

USING THE EFFECTIVE DISTANCE EDUCATION MODEL AS A GUIDE TO THE CREATION AND SELECTION OF TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

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Historically, traditional education meant bringing students to the sources of knowledge. The paradigm has shifted and today ten million students throughout the world are taking distance education courses. There is an increasing demand for effective distance education educators. An Effective Distance Education (EDE) Model was developed by Thompson (2001). The model focuses on the role of the instructor in determining the effectiveness of the program. Significant correlations ($p < .01$) were found between the quality of the course taken through distance education and the following factors related to the instructor: course materials, interactions with the instructor, perceived knowledge of the instructor, teaching methods used by the instructor, and accessibility of the instructor. There was also a significant correlation between the students' perceived quality of the course and the academic skill development of the students, defined as writing, presentation, critical thinking, teaching, curriculum development, networking, and research. Teaching/learning strategies were created which reflects the EDE Model and were consistent with adult education and brain-based educational theory. The strategies were then tested in three distance education courses, taught by instructors with varying levels teaching experience.

At the end of the semester, data were collected from the students enrolled in the courses. Students completed a Likert-type survey in which they responded to the effectiveness of each teaching/learning strategy used by the instructor. Analysis suggests the successful application of the EDE Model. Three suggested results were found. First, not all students liked or learned from all of the teaching/learning strategies. Individual learning styles and preferences were reflected in the students' responses to the course evaluations. Second, the number and variety of teaching/learning strategies were positively correlated with the experience level of the instructor ($r = .986$). The experienced teacher used 40 of the 46 strategies. The less experienced instructor used 27, and the novice instructor used six. Finally, the teaching/learning strategies used by the experienced instructor were rated significantly higher ($p < .05$) than those used by the less experienced instructor. The study suggested that strategies developed within a theoretical frame of adult education, brain-based education the EDE model can be effective when used in the virtual, graduate classroom.

Thompson, N.E. (2001). *Assessment of the distance education masters program in the Department of Human Environments at Utah State University*. Unpublished manuscript.

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