

# **Modalities of Distance Education: Muddied Water of Educational Landscape**

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## **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic has blurred the boundaries between distance education and traditional face-to-face teaching and learning as it has suddenly pushed every educational institution to move to remote teaching and learning regardless of its classification. Many terminologies have been used to describe different modalities of teaching and learning. Distance education has traditionally served those who are difficult to obtain education otherwise by providing a flexible mode of teaching and learning not bound to any particular place and time. Due to the pandemic, many educational institutions have experienced flexible modes of teaching and learning and started to embrace such flexible modes even after the pandemic. Distance education institutions, which had traditionally focused on asynchronous teaching and learning, started to offer synchronous teaching and learning due to the popularity and accessibility of web conferencing systems. Diverse modalities of teaching and learning have made it difficult for educational practitioners and researchers to even talk about education methods within the same reference frame. This presentation presents a framework to understand different modalities of distance education in consideration of granularities of timing issues (asynchronous and synchronous) and compulsion (mandatory/optional).

**Keywords:** asynchronous learning, distance education, flexible learning, modalities, remote teaching and learning, synchronous learning