

Lessons 2 and 3: Definition and History of Distance Education

In distance education students and teachers are physically separated and instruction takes place with the use of technology. It is what carries media like texts, images, and sounds. When distance education began in the 1850s, first generation of distance education, print based correspondence was the only technology used. It was not until the beginning of the 20th century when the radio began to be part of distance education. Later, TVs, satellites, and compressed videos were used. They are all part of the second generation of distance education, and they are still used as part the learning process. Many countries are currently using radio and TV broadcasts as part of their emergency remote teaching due to COVID-19. It is important to highlight that none of these technologies replaced another. The purpose is to make them all available to a variety of learners with the only purpose to increase the effectiveness of learning. This is the primary goal of Open Universities which are part of the third generation. In the mid-80s teleconferencing and video conferences began to be used as part of distance learning, 4th generation. Ten years later, with the invention of the worldwide web internet, virtual classes began to take their role in distance education being considered the 5th generation of it.