
BUSINESS NEWSWATCH UPDATE

Distance Learning Creates New Opportunities

An article posted in a forum maintained by SD (Sustainable Development Department) and the FAO (Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) states that a University in Montana is broadening their distant learning program via video conferencing. Neal Gorenflo from the Foundation for Rural Service in Washington explains, "Montana State University, North's (MSUN) video conferencing distance education network is an informal partnership between MSUN, Vision Net and two consortiums of primary and secondary public schools (K-12 schools). MUSN is a university chartered by the state of Montana whose support is based on enrollment. With one of the lowest population densities in the United States, reaching students has always been a challenge to the state university system in Montana."

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Neal continues, "Video conferencing increases MSUN enrollment in several ways. Firstly, it offers accredited university courses to college students unable to commute to campus. It also offers university instruction to adults as well as a wide range of continuing education courses including Teacher and Volunteer Firefighter Certification. High school students can even get a head start on their college education by taking advanced placement courses through MSUN's video conferencing network."

As educational institutions grow, build new classrooms, and woo new students, they are incorporating technology as an important tool to facilitate learning. These new tools can also reach into the furthest corners to include persons who would not normally be able to join due to location. Normally funded by state governments, grants, or other agencies, it is essential that schools use their funds wisely while meeting and exceeding the standards of student expectations. Equally important, is that they stay up to date with current technologies in order to provide an ideal learning atmosphere. Now more than ever, acquisition options are in demand.

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