

STUDENT LEARNING STYLES & DISTANCE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Distance learning is quickly becoming an accepted and even necessary part of college and university programs. As more colleges and universities join the growing ranks of institutions offering distance learning, educators and administrators are struggling with the issue of how to assess student success in this new and largely untested environment. Many distance learning providers, and even some institutions, have developed short surveys that are designed to gauge whether a student is prepared to undertake distance learning. These tests, however, may not accurately assess a student's predisposition and learning style. This paper highlights and compares the use of different learning style inventories as a means to formally and empirically assess learning styles. Students in both distance learning and traditional classroom courses were given several of these inventories and their progress was tracked. Initial results indicate that some of these can be used as a successful predictor of student performance and may be useful for students and administrators in determining whether or not the student should undertake a distance learning course or program. The paper concludes with some suggestions and implications for educators on distance learning.