Distance Learning Glossary

Anytime-anywhere course walk through information at your own pace and in your own space. Information and learning does not rely on teacher feedback, often finishing the course is enough for credit.

Asynchronous learning: learning can be done at your own pace and in your own space, educators will check in and provide feedback and guidance throughout the learning process.

AUP (Acceptable Use Policy): A policy that outlines the responsibilities of students, teachers, staff, and others as they use the computers, software applications, and Internet when using the school or district computers or Internet connections. AUPs also outline the consequences for failure to adhere to this policy.

Blended course: A course that combines two modes of instruction, online and face-to-face.

Blended learning: When a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace; often used synonymously with Hybrid Learning. (Horn and Staker, 2011)

Blog (short form of "weblog"): As a noun, a website or a section of a website used for expressing ideas and opinions of users in multiple modalities, often maintained by one leader. As a verb, maintaining or adding content to an ongoing asynchronous discussion housed at a target website.

Chat Room: A website or part of a website or an online service that offers communities a synchronous venue for discussing specific topics.

Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI): The use of educational software to enhance the mastering of educational concepts or standards without the involvement of a teacher.

Content repository: A venue for saving and sharing content. A digital content repository is an online venue for saving and sharing digital content.

Course completion: The percentage of students completing a course(s) within a certain time frame. The term is used in two ways: 1) The percentage of courses that are successfully completed by a student; or 2) the percentage of students who have successfully completed a single course. When determining successful completion using either definition, a program needs to include three components: 1) which students are included in the calculation (i.e.,

students enrolled after the drop period ends, students enrolled at the end of the term, etc.) and the length of the drop period; 2) the length of the course itself, including whether it is fixed or flexible; and 3) the academic requirements associated with completion (i.e., whether students need to pass an exam, or pass the course itself, to be considered as having completed it).

Course enrollment: The number of students formally in a course. Course enrollment data are influenced by registration periods, duration of course (semester, year-long, or flexible schedules for competency-based credits), drop/add periods and "count" dates that determine accuracy of number of students enrolled per course, completion and/or attrition rates.

Credit recovery: Refers to a student passing, and receiving credit for, a course previously attempted but did not succeed in earning academic credit towards graduation.

Cyberbullying: Involves harassing, embarrassing, or threatening a young person via the Internet, email and mobile device. Technically, cyber-bullying takes place between two or more young people. When adults are involved, it is typically referred to as cyber-harassment or cyber-stalking.

Curated resources and tools: Resources that have been selected, organized, and presented using professional or expert knowledge.

Digital citizenship: Norms of behavior with regard to technology use, including the practice of netiquette, ethical and legal online behavior.

Digital Learning: Online or blended learning. See "Online Learning" and "Blended Learning".

Digital Divide: The gap in information and communication technologies between any number of distinct groups resulting from differences in resources, bandwidth, and fluency and skills in leveraging digital resources. In contrast, digital inclusion points to efforts to provide these resources for all groups who do not have them.

Digital literacy: Digital literacy is the ability to locate, organize, understand, evaluate, analyze and create information using technology. (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2009)

Distance Learning: Instruction in which the student and instructor are in different locations. Students have access to appropriate educational materials and receive ongoing interaction with their licensed and/or registered teacher(s). This includes multimedia communication and blended learning strategies, not just online learning. Learning may or may not be separated in time (asynchronous vs. synchronous).

Distance education course: Any course offered at a distance. See "Distance education".

Distributed learning: Any learning that allows instructor, students, and content to be located in different locations so that instruction and learning occur independent of time and place; often used synonymously with the term "Distance learning".

E-School: A formally constituted organization (public, private, state, charter, etc.) that offers full time education delivered primarily over the Internet; term often used synonymously with the terms "Virtual school" "Online school", and "Cyber school" in some state policy. See "Online school".

E-Teacher (or e-Instructor): See "Online Teacher".

Engagement: Active participation in a course to promote retention and understanding for deeper learning.

Enrollment: See "Course enrollment".

Face-to-face: When two or more people meet in person. ***Not allowed during COVID-19 social distancing.***

Filter (Browsers): Software that restricts access to designated websites.

Independent study: An alternative to classroom instruction which provides the student with a choice of ways to learn content under the guidance of a teacher.

Instructional designer: Someone who uses the principles of learning, pedagogy, and content frameworks to create teaching materials and experiences for online courses.

Instructional media: The materials that teachers use to teach and students use to learn (for example, printed text, digitized text, software, speech, images).

Internet: A vast computer network connecting users worldwide via TCP/IP protocol.

Intranet: A private network using the Internet within an enterprise for authorized users.

Learning Management System (LMS): The technology platform through which students' access online courses. A LMS generally includes software for creating and editing course content, communication tools, collaboration and feedback tools, assessment tools, and other features for managing the course.

Learning object: An electronic media resource (or digital file; or collection of files) targeting a lesson objective, standard, or a lesson concept, that can be used and reused for instructional purposes.

Learning object repository: A space for storing digital learning resources.

Licensed content: Content with restricted usage and only available with permission, generally for a fee.

Mobility Rate: A measure of student movement in and out of a school or district during one academic year.

Online course: Any course offered over the Internet.

Online course provider: An organization that provides courses that are offered over the Internet.

Online learning: Education in which instruction and content are delivered primarily over the Internet. The term does not include printed-based correspondence education, broadcast television or radio, videocassettes, and stand-alone educational software programs that do not have a significant Internet-based instructional component.

Online learning program: An online learning program is an organized offering of courses delivered primarily over the Internet.

Online learning resources: Any digital material used for supporting student learning that is delivered in multiple delivery models.

Online professional development: Professional development delivered over the Internet.

Online school: A formally constituted organization (public, private, state, charter, etc.) that offers full-time education delivered primarily over the Internet.

Online teacher (or instructor): The person who holds the appropriate teaching certification and is responsible for instruction in an online course.

Online tutor: Someone who supports student learning in specific content areas over the Internet.

Pace/pacing: The speed or time allotted with which a teacher or student moves through a course.

Quality standards: A set of benchmarks or indicators for courses, teaching, professional development, programs, etc., developed by a governing body, association, or accrediting organization.

Remote learning office hours: Specified time where teachers are available to answer questions and interact with students remotely using an online meeting platform.

Remote learning: Occurs when the learner and instructor are separated by time and distance and cannot meet in a traditional classroom setting.

Screencasting: When a teacher makes a recording, often sharing the teacher's computer screen, with students. This allows the teacher to provide directions, show students how to maneuver sites, and even allows students to refer back to the video directions if they need assistance.

Self-paced: Online courses in which students work at their own pace within an overall time frame.

Student mentor: An adult who maintains a one-to-one relationship with a student over time and provides consistent instructional support and guidance towards academic achievement.

Student-teacher ratio: The number of students in comparison to the number of teachers provided for each online course.

Synchronous learning: Online learning in which the participants interact at the same time and in the same space (often using a video conference or e-chat).

Tag (or meta-tag): A coding statement for learning objects within a curriculum that describes the contents (using keywords, descriptive terms) enabling searches.

Teacher of record: In many online courses this is the same as the online teacher. However in some states, when the online teacher is not an employee of the student's school, educational code requires the teacher of record to be from the student's school. In this case, it is the person who holds the appropriate teaching certification and is responsible for certifying the final grade for the course.

Technology facilitator: This person provides training and support for technology and administrative applications.

Threaded Discussion: A forum that includes a running commentary of messages used by a group to facilitate asynchronous online discussions.

Technology Support Staff (TSS): Person assigned to a building to provide remote technical help with software and computers.

Universal accessibility: A requirement by law, ADA Section 508, that learning materials, Including interfaces, images, sounds, multimedia elements, and all other forms of information, must be made available for use by anyone, regardless of disability. (Foothill Global Access, 2008)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): A framework for the design of online learning objects and environments ensuring accessibility for all users.

Video conferencing: Interactive communication technologies which allow two or more locations to interact via two-way video and audio transmissions simultaneously.

Virtual Assembly: Online school assembly may occur in real time or may be pre-recorded.

Virtual Staff meeting: Meeting hosted online in real time using an online meeting platform where staff can communicate with one another even though they are not in the same location.

Webinar: Online meeting, presentation, or professional development held in real-time. Can be recorded for later viewing.

Wiki: A restricted or open website developed collaboratively by a community of users, allowing any user to create, add and edit content.