

In the USA, distance learning, distributed training and business television are the most commonly used terms yet refer almost exclusively to synchronous interactive instruction (live, same time instruction). 'Distance education' is a term used mainly by those in formal education and the university sector.

Australia and New Zealand

In Australia, the terms "open learning" and "distance education" are most frequently used to describe this sector. Distance education being applied almost exclusively to activities in the public, formal education sector. Recently, 'Open and Distance Learning' was incorporated in a name change of the professional association, Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia, ODLAA, and is likely to become the key descriptive term used.

In New Zealand, the term, "correspondence education" is reserved for the K-12 sector, "open learning" and "telelearning" for the emerging activities in the post secondary and training sectors, and "distance education" for the higher education sector.

Europe

The term "flexible and distance learning" is used in the European Union program for research and development in Telematic Systems for Flexible and Distance Learning, (DELTA), whose aim is to accelerate the design and implementation of learning technology solutions across Europe. Van den Brande (1993) describes flexible and distance learning as having four key concepts¹ :

1. *Openness* in terms of meeting changing and differentiated learning needs.
2. *Flexibility* in terms of adaptation to individual needs and learning modes and providing full interactive facilities with tutors or other learners.
3. *Decentralisation* both in terms of reaching people in remote areas, and of unimpeded access to study facilities at a distance.
4. *Multimedia* training, a definition based on the prevalent instruments and techniques.

Flexible and distance learning combines these four key concepts. *Flexible learning is enabling learners to learn when they want (frequency, timing,*

¹ Van den Brande L., (1993) Flexible and Distance Learning, John Wiley and Sons, Toronto, 1993