Distributed Learning Training Media Strengths and Weaknesses

Directions:

As we discuss each type of training media, in the space provided fill in the media type and at least three strengths and three weaknesses for the media we have discussed.

Application Sharing	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Real-time demonstration of content	Can accidentally share too much, such as answers or private items
Provides collaboration opportunities	Potential lag time for the learner to see the application
Flexibility to share anything accessible on the computer	May appear too small for the learner to see

Discussion Boards	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Encourages conversation between the students	Currently not available as an option for use
Public so everyone can see the discussion	Discussion threads are not always in the order of the conversation so students trying to contribute can become lost
Easy to use	Posts can be taken out of context

Breakout Rooms	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Engage each member of a small group in the activity (harder to hide)	Not available currently for the VBA
Incorporates other media tools such as whiteboard and audio	Have to manage multiple media tools in order to use the breakout room
Great for brainstorming	Requires extra planning and class management

Polling	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Easy to use	Requires pre-planning
Can be created quickly	Can be overused since they are easy to use and create
Flexibility to use for multiple purposes such as opening the session, questions, and evaluations	Colors may be an issue for color-blind students

Text Chat	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Instant communication	Tempting to the students to carry on private conversations
Great alternative for lack of audio	Private conversations can accidentally be seen publicly
Indicates students are actively participating	Students may stop using the feature if they feel their contributions to the discussion are not acknowledged

Two-Way Audio	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Introduces new voices to the session to reengage students	Voice over internet phones can have a lag time
Can be used for class discussions	Must establish rules so students are not talking at the same time since they cannot rely on nonverbal cues
Provides individual students the opportunity to share thoughts and ideas to the entire class	Noises from the microphone such as typing, coughing, and background noise can be distracting.

Video	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Provides a consistent message	Passive (no interaction)
Visual stimulation for the student to increase attention	High cost to initially produce and keep up to date
Takes the student to another learning environment	Large files can create lag times or technical issues

Web-Browsing & Tours	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Virtual field trip	Requires pre-planning to find websites, make sure the students can access them, and remove browsing history on host computer
Can use for internet-hosted games	Website addresses constantly change
Great for research-based projects and case studies	Opens the opportunity for students to browse other sites and multitask

Whiteboard	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Simulates the classroom easel pad or whiteboard	No spell check - garbage in, garbage out
Flexibility to use for collaboration, illustrations, discussions, etc.	Requires instruction to the students on how to use the annotation tools
Easiest tool to use as a beginning instructor in the virtual environment	Instructor may lose credibility if it appears he/she is not fully versed in using the tool