporate the ways in which they do this into their online discussions. This requires self-disclosure and trust in classmates)</td>
<td>• Students may be geographically dispersed from each other and from campus.</td>
<td>• Students may think it is easier than F2F</td>
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<td>• Students have to have access to a computer on the Internet and participate in discussions via the Internet on a regular basis</td>
<td>• Enables increased accessibility to students with physical disabilities</td>
<td>• Students may think timelines don’t matter (and thus find that they cannot keep up with the rest of the learning community).</td>
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<td>• Students have to have basic computer skills</td>
<td>• Helpful for non-traditional students (who cannot meet in real-time and who have to arrange their school work around the employment and family responsibilities).</td>
<td>• Time management is an issue, with more time required from students and instructor than traditional instruction.</td>
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<td>• Even if one or a small group of students try to dominate a discussion, participants can choose the amount of attention they give to those students’ posts.</td>
<td>• Alternative way to deliver electives</td>
<td>• Many would prefer to talk and get feedback – rather than write which leaves the communication there for all time.</td>
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<td>• Encourages shy students and to participate</td>
<td>• Sense of being separated from one’s peers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Online sharing enables all students to participate in class discussion in equitable way (allows all students the time they need to think and formulate a response without being interrupted). This is especially helpful to shy students and those who like to take longer to think about and formulate their answers before contributing to discussion. Reduces F2F dominance of one or a small group of students.</td>
<td>• Not all students are willing and able to self-disclose and reflect on application of learning to their own lives in public, written discussion forum.</td>
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- Meet face-to-face at start of course for orientation, and thereafter all online:
  - Syllabi & some readings online; also may use text book, CDs and hard copy library materials.
  - Students read information from readings independently; focus of course is on web-based discussion and analysis of assigned readings.
  - Teacher guides learning through suggested readings and in-depth questions to initiate discussions.
  - May be real time meetings via ITV as needed during the course.
  - Students may engage in group work with each other in real-time using WebX chat or other real-time, web-based conferencing options.

- Emphasis is on learning through a combination of analysis and discussion of outside readings and other students’ posts, as well as on every student participating in all discussions. (differs from face-to-face courses, where emphasis tends to be on direct input of the instructor). In other words, requires full participation of all students.

- Students expected to apply their learning to their own lives (and to incorporate the ways in which they do this into their online discussions. This requires self-disclosure and trust in classmates).

- Students have to have access to a computer on the Internet and participate in discussions via the Internet on a regular basis.

- Students have to have basic computer skills.

- Even if one or a small group of students try to dominate a discussion, participants can choose the amount of attention they give to those students’ posts.

- Online sharing enables all students to participate in class discussion in equitable way (allows all students the time they need to think and formulate a response without being interrupted). This is especially helpful to shy students and those who like to take longer to think about and formulate their answers before contributing to discussion. Reduces F2F dominance of one or a small group of students.

- Encourages shy students and to participate.

- Time management is an issue, with more time required from students and instructor than traditional instruction.

- Many would prefer to talk and get feedback – rather than write which leaves the communication there for all time.

- Sense of being separated from one’s peers.

- Not all students are willing and able to self-disclose and reflect on application of learning to their own lives in public, written discussion forum.
| Skills to be able to use online course materials and to communicate with others electronically | Discussion can be more student centered and not have instructor be “in front” of the classroom.  
- Extends offerings of the university beyond the physical limits of the host campus (students can take course from anywhere in world, provided they have Internet access).  
- Alternative way for departments to offer faculty opportunities to teach classes in an overload situation.  
- Use of affective performance evaluation online gives instructor insight into student’s understanding; and how the instructor frames the reflective exercise. | Some significant differences in teaching online (compared to F2F) require that instructors need new teaching skills. Because of the relative newness of this type of teaching, there is little training and support available to teach faculty how to teach in a learning community mode. (Example, knowing how to create discussion questions that lead to meaningful online discussions; when to provide input and how to balance their input into discussions; how to deal with online conflict among students or arising from inappropriate posts; how to facilitate on an ongoing basis to ensure community).  
- Does not work effectively if instructor is not able to keep up with and monitor discussion, and provide individual and group input as needed |
### 100% non Face-to Face

| 0. Correspondence INI | • Instructor develops course package ("instructor-in-a-box" model). Materials may be in a variety of formats used in any combination (e.g. web-based, paper packet of lectures and other written materials/workbook, CD, video). Students then complete readings and assignments at their pace, independent of other students. Essential that course materials are provided to students in a timely manner and that the instructions and materials provided by the instructor are clear. • Correspondence and sharing of materials from teacher to student and student to teacher may be via regular mail or electronically. Material may be in a variety of formats (e.g. paper, video, audio tapes, CDs) • May have time limits for completion of units within the course and the whole course, or students may be allowed to take as long as they need to complete the course. • May involve communication between instructor or a tutor, with instructor/tutor providing feedback to students on assignments; or • Requires high degree of responsibility, ability to follow directions and self-discipline to complete work independently. • Assignments must be done and submitted within specified time periods. • If INI is taken online, students have to have basic computer skills to be able to use online course materials and to communicate with instructor electronically. | • Self-paced learning (within time limits required by particular course). • Enables a large number of students to take a course in a given time period. | (instructor needs to be able to be online regularly) • Different for undergraduate than graduate students (better suited to latter and to adult learners). • Requires high degree of responsibility, ability to follow directions and self-discipline to complete work independently. • Assignments must be done and submitted within specified time periods. • If INI is taken online, students have to have basic computer skills to be able to use online course materials and to communicate with instructor electronically. • Self-paced learning (within time limits required by particular course). • Enables a large number of students to take a course in a given time period. | • Monitoring of student progress difficult and may come too late. • Limits student learning to input only from instructor and readings and not from multiple perspectives of other learners (because of teacher directed format of delivery). • Students who do not learn well through the format in which content is provided (if this content is provided only via one method, such as written materials) are not able to have concepts explained via alternate method. • Instructor’s time involvement with sporadic registration of students |
students may provide evidence of learning by completing online automatically scored assessments
• Students may be locally based or from campus (location of students is irrelevant to teaching and learning).

What works and why?

The key factors that participants shared in defining Distance Education were as follows. These have been organized into categories on which different definitions can be based. Items raised in the Think Tank in many cases are relevant in more than one category and thus appear more than once.

Success factors based on:

1. **Characteristics of teaching methods:**
   1. Clear expectations from instructor and from students
   2. Hybrid course - In class time more valuable and useful because other things can be handled online
   3. Threaded discussion - Instructors balance their input – knowing when to interject (what helps make this work is providing support to faculty in how to do this)
   4. Formal online orientation to students before they are allowed to take a course online - Instructor knows students know what to do
   5. Ongoing monitoring
   6. Using e-mail as a way to conduct office hours - Convenient; good use of time; any time access
   7. Using separate folder in WebX for questions (so it is not part of other discussions) - Faculty must check this regularly so students know that their questions will be addressed within short time
   8. Immediate feedback to students (or within short period of time)
   9. Online testing really successful - Pool of questions, all students get slightly difference exam – corrected on the fly by the system.
   10. Content links allows you to really explore - Can lead to more in depth learning – outline carefully which links student needs to absolutely study/visit. Allows for "individual" interest – by visiting course links to expand knowledge of various areas.
   11. Set deadlines for test and content learning - Higher success rate
   12. Examining what works and doesn’t work on a regular basis - Continual improvement and leads to greater success
13. Fine arts - Images on websites enhanced the experience for students
14. Online learning community - Students bring content and experience to discussions. Teacher guides learning through suggested readings and in-depth questions to initiate questions. Expectations are clear. Asking students to bring in the content – provide online links and students become discovers. In-depth conversations and learning by reflecting on reading and experiences in a given topic. Orientation is vital, different type of learning so have to have information on how to get students to reflect and to be a community of learners. Ongoing monitoring by instructor to make sure students are going in the right direction.
15. Reflective Assessment - Pharmacy students interview parents. The interview is recorded and reviewed by peers who provide feedback.
16. Some type of assessment to identify where students are BEFORE they begin a class. The same stands for instructors. They need skill assessments too.
17. Contact the student immediately on registration without waiting for the student to make the contact. This works because it establishes rapport and does not allow them to languish.
18. Learning modules that do a specific thing and engages the student. (Students work through a medical case.) This works because it’s specific, focused and straightforward.
19. Having the syllabus online is successful because the students have access when they need it, rather they’ve lost it or not.

2. **Location of learners & instructor:**
   1. Hybrid course - In class time more valuable and useful because other things can be handled online
   2. Using e-mail as a way to conduct office hours - Convenient; good use of time; any time access
   3. Online testing really successful
   4. Faculty Rotation of presentation - Rotation of sites (distance education onsite) where the students spend time at each site. Or instructor will travel to each site.

3. **Access and transmission of learning materials:**
   1. Drop box - If you set up mailboxes with cgi scripts and if you are able to open easily; if you are able to read and grade electronic copy rather than hard copy; having electronic copy of assignments means instructor gets to keep a copy of the students’ work
   2. Ability to access anytime - Works for non traditional student
   3. Content links allows you to really explore - Can lead to more in depth learning – outline carefully which links student needs to absolutely study/visit. Allows for “individual” interest – by visiting course links to expand knowledge of various areas.
   4. Lowest Common Technology - It works better when the technology is available to the person with the least of technology. For example, a broadband supported technology used might alienate those participants who have dial-up connections.
5. Having the syllabus online is successful because the students have access when they need it, rather than losing it.  
6. Centralized online course page—all that’s available online. Helps both faculty and student see what’s what.

4. **Synchronous vs. Asynchronous:**
   1. Hybrid course - In class time more valuable and useful because other things can be handled online.  
   2. Threaded discussion - Students can think about what they want to say before it is posted.  
   3. Using e-mail as a way to conduct office hours - Convenient; good use of time; any time access.  
   4. Online testing really successful.  
   5. Having a course online so they can access “when they are ready for it” - Sometime students return to course content “when they are ready to learn” – technology allows them to return later when they are ready to learn or learn more.  
   6. Online learning community - Students bring content and experience to discussions. Teacher guides learning through suggested readings and in-depth questions to initiate questions. Expectations are clear. Asking students to bring in the content – provide online links and students become discovers. In-depth conversations and learning by reflecting on reading and experiences in a given topic. Orientation is vital, different type of learning so have to have information on how to get students to reflect and to be a community of learners. Ongoing monitoring by instructor to make sure students are going in the right direction.

5. **Types of Interactions**
   1. Hybrid course - In class time more valuable and useful because other things can be handled online.  
   2. Threaded discussion - Allows discussion among students.  
   3. Online testing really successful - Pool of questions, all students get slightly different exams – corrected “on-the-fly” by the system.  
   4. Besides user ID and password – there is a picture of students - Put a human face on the students taking the class.  
   5. Online learning community - Students bring content and experience to discussions. Teacher guides learning through suggested readings and in-depth questions to initiate questions. Expectations are clear. Asking students to bring in the content – provide online links and students become discovers. In-depth conversations and learning by reflecting on reading and experiences in a given topic. Orientation is vital, different type of learning so have to have information on how to get students to reflect and to be a community of learners. Ongoing monitoring by instructor to make sure students are going in the right direction.  
   6. eGradebook, other automated pieces of software make life easier for the instructor and serve the student well.  
   7. Building community is important in whatever form that takes. No learning community serves no one. In Psych they have a message center, an announcement page, a comment box on each page, etc to keep students connected to each other and to the instructor. Specific (online) office hours work well.  
   8. Lets students know when they can expect to hear from you, so there’s no misunderstanding.
6. Administrative issues (such as registration in- vs. out-state):
   1. Formal online orientation to students before they are allowed to take a course online - Instructor knows students know what to do

What hasn’t worked? Why?

Problems or obstacles based on:

1. Characteristics of teaching methods:
   a. WebX discussion in an undergraduate course - Instructors derived questions with no student involvement; so how applicable were they to the student experience?
   b. Faculty fear that they don’t know every aspect of technology - feeling that you have to be able to control every aspect (not using supports that are available; not choosing methods that are within your capabilities) & fear that they have to be able to teach the students how to do it
   c. Courses that are end-loaded (nothing turned in and progress isn’t checked along the way - Students don’t know how they are doing and if they are on track
   d. Drop box - May have been because of having 250 students. Drop box couldn’t handle the volume; takes too much time for faculty to download, open, type in feedback, and return to students; fire wall issues; non UMD network issues
   e. Testing security - No way to REALLY know who is really taking the test
   f. Online discussion - Some don’t like to write on the fly
   g. Nervous they are going to drop Web Crossing and only do WebCT - Concerned about support for the technology being used...doesn’t want to have to learn a lot of new software all the time.
   h. Understanding assignments - Instructors need to be very clear about expectations.
   i. Learning community - Expectations are not clear. Also, learning community may not be a focus for a particular course.
   j. Online components - Information isn’t always presented to meet multiple learning styles/modalities.
   k. Streaming video – band width
   l. Can’t put just any course online, some classes would be difficult to teach online - No f2f for direction and immediate feedback. Not every instructor would be successful. Takes additional time by instructor to monitor, need self-discipline and organized. Faculty does not get incentives to teach online – tenure issues regarding the time it takes to monitor online interactive class do not balance the actual time it takes to develop and successfully run a course. Technology can prevent discussion when it does not work, prevents them from participating. Students really need their own computer, takes more time in tech requirements and cannot just use school’s computers. Can be self selected learning community selected based on their ability to participate – must have technology.
m. Throwing PowerPoints online is not effective—it’s boring and does not necessary include everything. Lacks the synergy of the classroom.

n. Language of instant messaging doesn’t work for instructors. There’s a barrier there.

2. Location of learners & instructor:
   a. Not having face-to-face (F2F) opportunities - Need to be able to talk about what is expected, to ask questions.
   b. Testing security - No way to REALLY know who is really taking the test

3. Access and transmission of learning materials:
   a. Online readings - Links don’t work; insufficient directions about what part of the reading is assigned.
   b. When students have reservations/fears/issues or lack of basic computer skills - Students haven't been taught how to do the basics; students who haven't paid the computer access fee to be able to get help from lab attendants
   c. Process of logging in and figuring out what to do - Too many levels of technology to get through – not well structured and not well organized – content wasn’t great.
   d. Online components - Accessibility not checked.
   e. Can’t put just any course online, some classes would be difficult to teach online - No f2f for direction and immediate feedback. Not every instructor would be successful. Takes additional time by instructor to monitor, need self-discipline and organized. Faculty does not get incentives to teach online – tenure issues regarding the time it takes to monitor online interactive class do not balance the actual time it takes to develop and successfully run a course. Technology can prevent discussion when it does not work, prevents them from participating. Students really need their own computer, takes more time in tech requirements and cannot just use school’s computers. Can be self selected learning community selected based on their ability to participate – must have technology
   f. Tech issues – NW Minnesota and dialup

4. Synchronous vs. asynchronous:
   a. Synchronous chats - Common time not possible.

5. Types of interactions:
   a. Not having face-to-face (F2F) opportunities - Need to be able to talk about what is expected, to ask questions.
   b. Testing security - No way to REALLY know who is really taking the test
   c. No interaction with instructor and other students built in - Not successful

6. Administrative issues (such as registration in- vs. out-state):
   a. Completion rate - Nationally 25% for INI type course. Need to build in incentives/motivation for the online student. Structure.
   b. Testing security - No way to REALLY know who is really taking the test
   c. Liberal education courses in trouble
   d. Can’t put just any course online, some classes would be difficult to teach online - No f2f for direction and immediate feedback. Not every instructor would be successful. Takes additional time by instructor to monitor, need self-discipline
and organized. Faculty does not get incentives to teach online – tenure issues regarding the time it takes to monitor online interactive class do not balance the actual time it takes to develop and successfully run a course. Technology can prevent discussion when it does not work, prevents them from participating. Students really need their own computer, takes more time in tech requirements and cannot just use school’s computers. Can be self selected learning community selected based on their ability to participate – must have technology
e. Low amount of control of content - did not have control in the hybrid format. She developed an entire course around a CD from the textbook publisher only to have the publisher discontinue the sale of the CD the following year. Consequently, the entire course was changes.
f. Online education should be part of a contracted workload rather than always overload. Wanting to offer an online courses shouldn’t have to mean working overtime.

What do we need to do next at UMD?

There is a strong correlation between the Issues comments and the Next Steps comments. The following categories have been identified based on the content of these comments: U=Union, I=Instruction, S1= Students, S2= Systems, O=Other, M=Marketing. It is important to note that several comments fit into more than one category. In such instances, the given comment is placed in a category and followed by designators for the other category/categories to which it belongs. To demonstrate the correlation between the Issues comments and the Next Steps comments the following sub-categories have been identified: Next Steps at UMD and Issues. These sub-categories are presented respectively as follows.

Union - This category includes issues that are related to the union.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps at UMD</th>
<th>Support Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deal with work load issues (inload, online, overload)</td>
<td>VCAA needs to decide; Senior admin needs to get involved and decide; lots of wonderful things can happen but they are dependent of key people; it is fragmented; look to other universities and what they are doing; contribute ideas so that the mission reflects what we want;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity issue: who are we as a university? What is our mission relative to DE?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are our priorities? As a system, do we want this to be part of our identity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we do, what follows in terms of resources? (I, S2, S1, M)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we make the assumption that DE is something that the admin wants faculty to do, then it is one issue; or are people being hired just to do instruction design? Is the amount of work comparable for F2F and online? (recognize that it is not) (S2)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Instruction - This category includes issues that are related to instruction.
### Next Steps at UMD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps at UMD</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dept incentives for faculty to embrace DE; what is value e.g. resources, time</td>
<td>VCAA needs to decide; Senior admin needs to get involved and decide; lots of wonderful things can happen but they are dependent of key people; it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(catnip and cream, carrots) (S2)</td>
<td>fragmented; look to other universities and what they are doing; contribute ideas so that the mission reflects what we want;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find ways to facilitate partnering, mentoring of people who are teaching online;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ways to pair people up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity issue: who are we as a university? What is our mission relative to DE?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are our priorities? As a system, do we want this to be part of our identity?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If we do, what follows in terms of resources? (U, S2, S1, M)</td>
<td>E.g. Capella University pays people to go in and use a taxonomy and analyze student responses -- &gt; this information is then given back to faculty so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>they can discuss with other faculty the level and quality of their questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniform method by which we determine standards for courses that are offered by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMD; perhaps have checklist of what needs to be in online course (provide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recommended principle functional standards; suggestions of things to be careful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of) (S2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach faculty how to teach online, what to expect, how to be more efficient (S2)</td>
<td>Have experienced online instructors help guide faculty new to online teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine course effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Marketing - This category includes issues that are related to marketing distance education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps at UMD</th>
<th>Support Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disseminate information to people about what is going on</td>
<td>VCAA needs to decide; Senior admin needs to get involved and decide; lots of wonderful things can happen but they are dependent of key people; it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity issue: who are we as a university? What is our mission relative to DE?</td>
<td>fragmented; look to other universities and what they are doing; contribute ideas so that the mission reflects what we want;</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are our priorities? As a system, do we want this to be part of our identity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we do, what follows in terms of resources? (U, S2, S1, I)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Students - This category includes issues that are related to students.

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity issue: who are we as a university? What is our mission relative to DE?</td>
<td>VCAA needs to decide; Senior admin needs to get involved and decide; lots of wonderful things can happen but they are dependent of key people; it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are our priorities? As a system, do we want this to be part of our identity?</td>
<td>fragmented; look to other universities and what they are doing; contribute ideas so that the mission reflects what we want;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we do, what follows in terms of resources? (U, S2, I, M)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems - This category includes issues that are related to systems/administration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps at UMD</th>
<th>Support Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dept incentives for faculty to embrace DE; what is value e.g. resources, time</td>
<td>VCAA needs to decide; Senior admin needs to get involved and decide; lots of wonderful things can happen but they are dependent of key people; it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(catnip and cream, carrots) (I)</td>
<td>fragmented; look to other universities and what they are doing; contribute ideas so that the mission reflects what we want;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identity issue: who are we as a university? What is our mission relative to DE?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are our priorities? As a system, do we want this to be part of our identity? If we do, what follows in terms of resources? (U, I, S1, M)</td>
<td>of wonderful things can happen but they are dependent of key people; it is fragmented; look to other universities and what they are doing; contribute ideas so that the mission reflects what we want;</td>
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<tr>
<td>University needs a position on this; this forms a foundation for policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to be a clearinghouse on DE – what is going on where; what supports there are for each. E.g. list of all the courses that are offered online; a way to identify a course that is DE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive list of classes that are offered and different deliveries; list of ways in which classes are offered (instructional methods, software used (so faculty and look through list of what is being used, by whom, and why)</td>
<td>E.g. Capella University pays people to go in and use a taxonomy and analyze student responses -- &gt; this information is then given back to faculty so they can discuss with other faculty the level and quality of their questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where to find out about different classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniform method by which we determine standards for courses that are offered by UMD; perhaps have checklist of what needs to be in online course (provide recommended principle functional standards; suggestions of things to be careful of) (I)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not mandating uniform look – giving options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify some sort of uniform standard/ guideline for what a 1 cr, 2 cr, etc class is. E.g. how much time a student can expect to be working on a class for a given number of credits; also how much time for designing a class, based on number of credits. Also depends on number of students, methods of instruction used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we make the assumption that DE is something that the admin wants faculty to do, then it is one issue; or are people being hired just to do instruction design? Is the amount of work comparable for F2F and online? (recognize that it is not) (U)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach faculty how to teach online, what to expect, how to be more efficient (I)</td>
<td>Have experienced online instructors help guide faculty new to online teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The craft of learning – like Cambridge, Oxford tutors. Under those models, when you have learned all you want to from your class, you don’t go to class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find an easy way for guests to get involved in threaded discussion (i.e. guest speakers)</td>
<td>ITSS can help...find a simpler way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to stimulate interest and create proper incentives to get more faculty involved. Provide examples of incentives at all levels for all faculty.</td>
<td>Hear stories of those who are doing it – the good and the bad. What’s in it for me and what’s in it for my students? Feel the tech support is there. Find someone who can talk to faculty but understand the value of online and technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnering and mentoring for online</td>
<td>Find ways to support faculty to build online competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find ways for faculty to “get their feet wet” without fear of failure</td>
<td>Partnering and mentoring can help get some started...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing results from special training and conferences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs</td>
<td>Solved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central clearinghouse for all &quot;distance ed&quot; courses.</td>
<td>Can help/encourage faculty to go to other conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student support</td>
<td>Name a person/place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest login for WebX</td>
<td>24/7 help line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebX help</td>
<td>Setting up; how to have guest login</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Spam filter</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore sites for high-speed connection for students, e.g., local library; other cooperative arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An official position of the University related to distance education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need an elmo in every room</td>
<td>Money, write grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need more ITV classrooms</td>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need more technical support for all students</td>
<td>Money, staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need tech. Support when need it</td>
<td>Money staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplified registration</td>
<td>Registration people can handle that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User friendly grad school</td>
<td>Tenure committee educated and willing to make changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better support for faculty who want to go online</td>
<td>Need a commitment from administration and a decision in the direction we are going, then get the resources to do it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition from admin. That courses take more time, appropriate. Work load credit</td>
<td>We are very fragmented, need to be more consistent to get the systems in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better trained technicians in classrooms, don't always know how to even save files or know what to do when computer jams</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consistency with technicians in classrooms</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>See all sites at the same time or see them all on internet TV</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify ourselves that says we are or not moving forward with more online courses, need to make a commitment, and we need to decide if that is part of our mission. Bemidji State is advertising all over the place in the paper, radio, etc. and has a direction. As a land-grant univ. we need to advertise and make a decision on the direction. What are our priorities?? Do we want DE part of our identity, define ourselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of delivery tools using including a grading scale.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From an admin. Point of view</td>
<td>For the clearinghouse format – short descriptions ---scanable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamless format from grade k -20</td>
<td>Clear standard of what an online DE is at UMD. Approval for online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking with high schools for &quot;CITS&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt TC nursing course</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>determine cost effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mission of UMD</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Change the Definition of Distance ED “Distributed Learning”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative distribution methods for on campus students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop common standards for all online classes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Flat rate for online/Distance Distance
New Student group in PeopleSoft

Other - This category includes issues that are not related to any other category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps at UMD</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What other issues & questions are there?

What other issues are important to consider for those involved in Distance Education? (e.g. by students, faculty, administration, IT support people). What other questions should we be asking?

**Union Issues = U**

- Workload
- Tenure recognition
- Time it takes to develop a course (I)
- More research on other institutions strategies (M, I, S1, S2)
- Research MN Digital Learning Plan (M, I, S1, S2)
- Identify types of support needed (M, I, S1, S2)
- Work with union at all phases of brainstorming, planning, implementation, etc.

**Student Issues = S1**

- What students pay for DE courses; issue of in-state vs. out-of-state tuition. (S2)
- Look at creating a policy for off campus students registering for distance education courses (its different in the Twin Cities)
- More research on other institutions strategies (M, I, U, S2)
- Research MN Digital Learning Plan (M, I, U, S2)
- Identify types of support needed (M, I, U, S2)

**Systems Issues = S2**
What students pay for DE courses; issue of in-state vs. out-of-state tuition. (S1)
How much do our policies need to be the same as the Twin Cities campus?
Reason we are not free is we have set up a set of centralized rules. Affects funding formulas.
Skate to where the puck is going to be – keep the policies wide open -- be careful of policies that box us in.
Have a DE center that we all operate out of (along the lines of what we have today). There are models like this out there.
  What kind of outside and internal academic scholarship has been done – people investigating what DE is effective (see Educause article). We don’t have a single point of reference. There is a state agenda on everything we have talked about today. Thus if we are going to have a DE clearinghouse, we should be able to pull together the best practices. (M, I)
  Need to think about what our mission is and our identity is (I)
  If we are serious about the business of DE, hire a faculty development and research person whose role it is to coordinate mentoring and info dissemination on DE; need to keep on top of what is happening in DE, how this fits into the global marketplace [relates to clearinghouse issue] (M)
  Accessibility and usability: there is governance and guidance on this (e.g. Section 508). There are federal laws about this. What should faculty know before they develop a course (because it is hard to go back and retrofit a course to make it accessible) (I)
  Clearinghouse of what’s going on right now at UMD in the arena of distance ed.
  PeopleSoft friendly way to indicate what’s totally online and partially online.
  Identify types of support needed (M, I, U, S1)
  Top administrative support/approval. Define vision, mandates, large priorities.
  More research on other institutions strategies (M, I, U, S1)
  Research MN Digital Learning Plan (M, I, U, S1)
  Standardize competing strategies and policies
  Where to get software, how to learn it, who uses it and can act as a resource or give a recommendation, how students react to it. (I)
  Will we continue using WebX or move to WebCT? (I)
  Functionally based standards, e.g. you will include a syllabus which will have the following elements; you will include UMD’s logo, you will check to keep your links active, you will have an office hour where you’re sitting at your computer looking for email, etc. (I)

**Instruction Issues = I**

- Time it takes to develop a course (U)
• What kind of outside and internal academic scholarship has been done – people investigating what DE is effective (see Educause article). We don’t have a single point of reference. There is a state agenda on everything we have talked about today. Thus if we are going to have a DE clearinghouse, we should be able to pull together the best practices. (M, S2)

• Need to think about what our mission is and our identity is (S2)
• Accessibility and usability: there is governance and guidance on this (e.g. Section 508). There are federal laws about this. What should faculty know before they develop a course (because it is hard to go back and retrofit a course to make it accessible) (S2)
• Develop delivery strategies for online courses
• More research on other institutions strategies (M, S2, U, S1)
• Research MN Digital Learning Plan (M, S2, U, S1)
• Encourage use of certain standard tools, or provide overarching framework/parameters
• Functionally based standards, e.g. you will include a syllabus which will have the following elements; you will include UMD’s logo, you will check to keep your links active, you will have an office hour where you’re sitting at your computer looking for email, etc. (S2)
• Offer online orientation “course” for any student/faculty interested in teaching/learning online with basic tech skills required to maximize online experiences.
• Meet accessibility standards, both online and otherwise
• Identify types of support needed (M, S2, U, S1)
• Faculty mentoring faculty
• Will we continue using WebX or move to WebCT? (S2)
• Where to get software, how to learn it, who uses it and can act as a resource or give a recommendation, how students react to it. (S2)

Marketing Issues = M

• Cost to institution
• How do we stay competitive
• Need to look at market dynamics
• What kind of outside and internal academic scholarship has been done – people investigating what DE is effective (see Educause article). We don’t have a single point of reference. There is a state agenda on everything we have talked about today. Thus if we are going to have a DE clearinghouse, we should be able to pull together the best practices. (I, S2)
• If we are serious about the business of DE, hire a faculty development and research person whose role it is to coordinate mentoring and info dissemination on DE; need to keep on top of what is happening in DE, how this fits into the global marketplace [relates to clearinghouse issue] (S2)
• Get the word out about what resources UMD can offer
• Identify types of support needed (M, S2, U, S1)

Other Issues = 0

• Have a governance and administrative discourse around these issues-- needs to be coordinated effort, not isolated individuals.