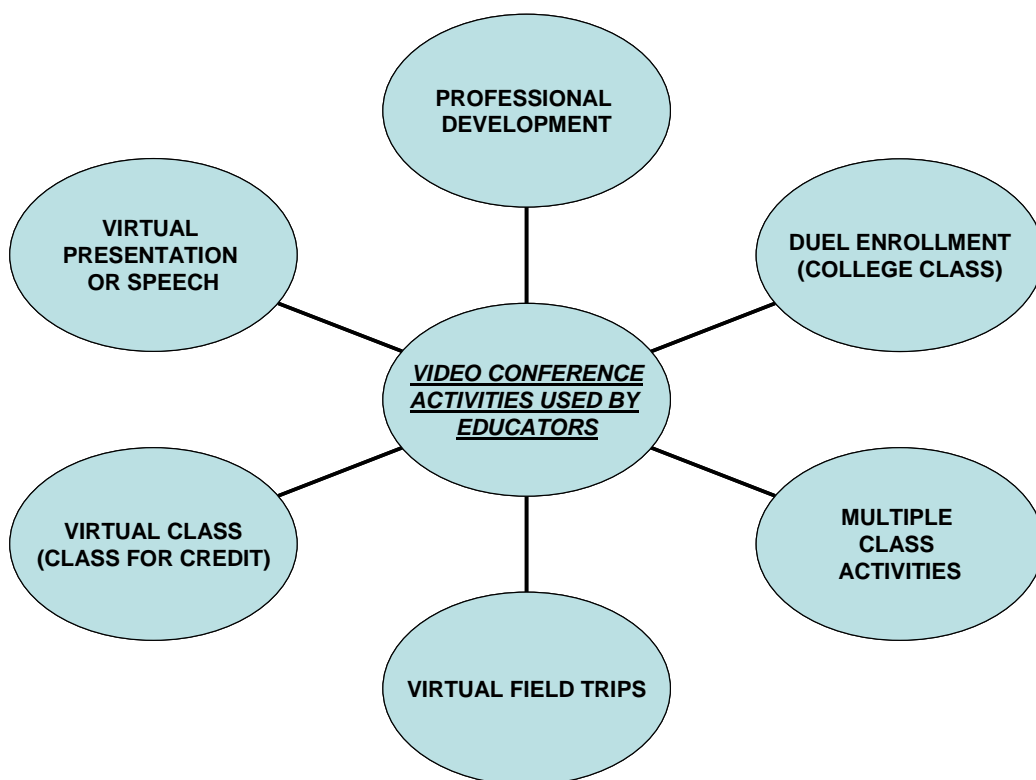


VIDEO CONFERENCING AND DISTANCE LEARNING 101

Distance learning thought video conferencing has been around for years in other states and on college campuses. However, Louisiana schools are beginning to have their first experiences with this new and exciting technology. To be able to maximize the use of a video conferencing kiosk at your school, you will need to understand what kinds of resources are available for you in the world of distance learning. The term distance learning usually specifically refers to a class taught over a video conference system but for this article we will include any educational activity into the distance learning definition.

The chart below explores the different ways in which video conferencing can be used in the classroom.

-----WAYS TO USE VIDEO CONFERENCING-----



DUEL ENROLLMENT - One of the ways that schools and teachers can effectively use video conferencing is by coordinating with universities to create duel enrollment classes for their students. This allows the school to offer college classes on their local campus without the need for students to travel or for professors to travel. This is an excellent way to increase the curriculum that a school can offer without hiring new teachers.

MULTIPLE CLASS ACTIVITIES – Teachers who can connect with other teachers using video conferencing technology can develop tailor made activities based on the needs of both classes. By using a directory of schools or simply contacting school districts until a partnership is found, a teacher can create a room to room connection and begin activities such as reviews, debates, presentations and joint class projects.

VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS – Many national and international groups offer virtual field trips. These activities allow teachers to choose a field trip program for their students and via a video conference visit a plethora of museums, government agencies, and historical sites. The virtual field trips are very easy to schedule using a video conferencing directory or search engine. Once the details have been worked out better the school and provider, the teacher simply becomes a classroom facilitator and allows the virtual field trip curator to present their program.

VIRTUAL CLASS – A virtual class is very similar to the duel enrollment class with the exception that it is not a college course. The virtual class is a high school class taught over a distance using video conferencing technology. The major benefit of this type of course is the fact that the teacher of the course does not have to be a member of the faculty nor do they have to be physically on campus. This could be a solution for a school who needs a very specialized course or who would like to expand its curriculum without hiring more staff.

VIRTUAL PRESENTATION OR SPEECH – One of the most impressive and useful attributes of video conferencing is the fact that it enhances the availability of people with very busy schedules. Scheduling a political or business person to speak with your class can be very easy since that person can usually use a video conferencing system in their own office or building. A perfect example of how this technology has given schools more access to educational resources can be found by going to the congressional website. Schools can now schedule to meet with their congress person via video conferencing simply by contacting the congressional offices and setting up a meeting in advance.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Video conferencing technology can also be applied to teacher professional development. By using a video conferencing system an school can bring in experts from around the country in a very cost effective manner. Schools can also use video conferencing systems to connect facilities at different sites simultaneously. This could allow department or grade level meetings across an entire district schools without anyone leaving their local facility.