

Is Distance Learning More Effective For Adults?

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Abstract

This research involves the study of the effectiveness of distance learning for adult students. The goal is to provide evidence on how distance learning is more efficient for adult students, given the various challenges faced by adults as they pursue further studies. The research was done by examining the drawbacks outlined by various scholars who meet adult students. Articles by institutions that offer distance learning have also been utilized in this research. Upon examination of all these materials, it is clear that distance learning is very effective for adult students. The aspect that distance learning allows flexibility in time, location, and schedule came out as a significant reason why distance learning is more effective for adults. However, some challenges were noted in the services offered by distance learning to adult students. These drawbacks include the feeling of isolation and lack of direct access to the instructor and other resources. This research provides valuable information regarding some of these effects of [distance education](#) on adults and how the above drawbacks can be reversed. Through the presentation of relevant evidence, this research has proved that distance learning is more effective for adult students.

Keywords: distance learning, advantages, financial requirements, time, location

Is Distance Learning More Effective For Adults

Education is one of the significant factors that determine the success of our future life path. Despite the government's effort to ensure that everyone has access to a learning institution, some circumstances hinder us by creating obstacles for those seeking education. This means that such individuals have to search for alternative methods of accessing studies, or else their learning process will be fractured. The main obstacles that hinder access to learning institutions are location, geographic flexibility, and a busy work and home life (Mignon & Jurie, 2012). Fortunately, the introduction of new learning methods ensures that people are no longer missing out on education just because of their circumstances. The advancement in information and communication technologies has played a crucial role in the delivery of distance learning. Moreover, the widespread availability of computers and iPad Internet have also facilitated distance learning (Njenga & Fourie, 2010). Distance learning is an efficient way for people to learn without ever having to attend a classroom. Various types of distance learning include synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid, and electronic learning. The effectiveness of distance learning, especially for adults and postgraduates, is determined by a couple

of factors, as discussed below.

One of the reasons why distance learning is more effective for adults and postgraduates is because it enables them to study from anywhere, anytime policy. Almost 90% of the adults who continue with their studies have other duties to take care of. Some are working, and others are looked upon by their families for provision and support. Distance learning requires that the students have some skills to balance their education and their busy work and home life (Moore, 2013). Evidently, most adults have acquired these important planning and decision-making skills to facilitate their learning process. The most admirable aspect of distance learning is that it enables them to form their workstations and homes. Distance learning also offers flexibility in time and freedom to adults for them to continue with their studies whenever they find some free time. For example, a mother taking care of her young baby can study at night while the baby sleeps. Distance learning allows adults to study without affecting their work or family life (Mignon & Jurie, 2012).

Secondly, most adults have to finance their studies. The fact that they have to support the family and personal requirements financially means that they have to work on a tight financial budget. Distance learning comes to their rescue since the expenses incurred through registration and course fees when joining a virtual college are significantly less (Moore, 2013). Individuals from financially crippled backgrounds, the disabled, and the poor can easily raise the amount required to study through distance learning. Another advantage is that the charges for some distance learning courses are reduced. Hence, the financial benefits of distance learning make it more efficient for adults to get a quality education at a low price. Distance learning also helps students evade some added expenses incurred by regular colleges, such as transport expenses (Njenga & Fourie, 2010).

Another advantage of distance learning that favors adults is that they can set their own pace of study. Most adults are experienced enough to enable them to know what they want to study, how they will study, and how to schedule their studies to fit into their busy life routines. Regular colleges usually offer fixed timetables and schedules to the students. Working with a pre-determined schedule could create many challenges for the adults. For example, most regular colleges operate from eight in the morning to four in the evening, a time span that finds most adults in their jobs (Simpson, 2013). Distance learning enables students to learn during holidays, work leaves, and weekends. For example, let us consider the case of high school teachers who are pursuing further studies. They can come up with a schedule to learn during weekends and the summer holidays (Mignon & Jurie, 2012).

Although distance learning offers many adults the chance to attain higher education, it is not all advantages and benefits. Some drawbacks make distance learning ineffective for adults. However, when these drawbacks are acknowledged and understood, they can easily be reversed. One of the significant drawbacks is that distance learning requires self-motivation. A real college environment creates motivation through completion and seriousness. Sometimes, the distance learning environment lacks these essential aspects, and the students undertaking the studies have to be much more disciplined to succeed. For example, the tutor does not have to conduct personal supervision, yet the student is required to fulfill all the requirements on time (Simpson, 2013). Distance learning is,

therefore, best suited for mature learners who cannot afford the time to attend regular classes. Moreover, the self-motivation aspect, to some extent, tends to work as an advantage to the adults. Almost all adults know what they want to achieve and do not study blindly, meaning that they can work unsupervised. They know the sacrifices to make to reach the academic success they strive for. The self-motivation aspect makes distance learning unsuitable for young and undergraduate students (Moore, 2013).

Distance learning is also isolated and does not give direct access to the tutor and instructor. The physical presence of an instructor means a big deal to the effectiveness of any learning process. The process of interaction between the instructor and classmates in the virtual environment created by distance learning is not sufficient. Also, some adult students are affected by the lack of personal touch with the tutor. However, distance learning offers students an opportunity to email their instructors or chat online through various social media platforms (Simpson, 2013).

In conclusion, adults pursue further studies to fulfill their academic goals, get promotions, or advance their knowledge in different areas. Distance learning is more effective for adults since it captures all their various needs. In many ways, distance learning makes education accessible and affordable to adults who have to study from work or at home. Some adult students do not have the time, money, or educational background to attend a regular college. Distance learning is structured to suit the learning process of adults despite the various drawbacks experienced.

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