

**THE LIMITS OF INFORMATION: A CAUTIONARY TALE ABOUT ONE
COURSE DELIVERY EXPERIENCE IN THE DISTANCE EDUCATION
ENVIRONMENT**

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ABSTRACT

Because of the importance of obtaining continuing education in the emerging global service economy and the difficulties involved in traveling to distant classrooms, universities are investing heavily in interactive video and other types of distance learning. In addition to the recent investigation of the advantages provided by these modes of instructional delivery, we advise a note of caution, suggesting also an investigation of what these technologies take away from the classroom experience. We performed a quasi-experimental study to investigate just that. Students in a local and distance class taught simultaneously by one instructor were asked for their perceptions about the experience, both in questionnaire format and in the form of perceptions they recorded during the experience and submitted to their instructor at the end of the course. In the main, the perceptions of students in the Distance setting were generally less favorable than their Local setting counterparts. We do not intend our study to be a definitive statement about distance learning in general, however, we do wish to raise a voice of caution as universities embrace distance learning as a means to expand their course offerings to a wider audience. Implications of our findings are discussed.