Today’s DE has come a long way from its beginnings with correspondence courses in the 1700s. In the 1900s radio then television offerings were broadcast but any interactivity between instructors and learners still relied on the written text and the postal system. This took considerable time for the student to complete lessons then mail them to instructors—often as much as two weeks for a complete cycle. During the intervening gap as instructors graded materials and provided feedback, the student could continue alone while waiting for the response, hoping not to be going the wrong way.

In the mid-1990s although the Internet began to allow more interactive distance learning, the cost of truly interactive technologies was way too high for most learners. Enter the turn of the century and rapid advances in technology, which forced costs down within reach of most learners, and distance education experienced a tremendous upsurge. An annual collaborative survey found that over 6.7 million higher education students took at least one distance course in 2011—and that’s an increase of 570,000 over the previous year!

Today, the courses offer by the Indiana University School of Nursing use lots of distance education types, including Cisco’s Movi and Adobe’s Connect. For under $100 for the purchase of a Webcam and a headset with microphone, students can participate with co-learners across high-speed broadband network connections, both seeing and hearing their colleagues in real time. As a mother with a part-time job and two small children who lives an hour away from an IU campus, Brittany stated that “if it wasn’t for Movi” she would have never been able to achieve her degree, calling it “just one example of how technology… allowed [her] to attend graduate school.” Being able to respond and interact in real time deepens discussion and, therefore, learning; it increases collegiality; it often forms the foundations of lifelong relationships that seldom, if ever, occur in other forms of distance education.

In addition to technology that allows connectivity, IU has created enterprise-wide license agreements with many software vendors. In the past, those affiliated with IU could download these applications and install them; however, now that software is available “through the cloud.” In one statistics course, students using personal laptops were able to access SPSS and do data analysis in a non-computer classroom, greatly increasing the opportunities for project work.

Distance education allows students more time for learning – not only in not needing to adjust personal and work schedules to sit in a classroom at a given time, but for many students not dealing with lengthy commutes to come to campus. This flexibility increases the options for students to work toward and achieve degrees from the nationally recognized Indiana University School of Nursing.

You’re missing any references that should be included at the end of your paper.