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**Role of Media in Distance Education**

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In a distance education system (DES), teachers and learners are physically separate and the instructional materials are delivered via telecommunication systems. The global application of the DES has proven to be an approach that is both successful and useful in education.

Based on technological, structural, and financial capabilities, a number of varieties of technologies are applied in higher education distance learning systems.

### ***Radio and Television***

Radio and television broadcasting has been used for educational purposes for many years. There are different types of broadcast: public, cable, and satellite. These technologies are convenient and cost-effective. These media can be used to present the views of experts, which would increase the credibility of and interest in the materials. Materials that cannot be communicated by print could be communicated this way. Video is a powerful medium in terms of capturing attention, and conveying a lot of information quickly [1].

### ***Audio***

Producing audio- or videotape helps keeping students in track, and get people in the community involved, and may recruit new learners to the institute. Broadcast may be provided

to learners through cable television network or satellite broadcast. Those channels can provide good quality broadcast and dedicated channels for educational purposes. An important disadvantage of television broadcast that this site lists is that broadcast delivery encourages passive viewing rather than active participation. Students lack control over the medium and are unable to stop the flow of information to ask questions and enhance understanding.

### ***Teleconference***

Teleconferencing involves the interaction of students and instructors via some form of telecommunications technology. Teleconferencing uses a variety of communication technologies such as satellite, microwave, and Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS). Services include producing, hosting, or broadcasting satellite downlinks, uplinks, or 2-way teleconferences to a number of locations. The studio classrooms have 3-camera production capability, an audio distribution system connecting remote locations and the studio on campus, and A-V equipment such as slide projectors, an overhead graphics camera and pad suitable for showing visual aids, 3/4" or SVHS videotape recorders, computers, etc. Computers can interface with the TV system for showing graphics or other visual aids and the Internet [2].

### ***Audioconference***

Audioconferencing most common and least expensive form of teleconferencing.

Audiographic teleconferencing systems involve the use of computer or facsimile technology to transmit visuals to support the audio. Some computer systems allow the transmission of graphics, programs, and data, where each site

sees anything on the instructor computer screen, besides hearing the audio. Audigraphic systems are good for classes that involve a lot of illustration, such as equations, or computer applications. Videoconferencing can be transmitted via satellite, cable, or standard telephone lines. It requires compressing the videos and several equipment. Videoconferencing allows learners and instructors to interact face-to-face. Computer Conferencing allows students and instructors to interact via a computer network. This interaction can be through e-mail messages, file transfer, chat rooms, real audio and video, and others. With the fast progress in computer technology, computer conferencing is taking its place in educational technology. Computer conferencing provides good quality, easy to use, and cost-efficient way of interaction.

### ***Web-Based Instruction***

With the fast growth of the Internet, and the fast progress of communication, the world wide web is a new promising medium for distance learning. With the enormous number of resources available online, and the increasing number of people who have access to the Internet, web-based instruction is considered one of the fastest media for teaching and learning. The world wide web provides a cost-effective, technology rich, and interactive medium.

There is a large number of technologies available for the delivery of distance education course. Selecting the medium is an important part of the efficiency of that course. Each medium has its own strengths and weaknesses, and these should be matched to the nature of the learning setting.

The medium selection process should be undertaken for each course and each program, since they all have different requirements depending on the objectives, learners, and learning environment [3].

References:

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