

Alternative Learning Environments

At Andrews University professors have several alternative ways of presenting classes. If you are thinking of trying your hand at a distance or hybrid class, here are some options.

The learning management system at Andrews University is **Desire2Learn**. This platform which is available for every class has many tools that you may find useful. Many teachers use it for its gradebook and dropbox. The gradebook allows students to see the grades that you have entered for them. That way there should be no surprises when the end of the term arrives. The dropbox is a way for students to turn in electronic copies of their work. It is better than email in that the work is time stamped and the student can see that it has actually been received. For the teacher the advantage is that the student can't say they emailed it and that the teacher must not have received it. There are many other tools such as discussion forums, quiz and test tools. You can post your assignments and even include audio and video.

If you feel comfortable making your own **web-pages** and in the past have made your own websites for your classes that is still possible. However, you can take those same pages and put them in D2L so that you can still use your creativity and in addition use the tools that D2L provides. The distance learning center can provide more information and training in the use of D2L.

Other options that may be desirable at times and are available are some of the following:

Teleconferencing. Some classes use speaker phones to connect a face to face class with students at a distance so that in effect they join the class and can participate in the discussion. This is a form of synchronous learning which means that everyone must be available at the same time to participate in the class.

Webconferencing. This is very similar to teleconferencing except that computers on the internet are involved. In this way participants can see what is on the screen of the teacher's computer. Sometimes the audio is also carried by the internet and at times the choice is made to use teleconferencing for the audio and just use the internet for the visual part of the lesson.

Email. This is often used for people who have poor internet connections. It is similar to correspondence courses as we know them except that it is speeded up by sending materials electronically.

Postal Services. This is used less and less but in some cases is the only way that students can receive their lessons. This sometimes is the only option for students overseas.

CD/DVD. This can be used to supplement any of the above. Lectures and assignments can be sent out ahead of time so that even those with poor internet connections can have the advantage of the rich multi-media experience. These can be incorporated into D2L so that when the student clicks on a link it will tell them to put in the CD/DVD so the material can be played.

