A case study conducted to investigate distance learning in Kentucky’s higher education system focused on four phenomena:
1. the policy context for DL,
2. attitudes about faculty DL issues,
3. faculty proficiency in instructional technology skills, and
4. institutional barriers and support for DL.
Data came from three sources: mining of documents, a faculty-development needs assessment survey distributed to 1,500 faculty members at the 9 Kentucky institutions of higher education, and interviews conducted with more than 60 administrators and faculty members.

Background
Institutions of higher education in Kentucky face pressure to offer distance education programs in response to the Kentucky Virtual University (KYVU), created with the passage of the Kentucky Postsecondary Improvement Act of 1997. State institutions became responsible for supplying courses to the KYVU, plus training and rewarding faculty engaged in distance education. However, the faculty responsible for developing and delivering the courses were hypothesized to be unwilling, unprepared, unrewarded, and unsupported by the university infrastructure. The study described here was to provide a snapshot of the state of distance learning in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Methodology
Given the guiding principles and ongoing recommendations of the Faculty Development Work Group of the Council of Postsecondary Education, a needs-assessment instrument was developed, refined, field tested, and pilot tested. The survey contained more than 100 five-point, Likert-type scale questions and an open-ended question where respondents entered additional comments about instructional technology, distance education, or their needs. The population for the survey...
The respondents had a positive attitude toward distance education as a general concept (mean = 3.53; standard deviation = 1.06), but were less enthusiastic about personal involvement (mean = 3.02, sd = 1.13). Responders disagreed with the following statement: DE will provide quality instruction (mean = 2.89, sd = 1.01). In rating the most effective mode of instruction for faculty development, respondents selected various forms of one-on-one instruction as most effective, followed by face-to-face classroom instruction. They ranked online instruction as the least effective mode of instruction. Respondents having no prior experience with distance education had little interest (mean = 2.43, sd = 1.60) in teaching a DE course, while those with DE experience showed only mild interest (mean = 3.29, sd = 1.61).

The faculty rated intrinsic factors consistently higher (mean between 3.64 and 3.17) than extrinsic factors (mean between 2.80 and 2.46). The faculty tended to be intrinsically motivated to participate in DE, especially to facilitate student learning. Financial incentives received the lowest rankings as motivators.

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