



“Distance Education In Regulated Industries”
Joe McClary, International Distance Education Certification Center
WWW.IDECC.ORG



Council on Licensure,
Enforcement and Regulation



2010 Annual Educational Conference • September 23-25



“Distance Education
Standards and Issues – How
to Better Ensure Competency
with Online Education”

Joe McClary
International Distance Education Certification Center

Promoting Regulatory Excellence

Objectives



- **Identify issues** with distance education (DE)
- **Examine the effectiveness** of DE.
- **Identify trends** in DE.
- **Examine options** regulators have for effectively maintaining quality DE programs.



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From The Audience

- Your name
- Job title
- Your profession
- What type of professional education requirements are imposed on licensees in your profession?
- Do your profession’s regulatory entities generally embrace distance education or oppose it?




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What problems do you think are inherent in distance learning courses?


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What do you think would be the characteristics of a quality DE course?

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Specific DE Concerns for Regulators

- How is student identity verified?
- How do they know a “3-clock hour course” takes 3 clock hours to complete? Compliance with state laws.
- Can courses be effectively taught at a distance?
- How does a regulatory agency actively monitor courses to ensure they maintain quality standards for instruction?

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Other Issues with Distance Education

- How will a student get a question answered?
- How will an instructor interact with the student or vice versa?
- One of most popular myths in distance education today is that instructors aren't needed.
- How will assessment and evaluation be done?

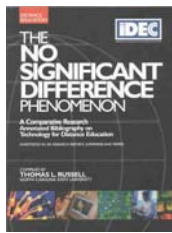






Distance Education Vs. Traditional Classroom

- Is distance learning a credible way to educate? What are your thoughts?

“Research studies have been quite consistent in finding that distance learning classrooms report similar effectiveness results as reported under traditional instruction methods. In addition, research studies often point out that student attitudes about distance learning are generally positive.”

US Distance Education Association






2008 Alabama Distance Education Vs. Traditional Classroom Real Estate Prelicense

Month	Primary Provider #1		Primary Provider #2		Primary Provider #3		Primary Provider #4		DE Provider Totals		State Totals		Pass Percentages		
	Pass	Total	Pass	Total	Pass	Total	Pass	Total	Pass	Total	Pass	Total	DE Pass %	State Pass %	
January-08	10	16	4	7	9	12	5	7	26	44	150	257	63.6%	60.0%	
February-08	8	15	2	4	15	25	3	8	28	52	156	322	53.8%	48.4%	
March-08	15	20	1	7	9	24	5	8	30	59	183	387	60.8%	47.3%	
April-08	6	11	2	4	6	16	2	8	16	30	157	310	41.0%	50.6%	
May-08	12	20	3	5	10	20	5	9	30	54	160	346	55.6%	48.8%	
June-08	3	5	2	2	11	15	6	12	22	34	127	259	64.7%	49.0%	
July-08	10	18	5	6	17	21	5	6	37	51	140	290	72.5%	48.3%	
August-08	11	17	1	2	11	15	4	4	27	38	108	218	71.1%	49.5%	
September-08	8	13	0	1	15	20	4	6	27	40	107	214	67.5%	50.0%	
October-08	1	5	3	4	18	21	4	7	26	37	106	209	70.3%	50.7%	
November-08	5	8	4	4	6	6	3	3	18	21	89	179	85.7%	53.5%	
December-08	2	6	2	2	7	7	4	5	6	16	22	99	146	72.7%	54.0%
Totals	91	156	29	46	134	203	51	84	305	491	1921	3047	62.1%	49.6%	

**Is DE Growing in
Acceptance and Popularity?**

- Growth of companies offering DE
 - Some real estate, appraisal, mortgage broker, insurance and other professional education companies had experienced growth rates between 20 and 40 percent annually. This decreased with the economic down turn.
- Regulatory agencies in many professions continue to begin accepting DE for qualifying and continuing education.
- It is very rare that academic institutions do not incorporate distance learning into their programs.

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Quick Facts

What percent of U.S. real estate regulatory agencies recognize distance education as an acceptable method by which licensees can earn continuing education credit?

A. 14%	C. 72%
B. 51%	D. 98%


Quick Facts

What percent of U.S. real estate regulatory agencies recognize distance education as an acceptable method by which licensees can earn prelicense credit?

A. 10%	C. 76%
B. 64%	D. 98%


Changing Technologies and Paradigms

- 74% of American adults (18 and older) use the Internet
- 60% of American adults use broadband connections.
- 55% of American adults use WiFi connections.
- The cost of bandwidth is decreasing.
- Society is continuing its rapid transition from the industrial age to the information age.




January 5, 2010
[Pew Internet & American Life Project](#), [PewInternet.org](#)

How is Student Identity Accomplished/Ensured?





- Very difficult to ensure 100% without taking inconvenient measures.
- Biometric solutions are not cost effective...yet
- Other methods required by regulatory agencies:
 - Proctored exams
 - Security questions
 - Signed affidavits
 - Requirement of photo IDs
 - Third party verification

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How are “Clock Hours” Ensured?

- Clock hours verses competency.
- Common procedures for verifying clock hours:
 - Counting pages of text
 - Regulator assessment
 - Student “beta testing”



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Things That Affect Distance Education In Professional Education

- Regulatory policy
 - Differences in laws/regulations between jurisdictions (uniformity in regulation).
- Size of the profession/industry
- Number of educational hours required for compliance
- Involvement of trade/professional associations in policy making

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Regulatory Options in Dealing With Distance Education

- Do not allow it (or distinguish for qualifying ed. or continuing ed.)
- Limit the number of hours/credit one can take via DE courses to fulfill requirements. This typically means “relaxed” or “low” standards for education students do take.

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Regulatory Options in Dealing With Distance Education...continued

- **Implement your own standards** for quality distance education.
- **Advantages** -
 - a) regulatory board maintains autonomous perception,
 - b) standards can be customized based upon desires of board members/staff/commission.
- **Disadvantages** -
 - a) standards must be very CLEAR so they can be enforced. Standards must change with technology and terminology,
 - b) board members/staff/commission do not always understand the technology or instructional design issues involved with DE,
 - c) uniformity in implementation and enforcement must be considered.
 - d) providers have to compensate for unique requirements.

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Regulatory Options in Dealing With
Distance Education...continued

- **If you implement your own standards** for quality follow these guidelines for course design and assessment.

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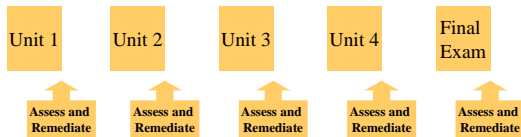


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Poor Course Design Example 1



Good Course Design Example 2



Regulatory Options in Dealing With
Distance Education...continued

- Require “banks” of questions when used in assessments.
- Ensure assessment questions are designed for multiple competencies. Use Bloom’s Taxonomy as a guide.
 - Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation.
- Ensuring proper course design and assessment does two things: 1. Ensures the student gets something out of the course 2. Helps ensure the clock hours are appropriate for the amount of credit given.

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Regulatory Options in Dealing With
Distance Education...continued

- Limit distance education course delivery to synchronous courses.

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Regulatory Options in Dealing With
Distance Education...continued

- Adopt Third Party Standards
 - Distance Education Training Council



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Regulatory Options in Dealing With Distance Education...continued

- Adopt Third Party Standards
 - American Council on Education (ACE)



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Regulatory Options in Dealing With Distance Education...continued

- Adopt Third Party Standards
 - ASTD (American Society for Training and Development)



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Regulatory Options in Dealing With Distance Education...continued

- Adopt Third Party Standards
 - IDECC (International Distance Education Certification Center)



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Obstacles for Course Providers
Doing Business in Regulated Professions

- Regulation
- Lack of uniformity among jurisdictions.
- Cost of producing a course.
- Market Price (*The market determines the price and quality of distance education.*)
- Playing on an unlevelled “field” with other providers that don’t keep high standards. Providers will ultimately resort to the lowest common denominator if standards are not maintained.

Questions?
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