



Distance learning continues to grow and is now an option at more than two-thirds of all institutions of higher education offering at least a two-year degree. Indeed, 88 percent of public universities offer credit-granting distance education courses according to a 2006-07 survey conducted by the United States Department of Education — [National Center for Education Statistics](#), the last year such a survey was conducted.

Education Rocks

If you haven't seriously weighed distance education as a learning method you may not have considered all the advantages. To that end we've listed 7 reasons why distance learning rocks:

- 1. Opens Doors** – Distance education opens doors for millions of people who might otherwise not be able to set foot in a classroom due to accessibility issues including time, a physical handicap or location.
- 2. Flexible Schedule** – There are two types of distance learning classes: synchronous and asynchronous. With the former, you'll be gathering together with classmates and your instructor at a precise time during the week, the same as you if you attended school in person. With the latter, you establish your own learning schedule, relying on teaching materials and recorded data to accomplish your work.
- 3. Saves Money** – Certainly, not every distance education program is cost effective which means students may still shell out a wad of cash for each course. But, some schools such as [Western Governors University](#) offer a value based package. In addition, you'll use up less gas and your car won't wear out as fast.
- 4. Customized Learning** – You may find it easier to get the classes you want online than you would if you had to go to the Registrar's office each semester. Moreover, some programs are tremendously flexible when you pursue a degree, allowing to basically customize what courses you take beyond core subject material.

5. Builds Confidence – Older students, especially those who have been away from the classroom for decades, can find online learning liberating. No need to keep pace with youngsters or feel embarrassed about asking questions in front of a class.

6. Career Changer – Over the past few years, millions of people have seen their careers go up in smoke. Many are making the transition to a new career with distance education playing a role in helping them reshape their lives.

7. Education Sampler – Lastly, online learning allows students to sample a variety of classes some at no charge. If you aren't sure what you want to study, you may be able to preview class videos and notes before signing up. Save time and money by targeting the types of classes you want to take first.

Survey Says

More than likely when the next education survey is released, the number of schools offering online learning options will have increased. For a number of colleges and universities that is all they do while traditional campus based institutions are expanding to incorporate distance education.

Photo Credit: Simon Cataudo

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