

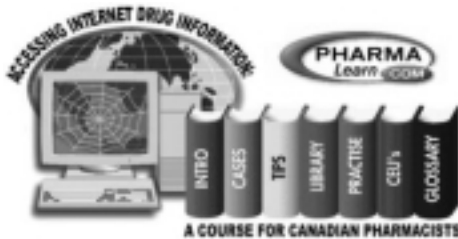
ADETA

Alberta Distance Education & Training Association

Volume 10 Issue 3

November 2001

Learner Perceptions of Situated Learning in an Internet Continuing Education Course



By Dale E. Wright BSP, MSc,
MDE

Situated learning is an experiential learning model in which knowledge is gained in the context of problem situations reflecting its use in practice. It has been recommended as a means of helping learners acquire “tricks of the trade” used by experts, while learning program content (1). Situated learning is based on the recognition that the activity or situation in which knowledge is developed is integral to what is learned. An instructional design template for situated learning environments identified the following key components of this model (2):

- Authentic Context - The instructional setting should reflect the context in which the new knowledge or skill will be used, and invite exploration in a realistic way.
- Authentic Activities - Instructional tasks should be ill-defined

as in practice, and allow learners to find, as well as solve, problems.

- Model of Expert Performance - An experienced role model should illustrate application of the new knowledge or skill, making explicit their underlying thought processes that represent practical knowledge acquired through experience.
- Multiple Perspectives - Multiple views of the problem should be presented, allowing learners to experience a variety of roles in the problem situation.
- Scaffolding - Learners should be provided with skills, strategies, and links in the problem-solving process that will allow them to accomplish tasks beyond their current knowledge and skill level.
- Coaching - Hints, reminders, and feedback on performance, that are both situation and learner specific, should be provided.
- Reflection - Learners should be given opportunities to reflect on their experience and new learning, to encourage integration of new and existing knowledge.

- Articulation - By explaining their thought processes, learners organize their new knowledge, and make tacit knowledge more explicit.
- Collaboration - Interaction between learners will allow them to explore problems and their solutions to a greater depth and breadth.
- Integrated Assessment - Assessment methods that are integrated with the learning tasks make assessment relevant and extend the learning experience.

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Collaboration and Excellence in Distance Education and Training

President's Message



Welcome back to another exciting year and the next issue of the ADETA newsletter. I can't believe it is November already. I would like to begin by thanking Jeff Hamilton and his organizing committee for hosting an excellent Interface 01 Conference in Lethbridge this past spring. We had great weather, the food and entertainment was great, the speakers and sessions were informative. We had lots of time to network. A good time was had by all.

I heard that some of our members experienced a challenging bike ride in the Lethbridge hills. I believe one of our members had the ride of their lifetime and had some difficulty the next day in the finer sport of walking. Anybody know who that was?

Speaking of networking, I certainly missed meeting up with many of you at our Fall Workshop this year. Just so you know, we had problems in the Spring trying to find a host and when we found one, due to unforeseen renovations at a later date we were unable to go there. All institutions are getting very busy and space can be an issue. So we are now looking for volunteers to host the next fall workshop. So if you're interested in host-

ing a day workshop for Fall 2002, please let a member of the board know. I am beginning to think it is never too early to ask as it is a lot of work to organize and one needs time.

Your board has had teleconference meetings on August 28/01, Sept 28/01 and then we had a face-face meeting on Oct 30/01. Thank you Barb for arranging and hosting our day at Norquest College. We dealt with a number of issues related to follow-up from the past year, the objectives and goals for the upcoming year, committee work, finances, and programming. We are continuing to discuss the evolving and changing nature of our organization and how we can best serve the membership. Again on behalf of the ADETA membership I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their commitment, time, and effort in doing this volunteer work.

The Board Members and the Committees they represent:

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As you will remember from the postings on ADETA-net and at the Interface conference we asked for your input into helping us with the definition with distance and the role of ADETA. It became clear when trying to define distance education there are many ideas as to what individuals see as the meaning behind distance education. This process was very interesting and we discovered there is no one definition. So we came up with a few changes and incorporated them into the updated brochure. We are in the process of giving a new face to the Web site so you can look forward to the new site in a few months. We are hoping that this new web design we help to facilitate a more active participation. If you have any ideas or suggestions as to what you would like to see please email me or send via the ADETA-net.

- The Board continues to believe that members who get the most from our professional organization are those that actively participate. We look forward to hearing from you, send in your ideas, make use of the ADETA-net as a means of sharing information, advertising upcoming workshops, asking questions, etc. Get involved. If you have any ideas or want to participate in a noon hour session as you have something to share please contact the board reps.

Reminder about the upcoming ICDE/CADE-ACÉD Conference, Calgary, May, 2002. ADETA is a partner and we look forward to this wonderful opportunity to participate in an international conference. We have been given a reduced rate. See the Web site for details.

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<http://www.athabascau.ca/conf2002/>
The deadline for the Call for Papers has been extended to November 16, 2001. Proposals received after the original deadline of October 30 may not receive notification of acceptance until early January 2002. There will be a draw for a free registration for those who are presently members of ADETA who submitted a proposal for this upcoming international conference.

Alberta continues to grow and so does global e-learning. We all continue to work hard and demands on our time are growing. ADETA will continue to evolve and grow to help meet the needs of its members through our collaborative efforts. Please feel free to email me or call if you have any questions, concerns, or want to be more involved.

I am looking forward to this year with ADETA, because there is such a lot going on, and the group is so dedicated. The major focus will be the CADE-ICDE collaboration, which should result in a wonderful opportunity for members to meet some of the movers-&-shakers in distance and open education worldwide. We are lucky to have this in our own backyard, and I hope we show our appreciation by participating.

The Board this year has a good balance of expertise and interests, and this should lead to some good interaction with the group, and extension

out into the online community at all levels. We have had good meetings, have come to know and respect each other, and are discussing some PD and workshop offerings which I believe will be highly appreciated.

All the best in your upcoming year. Don't forget to take time out to play and have fun.

Fae Jackson 403-240-6041
President
fjackson@MtRoyal.ab.ca

Messages from the Board of Directors

Pat Fahy

I am looking forward to this year with ADETA, because there is such a lot going on, and the group is so dedicated. The major focus will be the CADE-ICDE collaboration, which should result in a wonderful opportunity for members to meet some of the movers-&-shakers in distance and open education worldwide. We are lucky to have this in our own backyard, and I hope we show our appreciation by participating.

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Ingrid Stammer

I am looking forward to serving another year on the ADETA board. It is an opportunity to stay connected to

the Distance Education community in Alberta, across Canada, and beyond. This year is shaping-up to be especially interesting with the Calgary conference on International Distance Education and Open Learning in May. ADETA's willingness to collaborate with organizations such as ICDE, CADE, and others whose activities compliment our own, reinforces some the basic principles of distance delivery that I find appealing.

As Director-at-Large I continue look for opportunities to promote ADETA and its programs. My focus these days is on distance or open delivery in the corporate community. My own work continues to address the problems and possibilities of developing web-based programs for Canadian Pacific Railway.

Barb Pearce

Hi, I'm Barb Pearce, the Treasurer for ADETA and a Media Designer with NorQuest College. I manage course development projects for distance and face-to-face courses. I'm particularly interested in WebCT these days and wonder if any of you would like to form a special interest group. It could be a forum to discuss problems, solutions, tips and tricks. Contact me if you'd like to join.



What's Happening...

Alberta-North

Since the last newsletter update, Alberta-North has been keeping busy serving northern students and helping lobby for northern interests.

Our Edmonton member, NorQuest College, left the Alberta-North partnership this year to focus more on Edmonton-based collaborations but the connections made over the past few years are still proving valuable. Just knowing as much as we do about each others' programs and courses means that students are being shown a wider range of options and advisors can often find a resource to meet a student's needs.

Alberta-North thanks the Northern Alberta Development Council for assisting us in accessing funds for CAP expansion. We now have a network of 48 community access points across the north. In addition, we have expanded the learner support area of our website (<http://www.abnorth.ab.ca/>) and are always on the lookout for useful resources.

The Northern BSW Council of Stakeholders was awarded the Premier's Award of Excellence for the committee's work with the University of Calgary's Access BSW program. Ruth Hunter-Moffat formerly of Northern Lakes College, Marylea Jarvis of Keyano College and Judith van Duren of Alberta-North are members of the hard working team led by Audrey DeWit of NADC who insisted that there had to be an alternative BSW program made available to northern students.

Alberta-North has been working with the North-East Alberta Board for Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Susan Moisey of Athabasca University who received an

OLT grant to create a virtual web-based support community. This website will be accessible at any AN CAP site and we have purchased copies of good screen reader software that will be installed in CAP sites depending on local community needs.

Alberta-North always wants to expand its services to learners in northern communities. If your institution has online programs that you would like to have advertised at our CAPs please contact the office at (780)675-6183.

Judith van Duren 780-675-6184
judithv@athabascau.ca
<http://www.abnorth.ab.ca/>



Northern Alberta Post-Secondary Institution Society

University of Alberta

Government Studies, (<http://www.extension.ualberta.ca/govstudies/>) Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta is partnering with Dalhousie University (<http://www.dal.ca/>) to develop a national online certificate program for local authority administrators. These administrators work in one of the 4,200 municipalities across Canada or in affiliated organizations, companies and agencies. Currently we are conducting a telephone survey of 400 administrators across Canada to determine their needs and preferences for online professional development.

The program is scheduled to launch in September 2002. Our delivery model will include collaboration with other universities who deliver provincially based programs to this audience. The curriculum will be a core of generalizable concepts with "add-ons" for specific material that is tailored to various jurisdictions locally and provincially.

Our website, MuniMall.net, (<http://www.munimall.net/>) will host resources including content and discussion tools for the program. MuniMall will go through a significant re-configuration as the program develops. Some of the research and consultative work for the project has been supported by a grant from the Office of Learning Technologies (<http://olt-bta.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/>), HRDC.

Christine Marles, 780-492-8264.
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<http://www.extension.ualberta.ca/govstudies/>

University of Alberta



What's Happening...

SAIT

When SAIT made the decision to become a digitized organization capable of electronically delivering its curriculum on campus and at a distance, it recognized that there would be issues and concerns that would affect the Institute. *Planning Our Virtual Space: 2001* was a series of sessions held last spring that tried to address these issues.

Some of the outcomes from those sessions were:

- **Support:** We had an impressive number of on-campus people turn out to these events; they came from various departments, and members of the SAIT Executive opened the four sessions.
- **External Colleagues:** The educators and developers who were invited to make presentations complimented us on our plan and our approach to the virtual-space questions.
- **State-of-the-Practice:** We were given the opportunity to examine, debate and adopt best practices from other institutions.
- **Web-centric Environment:** Our DE unit within the Centre for Learning is now to be called Networked Learning to better reflect the multi-uses and multi-audiences of curriculum delivery.
- **Coordinating Committee:** We established a Curriculum Council that reports to Dean's Council and is responsible for developing, prioritizing and impelling the policies and procedures relating to curriculum development at SAIT.
- **Information database:** A Learning Objects Repository would su-

persede our existing CORnet resource by expanding and enhancing it to conform with similar databases established in institutions and organizations elsewhere.

- **Initiative:** A CFL Curriculum Suite would extend our on-campus curriculum design and development expertise to corporate and international members of the larger SAIT community.

No one knows better than educators that plans and tangible results do not always coincide. But we at SAIT feel that some significant positive steps have been taken to give us the impetus to embrace a new learning environment.

SAIT Site: www.sait.ab.ca

SAIT Centre for Learning contacts:

Networked Learning: judy.adams@sait.ab.ca

Curriculum Development: steve.donaldson@sait.ab.ca

Curriculum Suite: bryan.green@sait.ab.ca

Library: susan.brayford@sait.ab.ca



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Learner Perceptions

Continued from P. 1



This design framework guided the development of a self-study Internet-based continuing education program for pharmacists on using the Internet as a drug information resource. In each unit, a case scenario illustrated how an experienced pharmacist would search the Internet to find the target type of drug information and apply it in their practice. Links to relevant Internet sites embedded into the scenario allowed learners to emulate the expert's search strategy. The case was followed by a discussion of Internet sites introduced in the case, as well as other sites of value in finding the target type of information. Learners were encouraged to mark these sites for their growing Internet drug information library. Practice activities in each section encouraged learners to use these Internet sites to find topic-related information. Standardized feedback on the practice activities allowed learners to compare their search strategy with that of a more experienced pharmacist. At the end of each section, learners had access to a bulletin board where they could discuss with their peers their experience in searching the Internet to find the target type of information. The final unit assessment required learners to research a question, and send a summary of their search strategy and findings to the instructor by e-mail. Feedback on the submission was provided to each learner by e-mail.

A written survey and semi-structured interviews were used to determine how experienced and novice Internet users rated the importance to their learning of 18 course elements representing the 10 situated learning model components. Overall, there were no statistically significant differences found between experienced and novice Internet users in their ratings for any of the course elements. Pharmacists in both groups valued program design elements representing nine of the 10 components of a situated learning environment. They unanimously rated as valuable to their learning the authentic context of the program, authentic learning activities taken from practice, the presence of a virtual expert, and some learner support features. Also highly regarded were structured opportunities for reflection, and the integrated assessment process. Individual coaching was highly valued by novice Internet users.

The least valued program element was collaborative learning through a bulletin board. Lack of experience with on-line discussion groups, as well as time constraints were the

most common reason given for avoiding the bulletin board. One of the interactivity challenges faced by this course was the waxing and waning nature of the on-line group. Learners entered and left the course, and the bulletin board discussion, as their personal learning timetables allowed. This restricted the bulletin board to a mainly information-sharing role, rather than the dynamic forum envisioned by proponents of situated learning.

In conclusion, the situated learning design model used in this course was evaluated positively by pharmacist learners. With creative attention to instructional design, most of these situated learning components can be incorporated into distance-delivery pharmacy continuing education programs, regardless of the medium used. The exceptions are individualized coaching of the learner by an instructor or mentor, and collaborative interaction between learners, which require personal communication, either face-to-face, or technology-mediated. Further research is required to determine if coaching confers sufficient benefits to learning



outcomes to warrant its inclusion in self-study continuing education programs. The situated learning design component least valued by pharmacists in this course was the collaborative learning opportunity provided by the bulletin board. Issues that need to be addressed are whether effective collaborative learning can occur in a "continuous enrolment" type of course, and whether pharmacists value collaborative learning opportunities. It may be that pharmacists choosing this type of continuing education program do not perceive interaction with peers in a structured learning situation to be important to their learning outcomes.

References:

1) Brandt, B.L., "Cognitive learning theory and continuing health professions education," *J. Cont. Ed. Health Prof.*, **16**, 197-202(1996).

(2) Herrington, J., Oliver, R., "Critical characteristics of situated learning: implications for the instructional design of multimedia," Presented at the Australian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education Conference, Melbourne, Australia (1995).

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New ADETA Board of Directors



From left to right: Jeff Hamilton, Ingrid Stammer, Stephen Walker, Barb Pearce, Fae Jackson, Pat Fahy and Judith Van Duren is missing.

About This Newsletter

Published three times a year by the Public Relations Committee, as a service to members of the Alberta Distance Education & Training Association.

Next issue: February 2002

Deadline for submissions: February 8th, 2002

Editor: Rod Corbett (403) 297-4829

E-mail: RodCorbett@shaw.ca

Advertising Rates:

Full page: \$100 1/2 page: \$65 1/3 page: \$35 1/6 page: \$20

Camera ready artwork supplied

Statements, opinions, and points of view expressed by the writers do not necessarily represent those of the officers or members of ADETA.

Messages from New Members

Jenny Geary

Jenny Geary is another new member to ADETA. She is presently a student at The University of Southern Queensland completing her Master of Education. She runs the Trident Foundation, a non-profit organisation which offers face-to-face or online counselling mediation and other support services. Jenny is a life-long learner and has completed several other Masters programs and is looking forward to progressing on her PhD studies.

Rhonda Van DeKeere

Rhonda Van DeKeere is a returning member to ADETA. She is presently working on her Masters of Distance Education at Athabasca University.

Brenda Cameron

My name is Brenda Cameron and I work at Bow Valley College, Calgary. I am an instructor for our distant students, and I am actively involved in a program which is a combination of distant and traditional education. I meet with students for 2 hours per week and then the rest of the time the course is conducted on line. I am also involved with a pilot project at the college which has given me an opportunity to work from home exclusively.

Aubrey Hoyle

My name is Aubrey Hoyle. I have worked in the Lethbridge Community College Distributed Learning office for two years. I have attended the fall ADETA conference and Interface both years. I am originally from Wetaskiwin and relocated to Lethbridge four years ago.

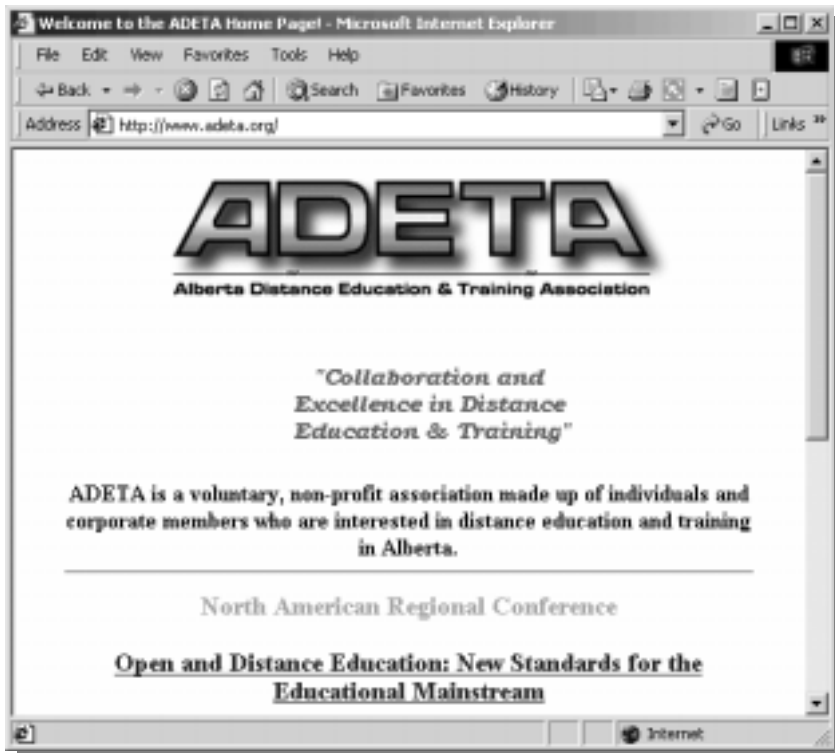
Andrew Riel

My name is Andrew Riel. I work in the Academic Development Centre at Mount Royal College.

Check out the ADETA Website at
<http://www.adeta.org>

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Announcements



Annual ADETA Research Award

As practicing distance educators and trainers, many ADETA members have contributions to make to our understanding of the field. In order to support and encourage research and reflection on practice, ADETA has established an annual award for the best research project completed by one of its members. The award consists of a free registration to Interface, and \$150.00 toward the costs of attending. Only ADETA members in good standing (at the time the research is considered) are eligible. The Research Award Selection Committee is chaired by the ADETA past-president.

The criteria for the selection of the winning submission are:

- Relevance to ADETA members.
- Quality and soundness of the research design and implementation.
- Potential impact of the results on the theory or the practice of distance education.

Besides scholarly or theoretical submissions (such as theses), the award

is intended to include other projects that systematically examine, evaluate or reflect upon practice. To be considered, the project should be documented in such a way that the results and findings are accessible to ADETA members and other interested groups. For this reason, longer works (major papers, theses, dissertations, project reports, etc.) must be summarized, in a maximum of 1500 words, before submission for consideration by the Research Award Selection Committee. If the research is already published online, the URL should be provided. A synopsis of the winning work will be printed in the ADETA newsletter, based on the summary provided. The work's author is responsible for obtaining copyright clearance for ADETA's use of the material, if necessary.

The deadline for submissions is April 30 annually. Nominations for the Research Award must be made by an ADETA member other than the author of the nominated work. Nominations or questions about the Research Award may be forwarded by mail, fax, or email to the past-president (address below), to the editor of the Newsletter, to the ADETA link on the Website (www.adeta.org), or to the ADETA mailing address (Box 47022, 62 Edmonton Centre, Edmonton AB T5J 4N1).

Pat Fahy 780-675-6216
Past-President
patf@athabascau.ca
Fax: 780-675-6170

ADETA-Net

ADETA-Net is a free service for ADETA members providing the opportunity to electronically dialogue and share information with other distance educators and trainers.

The quality and quantity of messages posted depend on the interest and care of the list members. ADETA-Net is unmoderated, in that all members are free to post queries or items of interest and concern. This is done by addressing electronic mail to ADETA-Net@SAIT.AB.CA. The list will automatically forward these messages to all registered members.

Registration in the list is restricted to ADETA members thus it is necessary to have your membership in the list approved by the list owner. If you are an ADETA member, and wish to join the list, send an e-mail message to:

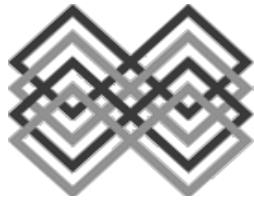
Susan Kerr
Susan.Kerr@norquest.ab.ca

If you answer **Yes** to any of the following, please contact Susan Kerr

- I have never received an e-mail message from ADETA-NET (I am an ADETA member)
- I used to get messages but now they have stopped
- I have changed my e-mail address since I joined ADETA

e-mail: susan.kerr@norquest.ab.ca
Phone 780-427-7865

Conferences & Workshops



The International Council for Open and Distance Education and the Canadian association for Distance Education Present

CADE/ICDE North American Region Conference 2002

Calgary, May 26—29, 2002

At the Telus Convention Centre

<http://www.icde.org>

Primary Hosting Institution is
Athabasca University

The first North American tri-lingual conference on open and distance education will be held in Calgary, Alberta, May 26 – 29, 2002. The conference is sponsored by the International Council for Open and Distance Education and the Canadian association for Distance Education, and is hosted by Athabasca University.

Planning of the many aspects of the conference is well under way. Organizing committees are working on the logistics, sponsorship, tradeshow,

communication and advertising, as well as the program structure and the selection of papers for presentation at the conference.

ADETA will play an important role in the conference as they will present the Pre-conference Workshop and Cracker Barrel Session, Sunday, May 26, 2002.

For conference information, deadlines for papers and registration to the conference see:

<http://www.athabascau.ca/conf2002/>

Professional Practice In Online Learning Critical Issues For Campus Alberta

This series of forums is designed to build a framework for human resources development in Alberta's growing online learning community. Alberta is poised to extend its national leadership in the growing field of online learning through large-scale projects such as the SuperNet that will build unprecedented infrastructure capacity, Alberta Learning's Online Curriculum Repository, and the Campus Alberta Repository of Educational Objects (CAREO) that will provide a wealth of shared instructional resources. The natural outgrowth of these initiatives is an increased focus on the people who will make Online learning happen in the province - teachers, faculty members, and other professionals involved in the teaching enterprise at both the K-12 and post-secondary levels.

This series of forums is designed to develop a plan that will prepare Alberta educators for the world of online learning. The series is divided into topic areas that come under the larger theme of professional practice. Each Forum is limited to 100 "on-location" registrants but both the keynote address and plenary discussion will be offered online through streaming media to participants across Canada at a reduced fee.

Forum #1 - Professional Practice and the Changing Role of Teachers in Online Learning

This forum will focus on the shifts in teacher practice that will occur as more educational organizations ap-

To find out more about other Conferences that are coming up, check out The Distance Education Clearinghouse conference list at www.uwex.edu/disted.

Athabasca University
Canada's  **Open University™**

Conferences & Workshops

proach the world of online teaching and learning.

Outcomes will include answers to the following questions:

*What changes in teaching methods need to occur to facilitate the shift from classroom to online environment?

*What type and level of professional development is required to allow teachers/faculty to accommodate this shift?

*What are known to be "best practices" that will lead to student success in online learning?

*What issues of teacher/faculty workload are present in the shift to Online Learning?

Keynote Address:

Becoming a Successful Online Teacher and Learning Facilitator

Judy Roberts is President of Judy Roberts & Associates and has over 25 years' experience in the applications of learning technologies, with particular emphasis on distance and open learning, and telemedicine. Judy will present a case study to describe the challenges she confronted in becoming an online teacher.

When: Friday, November 23, 2001 - 9 AM to 4 PM

Where: The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Edmonton, Alberta

Forum #2 - Professional Practice and Policy Reform in Online Learning

This forum will focus on the system-wide policy change that needs to occur in order to create a thriving professional practice of Online Learning in Alberta. Outcomes will

include answers to the following questions:

*How will teacher/faculty preparation need to change to accommodate the online learning environment?

*How will teacher/faculty professional development needs be met in the constantly changing online learning environment?

*Which intellectual property and copyright issues need to be addressed in order for teachers/faculty to become professionally engaged in Online Learning?

*Which teacher/faculty workload and compensation policies will be affected by a move to online learning?

Keynote Speaker: Lucille Pacey

Lucille Pacey is the former Vice - President of the Open Learning Agency and bases her consulting practice on over 20 years' experience as a senior executive in distance education. She has been instrumental in setting corporate policy and overall strategic direction for the effective use of technology and telecommunications for the delivery of education. She is presently the North American representative for the World Education Market (WEM) scheduled for Lisbon, May 2002. She has served as President of the Canadian Association for Distance Education and was the Founding President of the not-for-profit society 'Arts Start in School'.

When: Friday, January 25, 2002 - 9 AM to 4 PM

Where: University of Calgary, Learning Commons, Calgary, Alberta

Forum Agenda (All times MST):

9:00 - 10:30 AM : Welcome & Keynote Address

10:30 - 10:45 AM: Break

10:45 - 12 Noon: Morning Workshop

12 - 1:00 PM Luncheon

1:00 - 2:30 PM Workshops Continue

2:30 - 4:00 PM Plenary and Wrap-up

FEES:

Per Forum Event (lunch and break refreshments provided):

Individuals from AOC Member Organizations: \$40

Non-Members: \$50

The keynote and plenary sessions for these forums are available online through web-based streaming media. Online participants can email questions and comments "live" during the presentations. National Online Access to Keynote and Plenary sessions only: \$20 per registrant

To Register:

Online: www.nait.ab.ca/aocforums

By Mail:

Forward a cheque or PO payable to The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology to:

NAIT, AOC Forum - Attn: Traci Spaans 11762 - 106 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5G 2R1

**LOCAL REGISTRATION LIMITED TO 100 INDIVIDUALS!
REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
Tuesday November 20, 2001**

Further information:

Jeff Zabudsky, Chair, Alberta Online Consortium Committee on Post-Secondary Affairs

Ph: 780-491-3912

Email: jeffz@nait.ab.ca

Conferences & Workshops

Interface 2001, An Alberta Odyssey

University of Lethbridge & Lethbridge Community College
May 30th, 31st, June 1st 2001

