

Title: College Students' Perceptions of Instructional Interactions in Distance Education Courses

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Rapid advances in technology make it possible for educational products to be delivered anytime and anywhere. Distance education creates new opportunities to reach individuals who cannot easily access traditional education. This research investigated the effectiveness of instructor's immediacy behavior as perceived by students who have taken distance education courses, in particular, the effective interactive behaviors using two-way audio and video conferencing technology.

A 50 item, Likert-scale web based electronic survey was posted on the World Wide Web (WWW) for participants' responses. A total of 424 students who had taken courses at Penn State University participated in this study. Data were collected on a variety of demographic and course profile characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, age, academic classification, the number of distance education courses taken from remote sites, student interests in taking a particular course, enrollment status, and the type of courses taken.

The findings of this study indicated that there is a relationship between instructor's technical competence and the use of interactive distance educational methods of delivery. The results of this study suggest that instructors using technology-mediated delivery methods should continue to be sensitive to using praise when appropriate, avoiding criticism, and adding to student comments when necessary. In order to more effectively use technology mediated delivery techniques, instructors need to be knowledgeable, proficient, and comfortable with the

technology. A topic for additional research may be a comparison of instructor teaching experience or the number of teaching opportunities that instructors have while using this methodology.