Volume 9 Number 3 2012

DISTANCE LEARNING

... For Educators, Trainers, and Leaders

DISTANCE LEARNING

PURPOSE

Distance Learning, an official publication of the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA), is sponsored by the USDLA, by the Fischler School of Education and Human Services at Nova Southeastern University, and by Information Age Publishing. Distance Learning is published four times a year for leaders, practitioners, and decision makers in the fields of distance learning, e-learning, telecommunications, and related areas. It is a professional magazine with information for those who provide instruction to all types of learners, of all ages, using telecommunications technologies of all types. Articles are written by practitioners for practitioners with the intent of providing usable information and ideas for readers. Articles are accepted from authors with interesting and important information about the effective practice of distance teaching and learning.

SPONSORS

The United States Distance Learning (USDLA) is the professional organization for those involved in distance teaching and learning. USDLA is committed to being the leading distance learning association in the United States. USDLA serves the needs of the distance learning community by providing advocacy, information, networking and opportunity. www.usdla.org

The Fischler School of Education and Human Services (FSEHS) of Nova Southeastern University is dedicated to the enhancement and continuing support of teachers, administrators, trainers and others working in related helping professions throughout the world. The school fulfills its commitment to the advancement of education by serving as a resource for practitioners and by supporting them in their professional self development. The school offers alternative delivery systems that are adaptable to practitioners' work schedules and locations. School programs anticipate and reflect the needs of practitioners to become more effective in their current positions, to fill emerging roles in the education and related fields, and to be prepared to accept changing responsibilities within their own organizations.
FSEHS—NSU
1750 NE 167th St.
North Miami Beach, FL 33162
800-986-3223
www.schooloffed.nova.edu

MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Distance Learning is for leaders, practitioners, and decision makers in the fields of distance learning, e-learning, telecommunications, and related areas. It is a professional journal with applicable information for those involved in providing instruction of all kinds to learners of all ages using telecommunications technologies of all types. Articles are written by practitioners for practitioners with the intent of providing usable information and ideas. Articles are accepted from authors with interesting and important information about the effective practice of distance teaching and learning. No page costs are charged authors, nor are stipends paid. Two copies of the issue with the author's article will be provided. Reprints will also be available.

1. Your manuscript should be written in Microsoft Word. Save it as a .doc file and also as a .rtf file. Send both versions on a CD.

2. *Single* space the entire manuscript. Use 12 point Times New Roman (TNR) font.

3. Laser print your paper.

4. Margins: 1" on all sides.

5. Do not use any page numbers, or embedded commands. Documents that have embedded commands, including headers and footers, will be returned to the author.

6. Include a cover sheet with the paper's title and with the names, affiliations and addresses, telephone, and e-mail for all authors.

7. Submit the paper on a CD that is clearly marked. The name of the manuscript file should reference the author. In addition, submit two paper copies. A high resolution .jpg photograph of each author is required. Send the CD and paper copies to: Michael R. Simonson

Editor
Distance Learning
Instructional Technology and
Distance Education
Nova Southeastern University

Fischler School of Education and
Human Services
1750 NE 167th Street
North Miami Beach, FL 33162
simsmich@nova.edu
(954) 262-8563

The Manuscript

To ensure uniformity of the printed proceedings, authors should follow these guidelines when preparing manuscripts for submission. DO NOT EMBED INFORMATION. YOUR PAPER WILL BE RETURNED IF IT CONTAINS EMBEDDED COMMANDS OR UNUSUAL FORMATTING INFORMATION.

Word Processor Format
  Manuscripts should be written in Microsoft Word.

Length
  The maximum length of the body of the paper should be about 3000 words.

Layout
  Top and bottom margins: 1.0"
  Left and right margins: 1.0"

Text
  Regular text: 12 point TNR, left justified
  Paper title: 14 point TNR, centered
  Author listing: 12 point TNR, centered
  Section headings: 12 point TNR, centered
  Section sub-heading: 12 point TNR, left justified

  Do not type section headings or titles in all-caps, only capitalize the first letter in each word. All type should be single-spaced. Allow one line of space before and after each heading. Indent, 0.5", the first sentence of each paragraph.

Figures and Tables
  Figures and tables should fit width 6½" and be incorporated into the document.
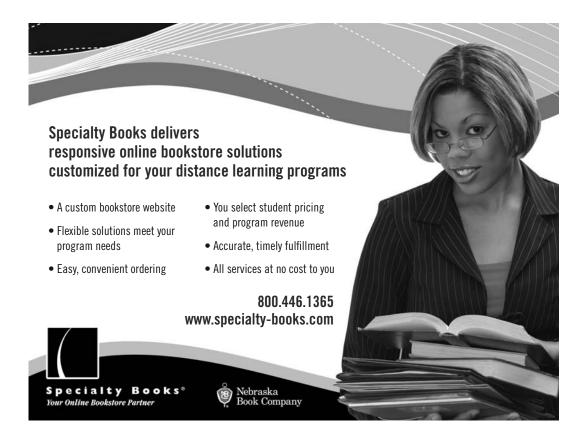
Page Numbering
  Do not include or refer to any page numbers in your manuscript.

Graphics
  We encourage you to use visuals—pictures, graphics, and charts—to help explain your article. Graphics images (.jpg) should be included at the end of your paper.

IN UPCOMING ISSUES

Instructional Design as a Change Agent in a School of Nursing

Lyndon Godsall and Cynthia Foronda

INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, provides direction for academic administrators to require faculty to perform with cutting-edge competence in teaching (IOM, 2010). Within the directive, administrators are advised to regularly evaluate nursing programs for adaptability, flexibility, and accessibility (IOM, 2010). Hence, faculty must strive to engage learners and incorporate technology to provide student-centered, accessible programs. In response to societal demands and trends, traditional and proprietary universities have been transitioning nursing programs and certificates to online formats. Collectively, there is a wide range of offerings that include blended/hybrid models to fully online programs where students never step foot on a campus. Of course, there are proponents and critics of both models, but the reality is that education has changed and the future place of technology in teaching and learning appears

Lyndon Godsall,
Instructional Designer, University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies, Brunson Drive, Coral Gables, FL 33124.
Telephone: (954) 647-4634.
E-mail: l.godsall@miami.edu

Cynthia Foronda,
Assistant Professor of Clinical, University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies, Brunson Drive, Coral Gables, FL 33124.
Telephone: (305) 284-2080.
E-mail: c.foronda@miami.edu

imminent. Nurse educators must embrace technology-infused education to thrive in academia and amply prepare students to succeed in the profession.

Moving traditional programs to online formats is a laborious process more complex than simply shifting content. The entire delivery process must be carefully contemplated to ensure a participative and multifaceted learning experience for the student. Pedagogy in nursing has been shifting away from traditional approaches and is now inclusive of gaming, use of video, social media, and virtual simulation to name a few examples. Although nursing faculty are experts in their specialty areas, many struggle with the skillset required to independently implement these new methods and migrate their courses to the fullest potential. The knowledge, skills and experience of an instructional designer is pivotal to the process. Subsequently, more schools of nursing have added instructional designers to their departments.

BACKGROUND

As Locatis (2007) stated, the penchant for science and health care, including nursing, is not to stifle the advances of technology but to embrace it. Some of the most innovative educational technology applications have been in health care. Amazingly, some of the earliest uses of technology in education were developed in the 1960s with the development of databases and educational simulations (Locatis, 2007). Some of the earliest applications of educational and clinical interaction were through interactive television and telemedicine. Historically, the health professions have been leaders to adopt innovative technologies and pedagogies.

WHAT IS INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN?

According to Kanuka (2005), in the simplest sense, instructional design is the process of translating general principles of learning and instruction into plans for instructional materials and learning activities. According to Reiser (2012),

> the field of instructional design and technology (also known as instructional technology) encompasses analysis of learning and performance problems, and the design, development, implementation, evaluation and management of instructional and noninstructional processes and resources intended to improve learning and performance in a variety of settings, particularly educational institutions and the workplace. (p. 5)

Instructional design has become a necessity in both industrial and educational settings, supporting the creation of training and educational excellence in a variety of modalities. Gustafson and Branch (2007) stated instructional design is a systematic process that is employed to develop education and training programs in a consistent and reliable fashion. The origins of instructional design are difficult to pinpoint; however, the instructional design process traces back to the 1960s with use in higher education (Barson, 1967).

Most of the early instructional design models were based on behaviorism, broadly described as a way to measure the study of human behavior (Burton, Moore, & Magliaro, 1996). Behaviorism is commonly associated with Skinner and his stimulus-response theory, but most of the early work in instructional design was theoretical and philosophical. Later, cognitive psychologists such as Gagne, Wager, Golas, and Keller made major contributions to instructional design development. Instructional designers believed the use of systematic design procedures made instruction more effective and efficient.

Instructional design is firmly rooted in a learner-centered approach where the learners are the focal point of all of the instructional activities. Projects are always goal oriented and often the instructional

designer will act as the "project manager." Throughout the process, the focus circles back to the assessments and opportunity to collect data for systematic improvement. Instructional design requires the skill set of a team of people ranging from the instructional designer, who may be working with individual faculty, or to an extensive team of people who can offer various skills. Examples of these skills include graphic design, flash development, and curriculum design.

WHAT IS AN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER?

An instructional designer is primarily a team member who works with faculty or subject matter experts (SME) to apply a systematic methodology based on instructional theory to create content for learning events. Many nursing faculty members have limited training or experience with curriculum development, course development, and blended and distance learning. Faculty, in general, are employed for their content expertise but many lack pedagogical knowledge. According to Shulman (1987), a dichotomy often exists between teachers' subject matter knowledge and teachers' knowledge of pedagogy. Unfortunately, a common fallacy is that any subject expert can teach. In the midst of a nurse educator shortage, schools of nursing are being forced to hire inexperienced faculty. While some individuals may claim to "wing it" successfully, individuals with a background in education tend to employ teaching methods and educational practices that are intentionally and thoughtfully designed. As an attempt to rectify the lack of educational preparation of nurse faculty, nurse education certificate programs have emerged.

According to Bates (2005), departments without instructional design experts will lead to a deficit in facilitation of effective e-learning, which will ultimately lead to failure. With the adoption of a wide range of technologies and social software available (i.e., learning management systems, video-conferencing, social bookmarking, and virtual realities), academics will benefit from consultation with instructional designers to ensure the technologies and design formats they choose meet course objectives.

The expert instructional designer must have skills to work with faculty who are stressed and are venturing into the area of blended and online delivery modalities. Instructional designers should be extremely sensitive, have excellent interpersonal skills, and be able to negotiate with coworkers who typically have tight deadlines. The instructional designer needs to become part of the culture and have sensitivity to the beliefs and practices of the faculty and institution (Crawford, 2004).

THE ROLE OF AN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER IN A COLLEGE OF NURSING

Nursing faculty educate students daily utilizing technology to improve patient care. Nursing students must be trained to be adept and proficient with technology to function in the health care system. Nurse faculty are accustomed to having to learn how to use technology on the fly due to the nature of the healthcare environment. However, nurse faculty are often not up to speed on the latest educational technologies. The instructional designer may serve as a resource person for faculty to teach and spread knowledge of current academic technology. The role of the instructional designer is to support faculty and administration to deliver the highest quality educational experience to students and to look continually for improvement.

Most universities are organized into faculties of independent units or schools and the faculty are seen as the central players with the highest status. According to Campbell, Schwier, and Kenny (2009), the instructional designer is typically employed by a service department and

viewed as support staff. Many instructional designers possess advanced degrees including doctoral degrees, but because of their perceived status they may feel closed out of the larger community. "However, because instructional designers are often considered 'instructional support' there is an important disconnect between their perceived responsibility and their perceived authority to influence change on a meaningful scale" (Campbell et al., 2009, p. 648).

The role of an instructional designer in any university department can vary and Campbell et al. (2009) suggest that instructional designers see the importance of working in teams. An instructional designer will be the project leader working to build relationships and occasionally work on conflict resolution. The main focus for the instructional designer is to continually look for ways to impact student achievement in both preparation and program delivery. Examples presented in Table 1 demonstrate the variability and multiple skill sets an instructional designer could contribute.

NATIONAL DIRECTIVES IN EDUCATION RELATED TO NURSING PROGRAMS

Colleges of nursing offer various programs ranging from ADN programs, diploma programs, traditional BSN programs, BSN Accelerated Option programs, master's in nurse anesthesia, family nurse practitioner, acute care and adult nurse practitioner, doctor of nursing practice, doctor of philosophy, and online certificate and post-master's certificate programs. Many of these programs are based on the guidelines of professional organizations and accrediting bodies that require inclusion of particular elements within the curricula. The instructional designer must be aware of these driving forces.

One set of highly valued guidelines influencing curricula are developed by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). The AACN Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (2008), the AACN Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing (2011), and the AACN Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (2006) all require that nursing students be prepared to use technology. Essential IV of the AACN (2006) Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice regarding Information Systems/Technology and Patient Care Technology for the Improvement and Transformation of Health Care states:

> Graduates are distinguished by their abilities to use information systems/technology to support and improve patient care and healthcare systems, and provide leadership within healthcare systems and/or academic settings.… Graduates must also be proficient in the use of information systems/technology resources to implement quality improvement initiatives and support practice and administrative decision making. (pp. 12-13)

Teaching students with technology prepares them to embrace technology.

The American Nurses Association endorses the integration of nursing science, computer science, and information science "to manage, communicate, and expand the data, information, knowledge, and wisdom of nursing practice" (2008, para. 1). Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) proposes nursing students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes be developed specifically in six competencies including the area of informatics (QSEN, 2012). There is evidence to suggest that nursing, in general, has adopted and absorbed the use of technology. This acceptance of technology has spilled over into the teaching and learning environment. The implication of this change is that nurse educators, who are skilled at teaching in a lecture format or apprentice-type form of teaching, have had to become

TABLE 1

Project	Role	Duties
Nurse education certificate program (Figure 1)	Project manager/ instructional designer	Work with SMEs and administrators to design and develop the program using an appropriate instructional design model. Build all content into the learning management system and design and create all graphical content and multimedia. Support faculty and evaluate the program.
Preimmersion Orientation for accelerated BSN students (Figure 2)	Project manager/ instructional designer/ contact liaison	Initiate the original concept using an appropriate ID model and conduct focus groups with students and faculty. Collaborate with the associate dean to choose a suitable text for the orientation. Design the orientation in the learning management system and work with the SMEs to load content. Liaise with the office of student services to get the course out to entering students and support students during the delivery period. Evaluate the orientation.
Video preparation to familiarize student nurse anesthetists with equipment, processes and general environment of anesthesia practice (Figure 3)	Project manager/ instructional designer/ videographer	Video faculty demonstrating correct usage and technique of foundational equipment used in the anesthesia process. Edit video and upload to a format that was placed into the school's learning management system. Place video vignettes using an adaptive release technique requiring students to work through a series of units answering questions to demonstrate mastery.
Student mentorship program (Figure 4)	Project manager/ instructional designer	Develop a 10-week mentorship program in collaboration with the project leader. Research and find multimedia and load into the LMS. Work with the students and faculty mentors to familiarize them with the delivery and recording systems. Evaluate the program.
Psychiatric mental health certificate (Figure 5)	Project manager/ instructional designer/ videographer	Use an appropriate ID model; liaise with the lead SME to design the model of delivery. Lead a team of SME's to provide content for four separate subject areas. Design all graphics and shoot video footage for all case studies.
Multimedia development (Figure 6)	Instructional designer and media developer	Work with faculty to create learning objects for courses using various software such as Raptivity, Camtasia, Captivate, iMovie, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Snagit, etc.
Faculty workshops (Figure 7)	Trainer	Develop and deliver a series of workshops for faculty to improve their skills in the field of academic technology.
Clinical central (Figure 8)	Project manager/ resource manager	Develop a resource center for students and faculty to retrieve all paperwork for clinical rotation sites.

versed in teaching with technology. Subsequently, the role of the instructional designer has become integral to support and foster the nurse faculty's growth of course design, administration, and technological skills.

Unit 1: Orientation to Online Learning ⊻

Unit 2: History of Nursing Education ⊻

Figure 1.   Nurse Education Certificate Program.

University of Miami
School of Nursing and Health Studies
Accelerated Option Students Pre-Immersion Course

Figure 2.   Pre-Immersion Orientation for Accelerated BSN Students.

Figure 3.   Video preparation to familiarize student nurse anesthetists with equipment, processes, and general environment of anesthesia practice.

Figure 4.   Student Mentorship Program.

Figure 5. Psychiatric Mental Health Certificate.

Figure 6.   Multimedia development.

Figure 7.   Faculty workshops.

Figure 8.   Clinical Central.

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The IOM Future of Nursing report recommends nurse educators embrace an interdisciplinary approach (IOM, 2010). Similarly, QSEN has proposed Teamwork & Collaboration as a competency that must be emphasized in prelicensure nursing programs (QSEN, 2012). To attend to trends in healthcare and information, nurse administrators must promote group process, teamwork, and collaboration amongst faculty of various disciplines. Not only should schools of nursing collaborate within the health professions, the interdisciplinary approach should include faculty of information technology, computer science, and informatics to address the AACN directives and current state of health care. Although this approach may counter tradition, the potential benefit of having diverse field experts educate nursing students presents breadth and depth to promote transformative education.

CONCLUSION

The field of nurse education is more complex and challenging than ever. Nurse administrators and faculty stand to benefit from a sound understanding of the role of an instructional designer to maximize educational effectiveness. By bringing an instructional designer onto the team, nurse faculty will be able to appropriately apply educational technology and innovation. Embracing a multidisciplinary approach, including faculty from the world of instructional design, will only propel and expand educational opportunities and potential breakthroughs.

REFERENCES

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2006). The essentials of doctoral education for advanced nursing practice. Retrieved from http://www.aacn.nche.edu/publications/position/dnpessentials.pdf

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2008). The essentials of baccalaureate education for professional nursing practice. Retrieved from http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education-resources/BaccEssentials08.pdf
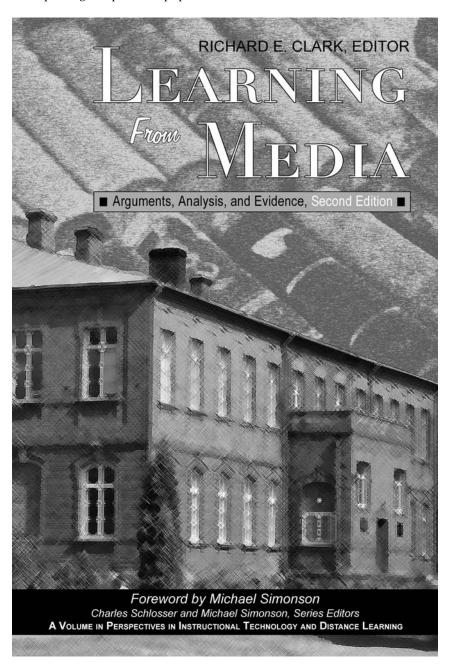
American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2011). The essentials of master's education in nursing. Retrieved from http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education-resources/MastersEssentials11.pdf

American Nurses Association. (2008). Nursing informatics: Scope and standards of practice [DX Reader version]. Retrieved from http://www.nursesbooks.org/Main-Menu/Standards/H--N/Nursing-Informatics-Scope-and-Standards-of-Practice.aspx

Bates, A. W. (2005). *Technology, e-learning and distance education* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.

Barson, J. (1967). *Instructional systems development: A demonstration and evaluation project.* East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.

Burton, J. K., Moore, D. M., & Magliaro, S. G. (1996). Behaviorism and instructional technology. In D. H. Jonassen (Ed.), *Handbook of research for educational communications and technology* (pp. 46-73). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Campbell, K., Schwier, R. A., & Kenny, R. F. (2009). The critical, relational practice of instructional design in higher education: An emerging model of change agency. *Educational Technology, Research and Development, 57*(5), 645-663.

Crawford, C. (2004). Non-linear instructional design model: Eternal, synergistic design and development. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 35*(4), 413-420.

Gustafson, K. L., & Branch, R. M. (2007). What is instructional design? In R. A. Reiser & J. V. Dempsey (Eds.), *Trends and issues in instructional design and technology* (2nd ed., pp. 10-16). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Institute of Medicine. (2010). *The future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health. Report recommendations.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Kanuka, H. (2006). Instructional design and eLearning: A discussion of pedagogical content knowledge as a missing construct. *E-Journal of Instructional Science and Technology, 9*(2), 1-17.

Locatis, C. (2007). Performance instruction, and technology in health care education. In R. A. Reiser & J. V. Dempsey (Eds.), *Trends and*

issues in instructional design and technology (2nd ed, pp. 197-208). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Quality and Safety Education for Nurses. (2012). Quality and safety competencies [Internet Message Boards]. Retrieved from http://www.qsen.org/competencies.php

Reiser, R. A., & Dempsey, J. V. (2012). *Trends and issues in instructional design and technology* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson

Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review, 57*(1), 1-22.
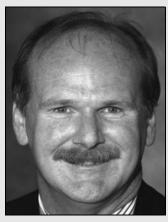
Beyond Open Access
Leveraging OER
for University Teaching and Learning

Don Olcott, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

T he growth of open educational resources (OER) by colleges and universities has been steady over the past 5 years. Today, universities across the globe are using OER to supplement formal instruction, reduce costs of instructional content, and leverage capacity-building opportunities for educational systems in developing countries (Kanwar, Kodhandaraman, & Umar, 2010; McGreal, 2012). OER, in and of themselves, cannot solve the immense challenges that define the digital divide. These challenges must

Don Olcott, Jr.,
Strategic Planning and Institutional Engagement, Higher Colleges of Technology, System Office Central Services, P. O. Box 25026, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Telephone: 971 2 692 2712. E-mail: don.olcott@hct.ac.ae

receive increasing priority in the political, economic, social, and ethnic spheres to position education for development as a viable capacity building strategy in developing nations (Butcher, Kanwar, & Uvalić-Trumbić, 2011).

Despite the recent growth, OER may be the best-kept secret on the planet. There is clearly a need to expand the promotion, benefits, and cooperative sharing potential of OER in the broader university community at the grass roots level. Indeed, major organizations including UNESCO, the Commonwealth of Learning, Open-Learn, OERAsia, Connexions, MIT, and other agencies have been instrumental in promoting OER in education.

This article will provide a status report on some of the reoccurring and emerging issues for university adoption and use of OER. Although it is difficult to present concepts that are directed at practitioners new to OER and at the same time include analyses of issues for experienced OER users, the importance of expanding awareness and dialogue of OER suggests that this dual focus is warranted. A list of key questions for university leaders will be presented in the final section of the article. Appendix A will provide a list of key organizational resources for OER.

DEFINING OER

The definitions of emerging innovations tend to progress through a number of definitional iterations. This is due, in part, to

the newness of the innovation and the impulse of practitioners to infuse new ideas and concepts into the process. OER have been around for a decade and we have seen the definitional continuum progress from the generic to the specific. A few recent examples are highlighted below.

Hylen (2007) states that OER refers to full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials or techniques used to support access to knowledge. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, a major contributor to OER project initiatives, has defined OER as: "teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or repurposing by others" (The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, 2010, para. 2).

UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning (2011) define OER:

> Open educational resources (OER): OER are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium that reside in the public domain and have been released under an open licence that permits access, use, repurposing, reuse and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions (Atkins, Brown, & Hammond, 2007). Use of open technical standards improves access and reuse potential. OER can include full courses/programs, course materials, modules, student guides, teaching notes, textbooks, research articles, videos, assessment tools and instruments, interactive materials such as simulations, role plays, databases, software, apps (including mobile apps) and any other educationally useful materials. The term "OER" is not synonymous with online learning, eLearning or mobile learning. Many OER—while shareable in a digital format—are also printable. (p. v)

OER are not synonymous with online learning or distance education. The World Wide Web, particularly the Internet, has become a gateway for accessing OER in digital formats. OER can be integrated as an instructional component in an online learning or mobile learning course yet these same OER may also be readily accessible in print formats. Digital formats via the Internet simply provide an efficient and accessible cyberhighway to OER with paying the tollbooth of licensing fees, royalties and/or copyright holder permission (Butcher et al., 2011).

OER, however, can be integrated and developed within online learning management systems. Connexions (www.cnx.org) provides a system to develop the OER online and then use automated processes for creating a Creative Commons license, adding the OER to a database, and publishing the OER. Moreover, this particular system allows teams to contribute to developing the OER on this site thereby tapping into broader expertise to create, evaluate, and publish the final OER (Butcher et al., 2011).

The key attribute of OER that differentiates them from any other educational resource is the license (Butcher et al., 2011). OER can be accessed easily and efficiently for reuse and adaptation because the open license does not require prior permission, licensing fees, and/or royalties via the copyright holder.

OER: Frequently Asked Questions

Are OER Free?

OER are basically free to access without seeking permission and paying licensing fees. Depending on the specific requirements of a Creative Commons license, OER may generally be reused, modified, integrated in another delivery medium, and distributed for educational purposes. In sum, initial access to OER is free to the user (McGreal, 2012).

A second consideration of "free" pertains to the financial cost (money and people) of OER. Perhaps the easiest way to think about this is that OER initially are accessible for free; however, the subsequent modification, reuse, repackaging, management, and integration at the organizational level, does require a financial investment of money and staff (Butcher, et al., 2011).

For example, if a university decides to create an electronic repository for its own OER or even combined with external OER, this does not happen by magic. Someone has to organize and develop policies and processes for the repository. Someone has to talk with faculty about the merits of making their content open within the repository. Who will be involved in ensuring quality standards at the institutional level for OER? These issues only begin to enter the emerging scholarly dialog on open educational practices (Conole, 2010a; Conole & Ehlers, 2010; Ehlers, 2008) and open educational management (Olcott, 2012a).

The idea that OER are free is a simplistic assertion that often leads to further assertions that OER will cut costs for educational delivery, be a professional development resource for faculty, enhance student success, strengthen research, and more. The plausibility of these OER impacts are tied to the broader question of how and why institutions invest in quality teaching and learning processes that are surrounded and supported with an array of sound educational resources. The value of OER suggests that an institution is committed to investing sufficient resources (fiscal and human) in teaching and learning that enhances instruction and improves student learning. OER is one, and only one, factor that may contribute to student success.

Is an Open License Wide Open?

An open license for OER may have some restrictions to protect the original author or creator of the resource (Creative Commons, 2012). Many practitioners misinterpret licensing parameters, believing that content automatically resides in the public domain and the original author has relinquished all rights. In fact, open licenses (aka, Creative Commons) are designed to protect the rights of the original author by ensuring that original credit is given for any use of this material. Moreover, though becoming less common, some open licenses restrict modification of the original resource (no derivatives). In other words, you can access, copy, and use the material for educational purposes but you cannot alter the original content (Butcher et al., 2011; McGreal, 2012).

An open license allows the original author to retain copyright over his or her work and yet give away some rights under an open license. There is a variety of different licensing options and the reader is encouraged to visit www.creativecommons.org to review these (Butcher et al., 2011; McGreal, 2012). Any use of open content for commercial purposes by the user is generally an infringement of copyright law with potential legal penalties for those violating intellectual property laws.

A Question of Quality

A reoccurring issue in education reverts back to the question: who is responsible for ensuring the quality of educational materials? This question is of particular importance for OER given many of these resources can be modified and changed for subsequent adaptation and use. At the same, time common practice suggests that the institution and the educators using OER have an inherent responsibility to maintain the quality of these materials (Butcher et al., 2011).

The OER movement is a mere decade old. The increase in OER development and institutional repositories has grown considerably in just a few years. A number of

questions have emerged recently. Olcott (2012a) summarizes some key questions below.

- How do we differentiate OER from open educational practices? (Conole, 2010; Ehlers, 2008). Open educational management? (Conole & Ehlers, 2010; Olcott, 2012a);
- What benchmarking strategies do we consider for establishing quality standards for similar OER content? (Butcher et al., 2011);
- Formal and informal OER suggest a variety of uses in educational contexts (Olcott, 2012a);
- Do colleges and universities consider offering academic credit for OER? (Olcott, 2012a). Will students resist using OER unless they can earn academic credit and apply this credit toward a credential? Or should OER remain and supplementary learning resources to formal instructional content?; and
- Given the sustainability of OER requires an investment of money and human resources, what business models are needed? (De Langen & Bitter-Rijkema, 2012); How do these differ from traditional business models where revenues are a significant part of a business plan?

These issues are not intended to be all inclusive. Educational institutions and educators will have to grapple with a host of localized issues related to policies, incentives, management costs, assessment, and others.

ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF OER

What are the pros and cons of OER? Kanwar et al. (2010) summarized some of the advantages of OER particularly for developing country educational systems. These are paraphrased as follows:

- resource optimization—OER help developing countries save both course authoring time and money;
- OER foster the exchange of global knowledge;
- online collaborative OER development supports capacity building in the developing world thereby bridging the digital divide;
- collaborative OER development encourages the preservation and dissemination of indigenous knowledge; and
- the availability of high-quality OER can raise the quality of education at all levels.

At a practical level OER advocates cite that OER can be reused, mixed, altered, and localized for cultural and social contexts; you do not need permission to use them; there are no Digital Rights Management or restrictive licensing; and you can copy, paste, annotate, highlight, print out basically free of charge (Butcher et al., 2011; Kanwa et al., 2010; McGreal, 2012).

Common barriers cited include the lack of awareness about OER; the university elitism that it was invented here so we'll use our own; faculty resistance given my content is king in my kingdom; and of course the lobbying of many publishers that see the OER movement as a threat to their historical business monopoly over content. Content is big business in the commercial world and those models will die hard (McGreal, 2012).

From a practical-applied perspective (Butcher et al., 2011), OER provide teachers and students with:

- access to global content that can be adapted and localized by teachers and faculty anywhere, anytime to create new courses-modules-lessons or enhance existing content;
- more resources and choices for students to supplement their studies with "value-added" content;

- opportunities to create diverse student and faculty learning communities that can bridge cultural, gender, and ethnic differences to promote social inclusion in our classrooms, in our communities, and in our world. OER are effective localized cultural-social-ethnic manifestations of the global village.

What are some examples of OER use in education? Olcott (2012b) identified some basic examples.

- illustrating an innovative practice in reading comprehension for primary school teachers using an excerpt from a scholarly article;
- lessons for teaching effectiveness, mentoring, and instructional design for teachers and/or teacher preparation institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa (See TESSA Project at www.tessaafrica.net;
- showing a podcast on French pronunciation for a beginning French high school course;
- reviewing photographs of modern art from an "open resource" museum website to illustrate characteristics of art nouveau; and
- conducing a 4-hour "Introduction to OER" workshop at a major open and learning conference using resource modules developed by the Commonwealth of Learning.

Indeed, these practices are common to most educational environments. OER provide ready access to content for supporting these educational practices and adapt them to teaching and learning processes. Moreover, the simple practice of using OER in an educational practice leads teachers and students to a host of additional OER resources available to support value-added teaching, learning, and research. These examples are not all-inclusive. Educators adapt OER to their teaching strengths, lesson objectives, and the learning needs of their students.

One of the unique advantages to OER is the capacity to adapt and reformat (this must be authorized in the open license) into diverse content packages. McGreal (2012) states:

> The concept of granularity is also important. An OER can be a course, unit, lesson, image, Web page, exercise, multimedia clip, etc. but it should have a *specified* pedagogical purpose/context [15]. Content instances can be assembled into a lesson. Lessons can be assembled into modules. Modules can be assembled into courses, and courses can even be assembled together and become a full programme. All of these at their various levels of granularity can be OER. (McGreal, 2012, p. 2)

In sum, OER can be adapted for a wide range of uses in education at all levels. Moreover, they expand the resource base for faculty to tap into high quality materials to supplement their own use of open and proprietary resources. This brings us to a common question about OER: Are they really free?

The OER movement is based on the premise of free and open access of knowledge to anyone, anywhere, anytime for educational and personal enrichment purposes. However, the issues of "free" and licensing were discussed earlier in this commentary. Indeed, it was pointed out that there are legitimate and necessary restrictions on the openness of proprietary educational content. In the future, OER will coexist with proprietary content with each having an important role to play in education.

CHALLENGES FOR UNIVERSITIES

The UNESCO/COL definition of OER pointed out that OER are not synonymous with distance learning or online learning. However, recent advances in digital technologies create efficient venues for access-

ing, creating, storing, retrieving, and distributing OER content.

University leaders have many questions about OER, their quality, and whether they are a viable option for their institution. It is beyond the scope of this commentary to cover the myriad of questions and issues.

The first key question is to ask is what is the educational context or potential value-added contribution of OER to the overall teaching and learning mission and enterprise of the university? This is a fundamental question before considering any major institutional investment in OER (Olcott, 2012b).

Colleges and universities invest significant resources (fiscal and human) in the teaching and learning enterprise. This includes personnel costs, support services, instructional materials, professional development, and educational technology and staff training. These are just a few of the major investments made by a university.

From a management perspective, the misconception of OER as free must be considered seriously—OER cost money and are not free. Is your institution willing to invest staffing and money in the management and staffing of OER? OER content may be accessible and free, but a staff has to manage and maintain the OER repository on your campus. OER can, however, simply be a supplemental resource for faculty and students whether the institution chooses to invest or not. Institutional leaders must examine clearly the monetary implications of integrating OER into the mainstream educational enterprise (De Langen & Bitter-Rijkema, 2012; Olcott, 2012, 2012b).

There are capacity issues to examine regarding an institution's ability to leverage the potential of OER. For example, the capacity of the institutional information tectnology and educational technology departments are critical to maximizing the potential of OER. Do these departments have well developed open and distance learning capabilities, training programs, and support infrastructures for students? The critical point is that OER management, infrastructure, and staffing must maintain service, training, and access to campus-wide OER use.

OER can be stored, linked, and retrieved in most learning management systems giving students and faculty immediate access to supplemental OER content resources in support of online courses. Moreover, as iPad and mobile technology teaching increases, OER will be accessible for students to review and use open content. Although OER access with new technologies is in its infancy, these technologies will accelerate creative ways for supporting teaching and learning with proprietary and open content resources.

Table 1.   A Brave New World Emerging for OER

The OERu (Open Educational Resources University) has initiated a pilot project through its OER Tertiary Education Network universities to create and offer eight (8) first and second year university courses with an option to earn academic credit that could be applied toward a Bachelor's in Liberal Studies degree (Green, 2012). This project is in the early stages but reflects an innovative approach to creating value-added option for students.

  URL: http://creativecommons.org/weblog/entry/31947

  Similarly, MIT and Harvard have recently launched edX (www.edxonline.org/faqs) an open platform of Harvard and MIT courses that will be freely accessible worldwide to anyone having Internet access (Harvard-MIT, 2012). This will be available globally and students will even be able to earn Certificates of Mastery by demonstrating competency of content in the course (s). According to the edX website, students will not earn Harvard or MIT certificates, just certificates of mastery. Moreover, Harvard and MIT students will not be allowed to take these courses and Harvard and MIT academic credit will not be granted for these courses

Source: Olcott, D. (2012a).

In many countries, OER must be viewed within the context of local culture, traditions, heritage, and language. At varying levels, these nations are committed to preserving the heritage of their cultures and preserving their native language. The standardization of English as the global language of commerce also has important implications for OER development in education.

The UNESCOL/COL OER Declaration (2012) for governments to promote OER awareness, development, and use accentuates the need to create OER in multiple languages (UNESCO/COL, 2012). A major policy issue around OER adoption, development and use will be to define a balance of creating OER in Arabic and English. Moreover, this is not an either-or proposition. OER can and will have immense educational value in English and in Arabic not only as university level, but in K-12 educational systems across the region. Universities may be wise to consider these cultural, heritage, and linguistic issues in advance as they contemplate the scope of their OER initiatives.

KEY QUESTIONS
FOR UNIVERSITY LEADERS

Olcott (2012a) identified key issues for university leadership to consider that are relevant to OER. These included:

1. What management models are most effective for university OER repositories?
2. Does the academic culture of the university create barriers to "institutionalizing" OER and open educational practices?
3. As an investment toward quality teaching and learning, what level of resources is needed for OER staff and infrastructure?
4. Should universities organize their OER inventory (internal and external) so that students can earn formal academic credit? What structures, policies, and assessment measures will be needed to do this?
5. Do we leave OER in the nonformal resource category and focus on using OER as open, flexible, and optional resources to support and supplement our formal higher education teaching and learning processes?
6. Can we have this openness and flexibility without integrating formal OER into our core management and organizational structures?
7. What revenue enhancement strategies can universities employ for sustainable OER development and management?
8. Should universities revert to an OER fee similar to the "distance learning or technology" fee charged to students by many universities?
9. Does the educational value of OER justify university investment of reoccurring budget allocations to the development and management of OER? Will faculty members, department chairpersons, and senior leadership support this?
10. What does a long-term sustainable business model look like for OER?

The OERu and Harvard-MIT initiatives suggest that educational institutions and educators are often inclined to integrate innovations into traditional institutional structures. In other words, it is not surprising that the issue of academic credit or formal recognition of using OER has entered the landscape.

We are seeing the recycling of open and distance learning issues from 20 years ago appear on the OER landscape today. Many faculty members are resistant to having their content put up on the open market (Olcott, 2012a). Second, many are concerned about having their intellectual property placed in a public forum for review by peers, students, and the general public. The old adage that it was created here and here it shall stay remains strong

in the academy. And, many who see value in open educational resources are trekking down an old incentives path asking how does the development and use of OERs by faculty count toward career advancement—in the academy that means promotion and tenure. What goes around comes around and stays around in the hallowed halls of our ivory towers.

Summary

OER are growing rapidly across the globe. Open and free content, accessible to anyone anywhere and through digital media, has the capacity to reshape the educational landscape. In fact, OER have been reshaping higher education for nearly a decade and may be the best-kept secret on the planet. OER are not a panacea for resolving all the issues in education relevant to access, the cost of content, and the teaching, acquisition and application of knowledge through educational media. Rather they are resources that broaden the content continuum for educators to use for designing innovative and engaging teaching approaches that produce improved and rewarding learning experiences for students.

University leaders may need to assess their local knowledge base about OER; how OER capacity aligns with the institution's mission and teaching and learning infrastructure; the cultural, social, and linguistic issues relevant to OER; and what organizations may be potential partners for OER collaboration. Colleges and universities new to the OER movement may find it useful to establish a task force or working group to examine the potential benefits continuum of OER for the institution.

Universities will have to seriously consider the benefits continuum of integrating OER into the mainstream teaching and learning infrastructure of the academy. OER will require money, staffing, and research. OER will require critical input from faculty and students. OER will require a sustainable business model beyond project-based resources from foundations, corporations, government agencies, and private donors. Indeed, there may be a brave new world emerging for OER but it will cost money, commitment, vision, and integration into the mainstream university structure to be effective, sustainable, and value-added resources.

Appendix A: Recommended OER Websites for Universities

- Knowledge Cloud:
    www.oerknowledgecloud.com
- Commonwealth of Learning (COL):
    www.col.org
- Connexions:
    www.cnx.org
- Creative Commons:
    www.creativecommons.org
- Harvard/MIT edX:
    www.edxonline.org/faqs
- OER Africa:
    www.oerafrica.org
- OER ASIA:
    www.oerasia.org
- Open Courseware Consortium:
    www.ocwconsortium.org
- TESSA (Teacher Education in Sub Saharan Africa):
    www.tessafrica.net
- OpenLearn:
    ww.open.edu/openlearn
- UNESCO:
    www.unesco.org

References

Atkins, D. E., Brown, J. S., & Hammond, A. L. (2007). *A review of the open educational resources (OER) movement: Achievements, challenges, and new opportunities*. Retrieved from www.hewlett.org/uploads/files/ReviewoftheOERMovement.pdf

Butcher, N. (Author), Kanwar, A. (Ed.), & Uvalić-Trumbić, S. (Ed.). (2011). *A basic guide to open educational resources (OER)*. Vancouver, Canada: Commonwealth of Learning,

and Paris, France: UNESCO. Retrieved from http://www.col.org/oerBasicGuide

Conole, G. (2010). Defining open educational practices (OEP) [Web log message]. Retrieved from http://e4innovation.com/?p=373

Conole, G. C., & Ehlers, U. D. (2010, May). *Open educational practices: Unleashing the power of OER*. Paper presented to UNESCO Workshop on OER, Windhoek, Namibia.

Creative Commons. (2012). Retrieved from http://www.creative commons.org

De Langen, F. H. T., & Bitter-Rijkema, M. E. (2012). Positioning the OER business model for open education. *European Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 1-13. Retrieved from www.eurodl.org

Ehlers, U. -D. (2008). Understanding quality culture. Proceedings of the 2008 EDEN Conference (p. 45). In A. Tait & A. Szûcs (Eds.), *European Distance and e-Learning Network (EDEN)* (p. 45). Retrieved from www.eden-online.org

Green, C. (2012). *Thanks to Creative Commons, OER University will provide free learning with formal academic credit*. Retrieved from http://creativecommons.org/weblog/entry/31947

Harvard/MIT edX. (2012). *The future of online education is now*. Retrieved from www.edxonline.org/faqs

Hylen, J. (2007). *Giving knowledge for free: The emergence of open educational resources*. Paris, France: OECD. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/35/7/38654317.pdf

Kanwar, A., Kodhandaraman, B., & Umar, A. (2010). Towards sustainable OER: A perspective from the global south. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 24(2): 65-80. Retrieved from www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/08923647.asp

McGreal, R. (2012). *The need for open educational resources for ubiquitous learning*. Athabasca, Alberta, Canada: Technology Enhanced Knowledge Research Institute, Athabasca University.

Olcott, D. (2012a). (in press). OER perspectives: Emerging issues for universities. *Distance Education, 33*(2), 283-290.

Olcott, D. (2012b). Mobilizing OER in the UAE & GCC states: A primer for universities. *UAE Journal of Educational Technology and eLearning.*

UNESCO/Commonwealth of Learning. (2011). *Guidelines for open educational resources (OER) in higher education*. Paris, France/Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Author.

UNESCO/COL. (2012). *Draft declaration on OER* (Version 7a). Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/Events/DeclarationV7APostIALG_web.pdf

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. (2010). (n. d.). Open educational resources. Retrieved from http://www.hewlett.org/programs/education-program/open-educational-resource

Gaggle
The Safe LMS

Tayo Akinrefon

INTRODUCTION TO GAGGLE

Distance education is one of the fastest growing forms of education today (Rivero, 2011). As our culture moves faster, we must learn how to keep pace. There are various modes in which distance education can be driven; learning management systems (LMS), course management systems, and virtual learning environments. The goal of each system is to emphasize communication and collaboration between the teacher and the student (McIntosh, 2012). A relatively new LMS is Gaggle. This article will focus on the history of Gaggle, the exclusive

Tayo Akinrefon,
Department Head of Business Technology,
Middleton High School, Tampa Florida, 4801
N. 22nd Street 33610.
Telephone: (813) 233-3360.
E-mail: olutayo.akinrefon@sdhc.k12.fl.us

safety components that Gaggle possesses, and student' opinion of Gaggle.

WHAT IS GAGGLE?

Gaggle was founded by Jeff Patterson, an entrepreneur in the field of education and technology (Gaggle About Us, n.d.). Patterson believed that e-mail was a great tool for communicating with his colleagues. He also believed that students could benefit. As a result, Gaggle was launched in 1999 and its main focus was student e-mail communication; since then Gaggle has grown to offer so much more (Gaggle Students/ Parents, n.d.). Gaggle's main focus is offering safety within the K-12 market. Today, Gaggle is headquartered in Bloomington, Illinois, and provides various student communication tools to more than 15,000 schools in over 57 countries (Gaggle Students/Parents, n.d.). The Gaggle LMS includes several useful tools—from e-mail and shared calendars to drop boxes and online editing documents (Gaggle Students/Parents, n.d.). "Gaggle" is the name for a group of geese. According to Patterson, "Our goal was to give teachers an easy way to watch over their gaggle of students, hence the name Gaggle" (Gaggle About Us, n.d.).

GAGGLE AND SAFETY

The many benefits of the Internet are well known; however, the Internet can pose dangers as well. There are three major areas where young Internet users can be exposed to danger: exposure to illegal or

harmful material, receiving unsolicited messages, and being lured into a physical encounter (O'Reilly & O'Neill, 2008). Gaggle provides measures that protect its users from all of these dangers. Gaggle recognizes that the 21st century student will need to use the Internet and that limiting Internet use and functions can be detrimental to student learning (Gaggle Safety, n.d.). All the student activities in Gaggle pass through several Internet security measures as described in Table 1.

GAGGLE'S HUMAN MONITORING SERVICE

Since July 1, 2012, Gaggle has enhanced its online communication and productivity tools through the Human Monitoring Service (HMS) (Heykamp, 2011). HMS is an invaluable tool that helps to monitor all communication between students. A teacher who has to monitor a class of 25 students understands the difficulty of monitoring the communication between all of the students in the class. It is much more cumbersome to monitor the communication between 6 classes of 25 students. It is important that the monitoring of student accounts is done on a consistent and frequent basis (Gaggle Safety, n.d.). Gaggle's HMS allows this type of monitoring to be done. The HMS assigns a Gaggle employee to a set of student accounts. This employee is responsible for the monitoring of the assigned student accounts, relieving the teacher of both the pressure and responsibility. The school district is also informed of any possible violations that students may do by sending questionable messages. In

Table 1.   Student Filtering

Internet Danger	Internet Security Measure	Function
• Exposure to illegal or harmful material • Receiving unsolicited messages • Being lured into a physical encounter	Blocked words	Gaggle filters e-mail messages and attachments, as well as postings to blogs, message boards, chat rooms, and other activities for inappropriate language, including profanity, drug references, sexual references, and potential threats to student safety. Lists are frequently updated to stay current on the constantly evolving slang and text-speak being used by youth today.
• Exposure to illegal or harmful material • Being lured into a physical encounter	Anti-Pornography Scanner (APS)	Content of images are analyzed and appropriate images are can distinguish between inappropriate images. The antipornography scanner has been engineered with total safety in mind. It decompresses and analyzes zip files, inspects embedded images, and even scans linked pictures and URL addresses in e-mail messages, attachments, blog entries, and other Gaggle activities.
• Receiving unsolicited messages	Blocked domains and addresses	Teachers and administrators can control with whom students can communicate. Student accounts can be restricted to e-mail within their class, school, or district as a group or individually, or set to allow or restrict e-mail to and from specific e-mail addresses or domains.
• Exposure to illegal or harmful material • Receiving unsolicited messages	Blocked attachments	Attachments are filtered through the blocked words list and the antipornography scanner, as well as scanned for viruses.

cases of student safety concerns, like suicide threats or violence, Gaggle immediately contacts the designated school or district contact (Gaggle Safety, n.d.). The HMS became active on July 1, 2012 (Gaggle, n.d.).

GAGGLE AND THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

The Hillsborough County (Florida) school district is now piloting this system at Robinson High School. The digital design class at Robinson High School has 24 students. One of the major problems encountered by the instructor, Ms. Nelson, was having her students save updates to their digital files. The main issue was that students had a documents folder with only 250 MB of storage space. Because they needed more space, Nelson inquired about storage. The school district recommended Gaggle. To receive a student perspective concerning the use of Gaggle, five students from Nelson's class were asked the following five questions:

1. What is Gaggle to you?
2. Is Gaggle User friendly?
3. How would you compare Gaggle to other LMS?
4. Do you like Gaggle?
5. How do your parents view Gaggle?

In response to question one, all the students said "Gaggle is a file storage system." None of the students mentioned the robust options of the Gaggle suite, such as e-mail communication and texting. It is possible that these operations are being achieved through other programs. In response to question two, all students agreed that Gaggle is user-friendly and has a very familiar interface. Concerning question three, most students did not have experience with any other LMS, so they could not make a comparison. In response to question four, the students agreed that they generally like Gaggle. Concerning the

parental impression of Gaggle, only one student's parent was familiar with Gaggle and actually used it to view and monitor the child's assignments.

GAGGLE FOR THE FUTURE

Gaggle recently announced its new instant messaging tool. This tool will allow users to instantly chat with each other and incorporate Gaggle's state of the art safety features. The instant messaging tool is compatible with third-party systems such as Google Talk. Gaggle plans to expand the instant messaging tool to support other programs such as Facebook and Yahoo (Heykamp, 2011). Gaggle has also recently partnered with Microsoft Office to add security to their existing Live@edu and Office 365 services (Heykamp, 2012). Patterson, Gaggle's founder, said, "Gaggle is on the frontline protecting students against cyberbullying, offensive content and many other harmful situations. The safety we provide goes far beyond the Internet and in fact increases real world student health and well-being. It's only natural that we would want to extend our safety umbrella" (Heykamp, 2012).

REFERENCES

Gaggle. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.gaggle.net/home/

Gaggle About Us. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.gaggle.net/home/about-us/

Gaggle Safety. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://gaggle.net/home/safety/

Gaggle Students/Parents. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://gaggle.net/home/frequently-asked-questions/students-parents/
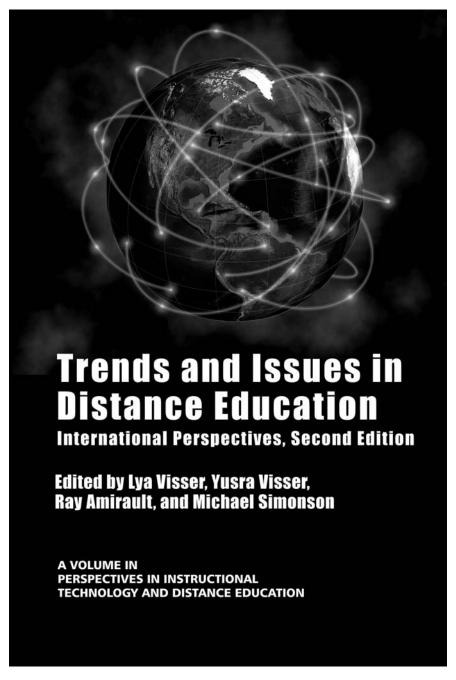
Heykamp, S. (2011). Gaggle. Retrieved from https://gaggle.net/press/Press_Release_Gaggle_Instant_Messaging.pdf

Heykamp, S. (2012). Gaggle. Retrieved from https://gaggle.net/press/Press_Release_Gaggle_Boosts_Student_Safety_for_Microsoft_Office_365.pdf

McIntosh, D. (2012). *Vendors of learning management and e-learning products.* Burnaby, British

Columbia, Canada: Trimeritus eLearning Solution.

O'Reilly, D., & O'Neill, C. (2008). An analysis of Irish primary school children's Internet usage and the associated safety implications.

International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education, 4(3), 40-48.

Rivero, V. (2011). What's new in online teaching and learning. *Internet@School*, 5(18), 8-11.

Online Learning Opportunities for U.S. Military Members and Government Employees

The Army Distributed Learning System

Joan M. Lenahan-Bernard

INTRODUCTION

Nearly 15 years after the Secretary of the Army directed the U.S. Army to develop training programs using available technology

Joan M. Lenahan-Bernard,
Department of the Army,
Fort Leonard Wood, MO 65473.
Telephone: (703) 508-4294.
E-mail: joan.m.lenahanbernard@us.army.mil

(Schumm, Turek, Ballard, & Webb, 2007), the U.S. Army continues to develop and expand its distance education offerings and venues. The Army Distance Learning Program (TADLP) was developed and implemented in 1996 under the direction of the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Dennis J. Reimer. His vision included leadership training delivered in either a blended format or entirely distance learning. In 2002, the "D" in TADLP was changed from distance to distributed in order to evoke a broader definition. The goals of TADLP at the time included leveraging emerging technologies (such as simulations and virtual worlds), providing anytime/anywhere access to training, and improving Army readiness (Schumm et al., 2007). Army policy in 2006 defined distributed learning as "the delivery of standardized individual, collective, and self-development training to soldiers and units at the right place and right time, using multiple means and technologies, with synchronous and asynchronous student-instructor interaction" (Schumm et al., 2007).

Figure 1. Army Distance Learning System: Anywhere, anytime training.

ARMY DISTRIBUTED LEARNING SYSTEM

Today, the TADLP is known as the U.S Army Distributed Learning System (DLS). The DLS program provides for the overarching long-range programming, planning, funding, and acquisition strategy necessary for distributed learning (DL) to become a pillar of Army training (DLS, 2012). DLS acquires, deploys, and maintains a state-of-the-art worldwide learning infrastructure that combines hardware, software, and telecommunications resources with training facilities and course content to deliver a cohesive, Web-based solution (DLS, 2012). The DLS is available to all components (Active, Guard, and Reserve) and Department of the Army civilians. The DLS mission is to provide high quality training that supports the Army goals of improved individual and unit readiness, and standardization of training and training management across the Army (DLS, 2012). By providing quality distance learning opportunities, the DLS aims to increase cost savings/cost avoidance for training events while decreasing disruption of Army family lives. This occurs through less time required for traveling to other locations for training, and maintaining facilities and instructors for training (DLS, 2012).

DLS has been implemented in four incremental phases. The first phase was conducted from 1998 to 2001. There were two main objectives of this phase. The first was to begin the process of integrating and modernizing courseware and hardware. The second objective was to being preparing and equipping distributed Digital Training Facilities (DTF) (DLS, 2012). At the end of increment 1, the DLS delivered video teletraining and interactive multimedia instruction on CD-ROM. These were available to both active army installations and reserve component training centers.

Increment 2 began in 2001. In addition to all Increment 1 capabilities, existing DTFs were networked together. The DTFs continue to be updated with the installation of network switches to connect local area networks to campus area networks, and wide area networks. Students gained increased capabilities such as e-mail, chatting, and discussions and web-based courses on the Internet (DLS, 2012). Increment 2 also added remote enterprise management with automated scheduling and system administration.

During the latter part of 2004, Increment 3 began. The hardware and software for the Army Learning Management System (ALMS) was available. In 2004, the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Reimer directed the establishment of the ALMS as the central location for administrative function supporting training by the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Reimer (Schumm et al., 2007). The functions available on ALMS include student registration, progress tracking, and individual development plans. These features are available to the students, course managers, and career management

Figure 2. Army Learning Management System.

personnel. While Increment 3 is ongoing, one objective achieved is the integrated interface between existing Army systems that track training requirements, personnel systems, and other information databases. Future Increment 3 objectives include the merging of data and video networks into one network, and desktop VTC capabilities to allow access to constructive and simulations training. Increment 4 has overlapped increment 3 (DLS, 2012). Increment 4's objectives focus on the development of the Deployed Digital Training Campuses (DDTC), which will provide distance learning opportunities into theater.

DLS is made of four primary systems. These are the Enterprise Management Center (EMC), two digital training platforms: DTF and the DDTC, the ALMS, and the Army e-Learning site.

The EMC, located at Fort Eustis, VA, is the management hub for the DLS. The centralized functions of the EMC allows for standardized policies and procedures for accounts, security, configuration, and performance management across the Department of Army installations and facilities (DLS, 2012). EMC functions include virus update releases, operating system updates, bandwidth analysis, and student user ID and password management. The EMC also manages all of the DTFs as a network and enables student access to web-based courses.

As part of its mission to provide "anywhere, anytime training" to service members, the DLS maintains two primary facilities: the DTFs and the DDTC) (DLS, 2012). DTFs are located on over 200 active duty installations and reserve component facilities around the United States and in

DTF Sites

DLS Sites
National Guard Sites
● PC Gaming Sites Fielded
○ Projected PC Gaming Sites
● Non-Gaming DTF Sites

CONUS	68
Active Components	21
Reserve Components	47
OCONUS	22
Active Components	20
Reserve Components	2
Total Sites	**90**

Figure 3.   Distance Training Facility locations.

several overseas locations. The DTFs serve to provide a distraction-free learning environment for service members to work on web-based, job related courses. Each DTF houses networked computers. These can be used for web-based and CD-ROM based courses. Service members are able to use video-teleconferencing to access training conducted at another location, either remote or at another location on the installation. Service members are also able to access other service intranets, as well as the Internet (DLS, 2012).

The DDTC is part of the DLS fourth implementation phase. The primary purpose of the DDTCs is to provide access to service members who are deployed in-theater (DLS, 2012). Approximately 20 DDTCs will be configured to go forward into theater with the Army's deployed divisions. The DDTC is a transportable system of networked stations, servers, and simulation

software connected to the Web. Through this system, service members will have access to web-based courses, collaboration tools and video conferencing capabilities. Additionally, DDTCs will be located in the United States at various installations to support surges in training due to deployment. Access to the DTFs and DDTCs requires an Army Knowledge Online (AKO) account, and military or government affiliation.

ARMY LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (ALMS)

In 2004, the Chief of Staff of Army, General Reimer directed that the ALMS be the central portal for distributed learning and training for Army soldiers and civilian employees (ALMS, 2012). The ALMS provides streamlining of many administrative and leadership functions. The ALMS's key
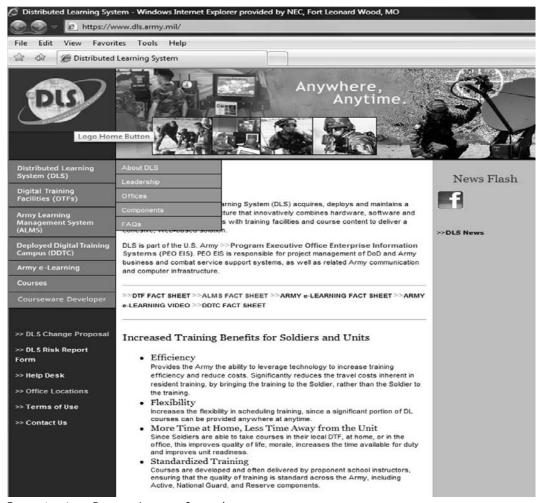
Figure 4.   Army Distance Learning System homepage.

features include a current enrollment and progress menu, completed training and certificate menu, job analysis and education plan, the Collaborative Army Training tool, and the customer service center (ALMS, 2012). Using the ALMS, individuals can search for and enroll in courses for their specific job, professional and leadership development, and mandatory training requirements. In one portal, an individual can locate a course in the catalog of approximately 30 courses, enroll, and launch the course. Upon completion of the modules and final tests, learners see their results immediately. Both score and certificate of completion are available to the learner within minutes. Within a 24-hour period, the learner sees the course credited to his or her Army Training Requests and Requirements System transcript. This transcript is invaluable to service members if the course has been evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE, 2012). Many universities and colleges accept this transcript and grant service members college credit toward completion of certificate and degree programs (ACE, 2012).

After enrolling in a course, the learner can open the "My Plan" tab. Each course with a current enrollment will have a progression bar indicating how much of the

course is completed. An empty bar indicates no portion of the course has been started. As modules are completed, the bar turns green and a percentage complete is shown as well. This is dependent on the total number of modules and/or phases in the course. A "more details" button can be clicked, which shows individual modules by phases (if applicable) and which ones have been completed or started. A red bar indicates that the learner has timed out of the course. This is the case usually for phase completion within a certain time period of registration. Most often this occurs when the distance learning phase must be completed prior to attending a residence phase. Enrollment in both phases may be concurrent but failure to complete the online phase cancels the residence enrollment. When this occurs, the individual must get leadership involvement for reenrollment into online and residence phases. Usually, any work completed online will be lost and must be done over.

The ALMS provides for leaders and certain administrators to see individual records or collective records for units or sections (ALMS, 2012). This feature gives leadership a picture of their unit or section's training readiness and job skill proficiency. This assists leaders and trainers in projection of training time required for all personnel to be ready for a training event or for deployment. It is also helpful for leaders to determine who is ready for more advanced professional military and job series courses. Leaders use this information to secure quotas and funding for service members who may have to attend resident phases of a course. One of the objectives of the chief of staff of the army was to move portions of professional military education to the ALMS (Schumm et al., 2007). Many courses offered to the Reserve and National Guard have several phases on the ALMS. This arrangement has been cost effective in reducing travel and per diem to support residence phases. This has also decreased the amount of time

reserve component service members must leave their civilian employment and family to complete required professional education and job series training.

ARMY E-LEARNING

Another source for training and education for service members and civilian employees is the Army e-Learning site. This site provides no-cost training for all components (active, reserve, and National Guard), cadets, and Department of the Army (DA) civilians. Through e-Learning, learners can earn points and college credits. Enlisted personnel can earn promotion points (1 for every 5 hours of coursework). Department of the Army civilians can earn continuous education units. Reserve component service members can earn retirement points (1 for every 3 hours). College credit can be obtained by taking one of 41 ACE evaluated courses (Army e-Learning, 2012). E-Learning also provides over 40 certification programs such as MCSE, A+ and CISSP, all cost-free to service members and government civilians. All of these support the Army's goals of providing anytime, anywhere training to individuals. By doing so, the Army increases readiness of individual service members while reducing training costs (e-Learning, 2012).

SKILLSOFT

A major provider of training and certification courses on the Army e-learning website is SkillSoft. SkillSoft is a leading provider of on-demand training for an array of businesses, government and education institutions. The design of SkillSoft courses is based on adult learning theories to promote learner initiative, self-management, and experiential learning (SkillSoft, 2012b). Instructional design principles are applied to ensure courses contain user performance objectives and relevant learner activities and assessments. Recently, the University of Phoenix has partnered with
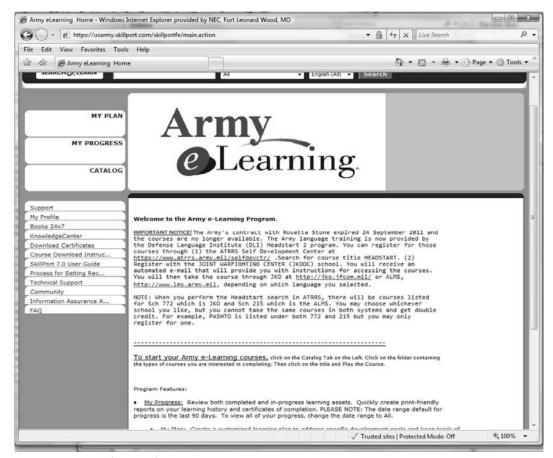
Figure 5.   Army E-learning homepage.

SkillSoft to support service members in achieving educational goals (SkillSoft, 2012a). Over 3,400 SkillSoft courses are eligible for credit toward an undergraduate degree. The University of Phoenix's Prior Learning Assessment Center is responsible for evaluating and granting equivalency credit for SkillSoft courses (SkillSoft, 2012a) for the communication arts and social science degree programs. As well, SkillSoft is approved as an education provider to military spouses through the Military Spouse Career Advancement Account program.

Service members and government civilian employees have access to Books 24x7 at no cost to through the Army e-learning site. Books 24x7 is an on-demand platform that provides online access to thousands of books, reports and manuals (SkillSoft, 2012a). Approximately 15 topical collections are available to registered e-Learning users. Titles include AnalystPerspectives, BusinessPro, and OfficeEssentials. Two new features are being added to e-Learning: Well Being Essentials and Referenceware. Books 24x7 On the Go enables users to access the site using their mobile devices. Other options include MP3, PDF, video and Kindle-ready mobi (SkillSoft, 2012a).

KNOWLEDGMENT MANAGEMENT

E-Learning is also a portal to several knowledge centers: leadership, project management, and information technology security. These enable service members and civilian employees to remain relevant and competitive with private and corpo-

rate organizations. The e-Learning site has proved invaluable to deployed Reserve component soldiers during deployments. This allows service members to build their skill sets and resumes as they prepare to leave the service, either for retirement or other reasons. Civilian employees are able to take training, which would be cost-prohibitive at their own expense. The no-cost courses and certification programs enable the civilian employee to stay up to date and to learn new skills that are beneficial to their organization.

These are all housed on the AKO, which is the single point of entry for the Army's knowledge management system (AKO, 2012). The Army's secure intranet site, AKO, was launched 2001 and serves as a portal to the Army's internal websites and information sources (Knapp, 2001). Since then, AKO has expanded its reach and its capabilities. In 2005, the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) proposed that AKO become a Department of Defense-wide web portal (Federal Computer Week, 2005). AKO continued to expand, offering e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, and collaboration features (Jean, 2005). AKO stays on the cutting edge of technology with the addition of Army Go Mobile (Walsh, 2009). Responding to the tech savvy soldier, AKO can be accessed via an array of mobile devices such as smartphones and video goggles.

CONCLUSION

The vision established nearly 15 years by the secretary of the army to develop training programs using available technology continues to develop and expand in scope. The goal of "anytime, anyplace" training is more critical to maintain operational readiness. More deployments and budget constraints have service members, leaders and trainers doing more in less time and less money. As jobs and equipment in the military become increasingly more technological sophisticated, the ability of service members and government civilians to have access to up to date and relevant courses ensures the work force is effective and competitive in their work. The Army's Distributed Learning System provides the tools and opportunities for service members and government employees to train and maintain their skills.

REFERENCES

American Council on Education. (2012). Retrieved from http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Military_Programs

Army e-Learning. (2012). Retrieved from https://www.us.army.mil/suite/designer

Army Knowledge Online. (2012). Retrieved from https://www.us.army.mil/suite/designer

The Army Learning Management System. (2012). Retrieved from https://www.lms.army.mil/Saba/Web/Main

Distributed Learning System. (2012). Retrieved from https://www.dls.army.mil/

Federal Computer Week. (2005). Army's online portal could be extended across DoD. Retrieved from https://www.us.army.mil/suite/designer

Knapp, L. (2001). Army intranet: World's largest. Retrieved from https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/16516709&inline=true

Jean, G. (2005). Army's web portal expanding under new management. National Defense. Retrieved from https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/16516707&inline=true

SkillSoft. (2012a). University of Phoenix Academic Certification and Continuing Education. Retrieved from https://www.skillsoft.com/about/credit_programs/academic_credit_programs/uop.asp

SkillSoft. (2012b). Instructional design philosophy. Retrieved from https://www.skillsoft.com/about/instructional_design.asp

Schumm, W. R., Turek, D. E., Ballard G. E., & Webb, F. J. (2007). Distance education in the armed forces: Army. In M. G. Moore (Ed.), *Handbook of distance education* (2nd ed., pp. 551-56). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Walsh, T. (2009). Army's Go Mobile puts big computing power into soldiers' pockets. *Government Computer News*. Retrieved from https://www.us.army.mil/suite/designer

Social Places in Virtual Spaces

Creating a Social Learning Community in Online Courses

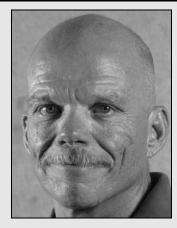**Sheila Bolduc-Simpson and Mark Simpson**

INTRODUCTION

Effective face-to-face (F2F) classroom discussions are those in which learners discover and explore dissonance or inconsistency among themselves. The learners are the ones asking and answering the questions with the instructors serving as guides on the side. Proposed new knowledge is being tested against existing cognitive schema, the learners' personal experiences, or other sources as learners negotiate meaning. Laughter emanates from these noisy discussions and as the semester progresses, friendships are formed.

From the fast-paced spontaneity of F2F discussions, how can instructors make the shift to the written mode of an asynchronous discussion forum (ADF) in their online classes and be successful? Where is the noise, the laughter, and the socializing in an ADF? Can ADFs be structured in a

Sheila Bolduc-Simpson,
Instructor II, College of Arts and Sciences,
Florida Gulf Coast University,
10501 FGCU Blvd. South, Ft. Myers, FL
33965. Telephone: (239) 590-7810.
E-mail: sbolduc@fgcu.edu

Mark Simpson,
Associate Professor, College of Education,
Florida Gulf Coast University,
10501 FGCU Blvd. South, Ft. Myers, FL
33965. Telephone: (239) 590-7757.
E-mail: msimpson@fgcu.edu

way that learners will feel a sense of belonging to a learning community?

Although Garrison and Cleveland-Innes (2005) explain that there are three main components for meaningful learning to take place in computer mediated discussions—cognitive presence, teacher presence, and social presence—this paper focuses solely on the last. The purpose, then, of this action research study is to examine the role that social presence plays in asynchronous discussion forums in creating a sense of belonging in an online course. The authors suggest ways to increase social presence and interaction in online courses through the use of an informally structured discussion forum. In their case, the forum is titled the Anything Else Cafe. The structure of the Anything Else Cafe simulates, to an extent, what occurs in traditional F2F classrooms. The authors also discuss the limitations of this method. The following question guided the study: Can informally structured asynchronous discussion forums be helpful for students in creating a sense of belonging in a social learning community?

Social presence is defined as "the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project their personal characteristics into the community, thereby presenting themselves to the other participants as 'real people'" (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 1999, p. 89). Creating a sense of community in which social interaction can occur is a major concern in the design and delivery of ADFs, not only with instructors but also with students. F2F classroom discussions seem to have the advantage of more personal interaction. In a F2F class, social interaction might take place through formal class discussions, before and after class, or in whispered asides to a nearby student. In an ADF, there are no pre- or postclass chats, nor are there any whispered asides to establish a social presence among the members of the group. Therefore, it is important that within the actual discussion forum similar such social inter-

actions be permitted to take place. The incorporation of social presence in the ADF can promote greater understanding of course material and different points of view. Friendly exchanges of opinion can reflect a strong social presence (Peterson & Caverly, 2006). ADFs that are designed specifically for students to have these social exchanges may offer opportunities for students to feel they are part of a social community.

ONLINE COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Social-constructivist pedagogies are defined by their social interaction. In distance learning, this interaction is always mediated. It is thought to be an integral component of quality distance learning (Garrison, 1997). Being a participant in a community is a vital component of the educational process. In that process of learning, meaning is negotiated in a collaborative and social environment (Barab & Duffy, 2000).

Anderson and Dron (2011) note that there has been much research on the value of creating social presence in both synchronous and asynchronous models of education. However, the more immersive technologies, such as Second Life, can provide the social enhancements that are not available in traditional synchronous and asynchronous forums. These social enhancements include forms of body language, like gestures, costumes, and voice intonation. In the traditional text-based ADF, these features are not available to the learner. The learner only has text and perhaps emoticons to show mood and emotion. The nonverbal signals present in F2F discussions are missing in the ADF format so ADF participants cannot read the body language, note the hesitation, nor hear the sarcasm in the writer's voice.

The "here and now" quality of the F2F discussion is in sharp contrast to the "there and whenever" aspect of the asynchro-

nous environment in which ADF participants operate. While F2F participants elaborate and repeat information, ADF participants try to increase communication efficiency by reducing unnecessary elaborative statements and repetition in their social interactions. Written communication is leaner so that ADF participants can reduce the typing requirements and express their thoughts clearly and concisely (Marra, Moore, & Klimczak, 2007).

MacDonald and Caverly (2001), on the other hand, do not see a big distinction between what occurs in F2F discussions and what takes place in asynchronous environments, particularly with the type of online discussions between students and instructors. In fact, they describe online discussions as "having a party in a dark living room. No one can see one another, but everyone hears what is being said" (para. 13). They identify three types of online discussions: (1) discussions where students ask the instructor or mentor questions; (2) discussions that encourage student-to-student interaction; and, (3) discussions that are student centered and led.

These three types of discussion formats are socially constructed. Social constructivism relies on two-way communication technologies that allow opportunities for interactions between and among students and teachers, like those offered in synchronous and asynchronous discussion forums. In a social-constructivist pedagogy, there is the acknowledgement of the social nature of knowledge and of its creation in the minds of individual learners. It is essential that distance education be a social activity rather than a one-way communication activity that is passively consumed by the learner (Anderson & Dron, 2011). The asynchronous discussion forum can be the venue for engaging in this two-way communication activity. Golding (2011) views an educational constructivist discussion as "a discourse between two or more people, at least one of whom is a student, that involves the student(s) actively constructing their own knowledge" (p. 469).

METHOD

THE SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

ENC 3250 Professional Writing is offered every semester through the Department of Language and Literature in the College of Arts and Sciences at Florida Gulf Coast University. All sections are offered online. This course is an upper division undergraduate course that fulfills a communication requirement set by the Florida State Board of Education. The data presented in this study are from one section of virtual ENC 3250 Professional Writing collected during the fall 2011 semester.

PROCEDURE

Students are introduced to the Anything Else Café before the class begins when the syllabus is mailed to the course enrollees. The participation policy section of the syllabus states that 10% of the student's grade is determined by the student's participation in the course. Students are informed that ENC 3250 is not a self-study class and they will be expected to be accountable not only for their own learning but for the learning of others in the class. The instructors explain that participation in an online class is just as important, if not more important, than it is in a face-to-face class.

The Anything Else Café is one component of the participation grade. The minimum participation requirement is to post and/or reply twice a week. The other two components are study team participation and log-in activity.

At midterm, approximately 8 weeks into the course, students are asked to generate a participation report using the Report tab in Angel in which they document their log-in activity, their study team participation, and their participation in the Anything

Else Café. This documentation is quantitatively based and not dependent on the quality of their posts or replies. They can meet the minimum requirement, exceed it, or significantly exceed the minimum requirement. At the end of the report, they provide justification for the scores they have given themselves. At the end of the course, they have another opportunity to generate a participation report using the same criteria. Each of the reports is worth 5% of their grade, or 10% total for the midterm and the final participation grade.

DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected for this study were generated by the "At a Glance" function in the Anything Else Café discussion forum over an 8-week period. This view provides information about activity trends, total post activity, and topical activity. In other words, this bird's eye view gives a picture of when the students posted, how frequently they posted, the ratio of student communication to instructor communication, and the most popular and least popular topics that were discussed.

Other data were collected using the Threaded View feature in the discussion forum. Using this view, the researchers were able to examine the content of the posts and replies. Discussion forum transcripts were viewed in order to analyze the kinds of communication that were occurring in the forum. This communication was categorized into: course related queries, other queries, informational postings, and responses to posts that were information related.

The final set of data was collected in the form of a 10-question survey to students about their experience with the Anything Else Café and their use of these kinds of cafés for creating a social learning community. Vonderwell (2003) states, "Examining the communication experiences and perspectives of online students can help

instructors design effective communication practices using asynchronous communication tools" (p. 78). The survey responses gave the researchers insights into how the Anything Else Café was being perceived by students.

FINDINGS

ANYTHING ELSE CAFÉ AT A GLANCE

Figure 1 provides a bird's eye view of the postactivity that took place in the Café during the semester.

The data presented in Figure 2 indicate that the Anything Else Café served as a vehicle for creating a strong social presence in this online course. As shown in Figure 1 this two-way communication forum was a student-to-student generated one rather than primarily an instructor-to-student interaction. Student participation represented 88% of the communication, whereas the instructor's participation was 12%. Even in the course-related inquiry posts, students worked out the answers to the questions and helped each to clarify assignment directions, due dates, questions on whether classmates could view their profile pictures, and questions about how to embed video and insert live links
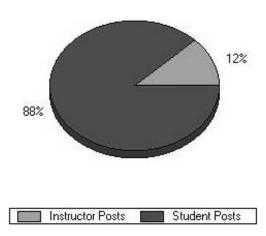
Figure 1.   Comparison of instructor postactivity to student postactivity.

Anything Else Cafe

Settings Reports Utilities Submissions Delete

New Post | At-a-Glance View ▼ | 🔲 |

┌─ Total Post Activity ──────────────────────

Moderator topic posts: 14
Moderator reply posts: 129

Non-moderator topic posts: 264
Non-moderator reply posts: 747

Total topic posts: 278
Total reply posts: 876

Replies per topic: 3.15

Figure 2.   Comparison of moderator (instructor) post/reply activity to nonmoderator (student) post/reply activity.

into a discussion forum. Overall, the posts were personal in nature, such as the very popular National Football League (NFL) talk. Other topics included talking about the weather, announcing events on and off campus, sharing stories about the everyday stress of being an undergraduate student at the university, sharing of resources about part time job opportunities, book and movie recommendations, service learning opportunities, internship opportunities, and talk of upcoming holidays.

The Anything Else Café was an active place for students to meet in cyberspace as one can see in Figure 2. The student postreply activity compared to the instructor-to-instructor postreply activity indicates that students interacted with one another in a democratic space that was controlled by the students. Topics were initiated by the students in this informal learning environment. The 1,011 posts and replies by students far exceeded the 143 posts by the instructor. Over the course of the 8 weeks, these 1,011 posts and replies

averaged 2.8 posts/replies per student per week, which significantly exceeded the requirement of two posts per week for this component of the participation grade.

SURVEY RESULTS

Of the 44 students enrolled in this section of ENC 3250 Professional Writing, 34 responded to the survey, representing a 77% response rate. There were ten questions that were asked related to the use of ADFs in creating a social learning community in online classes.

Although the activity trends and posts provided the researchers with evidence of a strong social presence in the Anything Else Café, the survey results addressed whether the students themselves perceived this forum as an important way to establish a social learning community. Thirty of the 34 respondents of the survey, or 88.2% of the respondents, said it was important or somewhat important to have a social community in a professional writing online class; 70.6% of the respondents thought that the Anything Else Café was a good way to create a social community for online learners; 14.5%, or 5 respondents, thought that the Anything Else Café might be a good way to create a social community. One student wrote, "It absolutely is. I feel like I actually know some of my classmates, which is really rare for an online class."

Questions 3 and 4 told a slightly different narrative about why students visited the café. The primary reason for 61.8% of the students was to satisfy the requirement for the Anything Else Café participation component of the course. The secondary reason was to socialize with fellow peers (32.4%) or respond to any of the other students who might be having problems with an assignment (32.4%). One might conclude from these data that participation in the Café might be low if the mandatory participation requirement were removed.

Question 10 on the survey provided some useful insights into the mandatory use of the Café to promote a social learning community. Respondents were asked, "If the Anything Else Café weren't a component of your participation grade, would you use it?" Forty-four percent answered that they would use it, while 32.4% said that they would probably use it. Again, it can be concluded that even if the Café were not a component of the students' participation grade, over three quarters of the students would use it or would probably use it. The Appendix includes the survey, results and sample student responses.

DISCUSSION

An informal and unstructured forum, such as the Anything Else Café, whose primary function is to create a social environment, provides opportunities for students to create their own social space where they can interact with one another to form a social community. Although asynchronous in nature, it can simulate what happens in the face-to-face classroom.

The following are five strategies for the successful implementation of such a café:

1. Make it very transparent to the students at the start of the course that taking an online course is not an individual experience but a collaborative and social one.
2. Separate any structured ADFs that are part of the course from the more informal and structured forum whose main purpose is to create a social community.
3. Establish this informal and structured forum as a mandatory component of the participation grade.
4. Structure two participation grades: one at midterm and the other at the end of the course, which will provide opportunities for students to become more actively engaged after the midterm.

5. Allow students to control the forum by not rushing in to respond to posts and require that they generate their own participation reports of their activity.

These strategies are founded on theories of social constructivism. A comprehensive understanding of the role that asynchronous communication can play in forming communities of inquiry should provide researchers and practitioners with effective ways to implement a strong social presence in online communities.

CONCLUSION

This action research study explored the role that ADFs can play in establishing a social presence and a sense of belonging in online courses. Results indicate that an ADF that is informally structured can be helpful for students in creating a sense of belonging in a social learning community. Most students enrolled in this online course realized the benefits of using an ADF as a way to create a social learning community. This community of inquiry model values interactions of a social nature that support the discourse of online communities (Garrison & Anderson, 2003).

Although an ADF cannot replicate the natural and spontaneous social interaction that occurs in F2F classes, it can provide a space and a place for students to socially construct knowledge and connect with one another to form social networks that will help them survive, if not thrive, in their online courses.

Online instructors who wish to make connections to their students and have their students connect with one another in a social space will benefit from implementing this ADF design. This more informal yet unstructured ADF will encourage social presence and provide opportunities for students to interact with one another to build strong social learning communities.

APPENDIX: ENC 3250 ANYTHING ELSE CAFÉ SURVEY

1. How important is it to you to have a social community in an online professional writing class?

a	Very important	52.9%	18
b	Somewhat important	35.3%	12
c	Not important at all	11%	4

2. In general, how often do you log into your ENC 3250 course in a week?

a	Once a week	5.9%	1
b	Twice a week	5.9%	2
c	Three times a week	26.5%	9
d	Four times a week	26.5%	9
e	Five times a week	17.6%	6
f	Every day	17.6%	6

3. What is your primary reason for going into the Anything Else Café?

a	To post a query	0%	0
b	To post my news	8.8%	3
c	To socialize with my fellow peers and see what they are up to	20.6%	7
d	To respond to any of my peers who may be having problems with an assignment	26.5%	9
e	To satisfy the requirement for this participation component of the course	8.8%	3
f	Other	0%	0

4. What is your second most important reason for going into the Anything Else Café?

a	To post a query	2.9%	1
b	To post my news	11.8%	4
c	To socialize with my fellow peers and see what they are up to	32.4%	11
d	To respond to any of my peers who may be having problems with an assignment	32.4%	11
e	To satisfy the requirement for this participation component of the course	19.6%	7
f	Other	0%	0

5. How many times in an average week do you go into the Anything Else Café?

a	Zero times a week	8.8%	3
b	Once a week	20.6%	7
c	Twice a week	17.6%	6
d	Three times a week	23.5%	8
e	More than three times a week	29.4%	10

6. Do you think that the Anything Else Café is a good way to create a social community of learners? Explain your answer.

a	Yes	70.6%	24
b	No	11.8%	4
c	Maybe	14.7%	5
d	I don't know.	2.9%	1

Sample Student Comments:

- "There are many things that can be done in the Anything Else Café. What I have seen is that it serves as a hub for people to get answers to questions regarding the course. Students also usually announce activities and/or events that might be going around the area or college campus. There is also the habitual chit chat about everyday life as expected which is good and keeps things fresh outside the learning web."
- "Yes because it gives a location for students to converse that doesn't have to be concerning a particular assignment. Gives students the ability to know others."
- "I can see where it can be a clever way to create a social community, but I don't think it should be required because of the fact that I do not respond to someone's posts that I do not know."

7. How important is it to you to have a social community in an online class? Explain your answer.

a	Yes	41.2%	14
b	No	38.2.%	13
c	Maybe	20.6%	7

Sample Student Comments:

- "Without a social community on an online class, you have no means of interacting with other students."
- "It can keep people in touch with each other and help college students make friends/study partners, etc."
- "Any kind of social contact is important. Having the chance to socialize in an online class is great."
- "I believe the virtual classes lose the social aspect of going to school. The Anything Else Café is a step in the right direction."

8. How important is it to you to have a learning community in an online class (e.g., discussion forums, peer editing groups, study teams)?

a	Very important	55.9%	19
b	Somewhat important	32.5%	11
c	Not important at all	11.8%	4

Sample Student Comments:

- "A learning community in a class is very important because speaking to classmates about the assignments and trying to better understand them from peers makes it easier to swallow."
- "Working with others helps you learn the subjects better and without these things, there would be little to no interaction with other students."
- "I think a learning community is an important element and it must always be a part of an online class. Makes the online class be more than student-computer-professor relationship, which brings it closely to a regular class."
- "Getting advice from multiple people all in the same class is helpful because someone might find something you or someone else wouldn't."

9. Do you think that the Anything Else Café is a good place for online learners to establish a learning community? Explain your answer.

a	Yes	61.8%	21
b	No	11.8%	4
c	Maybe	14.7%	5
d	I don't know.	11.8%	4

Sample Student Comments:

- "The Anything Else Café allows for interaction and is a way for students to go to other students for help with assignments. Also, by using this as a way to grade participation, it pushes people to be more involved and learn actively."
- "It can be helpful for those that need assistance when a professor can't respond immediately, but it is mostly full of chit-chat to fulfill a requirement."
- "One could establish a learning community, but I feel it establishes a place to create conversation which has potential to lead to a learning community."

10. If the Anything Else Café weren't a component of your participation grade, would you use it? Explain your answer.

a	Yes	44.1%	15
b	Maybe	32.4%	11
c	I don't know.	0%	0
d	No	23.5%	7

Sample Student Comments:

- "I would use it. Then again, would I use it as often? Probably not. I guess it would all depend on what goes around in the Anything Else Café. What the topics are, etc. There must be motivation and with all the things going on in a student's life, there is little time to make a place for it. So, by making it mandatory, I think the Anything Else Café gets its 'motivational boost'—which basically is 10% of your grade."
- "I'm not sure that I would. If I ran into a problem with an assignment, I might go post a question on the forum, but usually the assignments are pretty self explanatory."
- "I wouldn't use it as much probably, but there are usually interesting topics being discussed so I'd definitely use it.

References

Anderson, T., & Dron, J. (2011). Three generations of distance education pedagogy. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning 12*(3). Retrieved from http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/890/1663

Barab, S. A., & Duffy, T. (2000). From practice fields to communities of practice. In D. Jonassen & S. Land (Eds.), *Theoretical foundations of learning environments.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Garrison, D. R. (1997). Computer conferencing: The post-industrial age of distance education. *Open Learning*, *12*(2), 3-11.

Garrison, D. R., & Anderson, T. (2003). *Elearning in the 21st century*. London, England: Routledge-Farmer.

Garrison, D. R., Anderson T., & Archer W. (1999). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education, 2*, 87-105. doi:10.1016/S1096-7516(00)00016-6

Garrison, D. R., & Cleveland-Innes, M. (2005). Facilitating cognitive presence in online learning: Interaction is not enough. *The American Journal of Distance Education, 19*(3), 133-148.

Golding, C. (2011). The many faces of constructivist discussion. *Educational Philosophy and Theory 43*(5), 467-483. doi:10.1111/j1469-5812.2008.00481.x

MacDonald, L., & Caverly, D. (2001). Techtalk: Engendering online discussion. *Journal of Developmental Education, 25*(1), 42.

Marra, R. M., Moore, J. L., & Klimczak, A. K. (2004). Content analysis of online discussion forums: A comparative analysis of protocols. *Educational Technology Research & Development*, *52*, 23-40.

Peterson, C., & Caverly, D. (2006). Techtalk: What students need to know about online discussion forums. *Journal of Developmental Education*, *29*(3), 40-41. Retrieved from http://www.ncde.appstate.edu/publications/jde/index.htm

Vonderwell, S. (2003). An examination of asynchronous communication experiences and perspectives of students in an online course: A case study. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *6*, 77-90. doi:10.1016/S1096-7516(02)00164-1

THREE TYPES OF ONLINE DISCUSSIONS:

(1) DISCUSSIONS WHERE STUDENTS ASK THE INSTRUCTOR OR MENTOR QUESTIONS,

(2) DISCUSSIONS THAT ENCOURAGE STUDENT-TO-STUDENT INTERACTION, AND

(3) DISCUSSIONS THAT ARE STUDENT CENTERED AND LED.

Putting Asynchronous Discussions Under the Lens
Improving Discussions Through Student Examination

Lane W. Clarke

W hen I moved from teaching face-to-face classes to teaching online classes I tried to cling to the practices that had been successful for me when working with students in real time. One of these practices was holding class discussions. By engaging students in talk, I knew that they were active participants in the class, they were coconstructing knowledge through interactions with others, and they were visibly demonstrat-

Lane W. Clarke,
Assistant Professor Literacy,
Decary Hall 149,
University of New England.
Telephone: (207) 602-2682.
E-mail: lclarke1@une.edu

ing their ability to think and process the topics they were learning. It seemed common sense to engage students in similar discursive opportunities in their online learning experiences. Turning to asynchronous discussions is an accepted practice in online learning. King (2002) designated essential elements of success in online learning. Among the six criteria she lists, one of the most important is facilitating effective dialogue among classmates. Carr-Chellman and Duchastel (2000) assert that asynchronous discussions should be a feature as they believe that students "learn as much from one another's experiences as they may from a textbook" (p. 236).

What I did not realize, however, when bringing this pedagogical practice into the online environment, is that asynchronous discussions would not just enrich my student's learning of the content, but give both of us the opportunity to deepen our understanding about the connection between discussions and engagement, reflection, and learning. By putting asynchronous discussions under a lens and closely examining this practice, my students and I were able to develop an awareness that is not always afforded by fast-paced real time face-to-face discussions. I had thought that I was just taking class discussions online, but realized that asynchronous discussions are not just different but also provide an opportunity for stu-

dents to learn more about the material, more about themselves, and more about learning.

ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSIONS AND ONLINE LEARNING

Asynchronous discussions have been an accepted part of online learning for a variety of reasons. One of the most common explanations is they allow us to know that our students are engaged in the material. In a face-to-face class we can use more informal measures, such as eye contact, body language, and facial expressions to gauge student engagement; in an online class where these are all absent, one thing an instructor relies upon are asynchronous discussions to measure that students are actively engaged in learning. Thomas (2002) saw online discussions as the perfect forum for viewing students' engagement through their level of participation in these discussions. Rovai (2007) stated that the goal in online courses is to create a learning environment that motivates students to be active learners, participate in positive social interaction, and be engaged in the course. Using asynchronous discussions in an online course is one way we know our students are engaged and we know that when they are engaged with the material their learning will be more successful.

We also use asynchronous discussions because we believe that through these discursive interactions students are more likely to understand the material at deeper levels. It is one thing to process in the material but another thing to engage in it at higher levels. Peterson and Slotta (2009) emphasized that the development of communities through writing is a significant form of communication in an online course because the relationship between writing and active thinking can lead to more powerful learning.

Finally, the fact that asynchronous discussions are written, typically drawn out over time, and exist long after real time dis-

cussions, provides the opportunity for students to use this forum to engage in more meaningful reflection about a topic (Harasim, 2000). Peterson and Slotta (2009) maintain that writing communities are a significant form of communication and even can be seen as a pedagogical advantage as both the students and the instructor have increased accessibility to all students' thinking about the topics. By having more time and seeing all members' participation in a discussion we are also given the opportunity to reflect upon these discussions. This reflective piece is exactly what I highlighted with my class in order to achieve a deeper understanding of not just the material, but also the process of discussion as well.

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN EXAMINATION

As my experience with online teaching progressed, I learned more and more about asynchronous discussions. I revised my rubrics to establish clearer expectations for involvement. I posted exemplars of what good discussions looked like. I analyzed my questions and prompts to make sure they facilitated substantive conversations. I gave student's choices of topics and questions. I participated regularly in discussions and modeled the types of interactions I desired of my students. I gave detailed feedback about participation and quality of responses. I was working *really* hard—but I realized that *I* was doing all of the hard work to ensure successful discussions. While I am not averse to working hard, it soon became obvious to me that it was not *my* learning that I was trying to improve and if I really wanted the students to benefit from the rewards of this discursive community, I needed to find a way to get them to share in the responsibility of improving online discussions.

It was this goal that led me to create two assignments that I creatively called "Threaded Discussion Reflection One" and

"Threaded Discussion Reflection Two" (see Appendix A for both of these assignments). This assignment took place in a graduate level course for teachers getting their master's in education. The course was an 8-week literacy course called "Connecting Reading and Writing for Student Success." The course was delivered through the Blackboard 9.0 learning management system. In the syllabus I explained to the students that being part of a discourse community is part of the learning process and that the purpose of these two assignments was to reflect on how engaging in asynchronous discussions would help them become more thoughtful, more informed, and more reflective online students. The first assignment came at the end of Module 1 (a 2-week module) where students were asked to reflect on their participation in one of the four discussions and set some discursive goals. Students had been broken into grade level groups for these discussions. The group membership stayed the same throughout the course and the groups averaged between five and eight students.

The students were asked to respond to a template that prompted them to engage in an *individual analysis*, *group analysis*, and *goal setting*. For the individual analysis the students were asked to think about the *quantity* of their posts. Specifically, they were asked to tabulate how many posts they contributed to the discussion as well as the length of these posts. Students were also asked to look at the *quality* of their own contributions. First, I asked them to look at their initial post to the discussion. I asked them if this post connected to the reading, to their own experiences, and if others responded to this post. Then I asked students to look at their comments to others in the group. When looking at their contributions, I asked them to analyze if these comments were supportive, challenging, extending, and how these contributed to the group. I also asked them to

engage in a group analysis. First, I had them examine one discussion and look at the *quantity*: how long was the discussion, how many people posted, who posted the most/least and to look for overall posting patterns in the group. I also asked them to look at the *quality* of this discussion; specifically how the group's posts contributed to the student's understanding, whose posts stimulated the most thought, and with whose posts did the student connect. Finally, I asked them to set two *discussion goals* for themselves. I asked them to establish one goal for their initial posts and one goal for their contribution to the group. I wanted them to really focus on how they could improve on their initial posts and how they could stimulate more discussion through this post.

With this analysis and their personal goals to work on I then asked the students to engage in discussions again in Module 3. In this 2-week module, students again engaged in four different threaded discussions. At the end of this module, I asked them to go back to one of the threaded discussions that they participated in, reread this discussion, and engage in an individual, group, and overall analysis. The individual and group analysis in this assignment was the same from the previous task. In addition, however, students were asked to reflect upon the goals that they set for themselves in the first assignment and if they were accomplished. In addition, students were asked how this activity influenced their about this type of discursive community.

Having the students engage in this task and reflection put them in the driver's seat of improving these asynchronous discussions. They showed me that they could closely examine their own participation, set goals for themselves, and engage in meaningful reflection that made these discursive interactions more effective and more powerful.

ASSIGNMENT 1: ESTABLISHING THE *WHAT/HOW/WHEN* OF DISCUSSIONS

After the first round of reflections some clear themes emerged from the students. Most interestingly the students reflected on *what* made an effective post, *how* group process worked most effectively, and *when* the discussions were most productive. First, students were able to clearly articulate *what* made an effective initial post. According to students, productive initial posts made meaningful connections, offered insights, extended the conversation, and included references. Many students recognized that sometimes the initial posts seemed to focus too much on the prompt and not enough on connecting his/her initial post to the existing conversation. For example, one student noticed that often in the first hours of a discussion multiple people would post parallel responses to the question similar to multiple people talking at the same time but not listening to each other. Some students made goals for themselves to read the first few posts first, before constructing his or her initial response—that way they would be building on a conversation rather than just adding another solo voice. Many students also mentioned that including a question in his or her initial post would stimulate further discussion. They reported that often they waited for the instructor to pose the questions and neglected that they could also probe for information and push a conversations deeper through his/her own questioning of the group. Asking more questions and challenging themselves to dig deeper in these initial posts were the two most common goals established by the students. One student commented, "Ending with a question not only would provoke discussion but would also demonstrate that I am actively thinking about the material and not just trying to get the assignment done."

The students were also able to articulate *how* groups functioned. Many students believed that their contributions were supportive and offered encouragement. When students engaged in the group analysis it became very evident who were the "big" posters and who did not post enough. This disparity in posts led to many group goals about spacing out posts by different people. Also, the group analysis enabled students to notice who connected with who and why. By mapping out these interaction patterns students were much more aware of how groups function in online discursive environments and how some members tended to carry more weight of the discussions than others. This was also seen in the goal setting, where many students responded, based on this group analysis, they needed to participate more or less depending on these interaction patterns. One student responded that her goal was to "have my shorter posts carry a bit more meaning."

Finally, students became very aware of the *when* of discussions and how timing impacted the success of discussions. For example, some students reported that their group's discussions happened in "spurts" and that was sometimes hard to keep up with. For example, one student noticed, "I feel like I missed a big part of the conversation after just being away for 12 hours." Students also reported that a continual back and forth was much easier to keep up with and less overwhelming than posting and then stepping away and coming back. Every day checkers and contributors were much more effective. Also, many students set goals to post earlier in the week as students noticed that when they responded late sometimes their post did not generate a response. As one student stated, "this was discouraging to me as I prepared for question two but did not get another response for 2 days, making it difficult to get the discussion rolling." Students picked up on the timing of the posts and also how different groups established different

norms for this timing depending on group participation. Students noticed that if they had one or two members who would get a jump start on the discussion that this impacted the rest of the members.

While I was certainly aware of the what/how/when of discussions, it was much more effective for these profiles of what made a productive discussion to come from the students. By engaging them in this examination, they took ownership for their own learning through this forum.

ASSIGNMENT 2: INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

After the first round of reflection, the students were to engage in two more modules of asynchronous discussions (each module was 2-weeks long). This course had five sections and in between the two reflections I asked the other instructors if they noticed a difference. One instructor said that the subsequent discussions produced some of the best writing she had seen over the courses. Others noticed a difference as a result of giving the students an opportunity to stop and reflect. At the end of Module 3, I asked the students to reflect again. As a result of this reflection two different themes emerged. One was an increased awareness of the student's individual responsibility to these discussions and the other was a deeper understanding of the social construction of knowledge and how this impacted learning.

One of the most powerful takeaways came as students increased their awareness of the importance of their individual responsibility to the discussion. Students were more conscious of their own participation—they reported that this reflection caused them to "think more about my responses," "communicate more accurately," and "contribute more than "I agree" to the discussion." They were able to see the connection of their posts to the overall success of the group. This account-

ability to others showed up in comments such as "my posts did not stimulate more discussion" or "my posts were supportive." One student commented that when another classmate mentioned something she went out and looked up the resource and learned more about it on her own. Another student commented, "I didn't receive any replies to my initial posting and since my posting didn't receive any replies I made an effort to take an interest in other postings and added my questions and feedback." Instead of seeing discussions as a requirement for the course, this student realized that she had responsibility to her own learning and since others didn't respond to her she made more of an effort to reach out on her own. Through this reflection students reported having a great understanding of how their participation influenced others. One student commented: "This reflection really made me think about the discussion process and how my discussion fit with the rest of the group. I enjoy asynchronous discussion because everyone has an opportunity to be 'heard' unlike a traditional classroom where one person may dominate, or we run out of time for everyone to be heard."

Unlike this face-to-face discussion, students realized that engaging in an asynchronous discussion put more emphasis on individual responsibility for participation. One student realized that this participation was beneficial regardless of others as she commented, "I feel strongly that my contributions to a discussion are at least helping me. So if no one else is reading them or responding to them, then I am still gaining something by writing down my ideas."

While the above student realized that even if no one else listened the act of writing contributes to deeper understanding; many students reported becoming more aware of the power of the social construction of knowledge that was facilitated through these discussions. Students recognized that the group contributed new

ideas and explored different avenues. One student commented, "Left alone to read and digest knowledge we might not delve as deeply in the learning as we do when we discuss with others." Another student called her group "small but mighty," while another student recognized that the group was only as good as the members who contributed to it. Students articulated that their learning was improved as a result of engaging in this social discursive community. One student commented, "Although we all started the discussion by answering a single question, our different responses and unique experiences allowed the conversation to grow and change. In the end, we shared much more information than what was initially asked of us and it resulted in everyone learning more from each other in a meaningful way."

Working together to learn in a group was recognized by students. In the students' analysis they noticed how "everyone's comments built off one another" and how this contributed to a greater learning experience. Students also reported that as a result of the social aspect, they felt more motivated by and accountable to their group. One student mentioned, "I have to admit, it was a little overwhelming at times but I stayed a part of the conversation because I found what the members of my groups were posting to be interesting and I wanted to include my two cents!"

ENGAGEMENT, REFLECTION AND LEARNING: WHAT COMES NEXT?

By engaging students in a self-reflection of asynchronous discussions both the students and I became much more aware of how these discussions could contribute to increased engagement, reflection, and deep learning. Students reported that this experience stimulated their thinking; pondered how these discussions tied to their deepened thinking of the material, and made them realize how their individual contributions impacted others in the group. This experience made me realize that giving students exemplars and modeling productive discursive interaction was not enough. If I really wanted asynchronous discussions to be powerful, the students need to be engaged in these discussions beyond surface level participation. Through this examination I felt that my students were more engaged in their own learning and the course material, and they were given an opportunity to reflect upon their interactions in a more concrete manner, which led to a higher level of learning. However, like any meaningful learning activity I am left with more questions and ideas about how to improve asynchronous discussions. Some lingering questions that I have are:

- Is there a connection between online and face-to-face discussion as a result of this type of student reflection?
- Do students take this increased awareness into other courses' asynchronous discussions?
- Could I measure learning effectiveness in classes that are just given models of discussions vs. classes where students engage in this type of reflection?
- How could I engage students in creating "teaching" opportunities to others on how to improve asynchronous discussions?

Putting asynchronous discussions under the lens and letting students take the reins of improving online discussions, is a powerful next step in both furthering our understanding and improving upon this effective practice. Through his activity, I have come to realize that by including asynchronous discussions in my online classes I am not just carrying over a successful face-to-face practice but creating an opportunity for an even more powerful practice.

Threaded Discussion Reflection
Module One and Three
6 Points Total (3 + 3)

Overview: We write to learn and also write to demonstrate understanding. We need to be purposeful about why we ask students to write to learn. In this class we use a lot of threaded discussions but do we take the time to reflect on why we do these and how we can improve on our participation in this type of discourse community? Being part of a discourse community is part of the learning process. In this class we expect that your participation in threaded discussions will not just demonstrate that you are processing this information, but also will enable you to be a productive contributor to a learning community. However, we believe that it is not good enough just to be a part of a discourse community but also to reflect on how this writing experience is helping you become a more thoughtful, more informed, and a more reflective teacher about writing and learning. In order to use writing to further our growth as learners we need to take some time to step back and reflect on how writing communities contribute to our learning process. At the end of Module 1 you will be asked to reflect on your participation in the threaded discussions and set some discursive goals. You will be asked to reflect again at the end of Module 3.

Task: After participating in a threaded discussion in each module you will be asked to complete and submit a brief reflection about how your participation in this discourse community impacted both your own personal engagement with the content and also contributed to a positive coconstructed experience for deepening understanding. After each module you will be asked to fill out the Reflection sheet and submit it to assignments.

Task

1. Go back to one of the two threaded discussions that you participated in.
2. Reread this discussion and look for the following things:

- **Individual Analysis**

  i. Quantity

    - How many posts did you contribute to the discussion?
    - How long were your posts?

  ii. Quality

    - Initial Post—Look at your initial post—did this post connect to the reading? Did this post connect to your own experience? Did your post stimulate discussion (did others respond to it)?
    - Comments to the group—Look at your contributions to the group—were your comments supportive? Challenging? Did they extend the conversation? What did you contribute to the group?

- **Group Analysis**

  i. Quantity

    - How long was your group discussion? How many people posted? Who posted the most? Who posted the least? What did you notice about overall posting patterns for your group?

  ii. Quality

    - How did the group's posts contribute to your understanding? Whose posts stimulated thought for you? Whose posts did you connect with?

- **Goals—Module 1**

  i. Create a goal for your individual contribution as well as your group

contribution based on this reflection.

- **Goals—Module 3**
  i. Think about the two goals that you set for yourself in module one. Did you accomplish these goals—why or why not?
  ii. How did this activity influence your thinking around the coconstruction of knowledge in a discursive community?

REFERENCES

Carr-Chellman, A., & Duchastel, P. (2000). The ideal online course. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 31*(3), 229-241.

Harasim, L. (2000). Shift happens: Online education as a new paradigm in learning. *The Internet and Higher Education, 3*(1), 41-61.

King, K. P. (2002). Identifying success in online teacher education and professional development. *Internet and Higher Education, 5,* 231-246.

Peterson, S. S., & Slotta, J. (2009). Saying yes to online learning: A first time experience teaching an online graduate course in literacy education. *Literacy Research and Instruction, 48,* 120-136.

Rovai, A. P. (2007). Facilitating online discussions effectively. *Internet and Higher Education, 10*(1), 77-88.

Thomas, M. (2002). Learning within incoherent structures: The space of online discussion forums. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, 18*(3), 351-366.

ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION WOULD NOT JUST ENRICH MY STUDENT'S LEARNING OF THE CONTENT, BUT GIVE BOTH OF US THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEEPEN OUR UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DISCUSSIONS AND ENGAGEMENT, REFLECTION, AND LEARNING.

Six Barriers Causing Educators to Resist Teaching Online, and How Institutions Can Break Them

Dana Gutman

INTRODUCTION

In 2001, the South Dakota Alliance for Distance Education, partnered with the U.S. Department of Education's Star Schools Initiative, to host a 2-day workshop. This event, also known as the "conclave," allowed leading experts in the

Dana Gutman,
19501 W Country Club Dr. #904,
Aventura, FL 33180.
Telephone: (954) 610-0733.
E-mail: dgutman3@gmail.com

field of distance education, to discuss some of the barriers preventing online learning from gaining widespread prestige and acceptance from the academic community. One of the topics discussed at this workshop was the results gathered from an extensive evaluation process in which members of the conclave interviewed educators to assess their attitudes toward teaching online. Their findings reveal that educators feel significant apprehension about teaching in an online learning environment. This article will explore six of the major reasons educators resist teaching online, and propose solutions for overcoming each barrier.

BARRIER 1: SALARY

It requires a major investment of time and energy for an instructor to create an engaging distance learning course, but for many faculty, moving a course from the traditional classroom into an electronic medium is considered part of the standard workload (Bower, 2001). However, translating a face-to-face class into an engaging online course requires pedagogical training that is inherently different from that of teachers who perform in a live classroom (Bower,

2001). Therefore, distance educators possess a unique set of knowledge, skills, and abilities that institutions should recognize by offering appropriate compensation, and providing low cost incentives such as awards and recognition. By valuing the role of online teachers, administrators will increase standards and performance in the field of distance education (Gold, 2001).

BARRIER 2: PROMOTION AND TENURE

According to Bower (2001), distance education classes are more time consuming to prepare than traditional courses, while instructional and operational costs are generally lower, yet faculty still receive less. In addition, time spent in developing distance learning courses is time not spent on other professional activities, which may be needed to be successful in the tenure process. This issue is particularly important for faculty at research universities who face high expectations in research and publication (Bower, 2001). When faculty members make contributions toward distance learning initiatives, their efforts should help them earn tenure rather than interfere with their duties and be a source of stress. The field of distance education should support individuals interested in learning about technical innovation and online pedagogy. In doing so, administrators attract leaders to the field of distance education who can then share their knowledge and expertise. This degree of commitment and contribution should help educators achieve promotion and tenure rather than work against them.

BARRIER 3: WORKLOAD

One of the reasons for expanding distance learning, and the use of technology, is to increase productivity and student enrollment. However, to maintain a high-quality learning environment, distance education courses should have no more than 25 stu-

dents per classroom (Goodyear, Salmon, Spector, Steeples, & Tickner, 2001). Research suggests that intimate classroom discussions increase critical thinking, reflection, and interaction among learners (Goodyear et al., 2001). If institutions abide by this principle, administrators will need to hire more distance educators to keep up with the growing demand for online courses. The question remains, how many courses should a single educator be expected to handle? As mentioned, the role of an online instructor is different from a traditional classroom teacher; additional responsibilities include but are not limited to content facilitator, technologist, designer, manager/administrator, process facilitator, adviser/counselor, assessor, and researcher (Goodyear et al., 2001). Staying abreast of the latest technology and applying educational strategies effectively in an online learning environment requires a tremendous amount of time and effort. The problem is, if institutions provide faculty with release time to prepare their distance learning courses, they may need to demonstrate increased productivity through other means, such as increasing the student-faculty ratio (Bower, 2001). Research suggests that increasing class sizes so that fewer teachers would need to be hired and trained compromises quality of the learning experience (Lee, Paulus, Loboa, Phipps, Wyatt, Myers, & Mixer, 2010). By implementing team teaching, offering subscriptions to distance education journals, and providing time to attend training workshops and conferences, educators will be more efficient when it comes to designing courses, and thus require less release time to prepare.

BARRIER 4: TRAINING

Teachers must have the actual experience of online learning before they can be expected to be online teachers; otherwise, they simply map traditional practices onto the new medium (Gold, 2001; Lee et al.,

2010). By training educators in an online learning environment how to integrate technology with pedagogical teaching strategies, they not only experience distance education as an end user, but they learn how to effectively design a digital curriculum.

In-service programs must offer convincing, no-nonsense, and ongoing training that deals with how to teach at a distance, not merely how to manipulate new instructional technology (Beaudoin, 1990). Specific content areas might include methods to establish and maintain effective communication, increasing interaction among students, strategies for encouraging individual and group motivation, planning and managing organizational details, developing an awareness of the time demands of distance delivered courses, techniques for adding visual components and audio, and how to access and integrate information from various sources (Bonk & Dennen, 2002; Gold, 2001).

In a 2001 study, Gold investigated a 2-week faculty development pedagogical training course aimed at preparing teach-

ers on how to operate effectively within an online educational environment. Before the workshop started, he conducted a survey to see what kind of training their institutions previously offered. Table 1 presents results from his questionnaire.

These data, along with the feedback gathered from the South Dakota Alliance for Distance Education, reveal an overwhelming desire for more training by educators. Faculty also express a need for more technical support and staff development in the areas of technical innovation and pedagogy.

In addition, Bonk and Dennen (2002) assert that a national system of teacher training emphasizing distance education should be considered, and mandatory training in theory and practice should be instituted as a condition of employment for new and continuing faculty. The myth that teaching from a distance is easier and requires less involvement from the teacher must be dispelled. As previously mentioned, teaching from a distance requires a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities inherently different from those used in a tradi-

Table 1. Workshop Participants Training Experience and Needs

Survey Questions	No	Yes	Yes, Face-to-Face	Yes, Online	Yes, Either Type of Delivery
Does your institution have a formal training program in technology and online course development?	74.4%	25.6%			
Have you ever taken a course in technology and online course development?	65.8%	34.2%			
Do you want to take a course in technology and online course development?	2.6%	na	5.1%	30.8%	61.5%
Does your institution have a formal training program in teaching online?	94.9%	5.1%			
Have you ever taken a course in teaching online?	76.9%	23.1%			
Do you want to take a course in teaching online?	5.3%	na	0%	31.6%	63.2%

tional classroom; by giving teachers the tools they need to perform successfully in a distance learning environment, the field of distance education will attract and retain talented professionals. It is precisely in the design and delivery of these new learning modes where the participation of competent and committed faculty is most critical (Beaudoin, 1990).

BARRIER 5: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Personal interaction with students is one of the most gratifying aspects of teaching (Gold, 2001). For some, the lack of direct interpersonal contact with both students and faculty is an issue (Berge, 1998). In addition, the physical absence of the teacher makes it difficult to gauge the clarity of communication and understanding (Gold, 2001).

Online instructors have to be more outgoing, positive, and responsive to gain respect from their students (Gold, 2001). Mason identifies the three fundamental roles of a distance educator as organizational, social, and intellectual (1991). The organizational role involves setting the agenda, defining learning objectives, establishing a timetable, and explaining rules and procedures. Essentially, teachers must lay the groundwork for the discussion to begin. Their main social role is to create a friendly environment for the students. Good teachers often send out welcome messages, use a personal tone, and send prompt feedback with specific examples and references. Another important social role is modeling good intellectual behavior. Finally, the teacher must become the facilitator of the students' understanding. The teacher should focus on crucial points of discussions, ask questions, probe student responses, synthesize and summarize points, and help develop themes that link to the readings and class resources (Gold, 2001). Research suggests that these practices provide learners with a more sat-

isfying learning experience and they feel more connected to their online teacher than they do in a face-to-face classroom (Oliver & Herrington, 2000).

Besides increasing the interaction between the teacher and student, it is also important to promote a community of practice among faculty (Bawane & Spector, 2009). Approaches to promote a community of practice for faculty include: involving them in developing courseware; permitting them to preview, purchase, and evaluate materials; engage them in pilot projects to test alternative delivery systems; and expose them to case studies of successful distance education activities. Their input can be encouraged through social networking, live and virtual meetings, committee work, and mentorship programs (Beaudoin, 1990; Bower, 2001).

One of the most critical aspects of an online course is introductions (Gold, 2001). Both the instructor and student should identify themselves within the discussion forum. By establishing a caring online presence and taking an interest in the students, this creates a positive atmosphere and a sense of student trust in the class (Bawane & Spector, 2009). The goals of these introductory posts are to exchange ideas, share information, and create a social environment where students feel comfortable interacting with each other. Another way to increase interaction among students is to encourage the exchange of informal conversation. A study of 80 college undergraduates found that this produced higher more complex levels of student participation (Ahern, Peck, & Laycock, 1992). These findings suggest that when online instructors are more informal and spontaneous in their commenting, students become more interactive with each other, compared to conditions where the instructor simply poses formal topic-centered statements or questions. Bonk and Dennen (2002) agree that the more teacher-centered the envi-

BARRIER 6: QUALITY

According to Bonk and Dennen (2004), many educators are still skeptical about the effectiveness of courses delivered from a distance, claiming that they are poor attempts to replace the teacher with technology, and offer students an easier way to earn credits without having to demonstrate mastery of learning outcomes. Even though these are myths, they could become a reality if distance educators do not strive toward continuously learning, evaluating, and improving their practices. The phenomenon of syllabism is an ever-present threat to the success of distance learning outcomes (Beaudoin, 1990). Syllabism is the tendency for students to focus only on what is prescribed in the syllabus. The outcomes may be a series of assignments that satisfy course requirements, but which result in very little learning. Students thus develop perfunctory answers to questions based solely on self-contained knowledge of the material, in which case the teacher is simply paid to check that the rules of the exercise are adequately followed (Beaudoin, 1990). When professors expect learners to solely refer to their syllabus and required readings, the student fails to authentically engage with the material. Without applying new information in a realistic context and without receiving feedback on correctness, the student never receives confirmation of mastery, but rather adheres to the course outline simply to earn a grade. Gold suggests that distance education courses stress learning rather than teaching, a constructivist approach based on the principle that the key to learning is what students do, not what teachers do (2001).

According to Beaudoin (1990), instructional personnel must be adept at facilitating students' learning through particular attention to process, unlike classroom-based teachers whose traditional role is largely confined to selecting and sharing content. The Institute for Higher Education Policy (2000) asserts that better instructional design and standards of success will increase acceptance for e-learning both within higher education as well as the surrounding community. From a constructivist point of view, learning is a search for meaning. To make meaning, students must focus on concrete situations and understand not only the facts but also the context in which these facts are placed (Gold, 2001). In addition to being adept at both content and process, faculty must know something about the potential of technology to facilitate learning and to enhance their own effectiveness (Beaudoin, 1990; Bower, 2001).

Two leaders in online pedagogy, Oliver (2000) and Paulsen (1995), focus on how Web tools foster student articulation, collaboration, intentional learning, and goal setting. They also connect these constructivist principles to Web-based resources such as bulletin boards, asynchronous conferencing, concept mapping, and survey tools that might be employed for student debates, reflection, cooperative group situations, role-play, brainstorming, special guest appearances, collaborative learning, and online discussions. According to Bonk and Dennen (2002) all of these strategies serve to enhance the quality of online learning environments.

CONCLUSION

While individual faculty members may have their own reasons to resist participating in the latest wave of distance education, there are several reasons why faculty in general resist distance education. Faculty have specifically expressed concerns for the adequacy of institutional support, the change in interpersonal relations, and quality.

Recognition, collaboration, technical support, online sharing of pedagogical

practices, and instructional design assistance are all ways to increase faculty involvement and the adoption of web-based technologies in college teaching. Also, online educators have expressed a desire for more pedagogical tools, advice, and communities for their online teaching and learning efforts. By identifying these needs and the barriers that accompany them, professionals in the field of distance education can develop improvement strategies to overcome them.

REFERENCES

Ahern, T. C., Peck, K., & Laycock, M. (1992). The effects of teacher discourse in computer-mediated discussion. *Journal of Educational Computing Research, 8*(3), 291-309.

Bawane, J., & Spector, J. M. (2009). Prioritization of online instructor roles: Implications for competency-based teacher education programs. *Distance Education, 30*(3), 383-397.

Beaudoin, M. (1990). The instructor's changing role in distance education. *The American Journal of Distance Education, 4*(2).

Berge, Z. L. (1998). Barriers to online teaching in post-secondary Institutions: Can policy changes fix it? *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 1*(2).

Bonk, C. J., & Dennen, V. (2004). Frameworks for research, design, benchmarks, training, and pedagogy in web-based distance education. In M. G. Moore & W. G. Anderson (Eds.), *Handbook of distance education* (pp. 329-346). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Bower, B.L. (2001). Distance education: Facing the faculty challenge. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 4*(2).

Gold, S. (2001). A constructivist approach to online training for online teachers. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 5*(1), 35-57.

Goodyear, P., Salmon G., Spector, J. M., Steeples, C., & Tickner, S. (2001). Competencies for online teaching: A special report. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 49*(1), 65-72.

Institute for Higher Education Policy. (2000). *Quality on the line: Benchmarks for success in Internet-based distance education.* Washington, DC: Author.

Lee, D., Paulus, T. M., Loboda, I., Phipps, G., Wyatt, T. H., Myers, C. R., & Mixer, S. J. (2010). Instructional design portfolio: A faculty development program for nurse educators learning to teach online. *TechTrends, 54*(6), 20-28.

Mason, R. (1991). Moderating educational computer conferencing. *DEOSNEWS, 1*(19), 1-11.

Oliver, R., & Herrington, J. (2000). Using situated learning as a design strategy for Web-based learning. In B. Abbey (Ed.), *Instructional and cognitive impacts of Web-based education* (pp. 178-191). Hershey, PA: Idea Group.

Paulsen, M. F. (1995). Moderating educational computer conferences. In Z. Berge & M. P. Collins (Eds.), *Computer-mediated communication and the on-line classroom in distance education* (pp. 81-90). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

SIX BARRIERS AND ONLINE TEACHING

1. SALARY
2. PROMOTION AND TENURE
3. WORKLOAD
4. TRAINING
5. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS
6. QUALITY

TOJDE

Electronic Publishing and a Review of 10 Years' Experience in Turkey

Yasin Özarslan, Jale Balaban-Salı, and Ugur Demiray

INTRODUCTION

CONCEPT AND DEFINITIONS OF ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

Electronic publishing has been broadly defined as nonprint material that is produced digitally. Electronic publishing is an encompassing term for a variety of digitally produced materials (Jones & Cook, 2000) such as bulletin boards, newsgroups, mailing lists, CD-ROM-based media, and websites (Ludwick & Glazer, 2000). Material produced electronically can be classified into two major categories that are not mutually exclusive: communication and information management. CD-ROMs and websites are often categorized as information management, while others like newsgroups/forums and mailing lists can be grouped as a means of communication. Electronic publishing can be defined as distributing and archiving of full text professional articles via computer based storage technology such as magnetic or optical discs (Schauder, 1994).

It should be emphasized that electronic publishing can be grouped in two main categories from point of view of manage-

Yasin Özarslan,
Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Turkey.
E-mail: ozarslan@gmail.com

Jale Balaban-Salı,
Anadolu University, Turkey.
E-mail: jbalaban@anadolu.edu.tr

ment: communication and information. As the use of the Internet becomes more and more embedded in scholarly communication in many forms, scholars will face more complex choices in managing communications through electronic media. In an electronic format the resources can be hyperlinked and reachable in every part of the world. Users can easily search by author, keyword, title, journal, year, and see the results on the screen.

CLASSIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

Forums and chat rooms are also a means of communication. They are web-based and often developed and sustained for their constituents. Forums are like newsgroups in that the messages are often "threaded" or organized by a theme. Forums are also like e-mail, mailing lists, and newsgroups as they are asynchronous, exchanging information at different times. Chat rooms, which have exploded in the commercial sector, allow "real time" or synchronous

Uğur Demiray,
Anadolu University, Turkey.
E-mail: udemiray@anadolu.edu.tr

text posting and have been used primarily for socializing or for commercial purposes such as book promotions (Ludwick & Glazer, 2000). Another way to classify electronic publishing is as: e-bulletins, e-magazines, webpages, news archives, discussion lists, and e-journals.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING VERSUS PRINT PUBLISHING

Electronic publishing has these advantages:

- accessible to all users regardless of geographic location;
- more acceptance of e-publishing within the scientific community;
- possibility to get print out, to store in file, or download from Internet the long texts like an article;
- possibility of instant communication between editor/author;
- possibility of to read whenever or how much you want;
- possibility of cheaper publishing or cost effective publishing;
- possibility of easier production and distribution of large volume study materials (Ludwick & Glazer, 2000; Tonta, 1997); and
- possibility of easier and quicker reach to huge numbers of readers.

Electronic publishing may have these disadvantages:

- user-unfriendliness (Bishop, 1995);
- cost dimension of Internet and computer;
- time spent using and waiting for pages.
- technical difficulties reaching electronic materials;
- misconduct and security issues, piracy, and plagiarism;
- copy the entire document, or change the actual article, image, or data (Tenopir, 1995);

- destroying copyright (Rosenberg, 1994);
- lack of widespread acceptance within the scientific community;
- decreasing of access speed because of huge volume; and
- sounds and pictures (Ludwick & Glazer, 2000; Tonta, 1997).

ETHICAL VALUES OF ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

You are asked to submit a manuscript to an electronic journal, or perhaps as a reader of an electronic journal, you are moved to write a letter to the editor about a topic. As you contemplate writing either the article or the letter, you may experience some anxiety and uncertainty. How are letters and manuscripts are reviewed and is the journal peer reviewed? Do I submit my work electronically and how will the editorial staff communicate with me? Who will read my work? Underlying these questions are ethical issues about quality, security, and access. Let's now examine how these ethical issues could manifest themselves.

Quality is closely related to the ethical principle of "do no harm" and to the virtues of honesty and integrity. The ethical issue about the quality of electronic publishing that is raised most often is whether articles submitted to electronic journals are peer reviewed or not.

Security is closely related to the ethical tenets of privacy and confidentiality. Electronic journal editors carry the responsibility to their authors to guarantee confidentiality and to their readers be sensitive to privacy issues in many of the same ways that print journal editors must.

Access is related to the ethical principle of justice. For an electronic journal to be successful, it must not only have a loyal readership but also a readership that has the means by which to access the information.

How is the publication disseminated? Is the journal a dual publication (i.e., print and journal)? Is the publication free? Is registration required if the journal is free? Is the journal subscription based? Is the journal benefits open only to members? (Alptekin-Oğuzertem, 2000; Cipriano & Ruth, 2000).

SCHOLARLY ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

What is an electronic scholarly journal? We might simply define it as a digital periodical dedicated to publishing, on the Internet, articles, essays, and analyses that have been read and commented upon initially by a select group of editors and reviewers, to meet a certain arbitrary standard of excellence (as determined by the editors) for a given discipline addressed by the journal itself. The diversity of electronic journals in the past 5 years has led some to predict the extinction of traditional academic journals, that a new paradigm is sweeping scholarship.

A closer examination of the ways in which digital and printed scholarly journals are developed clearly indicates that most electronic journals are not all that different in their fundamental editorial processes than print (Valauskas, 1997).

An electronic publication has been defined as a document distributed primarily through electronic media or nonprint material that is produced digitally. An article posted on a web page (under a variety of restrictions or conditions), an article distributed via e-mail, or via an e-mail-based distribution list are all electronic publication (Kling & McKim, 1999). Material produced electronically can be classified into two major categories that are not mutually exclusive: communication and information management. CD-ROMs and websites are often categorized as information management, while others like newsgroups/forums and mailing lists can be grouped as a means of communication (Demiray, 2003). With the development of the Internet the characteristics of communication have changed. Electronic publishing, which is a nonprint digitally distributed

material across the network, became more popular. As the use of the Internet becomes more and more embedded in scholarly communication in many forms, scholars will face more complex choices in managing communications through electronic media. In an electronic format the resources can be hyperlinked and reachable every part of the World. Users can easily search by author, keyword, title, journal, year, and see the results on the screen.

JOURNALS ON DISTANCE EDUCATION

AJDE (THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION)

AJDE is the internationally recognized journal of research and scholarship in the field of American distance education, established with the mission of disseminating information about research and scholarship in the Americas. It was founded in 1987 by Michael Grahame Moore. From 1987 until 2001 AJDE was published at The Pennsylvania State University College of Education; following that it was published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates until 2006. AJDE is now published by Taylor & Francis.

AJDE offers a solid foundation of valuable research-based knowledge about all aspects of the pedagogy of the field. Peer reviewed articles provide reports on the latest findings in such areas as: building and sustaining effective delivery systems, course design and application of instructional design theories, facilitating interaction between students and with instructors, factors influencing student achievement and satisfaction, the changing roles of faculty and changes in institutional culture, and administrative and policy issues including cost-effectiveness and copyright.

ASIANJDE (ASIAN JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION)

The *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, established in 2002, aims to disseminate scholarly works and information useful to researchers and practitioners in the growing field of distance education in Asia. AsianJDE publishes peer reviewed articles and other information for researchers and others interested in open learning and distance education in Asia. This journal also aims to provide a forum for discussions within and directly relating to Asia, and so elicits Asian local theoretical and practical solutions to address local concerns. The AsianJDE has a specific focus on the Asian context and publishes double-peer reviewed scholarly articles, plus other papers such as focus reports on a bounded region or an institution, and works-in-progress. Other items include a detailed calendar of conferences and events in Asia, comments (a moderated discussion forum on previously published articles), Asian abstracts, and others.

ODLAA (OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA)

Distance Education is the official journal of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia, Inc. (ODLAA). It is published by Routledge Electronic. Copies of papers from Volume 23 are available through Informaworld for those who have purchased an individual or organizational subscription to the journal, outside of their ODLAA membership. *Distance Education* is a peer-reviewed international journal that publishes research and scholarly material in the fields of distance, open, and flexible education. *Distance Education* was one of the first journals published to focus exclusively on this area of educational practice. ODLAA connects professionals in order to share experiences and disseminate information with respect to open and distance learning. Its members come from all educational sectors plus commercial training

providers and training units in the corporate sector. They are involved in management, administration, design, development, research and teaching in multiple modes that may best be described as "outside the traditional classroom." ODLAA is a nonprofit organization managed by an elected executive committee of members who donate their time to conduct the business of the association.

EURODL (EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING)

EURODL, established in 1995 and supported by EDEN—the European Distance and E-learning Network presents scholarly work and solid information about open, distance, and e-learning as well as new dimensions of technology-enhanced learning and contributes to the open content movement.

It publishes accounts of research, development, and teaching for Europe in its most inclusive definition, exploring the potential of electronic publishing. Furthermore, EURODL presents scholarly work and solid information about open, distance, and e-learning, education through telematics, multimedia, online learning, and cooperation. The language of publication is English, with an abstract in the author's chosen language. Additionally, there is an option to publish the originally submitted paper's identical copy in another language; however, this latter contribution is not refereed.

The journal allows all the languages of Europe to appear, as the abstract and/or the optional contribution will be in the chosen language of the authors and will therefore extend e.g., from Lithuanian to German. The journal has a section of refereed articles that can be found on the "Current Issue" page and in the EURODL archive. Full papers in English meeting basic requirements that are comparable to publishing in printed journals are published in this section.

There is also a "Brief Items" section, which is not refereed and which acts as a more accessible and informative section of project reports, work in progress, non-English contributions, and the like. This supports communication within the EDEN membership as well as the European area.

GEJOFEDE (GLOBAL E-JOURNAL OF OPEN, FLEXIBLE & DISTANCE EDUCATION)

The *Global E-Journal of Open, Flexible & Distance Education* aims at providing a forum for exchange, between the developed and the developing worlds, of ideas, innovations, research outcomes, best practices, development in print and nonprint resource materials, and information on national/regional/international seminars/workshops/conferences in areas of open, distance, flexible, lifelong and e-learning at all levels of education. GEJOFEDE has four sections: conceptual and research papers, cases and innovations, print and software review, conferences and events. It is guided by an international advisory board, and is edited by a group of professionals from the field. It is published in February, June, and October every year by the Society for Advancement of Flexible & Distance Education & Development (SAFED) (a not-for-profit society), Bhopal-India. The focus is largely on, but not restricted to, planning and management, innovations and change, and research and development in these fields. This internationally referred, contributed, and abstracted journal is available mainly in electronic form. However, it is also available in paperback print form.

IRRODL (INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING)

The *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* (IRRODL) is a refereed, open access e-journal that disseminates original research, theory, and best practice in open and distance learning

---

worldwide. It is published by the Canadian Institute of Distance Education Research at Athabasca University. IRRODL is available free of charge to anyone with access to the Internet. The purpose of this refereed, interactive, online journal is to contribute and disseminate to practitioners and scholars worldwide scholarly knowledge in each of three areas: theory, research, and best practice in open and distance learning. In harmony with the open learning philosophy that distance education should serve to remote barriers to those who, given their geographical location, previous level of schooling, or other life circumstances would otherwise not be able to access distance education opportunities, subscriptions are free to individuals.

JDE (JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION/ REVUE DE L'ÉDUCATION À DISTANCE)

The *Journal of Distance Education* is an international publication of the Canadian Network for Innovation in Education (CNIE). Its aims are to promote and encourage Canadian scholarly work in distance education and provide a forum for the dissemination of international scholarship. The aim of the *Journal of Distance Education* is to promote and encourage Canadian scholarly work in distance education and provide a forum for the dissemination of international scholarship. It is published at least three times a year by the Canadian Network for Innovation in Education (CNIE). Original material in either English or French is invited in three broad categories: scholarly articles and research papers that focus on issues related to distance education; reports that highlight unique solutions to critical problems, short descriptions of work underlying new or innovative programs or contemporary events, and brief notes on research in progress; and dialogues devoted to the discussion or debate of issues in distance education that may arouse controversy. Also included here will be papers written in reply to articles published in earlier issues of the journal.

MJDE (MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION)

The *Malaysian Journal of Distance Education* (MJDE) is devoted to the dissemination of information on the research and practices of distance education. MJDE was launched in 1999 with an initial contribution from the academic staff members of the School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia. The Journal is published biannually (June and December) by the Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, the publishing house of the Universiti Sains Malaysia.

TOJDE (THE TURKISH ONLINE JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION)

The *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* (TOJDE) is a peer reviewed electronic scholarly journal published in English by Anadolu University, Eskisehir, Turkey, since 2000. For its first 2 years it was published biannually. Since 2002 it has been published quarterly. TOJDE focuses on the issues and challenges of providing theory, research, and information services to students.

METHODOLOGY

For this research study the *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* (TOJDE) was selected. TOJDE is a quarterly, peer-reviewed international electronic journal that can be accessed online from the address http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr

In this study, content analysis and website analytics were employed. First, content analysis was used in this study to investigate documents. There are two basic types of content analysis: conceptual (looking to quantify and categorize objects) and semantic (looking to find and predict meaning) in the set of objects (Murphy &

Ciszewska-Carr, 2005). The main goal of this conceptual content analysis was to find answers to following question: What are the publishing activities (research topics, methods, instruments, statistical methods, author numbers and their institutional affiliation) of TOJDE?

Data for this study were obtained from the articles published in the first 11 volumes (in the years 2001-2011) of the *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*. The articles are reviewed according to the selected criteria, and then these data were categorized according to existing or emerging themes. Most parts of the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and presented with tables and figures.

This study also examined the performance of TOJDE website by using website analytics. Website analytics measures visitors' traffic, visitors' behavior, and how this behavior compares to the expected behavior (Ferrini & Mohr, 2009).

FINDINGS

AN ANALYSIS OF TOJDE

Fields addressed by TOJDE are economic, social and cultural dimension of DE, pedagogical, political, philosophical, legal, ethical reflections in DE organization in DE, needs assessment, staff training in DE, program and material development in DE, professional experiences in DE, financial planning in DE, learning resources in DE, digital libraries and virtual universities, guidance and counseling, communication, multimedia software, Web technology, Internet, network software, feedback mechanisms, measurement, quality control and evaluation in DE, production of quality in DE, performance evaluation, interaction, DE in the future, DE and globalization, dynamism and dimensions of DE in the 21st century, virtual reality and electronic publishing in DE.

TOJDE's Editorial Board has 69 members, representing a team of worldwide experts in open and distance education. It was established by Turkish and foreign academicians who are expert in their field. Table 1 shows the number of editorial board members per country in TOJDE 2010.

The TOJDE site (http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr) contains several research articles, a detailed description of

Table 1.   Number of Editorial Board Members per Country (TOJDE, 2010)

Countries	# of Editors	Countries	# of Editors
Turkey	17		
United Kingdom	6	Hong Kong	1
Australia	5	Israel	1
Canada	4	Moldova	1
USA	4	Netherlands	1
India	3	New Zealand	1
Greece	2	Pakistan	1
Ireland	2	Philippines	1
Malaysia	2	Romania	1
South Africa	2	Russia	1
China	1	South America	1
Czech Republic	1	The Netherlands	1
France	1	Ukraine	1

the editorial board, and links to past issues. There is also a call for papers, information about conferences, a listserv subscription opportunity, as well as an opportunity to provide feedback to the writers of the journal.

TOJDE consists of articles, reviews, and news sections. It particularly strives to meet the continuing education needs of practitioners and educators by providing a forum for the discussion of extended learning strategies, policies and practices, and trends in information technology as they impact the delivery of any kind of the student support services for distance learners and faculties.

Articles may be theoretical, philosophical, and/or quantitative analyses of distance education/open learning and teaching issues, and may take the form of case studies, research studies, or general interest reports. Book reviews, conference reports, literature reviews, news items, editor's note, announcements of conferences and publications, and letters to the editor etc. are also published.

Publishing Values of TOJDE

The publishing values of TOJDE are as follows:

Readers' Needs: Readers' needs are paramount. We will not forget who we serve.

Quality Articles: The TOJDE will always try to provide not only quality articles to its readers, but also tries to meet readers' expectations.

Quality Journal Staff: The TOJDE will always value and prize those editors, reviewers, and staff who have shown a willingness to provide the quality publishing through their various levels of expertise.

Community Share Service: The TOJDE must try to show the community its commitment by sharing to its overall betterment. By committing to the previous three values, meeting this fourth value becomes a matter of record.

Abstracting and Indexing of TOJDE

TOJDE is abstracted, indexed, and cited by the following databases from around the world:

- The AERA SIG Communication of Research;
- Australian Education Index-AEI;
- The Directory of Open Access Journals-DOAJ;
- The Education Resources Information Center-ERIC;
- Education Network Australia-EdNA;
- Elsevier ScienceDirect;
- The Government Education Portal;
- Higher Education Research Data Collection-HERDC;
- Index Copernicus;
- Ulrich's Periodicals Directory; and
- Vocational Education and Training Research Database-VOCED.

Webometrics Ranking of TOJDE

If the web performance of an institution is below the expected position according to their academic excellence, university authorities should reconsider their web policy, promoting substantial increases of the volume and quality of their electronic publication. Since 2004, the Ranking Web is published twice a year (January and July), covering more than 20,000 higher education institutions worldwide (Webometrics Ranking of World Universities, 2011). Rank of universities of Turkey is presented in Table 2.

Webometrics bases its ranking of institutional websites on four indicators: *Visibility* (V, 50%): the total number of unique external links received (inlinks) by a site can be only confidently obtained from Yahoo Search, Live Search and Exalead. *Size* (S, 20%): number of pages recovered from four engines: Google, Yahoo, Live Search and Exalead. *Rich Files* (R, 15%): after evaluation of their relevance to academic and publication activities and considering the volume of the different file formats, the

Table 2. Rank of Universities of Turkey (Top 10)

World Rank	University	Position			
		Size	Visibility	Rich Files	Scholar
321	Middle East Technical University	452	428	324	153
613	Bilkent University	537	767	390	852
653	Boğaziçi University	901	727	434	977
853	Istanbul Technical University	1,065	890	709	970
881	Hacettepe University	1,213	864	649	1,386
942	Ankara University	916	970	978	567
945	Anadolu University	1,317	869	1,023	1,450
946	Sabancı University	1,213	981	891	309
1,069	Gazi University	962	2,031	908	1,088
1,137	Dokuz Eylül University	1,219	3,120	747	1,264

**Table 3. Impact of the Web Page TOJDE
for Webometrics Ranking Measures of Anadolu University**

Web Pages (Host under anadolu.edu.tr)	Inlinks (The total number of unique external links received)
www.anadolu.edu.tr	18,781
anapod.anadolu.edu.tr	453
eogrenme.anadolu.edu.tr	1,214
yunusemre.anadolu.edu.tr	457
tojde.anadolu.edu.tr	2,516
bildiri.anadolu.edu.tr	53

**Table 4. Impact of Publications Reached
From Websites for Webometrics Ranking Measures
of Anadolu University**

Web Pages (Host under anadolu.edu.tr)	Number of Publications
www.anadolu.edu.tr	54
tojde.anadolu.edu.tr	**3433**
bildiri.anadolu.edu.tr	101
mm.anadolu.edu.tr	52
home.anadolu.edu.tr	190
ietc2008.anadolu.edu.tr	150
Other	231
Total	979

following were selected: Adobe Acrobat (.pdf), Adobe PostScript (.ps), Microsoft Word (.doc) and Microsoft Powerpoint (.ppt). These data were extracted using Google, Yahoo Search, Live Search and Exalead. *Scholar* (Sc, 15%): Google Scholar provides the number of papers and citations for each academic domain. These results from the Scholar database represent papers, reports and other academic items.

Because an online journal has many inlinks and has many references in Google Scholar, it helps promoting the ranking. For instance, number of inlinks to major websites of Anadolu University reveals such a situation as can be seen on the Table 3. Almost 11% of the inlinks come from TOJDE as of July 2010.

Impact of publications reached from websites for webometrics ranking measures of Anadolu University are listed in Table 4. TOJDE's own website is the biggest impact for reaching to the publications.

Table 5 shows visibility rank of web pages hosted by Anadolu University. All web pages offer online services to users. TOJDE website that provides 0.4% visibility rank to reach for Anadolu University.

INDEX COPERNICUS VALUE OF TOJDE

Index Copernicus (IC) is a journal indexing, ranking, and abstracting site. This service accepts peer review and tracks manuscripts online and builds up relations with authors, reviewers, and readers as

Table 5. Visibility Rank of Web Pages Host Under Anadolu University

Web Pages (Host under anadolu.edu.tr)	Visibility
iolp.anadolu.edu.tr	43.3%
aofburo.anadolu.edu.tr	17.2%
mail.anadolu.edu.tr	14.7%
orgun.anadolu.edu.tr	8.6%
eogrenme.anadolu.edu.tr	5.7%
aofkayit.anadolu.edu.tr	2.4%
aof.anadolu.edu.tr	2.0%
e-gazete.anadolu.edu.tr	1.2%
orgunx.anadolu.edu.tr	0.8%
spk.anadolu.edu.tr	0.8%
aof20.anadolu.edu.tr	0.4%
aofmail.anadolu.edu.tr	0.4%
esertifika.anadolu.edu.tr	0.4%
oolp.anadolu.edu.tr	0.4%
vakifbank.anadolu.edu.tr	0.4%
tojde.anadolu.edu.tr	0.4%

Table 6. Index Copernicus Value of TOJDE

Year		Index Copernicus Value
2010	TUR ISSN: 1302-6488 Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education (TOJDE)	ICV: 5.57
2009	2428 TUR ISSN: 1302-6488 Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education (TOJDE)	ICV: 5.08
2008	2119 TUR ISSN: 1302-6488 Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education (TOJDE)	ICV: 5.76
2007	1286 TUR ISSN: 1302-6488 Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education (TOJDE)	ICV: 5.84
2006	832 TUR ISSN: 1302-6488 Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education (TOJDE)	ICV: 5.68
2005	778 TUR ISSN: 1302-6488 Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education (TOJDE)	ICV: 3.37

well as increasing the international awareness of a journal. For journals indexed in Current Contents Index Copernicus Value (ICV) calculations are based on the following formula: Base Points (BP) are converted into 10 points Total Basic Score (TBS), then: $9+[(TBS) \times (IF)]$ (where IF=impact factor value). This formula ensures that the journals indexed at Current Contents have a minimum ICV of 9 points. For the rest of journals which are not indexed in Current Contents TBS=ICV (Index Copernicus, 2011). Table 6 shows Index Copernicus Value of TOJDE.

PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES OF TOJDE (2000-2010)

Number of published articles types by year is presented in Table 7, number of published articles by year, volume and number in Table 8, number of authors per article in Table 9, number of authors per articles types, year, volume, and number in

Table 7. Number of Published Articles Types by Year (2000-2010)

	Years	Articles Types			Grand Total
		Article	Notes for Editor	Review	
Volume 1	2000	13		4	17
Volume 2	2001	15		6	21
Volume 3	2002	27	4	11	42
Volume 4	2003	23	1	5	29
Volume 5	2004	34	3	14	51
Volume 6	2005	37	4	10	51
Volume 7	2006	58	3	11	72
Volume 8	2007	49	4	8	61
Volume 9	2008	57	9	9	75
Volume 10	2009	54	14	11	79
Volume 11	2010	55	14	15	84
Grand Total		422	56	104	582

Table 8. Author Numbers per Article (2000-2010)

Years	Number of Authors						Grand Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2000	12				1		13
2001	11	3	1				15
2002	15	3	6		1		25
2003	16	5	1			1	23
2004	14	14	4	1	1		34
2005	19	13	3		2		37
2006	30	19	4	2	1	2	58
2007	25	11	7	4	1		48
2008	35	11	8	3			57
2009	30	14	7	3			54
2010	25	20	5	5			55
Grand Total	232 (55%)	113 (27%)	46 (11%)	18 (4%)	7 (2%)	3 (1%)	419

Table 9.   Number of Countries per Year (2000-2010)

Countries	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Grand Total
Australia		1		1	7			4	1	2	1	17
Austria									1			1
Bahrain								1				1
Bangladesh							4	1	4	1	2	12
Belgium						1						1
Botswana										1		1
Brazil	1						1					2
Canada	1		2		2	5	2	1	1	2		16
China			1									1
Czech Republic		1										1
Egypt				1					2			3
Eritrea								1				1
Ethiopia									1			1
Finland	2											2
France		1										1
Germany							1		1			2
Ghana								1		1		2
Greece	1			2	2		1		1	1	2	10
India	1	2	4	4	1	1	4	2	3	4	3	29
Indonesia								2		1	2	5
Iran						1			2	2	4	9
Israel		2	1									3
Italy								1		1		2
Jordan									1	1		2
Lesotho										1	1	2
Lithuania			1									1
Malaysia				3	3	5	2	2	1	5	2	23
Mexico	1											1
Nigeria						2	6	3	5	2	6	24
Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic			1		3	2				1	1	8
Norway							1	1		1	1	4
Pakistan								7	3	5	5	20
Philippines						1			1			2
Republic of Korea							1					1
RM Moldova							1					1
Romania									1	1	1	3
Saudi Arabia			1		1				1		1	4
South Africa						1	1					2
Sri Lanka									1	1		2
Swaziland					1							1
Switzerland			1									1
Thailand				1								1
Turkey	3	5	6	5	10	9	22	16	23	18	21	138
Uganda							1					1
UK	1		3		4	4	2			1		15
USA	1	3	5	6	3	6	6	4	3	1	2	40
Grand Total	12	15	26	23	34	37	58	49	57	54	55	420

Table 10, and number of countries per year in Table 11 are presented. A total 422 articles, 56 notes for editors, and 104 reviews were published during the years 2000-2010. As can be seen in Table 7, total article numbers appear to be increasing in recent years. Tuncay, Keser, and Uzunboylu (2010) also stated that publishing documents numbers increased over the years in TOJDE.

Over a 10-year period from 2000-2010, single authored articles have the biggest part—232 (55%)—of published articles.

Table 8 revealed author numbers per articles in TOJDE.

Number of countries contributed to publications per year in 2000-2010 is shown in Table 9. Most of the article submissions come from Turkey, and USA, India, Nigeria, Malaysia, Pakistan, Australia, Canada, UK, Bangladesh, Greece, and Iran, respectively. USA is in second place in the table. The reason is Turkish graduate students continue to study in American universities and send to TOJDE articles on behalf of their own universities.

Table 10. Number of Authors Country/Affiliation (2000-2010)

Country /Affiliation	# of Authors	Country /Affiliation	# of Authors
Argentina	1	Valley of The Green River University	1
Ar-Tesol Esp	1	**Canada**	15
Australia	17	Athabasca University	6
Central Queensland University	5	British Columbia Institute of Technology Bcit	1
Charles Sturt University	2	Canadore College	1
Deakin University	1	Centre For Distance Education Athabasca University	1
Macquarie University	2	Consultant Cgi	1
Monash University	1	Memorial University of Newfoundland	1
Open Learning Consultant	2	Nipissing University	1
Rmit University	1	Umbc	1
University of South Australia	1	University of Ottawa	1
University of Southern Queensland	2	West Valley College	1
Austria	1	**China**	1
Graz University	1	Open University of Hong Kong	1
Bahrain	1	**Czech Republic**	1
Bahrain University	1	Charles University Prague	1
Bangladesh	12	**Egypt**	3
Agricultural University	1	Mansoura University	1
Bangladesh Open University	8	South Valley University	1
Bangladesh Agricultural University	1	University of Mansoura	1
Dhaka National Medical College	1	**Eritrea**	1
Presidency University	1	Eritrea Institute of Technology	1
Belgium	1	**Ethiopia**	1
Vrije Universiteit	1	Haramaya University	1
Botswana	1	**Finland**	2
University of Botswana	1	South Carelia Polytechnic	1
Brazil	2	University of Oulu Utsjoki	1
University of São Paulo and President of Brazilian Association for Distance Education	1	*(Table continues on next page)*	

Table 10.   (Continued)

Country /Affiliation	# of Authors	Country /Affiliation	# of Authors
France	**1**	**Jordan**	**2**
The Centre For Advanced Learning Technologies Insead Fontainebleau	1	Philadelphia University	2
Germany	**2**	**Lesotho**	**2**
Fern Universität	2	National University of Lesotho	2
Ghana	**2**	**Lithuania**	**1**
University of Ghana	1	Vytautas Magnus University	1
University of Ghana	1	**Malaysia**	**23**
Greece	**10**	International Islamic University	1
Democritus University of Thrace	2	Ipoh Teacher Training Institute	1
Hellenic Open University	2	Multimedia University	1
T.E.I. of Kavala	2	National University of Malaysia	1
University of Macedonia	3	Open University Malaysia	2
University of The Aegean Department of Education Rhodes	1	Universiti Kebangsaan	5
India	**29**	Universiti Sains	4
Amity University	1	Universiti Teknologi Mara	1
Anna University	1	Universiti Utara	4
Ciefl	1	University Technology Mara (Uitm)	1
Indira Gandhi National Open University	13	University Tun Abdul Razak	1
Jawaharlal Nehru University	1	Wawasan Open University	1
Kota Open University	2	**Mexico**	**1**
M.J.P. Rohilkhand University	1	University of Guadalajara	1
Maharashtra Open University	1	**Nıgeria**	**24**
Maharshi Dayanand University	1	Covenant University	9
Panjab University	2	National Open University of Nigeria	7
Regional Centre	1	Obafemi Awolowo University	1
St. Xavier`s College	1	School Of Education	1
Strıde Ignou	1	University of Ado-Ekiti	1
University of Jammu	1	University of Ibadan	2
Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University	1	University of Ibadan	1
Indonesia	**5**	University of Ilorin	2
Universitas Terbuka	5	**Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic**	**8**
Iran	**9**	Eastern Mediterranean University	6
Azam Rastgoo Islamic Azad University	1	European University of Lefke	2
Great Persian Encyclopedia Foundation	2	**Norway**	**4**
Islamic Azad University	1	Lillehammer University College	4
Jahrom University of Medical Sciences Jahrom	1	**Pakistan**	**20**
Tehran University	1	Allama Iqbal Open University	8
University of Tehran	3	National University of Modern Languages (Numl)	1
Italy	**2**	Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University	3
University of Florence	1	Preston University	1
University of Salento	1	The Islamia University of Bahawalpur	6
		University of Arid Agriculture	1

(Table continues on next page)

Table 10.   (Continued)

Country /Affiliation	# of Authors	Country /Affiliation	# of Authors
Philippines	**2**	Zonguldak Karaelmas University	3
Mindanao Polytechnic State College	1	**Uganda**	**1**
University of The Philippines Open University	1	Makerere University of Uganda	1
		UK	**15**
Republic of Korea	**1**	City University	2
Language Center	1	Havering College of Further And Higher Education	1
Rm Moldova	1	Open University	3
State University of Moldova	1	The Open University of Sri Lanka	1
Romania	**3**	Umbc	1
Al. I. Cuza University	3	University of Central England	1
Saudi Arabia	**4**	University of Leicester	2
King Fahd University	3	University of Manchester	1
King Saud University	1	University of Oxford	1
South Africa	**2**	University of Plymouth	1
National University of Lesotho	2	University of Sunderland	1
Sri Lanka	**2**	**USA**	**37**
Open University of Sri Lanka	1	Arizona State University	1
The Open University of Sri Lanka	1	Brigham Young University	1
Swaziland	**1**	Cameron University	2
University of Swaziland	1	Clayton College & State University	2
Switzerland	**1**	Director Enterprise Applications Globeranger.Com Dallas-Texas	1
University of Italian	1	East Carolina University	2
Thailand	**1**	Education Development Center	1
Kasetsart University	1	Fairleigh Dickinson University	2
Turkey	**137**	Florida State University	2
Abant İzzet Baysal University	8	Founder And Vice President For Technology & Coordination	1
Akdeniz University	5	Indiana University	1
Anadolu University	58	Managing Consultant, Editor in-Chief of E-learn Magazine	1
Ankara University	1	New Jersey Institute of Technology	1
Atılım University	2	Rowan University	1
Balıkesir University	1	Samford University	1
Boğaziçi University	1	Slis Indiana University	1
Camp Rumi Technology Literacy Group	1	Southern Illinois University	2
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University	7	State University of New York	1
Dicle University	2	Texas State University	3
Eskişehir Osmangazi University	3	Texas Tech University	1
Gazi University	2	Umbc	1
Hacettepe University	13	University At Albany	1
İstanbul University	2	University of Alaska Fairbanks	2
Karadeniz Technical University	2	University of Illinois	1
Kırıkkale University	4	University of Maryland University College	1
Marmara University	7	University of Phoenix	1
Mersin University	1	University of The Pacific	1
Middle East Technical University	4	Walden University	1
Pamukkale University	1		
Sakarya University	2		
Selçuk University	4		
Uludağ University	1		
University of Marmara	1		
Yıldız Technical University	1	**Grand Total**	**413**

Table 10 shows authors' country/institutional affiliation, which indicates that most studies published by TOJDE are carried out at universities whose research field is open and distance education.

CLASSIFICATION OF RESEARCH AREAS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

The published studies' topics are listed in Table 11. This study used some parts of Zawacki-Richter's (2009) classification of research areas in DE. Inductive coding was employed to identify patterns in the data and establish categories. After close readings of studies and consideration of the multiple meanings that are inherent in the studies, topics of studies are added to the category where they are relevant. Learner and instructor experiences of online learning environment; information about the system and programme; economic, social and cultural dimension of DE, and pedagogical, political, philosophical, legal, ethical reflections in DE are the top four research topics in TOJDE.

Table 11.   Number of Studies by Topic (2000-2010)

Research Topics	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Grand Total
Information about the system/program	6	11	8		6	5	4	4	5	2	1	52
Economic, social and cultural dimension of DE	6	3			2	4	9	4	5	3	11	47
Pedagogical, political, philosophical, legal, ethical reflections in DE			9	7	2	5	6	2	7	6	3	47
Organization in DE		1	1			2	2	2		3		11
Needs Assessment, staff training in DE	1			1	1	1	6	1		5	1	17
Program and material development in DE			2	2			3	1				8
Digital libraries and virtual universities				1			1		1			3
Guidance and counselling/support				1	2	3		2	3	4	2	17
Communication, multimedia software, web technology, Internet, network, software, feedback mechanisms			1	2	3	2	5	10	8	6	5	42
Performance evaluation, measurement, quality control, evaluation, production of quality in DE			1	2	8	5	6	2	1	5	7	37
Interaction, DE in the future				3	4		1	3	3	5	2	21
DE and globalisation, dynamism and dimensions of DE in 21st century			1			1	1	2	1	1		7
Virtual reality and electronic publishing in DE.				1	1				2	1	1	6
Technological factors in DE			1	1		3	5	2	4	4	10	30
Learner and instructor experiences of online learning environment			3	2	4	6	6	11	14	6	9	61
Instructional design in DE					1			2	3	2	3	11
Problems and challenges in DE							3	1		1		5
Grand Total	13	15	27	23	34	37	58	49	57	54	55	422

Table 12.   Number of Research Paradigms used in Studies Published (2000-2010)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Grand Total
Quantitative	12	12	26	22	32	28	55	42	51	45	46	371
Qualitative		3	1	1	2	8	1	5	6	8	8	43
Mixed	1					1	2	2		1	1	8
Grand Total	13	15	27	23	34	37	58	49	57	54	55	422

Table 13.   Number of Instruments Used in Studies Published (2000-2010)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Grand Total	%
Observation			1	1	1	1				4	3	11	2.50
Test			1						1	1		3	0.68
Survey	1	2	9	5	5	8	15	14	4	8	18	89	20.23
Scale		2		4	6	4	10	3	21	10	9	69	15.68
Document	12	9	16	13	20	18	31	29	27	25	16	216	49.09
Interview		3	1	2	2	7		4	6	6	7	38	8.64
Case study					3	1						4	0.91
Reflection paper						1						1	0.23
Focus group							2	1	1	3		7	1.59
Evaluation form			1		1							2	0.45
Grand Total	13	16	29	25	38	40	58	51	60	57	53	440	

The studies are reviewed for their research paradigm. Numbers of research paradigms used in studies are given in Table 12. The analysis indicated that most of the studies are quantitative research paradigm in distance education studies.

The studies are also reviewed for their research instruments. Numbers of instruments used in studies published are listed in Table 13. Some articles identified more than one data collection tool, so they were listed under different multiple headings. Most of the studies collect data by document analysis. In addition, survey, scale, and interview are preferred instruments in distance education studies.

Numbers of statistical methods used in studies published are listed in Table 14. Descriptive statistics are the most used statistical analysis in distance education studies. Content analysis (13,7%), variance analysis (9,8%), and t test (6,8%) are also used in published studies.

ANALYSIS OF TOJDE'S WEBSITE

The *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* website, located at http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr, contains several research articles, a detailed description of the editorial board, links to past issues, a call for papers, information about conferences, a listserv subscription opportunity, and an opportunity to provide feedback to the writers of the journal. It is well laid out and organized into logical sections with easy navigation. The website received 823,129 hits August 2010-February 2011 from 31,498 visitors around the world.

Table 14. Number of Statistical Methods Used in Studies Published (2000-2010)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Grand Total	%
Descriptive	2	8	11	5	7	9	16	19	15	14	21	127	54.27%
Variance analysis		1	1	2	2	1	4	3	4	3	2	23	9.83%
Covariance analysis									1			1	0.43%
Correlation				3	1	1	1	3		1		10	4.27%
Regression					1	1	2	2	2	1		9	3.85%
Chi-Square					1	1			2	3		7	2.99%
Mann-Whitney U Test					1							1	0.43%
Narrative analysis					1							1	0.43%
Content analysis			1		7	1	3	5	10	5		32	13.68%
Factor analysis					1	1		3	1			6	2.56%
t test			2	1		2		3	2	6		16	6.84%
Fisher LSD						1						1	0.43%
Grand Total	2	9	12	10	13	23	28	28	36	34	39	234	

Table 15. Most Requested Directories (August 2010- February 2011)

Path	Content	Hits	Percent
/	TOJDE Homepage	62,054	27.36
/editors/	TOJDE Editorial Board	41,620	18.35
/tojde40/	TOJDE Volume: 11 Number: 4	37,844	16.68
/tojde2/	TOJDE Volume: 1 Number: 2	18,525	8.17
/tojde4/	TOJDE Volume: 2 Number: 2	16,894	7.45
/tojde1/	TOJDE Volume: 1 Number: 1	13,075	5.76
/tojde41/	TOJDE Volume: 12 Number: 1	10,564	4.66
/tojde39/	TOJDE Volume: 11 Number: 3	9,976	4.40
/tojde8/	TOJDE Volume: 3 Number: 4	8,509	3.75
/tojde3/	TOJDE Volume: 2 Number: 1	7,777	3.43

TIME USERS STAY ON SITE

This report answers the question: how long do users stay on site? It is calculated for all people visiting more than one web page. The TOJDE website received an average 4000 hits daily. It received between 800-1000 users per day, and has taken over 800 daily requests. Users preferred to visit TOJDE website in weekdays, with activity tending to peak at Thursdays.

USER PROFILES

User profile here is defined as set of unique pages visited in one time. Most Common User Paths display most popular paths of users on TOJDE presented Table 15.

COUNTRY VISITORS COME FROM

Visitors to TOJDE website come from all over the world as stated in study of Reddy Y (2005). Table 16 presents over 31,498 peo-

Table 16.   Visitors Country (August 2010-February 2011)

Country	Hits	Visitors	Visitors (%)
Turkey	690,555	9,323	6.12
United States	416,727	49,409	32.42
India	84,726	9,181	6.02
China	64,039	34,574	22.68
United Kingdom	40,014	4,167	2.73
Malaysia	33,114	2,593	1.70
Canada	28,396	1,934	1.27
Philippines	27,401	2,858	1.88
Germany	23,511	2,654	1.74
Russian Federation	22,843	1,892	1.24
Netherlands	21,088	812	0.53
Pakistan	19,994	1,864	1.22
Iran, Islamic Republic of	16,255	900	0.59
Nigeria	15,547	1,084	0.71
Australia	14,775	1,433	0.94
France	14,352	5,134	3.37
Indonesia	13,588	827	0.54
Greece	12,850	909	0.60
Spain	11,846	717	0.47
Egypt	8,728	368	0.24
Senegal	8,134	66	0.04
Bangladesh	7,157	339	0.22
Poland	6,755	1,107	0.73
Korea, Republic of	6,681	614	0.40
Japan	6,547	1,000	0.66
Saudi Arabia	6,427	427	0.28
South Africa	6,067	573	0.38
Taiwan, Province of China	5,778	465	0.31
Thailand	5,641	453	0.30
Others	169,675	14,739	9.67

ple visit this website in August 2010-February 2011 time period. TOJDE is published by Anadolu University, Turkey. Although most hits come from Turkey, a large number of users visited from USA, China, India, France and the UK.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined distance education research in TOJDE over a 10-year period from 2000 to 2010, and visitors' activity while visiting the TOJDE website. The authors reviewed 422 peer-reviewed articles by using content analysis. Their users' activity on the site measured via using web analytics.

Analysis of the data indicated that themes such as learner and instructor experiences of online learning environment; information about the DE system; economic, social and cultural dimensions

of DE; and pedagogical, political, philosophical, legal, ethical reflections in DE are dominant in recent years in TOJDE. Research in the areas of virtual reality, electronic publishing, digital libraries, programme and material development, and problems and challenges in DE appear to be less common. More than three fourths of the articles employed a quantitative research paradigm as their methodology. Furthermore, half of the articles used document analysis, 20% of articles used survey as their data collection tools, and half of the articles used descriptive statistics as their statistical methods. A review of research methodology used in DE research for four journals (*The American Journal of Distance Education* (United States), *Distance Education* (Australia), the *Journal of Distance Education* (Canada), and *Open Learning* (United Kingdom) in the years 1990 to 1999 found that three fourths of the articles used descriptive research (Berge & Mrozowski, 2001).

Most of the article submissions come from Turkey, the USA, India, Nigeria, Malaysia, Pakistan, Australia, Canada, the UK, Bangladesh, Greece, and Iran. Although single-authored articles are prevalent, collaborative studies have increased in recent years. Zawacki-Richter, Bäcker, and Vogt (2009) found that there is a significant positive trend for multiple author articles.

After website analysis, the most popular paths of users of TOJDE are the TOJDE homepage, TOJDE's editorial board, and TOJDE volume 11, number 4. Visitors to the TOJDE website come from all over the world. Most hits come from Turkey, but a large number of users visited from the USA, China, India, France, and the UK.

This kind of review can be used to increase the quality of future research studies and the results may affect research areas in DE in the future. For instance, virtual reality, digital libraries and programme development, and problems and challenges can be examined in further studies. In addition, this analysis can be useful for seeing the full picture of TOJDE and prospective researchers can use the results to identify priority areas and to explore potential research directions.

REFERENCES

Alptekin-Oğuzertem, Y. (2000). Eğitim için Internet, Internet için eğitim: Elektronik iletişim ve etik [Internet for education and education for Internet: Electronic communication and ethics]. Retrieved from http://inet-tr.org.tr/inetconf5/tammetin/alptekin.doc

Berge, Z. L., & Mrozowski, S. (2001). Review of research in distance education, 1990 to 1999. *The American Journal of Distance Education, 15*(3), 5-19.

Bishop, A. P. (1995). Scholarly journals on the net: A reader's assessment. *Library Trends, 43*(4), 544-570.

Cipriano, M. S., & Ruth, L. (2000). Ethics of electronic publishing. *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing.* Retrieved from http://nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAMarketplace/ANAPeriodicals/OJIN/Columns/Ethics/EthicsofElectronicPublishing.html

Demiray, U. (2003). Electronic publishing and academic dialogue between academicians via online journals in the new millennium: A case of TOJDE. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology* (*TOJET*), 2(2).

Ferrini, A., & Mohr, J. J. (2009). Uses, limitations, and trends in web analytics. In B. J. Jansen, A. Spink, & I. Taksa. (Eds.), *Handbook of research on web log analysis* (pp. 124-142). London, England: IGI Global.

Index Copernicus. (2011). Retrieved from http://www.indexcopernicus.com

Jones, S. L., & Cook, C.B. (2000) Electronic journals: Are they a paradigm shift? *The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 5(1). Retrieved from www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAMarketplace/ANAPeriodicals/OJIN/TableofContents/Volume52000/No1Jan00/ElectronicJournalsAreTheyAParadigmShift.aspx

Kling, R., & McKim, G. (1999). Scholarly communication and the continuum of electronic publishing. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, *50,* 890-906.

Ludwick, R., & Glazer, G. (2000). Electronic publishing: The movement from print to digital publication, *The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, *5*(1). Retrieved from http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenu Categories/ANAMarketplace/ANA Periodicals/OJIN/TableofContents/Volume52000/No1Jan00/Electronic Publishing.html

Murphy, E., & Ciszewska-Carr, J. (2005). Contrasting syntactic and semantic units in the analysis of online discussions. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, *21*(4), 546-566.

Reddy Y, L. N. (2005). An analysis of e-journals in open and distance education from mega open universities. *The European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning*. Retrieved from http://www.eurodl.org/?p=archives&year=2005&halfyear=1&article=172

Rosenberg, V. (1994). Will new information technology destroy copyright? *The Electronic Library, 12*(5), 285-287.

Schauder, D. (1994). Electronic publishing of professional articles: attitudes of academics and implications for the scholarly communication industry. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science, 45*(1), 73-100.

TOJDE. (2010). *TOJDE's editorial board and editors' e-mail addresses.* Retrieved from http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/tojde40/editoradres.html

Tenopir, C. (1995). Authors and readers: The keys to success or failure for electronic publishing. *Library Trends, 43*(4), 571-591.

Tonta, Y. (1997). Elektronik yayıncılık, bilimsel iletişim ve kütüphaneler [Electronic publishing, scientific communication and libraries]. *Türk Kütüphaneciliği*, *11*(4), 305-314.

Tuncay, N., Keser, H., & Uzunboylu, H. (2010). If knowledge is power why keep it secret? *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2,* 5650–5658.

Valauskas, E. J. (1997). First Monday and evaluation of electronic journals. *The Journal of Electronic Publishing*, *3*(1). Retrieved from http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/textidx?c=jep;view=text;rgn=main;idno=3336451.0003.104

Webometrics Ranking of World Universities. (2011). *Rank of universities of Turkey*. Retrieved from http://www.webometrics.info/index.html

Zawacki-Richter, O. (2009**).** Research areas in distance education: A delphi study. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, *10*(3), 1-17.

Zawacki-Richter, O., Bäcker, E. M., & Vogt, S. (2009). Review of distance education research (2000 to 2008): Analysis of research areas, methods, and authorship patterns. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 10*(6), 21-50.

Quarterly Review
OF Distance
Education

RESEARCH THAT GUIDES PRACTICE

Editors:
Michael Simonson
Charles Schlosser

≡IAP
INFORMATION AGE
PUBLISHING

An Official Journal of the
Association for Educational Communications and Technology

QUARTERLY REVIEW OF DISTANCE EDUCATION,
SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
WWW.INFOAGEPUB.COM

The True Value of Scholarships for Online Students

Thomas Jensen and Karen Adams

Kari Nuszkiewicz, a single mother of four, was struggling to find the time to pursue a graduate program that held deep meaning to her as a victim of domestic violence. "I dedicated myself to obtaining knowledge that would keep my daughters and myself safe. But more importantly, gaining the resources to prevent women and children from going through the experience or guide them if they had," she said.

Already successful in earning a bachelor's degree in child psychology, Nuszkie-wicz, of Schofield, Wisconsin, graduated in May from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville (UW-Platteville Online) with a master's degree in criminal justice with an emphasis in victim and offender services. She also received a Child Advocacy Studies Certificate through UW-Platteville Online.

Nuszkiewicz and the 1,000 graduates before her are the reason that throughout its 35-year history, the UW-Platteville Distance Learning Center has stayed true to its belief that working adults should be

Thomas Jensen,
Integrated Marketing Communications
Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Platteville,
1 University Plaza, Platteville, WI 53818.
Telephone: (608) 342-1390.
E-mail: jensentho@uwplatt.edu

Karen Adams,
Corporate Marketing Director,
University of Wisconsin-Platteville,
1 University Plaza, Platteville, WI 53818.
Telephone: (608) 342-1984.
E-mail: adams@uwplatt.edu

able to advance their education without putting their lives on hold.

"Many of our students are mothers and fathers who spend as much time in a car or airplane as they do at home," said Dawn Drake, executive director of Alternative Delivery Systems at UW-Platteville. "They're entitled to pursue a degree that they and their employers can be confident in and is of the highest quality" (Personal communication, June 15, 2012).

One way UW-Platteville helps students achieve their goals is by offering a variety of scholarships for students, including Nuszkiewicz who earned the Dawn Drake Excellence in Distance Education Scholarship. The annual scholarship, first awarded in 2005, was established by Drake in recognition of the important role that distance education has played in her life, both personally and professionally. The award of $500 also recognizes the many sacrifices that distance learners make to successfully juggle education, career, and family.

"I put a lot of effort into my studies, with the hope of obtaining the scholarship, making my daughters proud, and easing the financial burden of school," Nuszkiewicz said.

Currently working with The Women's Community, Inc., in Wausau, Wisconsin, a shelter and resource center for female victims of domestic violence and their children, Nuszkiewicz hopes to develop educational programs and materials for mandated reporters and school students.

In many states, including Wisconsin, mandated reporters are professionals who, in the ordinary course of their work and because they have regular contact with children, disabled persons, senior citizens, or other identified vulnerable populations, are required to report (or cause a report to be made) whenever financial, physical or other types of abuse have been observed or is suspected, or when there is evidence of neglect, knowledge of an incident, or an imminent risk of serious harm.

Nuszkiewicz is just one example of the increasing need to help students financially. Nationally, more than 6.1 million students were taking at least one online course during the fall 2010 term, an increase of 560,000 students over the previous year, according to the Sloan Consortium. Nuszkiewicz noted,

> There are many grants available to single mothers who return to school for bachelor's degrees, however not for those who have accomplished that, yet find it necessary to move forward to pursue a desirable degree that will support their family. (Personal communication, June 18, 2012)

Normally, when the Distance Learning Center reaches out to students regarding the "Dawn Drake" scholarship, the Distance Learning Center Scholarship Committee, on average, receives a little more than a handful of applications or serious inquiries. This year, the committee pored over nearly 30 applications, with more than 500 students expressing interest in the scholarship.

In January, UW-Platteville and the Distance Learning Center reached a top 20 spot in GetEducated.com's "Best Buys" for an online master's degree in criminal justice. It was the second time in less than five months that the university's online programs had earned a Best Buy designation. GetEducated.com, an online consumer watchdog and advocate for prospective distance education students, rates and compares online schools and degrees based on cost and quality, student satisfaction and credibility. UW-Platteville Online provides a master's degree in criminal justice for under $20,000.

"We're constantly looking for ways to be more efficient and more effective," Drake said. "And most importantly, providing a high quality education through forward-thinking instruction, student-driven course design, and attentive and intuitive student services" (Personal communication, June 15, 2012).

UW-Platteville's distance learning program began in 1978, offering a single bachelor's degree—in business administration—and its first graduating class numbered five in 1981.The university launched its first 100% online program in 1999 with a master's degree in project management and its first online graduating class consisted of 13 people in 2001.

Today, UW-Platteville Online serves 2,500 students worldwide through its eight degree programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, including its newest master's degrees in organizational change leadership, integrated supply chain management, and distance education leadership. UW-Platteville Online's other programs include master's degrees in criminal justice, engineering, project management, along with bachelor's degree programs in criminal justice and business administration.

Student support is the essence of UW-Platteville's Distance Education programs. Outreach Specialist Amy Griswold, who just received her online master's degree in organizational leadership and is former chair of the scholarship committee, knows firsthand how important encouragement is for an online learner. "Sometimes that support doesn't come in the form of a cheerleader or a motivational life coach, but from the people we are with every day, who are proud of us and want to see us succeed."

Often, scholarships are not so much about money as much as affirmation for students, particularly for those who study online. "People think I'm crazy, but I'm creating a future for myself and my family. Nobody can take my education from me. It is something that becomes part of me," said Amber George, a student in UW-Platteville Online's bachelor's degree program in criminal justice and an applicant for the Dawn Drake Scholarship.

Drake agrees.

If this ever becomes completely about the money, then I don't want anything to do with it. I'm not going to sacrifice the quality of the programs because that's not fair to anybody. The vigor associated with high quality online programs at UW-Platteville keeps students motivated and appreciative of their experiences. (Personal communication, June 15, 2012)

Starting as director of the Distance Learning Center in 1998, Drake developed training curriculum for faculty to put courses online, served as liaison with University of Wisconsin Learning Innovations to develop a process to better serve online students, developed an infrastructure to support learners at a distance, and assisted with development of 25 online courses.

Named executive director of alternative delivery systems in 1999, Drake oversees all aspects of continuing and distance education at UW-Platteville, shares ideas and collaborates with advisory boards, and has increased participation in classes by 1,200 percent.

Current and/or prospective students can visit www.GoUWP.com, call 800 362-5460, or e-mail disted@uwplatt.edu to learn more about UW-Platteville Online and its scholarship opportunities.

Below are overviews of the various scholarship opportunities through UW-Platteville and its Distance Learning Center.

DAWN DRAKE EXCELLENCE IN DISTANCE EDUCATION ($500)

Who should apply: UW-Platteville degree-seeking distance education students.

Background: Created to recognize the important role that distance education has played in the life of Dawn Drake, executive director of Alternative Delivery Systems at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, both personally and professionally. It also recognizes the many sacrifices that distance learners make to successfully juggle

education, career, and family. Deadline is February 15 each year.

ANA ALVAREZ-HOLMBERG MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP ($2,000)

Who should apply: Members of Project Management Institute of Minnesota and American Society for Training and Development, the ASTD-Twin Cities Chapter (or sponsored by a member).

Background: The scholarship's namesake left her mark through her kindness, commitment, support of others, honesty, and energy before she died in 2005 at the age of 46. Through her commitment to several organizations, her family, her friends, her faith community and to the community at large, she became a model of service and volunteerism.

GET EDUCATED EXCELLENCE IN ONLINE EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP ($1,000)

Who should apply: U.S. citizens enrolled in an online program with minimum GPA of 3.0

Background: This online degree financial aid program is funded and maintained by the distance learning experts at GetEducated.com as a part of its mission to help cut the cost of online college. Awards are based on both merit and financial aid need. Previous recipients include UW-Platteville Online students.

SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS ($500 TO $5,000)

Who should apply: SHRM student members with a valid SHRM ID number as of October 15.

Background: Undergraduate applicants must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 point scale and must have completed at least one human resource management course. Graduate student applicants must be enrolled in a master's degree program and clearly pursuing an emphasis area in human resources and human resource-related program (such as business, psychology, or labor relations) and have completed at least six hours of graduate course work with at least a 3.5 grade point average.

PHI KAPPA PHI LOVE OF LEARNING SCHOLARSHIPS ($500)

Who should apply: Phi Kappa Phi members pursuing graduate studies.

Background: Love of Learning Awards help fund post-baccalaureate studies and/or career development for active Phi Kappa Phi members to include (but not be limited to): graduate or professional studies, doctoral dissertations, continuing education, career development, travel related to teaching/studies, et cetera. A total of 140 awards, at $500 each, will be distributed.

THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP ($1,000 UP TO FULL TUITION)

Who should apply: varies by scholarship.

Background: PMI Educational Foundation's Scholarships and Awards Program supports development of the best and brightest future project management professionals and other professionals worldwide through learning opportunities

THE MARY CONE BARRIE SCHOLARSHIP ($2,500)

Who should apply: students enrolled in a course or program through the continuing education division of any American or Canadian accredited college or university

Background: Destiny Solutions launched The Mary Cone Barrie Scholarship Award in 2008. Mary Cone Barrie

(1945-2009) was the organization's first customer and was an inspiration.

ONLINE SCHOLARSHIP AND FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES

University of Wisconsin Platteville Financial Aid Office (www.uwplatt.edu/finaid/) provides budget and loan counseling.

Higher Education Location Program (www.tinyurl.com/84tqc3c) provides links to information about financial aid, scholarships, and other opportunities for adults to finance their education, especially within the Wisconsin system.
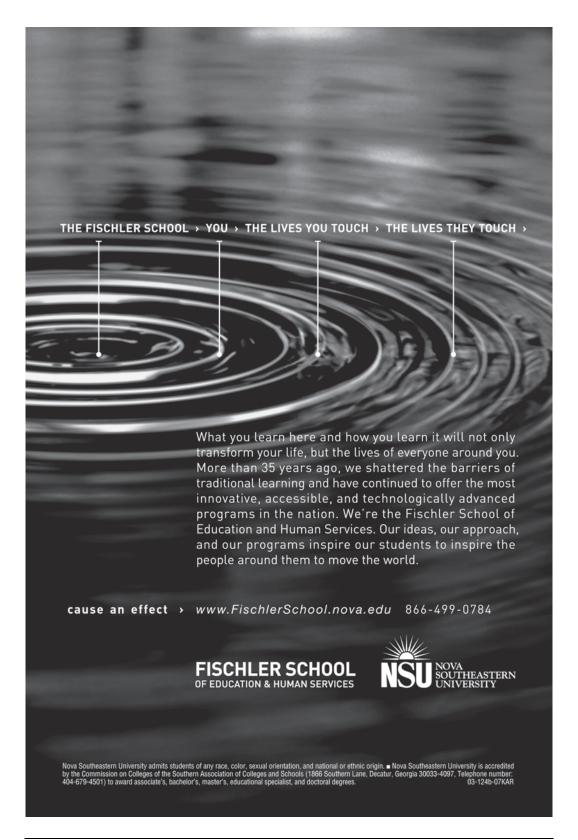
Federal Student Aid (www.fafsa.gov), an office of the U.S. Department of Education, ensures that all eligible individuals can benefit from federally funded financial assistance for education beyond high school.

REFERENCE

Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2011). *Going the distance: Online education in the United States 2011.* Wellesley MA: Babson Survey Research Group.

The Flipped Classroom Strategy
What Is it and How Can it Best be Used?

Natalie B. Milman

WHAT IS THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM?

In K-12 and higher educational circles, the "flipped classroom" instructional strategy (also known as the "inverted classroom") has been receiving a lot of attention. The idea is that rather than tak-

Natalie B. Milman,
Associate Professor of Educational Technology, The George Washington University, 2134 G ST, NW, Washington, DC 20052.
Telephone: (202) 994-1884.
E-mail: nmilman@gwu.edu

ing up limited class time for an instructor to introduce a concept (often via lecture), the instructor can create a video lecture, screencast, or vodcast that teaches students the concept, freeing up valuable class time for more engaging (and often collaborative) activities typically facilitated by the instructor. It is important to note that the strategy should involve more than just the "take home" video lecture (or screencast or podcast). It should also incorporate formative and summative assessment, as well as meaningful face-to-face (F2F) learning activities. Although many instructors at all educational levels and from various settings have been incorporating this strategy for years, the term is most often attributed to two Colorado high school teachers, Jonathan Bergman and Aaron Sams, who began creating screencasts and podcasts for their students in 2006 (Makice, 2012).

The flipped classroom strategy advocates tout numerous benefits. Most seem to be plausible advantages (e.g., increases time for more engaging instruction), especially for those teaching in hybrid or blended settings consisting of some combination of F2F and online instruction; how-

ever, the strategy also has its limitations. First, the quality of the video lecture may be very poor; even though an instructor might be outstanding in F2F settings, he or she may not produce a quality video instructionally and/or technically. Second, taking for granted that all students are able to view the video lecture on their own computers, the conditions under which they might view the video may not be the best for learning any concepts (e.g., a student might view a video while also watching a baseball game and listening to music). Arguably, there are many distractions in F2F classrooms, but at least the teacher can monitor comprehension with several formative assessments. Third, students may not watch or comprehend the video and therefore be unprepared or insufficiently prepared for the more engaging activities that will occur F2F. Fourth, students may need a lot of scaffolding to ensure they understand the material presented in the video. Although good instructors will likely build-in effective scaffolding activities while students watch the video such as "stop, think, and answer" questions (and also rewind if needed), they may still fall short in providing enough scaffolding activities for all types of learners. Fifth, students are not able to ask questions of the instructor or their peers if they watch the video alone. Therefore, important just-in-time questions to help them comprehend the material cannot occur unless the instructor is available during the viewing—which is difficult. Finally, the flipped classroom strategy may not be the best approach for second language learners or those with learning challenges—which represents learners not only at the K-12 level, but all educational levels and settings.

HOW CAN THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM STRATEGY BEST BE USED?

Although there are many limitations to the flipped classroom strategy and no empiri-cal research exists to substantiate its use, anecdotal reports by many instructors maintain that it can be used as a valuable teaching strategy at any educational level, depending on one's learners, resources, and time. Moreover, it seems to be a good fit for teaching knowledge that is procedural, one of the four general types of knowledge described in the revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001). Procedural knowledge is knowledge about how to do something. Therefore, a flipped classroom video lecture about how to solve a quadratic equation in which an instructor describes and models how to solve this type of problem would be a good use of the strategy. Complex procedural knowledge can also be taught utilizing the flipped classroom strategy although scaffolding and chunking of content will be very important not only to ensure that videos are short, but also to make certain that all of the steps of the procedure are introduced adequately so students understand it thoroughly.

Although procedural knowledge is arguably the best type of knowledge to teach using the flipped classroom strategy, the other three types of knowledge— factual (knowledge describing the basic and essential elements a person must know), conceptual (knowledge of the relationship between classifications and categories), and metacognitive knowledge (knowledge about one's own cognition)— can also be taught using this strategy. However, it is important to note that much more time and thought will need to go into employing the flipped classroom strategy.

Many resources exist regarding the flipped classroom strategy. A few are:
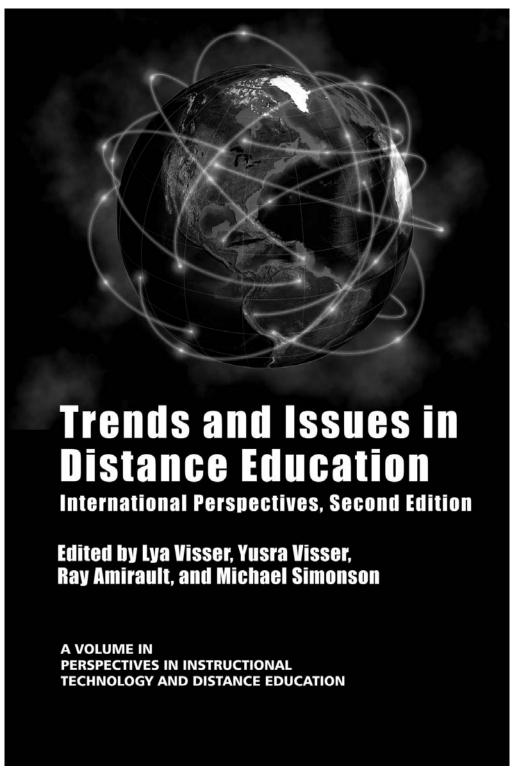
- Educause article, *7 Things You Should Know About … Flipped Classrooms*: http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7081.pdf
- Edutopia blog entry, *Five Best Practices for the Flipped Classroom*: http://

www.edutopia.org/blog/flipped-classroom-best-practices-andrew-miller

- Khan Academy—has many videos on a variety of topics: http://www.khanacademy.org/
- Knewton—has a good graphical representation of the flipped classroom strategy: http://www.knewton.com/flipped-classroom/

REFERENCES

Anderson, L. W., Krathwohl, D. R., Airasian, P. W., Cruikshank, K. A., Mayer, R. E., Pintrich, P. R., … Wittrock, M. C. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing*. New York, NY: Longman.

Makice, K. (2012, April 13). Flipping the classroom requires more than video. *Wired*. Retrieved from: http://www.wired.com/geekdad/2012/04/flipping-the-classroom/

FLIPPED CLASSROOM/INVERTED CLASSROOM = REDUCE LECTURES AND INCREASE COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES.

Trends and Issues in Distance Education

International Perspectives, Second Edition

Edited by Lya Visser, Yusra Visser,
Ray Amirault, and Michael Simonson

A VOLUME IN
PERSPECTIVES IN INSTRUCTIONAL
TECHNOLOGY AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

Get Your Copy Today—Information Age Publishing

Your First Postings
Always Crucial!

Errol Craig Sull

I t's a cliché, to be sure: you only get one chance to make a first impression. Yet this truism becomes especially important in the online course where the distance educator's words posted can be read by students again and again throughout the course, so what these postings say must be measured, must be precise, but be … perfect. But too often these first postings are just tossed into the course with little

Errol Craig Sull,
Online Instructor,
P.O. Box 956, Buffalo, NY 14207.
Telephone: (716) 871-1900.
E-mail: erroldistancelearning@gmail.com

thought given to the impact they can have throughout the course—and that impact can be huge.

There are three major areas of each distance learning class: general class announcements or e-mails; assignment feedback; and discussion postings. (Other areas, such as Live Chats, phone conversations, private messages, instructor course office, etc. also require much thought in the first response/postings by the instructor, and nearly all in this column can apply to these.) What follows are suggestions for the first posting in each, yet the substance and approach of each first should be maintained throughout the course. Do this and you'll markedly increase the engagement, enthusiasm, and excitement of your students.

THE FIRST GENERAL CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT OR E-MAIL

CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

Is it primarily freshmen with many who are new to online learning or a group level has students who previously have taken online courses? Is the audience mostly military, civilian, or a combination? Other factors include their ages and whether they have taken other courses in your subject.

The more you know about your class, the more specific can you make this first post.

Your First Few Lines Should Be Enthusiastic, Inviting, and Caring

Here's where you can erase the divide of only a computer between you and the class—by letting the students immediately feel you are glad to be teaching the course and that they are taking your course, that you are sincerely interested in their learning and improving, and that you are there to help whenever they need you. Also: encourage your students' suggestions and involvement. This sets a most positive tone and allows for a sense of humanity to come through the monitor—so important in getting and keeping students both engaged and motivated in the course.

Be Sure to Include the Course Boundaries

These include both the "musts" and your expectations of the course, and are crucial to post at the beginning of the course so the students cannot say they weren't informed of this or that. Additionally, the students need know they must take the course seriously, there are major repercussions if they don't, and just because the course does not meet in a brick-and-mortar classroom doesn't mean they can simply come and go when they choose, as they choose. This is your "I'm the boss" section of the post.

Include the Course's Importance Beyond the Course

Called reality-based education, it reminds the students that the course has importance beyond a grade, beyond X number of weeks. By explaining to students the subject's importance to them beyond the "I must take this course" mindset you are, yet again, offering a reason for their ownership of the course, and thus bringing about more involvement on the students' part.

Offer Tips on How to do Well in the Course

These tips can come from your past experience in teaching the course; items you look for in assignment submissions; insight on what their overall contributions in discussions, teamwork, chat, and other such areas should be; what they shouldn't do—these and other like items help improve the overall quality of each student's class involvement AND contribute to your humanization and I'm-really-interested-in-helping-you image.

Let Students Know You Are Available and That You Want Them to Succeed in the Course

While this should be mentioned at the beginning of your post it should also be restated at least two more times, including at the end. Again, this shows your sincere involvement in the course and concern for your students.

Make Use of Color, Bolding, Italics, Etc.

When available, the use of color, bolding, italics, etc. can highlight what you deem especially important, give a sense of personality and warmth to your words, and break up the print so it's easier to digest. Also, don't hesitate to use subheads, a word or two in caps to introduce a section, and sentence fragments to emphasize.

Always End on a Positive, Upbeat Note

This is the very last part of your first post that students will read, so restate the positives in your opening few lines; use an exclamation point here and there to show

excitement; and let them know you are really looking forward to the course, their involvement, and—very important—their overall improvement.

BEFORE YOU POST, READ IT ONE MORE TIME

Proofread and edit, proofread and edit: once you send out your first post you can't recall it, so be sure it says what you meant to say, that it's well written, and that you proofread it. You do, indeed, only get one chance to make a first impression!

THE FIRST ASSIGNMENT FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS

GIVE DETAILED FEEDBACK

Students want to improve, yet too often instructors simply indicate that something in an assignment is incorrect without giving specifics; this does not help the student. By establishing an initial reputation as one who gives detailed feedback—most comments will consist of indicating something in the assignment is incorrect, why it is incorrect, and how to get it right—the students will know yours is a class where they can learn, and this starts the road to a strong student-instructor rapport.

INCLUDE POSITIVE COMMENTS IN THE ASSIGNMENT FEEDBACK

We want students to improve, of course, and the ones who do well and are energetic coming in will continually give what is expected—and beyond. But there are also the students who do poorly on their first assignment, and while your comments will point this out it's also crucial that these students—of course, all students—receive one or two positive comments on their assignment. This motivation goes a long way in keeping students enthused and helps to build their confidence from the beginning of the course.

INCLUDE A TRANSITION/TIE-IN OF THE ASSIGNMENT TO THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD

Many students don't consider a course beyond its X amount of weeks and a final grade, yet by initially reminding students of how the course subject relates to the professional world you immediately make the course more important. And this can be done not only through the general subject being taught but also for the specifics of each assignment.

OFFER A MOTIVATIONAL AND UPBEAT SUMMARY COMMENT ON THE ASSIGNMENT

This is where you have the opportunity to personalize your feedback; it lets the students know you are not merely checking off a list, but rather focusing on each student, and his or her needs. And by including a positive and energetic sentence or two you establish yourself as one who is a cheerleader for the students' success, always crucial in keeping students engaged in the course.

INVITE STUDENTS TO CONTACT YOU IF THEY HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED FURTHER EXPLANATION

When students see you are available to help—indeed, you want to help—with any questions or confusion they have on assignments your role becomes that of a 3-D course instructor. For instead of the one-way conversation of you giving feedback to the students now you are inviting two-way conversation on their assignment submission and your feedback. This is but another way of letting the students know, early on, "Hey, I'm interested in helping you improve!"

PASTE A COMPREHENSIVE SUBJECT-RELATED WEBLIOGRAPHY AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR FEEDBACK

This is akin to one of those TV commercials with the famous line, "But wait—there's more!" Yes, students expect feedback from you, and giving detailed feedback will be quite nice. But at the end of your overall/summary comment paste a list of websites that offer additional information relating to the course subject and/or the assignment. This "resource bank" goes a long way in showing students they can count on you to give them everything they need to do well in the course. And always remind them of your comments' and the webliography's value beyond the course.

DRAW STUDENTS' ATTENTION TO POSITIVE AND ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT COMMENTS WITH HIGHLIGHTING

By giving students detailed feedback, an overall summary comment, and a webliography you are also giving them much text—and this can begin to run into one another if you don't use different-sized fonts, underlining, and—especially important—highlighting for the positive and especially important material. By doing this you'll immediately draw the students' attention to the "high points" of your comments, while establishing colors for which they will look with future assignments.

POST AN ASSIGNMENT X CHECKLIST TO BE SURE STUDENTS INCLUDE ALL REQUIREMENTS

Although this is not part of your feedback it does go a long way in making sure you have more positive feedback on the students' first submission. One way students often lose points on an assignment is by leaving out one or two items that are required for the assignment. A great way to help students prevent this, show the

students you are truly there to help them, and start students off with a positive feel about the course is posting a sheet that lists all requirements for the first assignment, in bullet form, indicating that as the students complete an item it can be highlighted as having been completed. You are letting students know you are trying to do everything possible to help them succeed!

THE FIRST DISCUSSION POSTING

POST IT EARLY IN THE DISCUSSION THREAD(S)

You are the umbilical cord that connects the students to their course, and the more life you pump through that connection the more students will want to be involved in the course. So, by posting early in a discussion thread—ideally, prior to the thread beginning, and then again on the first day the thread is open—the students see you are actively in the course, you are part of the course, and can be counted on to give suggestions and insights in discussion. Certainly, you do not want to overtake discussion—it is, after all, the students' discussion—but seeing you involved in discussion, with a reminder or two about the importance of the discussion thread, will prove quite meaningful.

MAKE YOUR FIRST DISCUSSION POSTING A GENERAL ONE—NOT IN RESPONSE TO AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

As the discussion goes on it will be important to post to specific students—this gives your postings a personalized touch and allows you to offer motivation to each student on a name basis. But the first couple of postings should be to the whole of the class—this way, the class knows what you are saying in discussion is for all and you are interested in all doing well in discussion.

Emphasize the Importance of the Thread's Topic to the Course and Beyond the Course

This is something that should be done throughout the course, but in each first posting opportunity this needs be mentioned to get students used to thinking about your course as more than a brief time with you for a grade. Thus, in your first and second post in the discussion remind students of how the thread's topic ties into the professional world—and always ask students to share any experiences in their professional lives that tie into the thread's topic: this immediately gives them more ownership in the course, which results in enthusiasm for learning the material.

Be Enthusiastic, Motivating, and Excited About Student Discussion Postings
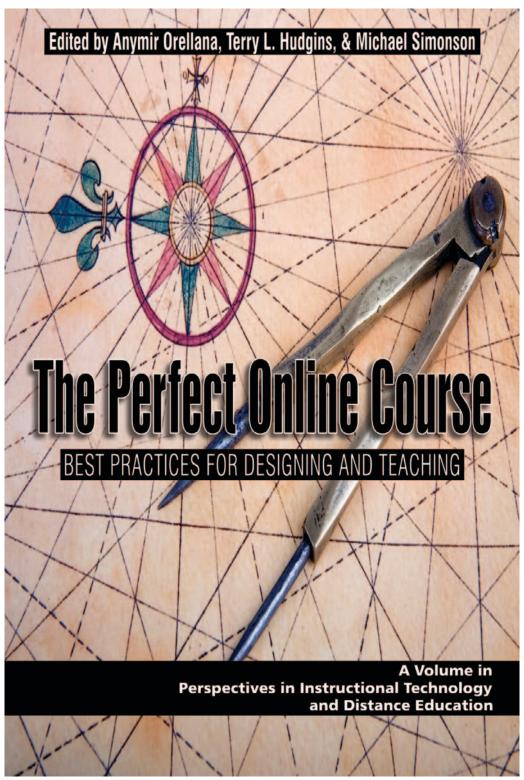
While this is a given throughout the course, if established in the first and second posting the students will see you are doing more than a "Ho-hum, I gotta post, so here it is" posting. If students know you really enjoy learning from discussion posting it's another push to get your students involved. And remind them: each time they respond to a classmate's posting it takes the course deeper and wider, which makes for a richer learning experience.

Remind Students to be Polite and to Use Their Life Experiences

Proper netiquette is always important, but the heat of a discussion topic can make students post with emotion first—and this can hurt or upset other students. To stem this do remind them to be courteous; to disagree, if they choose, but in a professional manner; and to read over their posts before hitting "submit." Also, tell students how valuable their life experiences are to the course as they relate to the thread topics—overall, students enjoy talking about their worlds, and when they tie it in to the topic of the thread, even the course subject, the students are contributing to that reality-based education that takes the course out of the school and into the real world.

Remember: The first whiff of food, the first interaction with a waiter, and the first reaction to the ambience in a restaurant set our anticipation for what to expect—and it is the responsibility of the restaurant's owner to make all positive; if not, the customer will have a less than positive experience, and probably not return.

Edited by Anymir Orellana, Terry L. Hudgins, & Michael Simonson

The Perfect Online Course

BEST PRACTICES FOR DESIGNING AND TEACHING

**A Volume in
Perspectives in Instructional Technology
and Distance Education**

Get Your Copy Today—Information Age Publishing

Ask Errol!

Errol Craig Sull

Wow—the year is going by: nearly fall! Yet distance learning classes continue, and as they continue to grow—a huge growth spurt is forecast over the next few years—so will new problems, ideas, approaches, strategies, activities, complications, and obstacles relating to distance learning. And when these come my way I'll be happy to offer suggestions that might help. Do you have a distance learning question? Drop me an e-mail at ErrolDistanceLearning @gmail.com—I'll be glad to help out if I can! (And to make it in the next issue of *Distance Learning* please be sure to contact me by September 30.)

Here is the latest batch of questions and concerns that I deem are probably considered by many:

I use a bank of prewritten comments to insert when grading my students' assignments, and this works well for my students, as my comments are detailed. Yet for me it becomes a same-old same old, so I'm in a quandary: it certainly saves me the time of writing individualized comments for each student, but it also begins to feel very repetitious—almost boring—for me, and perhaps for my students, resulting in their not reading all my comments. Any suggestions?

When distance learning educators realized the value of using a stash of already-written comments for their students' assignments it was a great step in streamlining the grading process, while also saving beaucoups of time. Yet, as you point out, there can set in a "ho-hum" sense—and this can put a dent in the student-instructor rapport if the students begin to feel your comments are always going to be the same. So, as Clint Eastwood's character remarked in the movie *Heartbreak Ridge*, we adapt, we improvise, we overcome—and in doing so we can make

Errol Craig Sull,
Online Instructor,
P.O. Box 956, Buffalo, NY 14207.
Telephone: (716) 871-1900.
E-mail: erroldistancelearning@gmail.com

those cookie cutter comments seem freshly baked.

First, always let you students know—at the beginning of a course—the comments they receive from you will be very detailed, not only pointing out when something is incorrect but why it is incorrect and how to get it right. This immediately makes any of your comments a good thing. (And a hint: never repeat a comment in its entirety in an assignment; rather, the second or third, et cetera, time the same comment is inserted in your student's assignment write, "See comment #1" or whatever number marks the first time that comment appeared. This way, the student is not overwhelmed by a huge amount of text.) Second, always tweak a prewritten comment when necessary so it specifically fits the problem being pointed out—this makes your bank of comments come alive, and will be an added reason why students need read each of your comments. Last, when a student has a large number of A, B, or C problems in his or her assignment, thus necessitating the same comment many times, drop the student an e-mail about this—this helps stress the importance of your comments and lets student know you take the comments, and thus the student's improvement, seriously.

My school offers distance learning courses not through the typical online course delivery platform, such as Blackboard or eCollege, but rather using a video camera. I speak into a camera, and I am broadcast to several schools with which my college has a contract for the course; the students can see me, and I can see most of them (as the camera is stationary, and thus I can only view half of the class at a time). You have not addressed such a situation in your previous columns, but can you offer approaches for me that would keep these students more involved, rather than merely looking at a talking head each day of the class?

I've had much experience with this, so I know well the problem you describe! This type of distance learning presents unique problems not found in the more typical online course, where all students "see" you through your writings—and can do so on a 24/7 basis. The two biggest problems to overcome in video teaching are keeping the students engaged and having the material taught not quickly disappear from the students' minds (it is an oral presentation, after all, and thus revisiting the lesson is more difficult to achieve).

Several approaches have proved successful in overcoming these challenges: (1) An enthusiastic, even quirky, approach to teaching will help keep students engaged in the class; (2) Ask many questions of the students, and be sure each comes in view of the camera, and gives his or her name; (3) When possible, use your school's course delivery system to help in presenting info of the course, including discussion, activities, and lecture material; (4) Start off each class with a preselected student giving a summary of what is to be covered in that class's lesson; (5) Explain at the start of the course—and occasionally remind the students—of the course's importance in the professional world; this can assist in making the material more important, and thus improve student focus; (6) As for seeing only half of the class be sure the camera is repositioned for each class so you can rotate what section of the class you are seeing. These suggestions combined can transfer the dull, stagnant video course into one that is vibrant and exciting!

I love this column! It offers tidbits that have helped me in my courses, and I've shared them with others in my school. So with that praise (you do deserve it!) I have a question of my own—any suggestions on how to get students more involved in the content of their assignments, in turning them in on time, and doing a better job on what they turn in? I think I've tried just about everything!

Well, thanks for the nice words! And of course you are asking questions that are the Golden Fleece all distance educators yearn to find! If an immediate answer were available how easy would be our life in online education. But while a "one size fits all approach" is still sought for your concerns there are some helpful approaches that most assuredly do improve each of the items you mention. In order to successfully implement these, however, they require more time and effort on your part—but the end result is well worth you doing this.

Let's begin with a reminder to students—around midweek—of what you expect in the upcoming assignment, where students have previously erred, and tips on how to do a good job; send this out as a class e-mail and post it as an announcement in the class, to be sure all see it. (This can be taken to a higher level of success if you make an audio recording of this info, then post it to the class—but still send out the e-mail.) Next, develop a checklist of each major assignment requirements, then post it in the course each time an assignment is coming up; tell students to highlight each item once it is completed. This is a great way to help students turn in all assignments on time and with all requirements included (and remind students this checklist can be adapted to other portions of the course, such as Discussion). Third, be sure you post enough resources in the course so that students will have all they need to show a good effort on each assignment. Last, interject reminders—about twice per week—in a discussion thread about deadlines for upcoming assignments, with plenty of motivational and enthusiastic language included. While these items cannot guarantee 100% success for each of your concerns they certainly will diminish them!

There are so many software packages and "tools" available that it becomes almost

impossible to keep up with them: Power-Point, Prezi, and Adobe Connect are only a few, and I'm beginning to wonder if this is the future of distance learning, that is, where does the instructor fit into all of this? (PS Thanks for your columns—very helpful!)

Not to worry—the distance learning instructor is not in danger of becoming extinct; quite the opposite, in fact! But there are online educators who look at the onslaught of software tools designed for the distance learning classroom as a great way to minimize their efforts, and this should not be the case. It is the distance educator who controls these—and he or she gives direction to them, while also guiding students to their use for better learning.

It is, of course, important to stay current with all software your school adopts, but especially important is how you decide to integrate these into your teaching. As you become more familiar with each make a checklist of how you can implement them into your course for a richer learning experience. And always watch for students' comments, suggestions, and concerns about the software—you can learn much this way, all to improve your overall course effectiveness.

Several studies have been done on which is more effective for the student: a distance learning course without an instructor, but loaded with "whistles and bells" of software; and the same combination of really good teaching software, with the distance learning instructor included. Always the course that has the instructor comes out ahead—way ahead—because the instructor offers guidance, suggestions, directions, reassurance, motivation, and personal intervention in a way the best designed software cannot do … and I doubt will ever do. (And PS—I'm glad my columns have proven beneficial to you!)

Remember: We can only be best by striving to be better—and that takes forces far beyond what our one brain can offer.

DEBT *&* DISILLUSIONMENT

Extending the Economic Advantages of Online Learning

October 3, 2012 | 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Washington, DC

For more information and to register, go to
presidentsforum.excelsior.edu
or
www.usdla.org

Presidents' **Forum**
at EXCELSIOR COLLEGE

USDLA.
UNITED STATES DISTANCE LEARNING ASSOCIATION

Parental Trust, means that the parent trusts the child to use the smartphone correctly.

Apps are tremendous resources, and like any resource there is a set of skills involved in their use. In schools, media specialists are experts in application appropriateness and use. Parents can ask them for app advice. Another way to identify educationally appropriate content is to seek apps that are linked to traditional, long-standing educational tools. For example, *Curious George* has been around a long time, and the *Curious George* app supports the program and is excellent.

For distance educators, the thoughtful use of apps is a great way to improve instruction and expand access—the course syllabus, e-learning lesson, and webinar session should have an app list to accompany the traditional reference list. However, we should not expect too much from apps; they are not replacements for teachers, nor should they be.

And finally, the fourth app R is Recreation—certainly an exciting use of the smartphone, *after* homework is finished.

3 Rs = REMEDIATION, REFERENCE, AND REMINDERS
3 Ps = PARENTAL CONTROL, PARENTAL REVIEW, AND PARENTAL TRUST

Apps
The 3 Rs and the 3 Ps

Michael Simonson

As with any new instructional technology, there are those who claim the new tool or idea is going to revolutionize education, and smartphone and tablet applications ("apps") are new. However, a review of the thousands of apps available indicates that there are currently three viable categories for education. Let's call these categories the 3 Rs.

Remediation is the first category of smartphone applications. These apps are

Michael Simonson, Editor, *Distance Learning*, and Program Professor, Programs in Instructional Technology and Distance Education, Fischler School of Education, Nova Southeastern University, 1750 NE 167 St., North Miami Beach, FL 33162. Telephone: (954) 262-8563. E-mail: simsmich@nsu.nova.edu

designed to reinforce skills or knowledge learned previously, but that need some refreshing or practice. Excellent examples of remediation apps are *Flashcards+* and *Cram*.

Reference applications allow the learner to look up basic information, like the definition of a word, or a date, or a fact. *National Geographic's World Atlas* and the *Miriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary* are "must have" reference apps.

Reminders are the "to do"-type applications, such as meeting reminders, homework dates, and locators. *Find iPhone* is a great reminder app because it reminds us of the location of an iPhone. Parents love this app because if you find the iPhone you usually will find the iPhone user.

Many distance educators are asked by colleagues and friends about the educational appropriateness of using smartphone apps. The 3 Ps help answer these types of questions.

The first P relates to Parental Control. Young children often benefit from educational apps, but for pre-teens it is recommended that parents install and supervise the apps that are on a smartphone. The second P, Parental Review, is aimed at learners in middle and high school. If a student has a smartphone it should be subject to periodic parental review. The final P,