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Implementing Open Distance Learning in Developing Countries

Clayton R. Wright

Introduction

There is no doubt that open distance learning (ODL) systems can be effectively implemented in developing countries. Indira Gandhi National Open University in India, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University in Thailand, and Anadolu University in Turkey are testaments to the potential of ODL to provide learners with alternative means of obtaining educational experiences and credentials. ODL can provide effective learning opportunities. When you consider that “only about 3 percent of young people in sub-Saharan Africa and 7 percent in Asia attend some form of post-secondary education” (Bollag, 2001, p. 1), you can understand why countries with limited resources may look at ODL as one way to educate citizens and address prevailing equity and equality issues.

ODL combines the features of both distance and open learning. Distance education is usually characterized by:

- the separation of the learner and the instructor during a significant portion of the learning experience,
- the use of two-way communication that allows interaction between the learner and the instructor or tutor,
- the use of non-print media to replace or support printed materials, and
- students studying primarily on their own. ►

ODL continued on page 8

About the Author

Clayton R. Wright, PhD, is the Coordinator of Instructional Media and Design at Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. He has presented workshops or consulted internationally with educators in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, South America, South-east Asia, Russia, and Ukraine.

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Information

Get Connected. Join ADETA

ADETA is a voluntary, non-profit association of individuals and corporate members interested in distance education and training in Alberta. Its purpose is to actively foster collaboration, cooperation and understanding among those involved with distance education and training in Alberta.

Individual Members:

Individual members may participate in all discussions, have one vote on all issues and hold office within the Association.

Annual Individual Membership: \$35.00

Student Members:

Student members may participate in all discussions but do not have a vote and cannot hold office within the Association.

Annual Student Membership: \$10.00

Volunteer Opportunities:

We are actively seeking volunteers for the upcoming Fall Workshop at the Alberta Distance Learning Centre in Barrhead, Alberta and for Interface 2003 at NAIT in Edmonton. ADETA has short and long term opportunities for you to share or develop your experience in board governance, distance and alternative education research and mentoring, newsletter publication, and a range of committee activities.

To get involved, contact Ingrid Stammer at (403) 319-7245, or ingrid_stammer@cpr.ca.

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About this Publication

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

Contact us:

The Distance welcomes your comments and suggestions. Send comments by email to Camille at lcjensen@shaw.ca or Ingrid at ingrid_stammer@cpr.ca or by regular mail:

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Next Publication:

The submission deadline for the November 2002 newsletter is October 14, 2002.

Advertising rates:

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

Camera ready artwork supplied.

President's Message

Ingrid Stammer

In the after glow of the May ICDE/CADE conference it was clear that the event was personally very satisfying. It was an opportunity to meet colleagues and friends from Alberta and around the world. It was a time to catch-up on developments in distance and distributed learning, as well as important events like promotions, moves, and a birth. It was also a time to reflect on where we stand as individual practitioners, the position of our organizations, the province's support, and beyond (with a glancing nod to Buzz Lightyear). The daily, ubiquitous irritations of working in a technology-mediated environment shrunk to insignificance when listening to issues faced by some of the presenters. One woman from India was trying to manage the logistics of enrolling, teaching and assessing 800,000 students in a developing country. Not an enviable position.

To explore further some of the issues facing developing countries have a look at Clayton Wright's feature article in this issue. It takes a closer look at implementing Open Distance Learning (ODL) in developing countries by asking the question developing countries need to ask themselves before they can take advantage of ODL. The questions Clayton poses are the same we need to ask ourselves when approaching or maintaining distance and distributed learning. A critical difference is that the developing countries face financial and infrastructure issues that dwarf any issues we have in the same areas.

Our Annual General Meeting was held during the conference. At the AGM we saw some board members complete

their terms or choose to leave the board. As a result we now have two new members: Daph Crane from Bow Valley College and Christine Marles from the University of Alberta. Re-elected to the board, after a heart wrenching speech that included a kneeling plea to be allowed back, was Stephen Walker. Less dramatic, but as important, was the return of Barb Pearce as Treasurer. Jeff Hamilton had the pleasure of continuing as a board member, without having to run for his seat. Fae Jackson has moved to the august position of Past President, following in the footsteps of Pat Fahy. While I have relieved Fae of the position of President.

The newly reconstituted board has a busy year ahead. We are already in the throws of organizing the Fall Workshop in Barrhead, and preparing for the 2003 Interface at NAIT in Edmonton. In addition we are planning a series of six lunchtime speakers. The board members are an enthusiastic group with many talents. Keep watching the ADETA website for developments, and feel free to contact us with suggestions and questions.

I would like to recognize those board members who have left this year. Pat Fahy has been an active board member for many years. In that time he has led ADETA as President then provided guidance to the board as Past President. Pat has earned his well-deserved time away from the board. Judith Van Duren brought an exciting energy to the board that will be greatly missed. To both of these hard working volunteers, I would like to extend the thanks of all ADETA members. ■

Editor's Message

Camille Jensen

It is a time of new faces at ADETA, and I have added myself to the newbies roster. I have been a member of ADETA for several years, however, this is my first issue as Editor and Production Manager of "The Distance." (It is also my first time using PageMaker! Yikes!) I've enjoyed compiling this issue and I look forward to working on the next issue due out in November.

New to this issue is the Editor's Message. I will use the Editor's Message to tell you about what I'm planning for the next newsletter and encourage you all to submit articles, and whatever tidbits you'd like to see to enhance our publication.

For the next issue, I hope to focus on two items. I've found the 'Updates' submissions are sometimes long enough to warrant placement as an article. So, I intend to include a 'Feature' article that highlights a specific institution's approach to distance education, or e-learning. Second, I would like to entice some advertisers to the publication. Perhaps you know of an organization that might consider exposure in our publication. If you would like your institution to be featured in the next or upcoming issues, or if you might consider advertising your programs, courses or business services in "The Distance," please contact me at lcjensen@shaw.ca.

I hope you enjoy my first issue! ■

Announcements

ADETA Board Elected at Annual General Meeting

ADETA Board Elections took place at the May 27th ADETA Annual General Meeting. Our new president, Ingrid Stammer was elected to a one-year term. Board members were elected to two-year terms. Our new board members include familiar friends and two new faces. Please welcome the ADETA Board...however they might appear!



President: Ingrid Stammer
ingrid_stammer@cpr.ca

Ingrid Stammer is with the Performance Technology Design Group at Canadian Pacific Railway. As a Lead Designer she provides support to CP business units by assessing employee technical skills and performance, then developing, implementing, and evaluating performance

improvement initiatives. Current projects include the introduction of several technology mediated training programs.

Ingrid has an extensive background in distance education. She has developed and implemented programs and training resources for faculty, staff and students at post-secondary institutions as well as in a corporate setting. In recent years she has shifted her focus to Human Performance Technology. Her current interest is in humanizing technology mediated instruction.



Treasurer: Barb Pearce
Barb.Pearce@norquest.ca

Barb Pearce is currently working as a Media Designer with NorQuest College. She coordinates the Media Development Centre, a unit responsible for overseeing and supporting the college's curriculum development activities. Previously, she worked

in the area of technical support and training at the college. Barb has been a member of ADETA for many years and has served on the board as Treasurer for the past two years. She is enrolled in the Masters of Distance Education program at Athabasca University.



**Past President:
Fae Jackson**
fjackson@mtroyal.ab.ca

Fae Jackson has been a faculty member at Mount Royal College for 20 years. She has been teaching in Advance Studies in Mental Health, a distance delivery program for 9 years. This program is a multi-model delivery system using a variety of older and newer technology. Over the last few years

she has been integrating the web as part of her distance teaching. She believes strongly in a team approach when developing and learning about how we can integrate technology into our learning environments. ADETA has been another wonderful means of increasing her networking and sharing ideas about how we can make a difference in our delivery and teaching.



**Secretary:
Jeff Hamilton**
jeff.hamilton@lethbridgecollege.ab.ca

Jeff Hamilton is the Administrator for Instructional Development and Academic Technologies at Lethbridge Community College. In this role he works with faculty to implement technology in the classroom. Jeff is an avid coulee biker (There are no mountains near Lethbridge, but the biking is still pretty aggressive - ask Stephen Walker.) Jeff enjoys spending time with his wife and three children –

also coulee bikers. Naturally, he enjoys the association with ADETA members and has found lots of useful strategies from the yearly workshops and conferences.



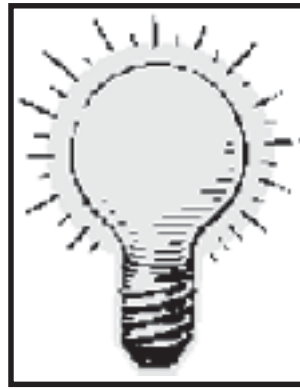
Director at Large:
Daph Crane
dcrane@bowvalleycollege.ca

Daph Crane is an Instructional Designer/Program Evaluator with Learning Resource Services at Bow Valley College. She is a graduate of Athabasca University Master's of Distance Education program. The bulk of Daph's instructional design work is with the ESL and Business and Industry Departments. Her program evaluation work spans across all program departments at Bow Valley College. She has a special interest in professional development. Daph has been a member of ADETA for 4 years and has been living in Alberta for 3 1/2 years (originally from St. John's, Newfoundland). Outside of work, Daph enjoys swimming, reading, outdoor life and needlework.



Director at Large:
Christine Marles
christine.marles@ualberta.ca

Christine Marles is a distance education specialist who has worked in Canada and Singapore. Christine's focus is on making education accessible and effective through systematic development and implementation of distance learning technologies. Christine is Chief Editor, Government Studies, University of Alberta and is a partner in Open Learning Consultants. Christine has worked in distance education for more than 17 years and holds a Master of Distance Education degree from Athabasca University. Christine is a past President of the Alberta Association for Continuing Education and is looking forward to her work as an ADETA Board member.



Director at Large:
Stephen Walker
swalker@adlc.ca

Stephen Walker is the Program Coordinator for Resource Development at the Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC). Mr. Walker manages the development of new print and online distance learning resources for primary and secondary learners across the province. As an educator, Mr. Walker highly values qualitative resources that effectively work to break the barriers to education and meet the needs of distant learners throughout. Stephen has been a part of the Alberta Distance Education Training Association for four years and has served this community as a board member for the past two. Stephen is committed to facilitating and learning from his fellow ADETA members and working with the membership to promote good practice and sound teaching for distance education.

Three cheers for...



We welcome new board members, but say goodbye to three dedicated and hard working professionals that have volunteered countless hours for ADETA. Our gratitude and thanks go out to...

Pat Fahy
Judith Van Duren
Rod Corbett



Special Mention — Richard Day

Congratulations to Richard Day, Video Producer in Instructional Media and Design at Grant MacEwan College. Richard won the Association for Media and Technology in Education in Canada (AMTEC) 2002 Media Award for post-secondary institutions, as well as the Panasonic Media Award, for the video series "Supervising with Style". Dr. Sherrill Brown, Dr. Carole Massing, and Dianne Tuterra in Early Childhood Development initiated the production of the acclaimed video series. "Supervising with Style" is a component of an Early Childhood Development joint project among Grant MacEwan College, Grand Prairie Regional College, and Lakeland College.



Start Spreading the News!

The 2003 Interface conference will be held in Edmonton at NAIT, May 28, 29 & 30. If you would like to volunteer to help organize and roll-out this extravaganza, contact Barb Pearce at Norquest College, (780) 427-8043 or barb.pearce@norquest.ab.ca.

Watch for Interface updates on the ADETA website, www.adeta.org.

Register for the Fall Workshop

Yes, that's right its registration time! The ADETA Fall Workshop, "A Focus on Teaching and Learning" is being presented October 4th, 2002, in Barrhead at the Alberta Distance Learning Centre...the stomping grounds of ADETA Board member Mr. Stephen Walker. The workshop will provide an opportunity for practitioners, neophytes and support staff to discuss and share practices, new technologies, opportunities, successes and problems in delivering distance learning.

Among the sessions being offered are:

- Synchronous tools for distance delivery
- Strategies for connecting with students at a distance
- Flash development tools
- Effective instructional design for online courses
- An Action Learning Model...and much more!

Opening the workshop will be Ralph Helder B.Ed., M.Ed., Director of the Alberta Distance Learning Centre. In the past five years he has facilitated the transition of traditional

distance education delivery to a multi-modal distributed learning online format. He was instrumental in the organization and establishment of the Alberta Online Consortium representing Alberta school jurisdiction members as well as other post-secondary groups and interested stakeholders and is presently serving as vice-chair. Ralph is considered a leader in the K-12 distance education community in Alberta and across Canada and has assisted other institutions in establishing alternative distributed-learning programs. Ralph completed his Masters degree at the University of Calgary with major emphasis in Educational Leadership and Education Technology. He has also shared expertise in program planning with the ministries of education in Saskatchewan and Ontario. He is also an advisor to the Royal Roads University - Master of Arts Distributed Learning program.

If you need further information about the Fall Workshop, direct all inquiries to Ingrid Stammer at ingrid_stammer@cpr.ca.

Fall Workshop Registration Form

Name:

ADETA

Member: \$60.00

Non

Member: \$80.00

Institution or Organization:

Payment: **Cheque**

please make cheques payable to ADETA

P.O. Number

Address:

including city, province and postal code

Mail Registration

to:

ADETA Fall Workshop 2002
Box 47022
62 Edmonton Centre
Edmonton AB T5J 4N1

ADETA Research Reward Recipient: Casey Allen

ADETA presented its annual Research Award at the ADETA Annual General Meeting. Casey Allen received his award for his research paper entitled "The Internet as a Professional Development Tool in Alberta – Teachers' Attitudes and Understanding". The ADETA Research Award includes free registration and \$150.00 toward the costs of attending Interface. Congratulations Casey!

Casey Allen has just completed his Master's degree through Athabasca University in the field of Distance Education. He is now an instructional designer for Mortech Services Ltd., which contracts services for colleges in Alberta. Casey coaches football and basketball, is an avid HAM radio hobbyist and hopes to get his ultralight pilot's license. His future aspirations are to go on to study for a Ph.D. in educational technology and to develop partnerships for Mortech Services in the field of instructional design, evaluative surveys and pilot testing new courses.



Casey Allen (left) is congratulated by Pat Fahy (right) upon receipt of the ADETA Research Award.

The Internet as a Professional Development Tool in Alberta – Teachers' Attitudes and Understanding

More corporations are using the Internet to deliver training sessions to their employees with a great amount of success. School-based initiatives are also in use around the world to incorporate professional development via the Internet. In turn, those teachers believe they are better equipped to teach more effectively. Changes are happening very rapidly due to the Internet. We have reached a critical threshold equivalent to, or greater than the changes produced by Johannes Gutenberg's printing press.

In Alberta, very few incentives have been developed and very little has been done through governing bodies to bring our teachers into the forefront of training using the Internet. This study's intent is to assess the attitudes of teachers towards using the Internet as a professional development tool.

Both classroom teachers and distance educators, in the Alberta K-12 system were surveyed to determine how teachers felt

about the Internet as a PD tool, and how receptive they are to using it as such. There were many differences between the two groups. Online educators used computers much more and felt they had many more professional development experiences dealing with technology use than did classroom teachers. A greater number of online educators felt that professional development in-services could be effectively covered using online techniques such as CMC's or training packages and over 80% of them felt that the social interaction of online PD was the same or better. By comparison, classroom teachers were less trusting of data found on the Internet and did not believe that socialization could be as effective. Less than half of the classroom respondents had considered online training as part of their professional growth plans.

It is hoped that this study will point out the need for promoting a greater awareness of what the Internet has to offer for training to our educational colleagues across the province as we move forward into the next century and through the critical threshold of change that awaits us. ■

ODL continued from page 1

Clayton R. Wright

Open learning may display many of the attributes below; however, note that openness is a relative concept. An open learning system tends to:

- have less restrictive entry and exit requirements and more entry points than traditional educational systems;
- allow students to progress at their own pace rather than a pace set by the institution, instructor, or peer group of students;
- provide the opportunity for learners to progress through the material in a variety of ways;
- allow students to negotiate the course content, activities, and assessment methods;
- enable learners to study anywhere and anytime.

In an open learning setting, the student and instructor may not be separated by distance—they could be situated in the same classroom.

An ODL system can be defined as one that provides flexible learning opportunities to students who are separated from their instructors for a significant amount of time and allows students some flexibility in completing their studies.

ODL systems appeal to governments and educators in developing countries for many reasons. ODL can:

- address the needs of a growing population by providing education to the masses rather than to a select few;
- provide the skilled workers and professionals that developing countries need in order to reduce poverty, raise the living standards of their citizens, increase the level of economic activity, and sustain their communities;
- be the basis of an educational system that may cost less than a traditional, lecture-based educational system, as large educational buildings and dormitories are not required; thus, more people can be educated for less money;
- increase access to educational opportunities for those who have job and family responsibilities and may not be able to attend an educational institution on a full-time basis;
- be accessed by students who live a significant distance from conventional institutions;
- offer a flexible means of completing an educational credential, as students can study at home and may not encounter the restrictions normally associated with traditional institutions;
- adjust educational programming to meet the needs of the country more easily than conventional institutions can.

“...before they can take advantage of the potential of ODL, developing countries need to address a number of basic questions...”

But before they can take advantage of the potential of ODL, developing countries need to address a number of basic questions. These questions are discussed briefly below. Although the questions are presented in a sequential order, note that the response to any one question affects the answers to other questions.

What are the benefits and concerns related to the use of ODL for a particular program?

Prior to establishing an ODL system, developing countries need to clearly identify what they hope to accomplish and thereby create a yardstick to measure their progress and successes. Do they want to raise the general educational level of the entire population or have they targeted areas in which expertise is required? Do they want to establish an ODL

system to educate people in one area of expertise or train people to fulfill a variety of roles in their society? Is ODL suitable for their purposes? In countries that lack sophisticated telecommunication infrastructures, ODL may not be appropriate for programs that require extensive hands-on experience or observation by an instructor. As their resources are scarce and must be used to realize the greatest impact, developing countries must be careful not to embrace the latest ODL fads; they must resist high-tech novelties.

Will the ODL certificates, diplomas, or degrees be recognized?

Distance education or ODL systems may be perceived in developing countries as having a low status. In countries that were colonized by European powers, those who wanted to receive higher education and could obtain the necessary finances frequently went abroad to obtain their post-secondary credentials or attended in-country public and private institutions that were established during the colonial period. These institutions were – and are – usually conventional in their approach to learning and instruction. Thus, graduates who have become leaders in their countries have no experience with alternative delivery methods. If they are decision makers or employers, they may frown on credentials obtained in a non-traditional manner. Some developing countries, such as South Africa, have introduced ODL, but have done this so rapidly that a number of their institutions did not develop quality materials or provide the necessary student support structures. Thus, the quality of graduates from some of these programs is suspect. Further complicating this scenario was the arrival of overseas correspondence schools, especially in ►

Africa. These schools made many unkept promises, provided material that was not relevant to the local populations, introduced culturally inappropriate content, provided limited student support, and sometimes used outdated material. As a result, people lost confidence in distance education and the certificates, diplomas, and degrees granted by these “accreditation mills.”

In order to improve the status of ODL in developing countries, educators must improve and /or ensure the quality of the materials and support systems provided to the instructors and learners. Initially, the same instructors who teach in recognized traditional programs could prepare or supervise the development and delivery of ODL. Countries may want to consider establishing a dual-mode institution prior to establishing a single-mode institution dedicated to ODL. Later, as developing countries gain ODL experience and access external assistance and expertise, they can establish nationally recognized ODL institutions. However, the perception of ODL in some developing countries will not change unless the quality improves, the general public is made aware of the quality of education or training being offered, and certificates, diplomas, and degrees obtained after completing an ODL program of study are accepted as equivalent to those received from a traditional institution.



Will students have equitable access to ODL opportunities?

Initially, developing countries may have difficulty ensuring that all citizens have equitable access to ODL opportunities, yet they must strive to achieve this goal in order to attain country-wide support and acceptance of ODL. Although ODL can be more accessible than conventional educational institutions, several factors may hinder equitable access. For example, countries such as Nigeria in which several languages or dialects are spoken may offer ODL only in English, thereby excluding those who speak other languages. ODL may not require the construction of large educational institutions, but it does rely heavily on an effective transportation and communications infrastructure. In Kenya, most people live in a central east-west corridor, and the transportation and communications infrastructure is highly developed in this corridor. Beyond this region, services are

minimal; therefore, it becomes difficult to provide educational services to those who live a pastoral and nomadic way of life. It is possible, as is done in many countries, to provide educational radio and television broadcasts, but these afford only one-way communication. Two-way communication by satellite and cellular phones is possible, but the current costs for establishing and maintaining these systems place them beyond the reach of the vast majority of people in developing countries. Some developing countries have started to locate small learning centres in remote regions in order to reach out to more students.

Perhaps the greatest barriers to students making use of ODL educational opportunities are setting high tuition fees and requiring students to take on costs that are normally borne by conventional institutions. Few students in developing countries can afford to purchase a laptop computer and the associated hardware and software required for participation in online courses.

How will students' progress and success be assessed?

All ODL educators face this challenge, but it is crucial to ODL in developing countries in which there may be an unfavourable perception of

ODL. It can be difficult to monitor the progress of ODL students who live a significant distance from major economic centres or educational institutions, yet students must receive feedback on their progress and receive a summative evaluation that clearly measures their educational achievements. Both developing and developed countries have used some of the methods below to facilitate and assess the learners' progress and accomplishments:

- Provide feedback via telephone, facsimile machines, audio-conferencing, video-conferencing, and the Internet.
- Establish local learning or study centres where students can obtain guidance and be tested under supervised conditions.
- Initiate mentorship programs that pair students with others who have more knowledge and experience than they do.
- Organize study groups to assist students with their social and team-building skills and allow them to discuss and work on assignments together. ►

ODL continued from page 9

Clayton R. Wright

- Establish short residency workshops that provide opportunities for learners to interact with other students and the instructors.

Unless students are monitored frequently and receive effective feedback, they are likely to drop out of educational programs. If a country establishes a goal of having “x” number of students graduate from an ODL program and a lesser number graduate, this graduation rate may appear to be a failure in a developed country, but can still be seen as a success in a developing country, as those who dropped out may have obtained some skills and be better off than those who did not participate in ODL. Success is a relative term. Developing countries are seeking any methods that will help their people increase their skills, especially methods that reach those who were once considered to be unreachable or marginalized.

Will students be able to transfer credits?

Under ideal conditions, credits earned upon the completion

of ODL courses and programs would be transferable to other ODL and traditional institutions. If this is not possible, then the options available for learners who complete ODL courses and programs will be limited. In societies in which people must move from place to place in order to survive or find employment and in situations in which a local institution may not have all the expertise required to deliver an entire program, it is essential that students be able to transfer credits from one institution to another. In a perfect world, programs within a region or country would be harmonized so that students could transfer credits as needed. These credits could also be transferable to a regional university, such as the University of the West Indies, which serves several island countries in the Caribbean.

What information and communication technologies will be suitable for the subject matter, the students, and the instructors?

A variety of technologies can be used to administer and deliver ODL programming. However, no one technology is ►

ODL continued on page 11



MuniMall Newsletter

John Sinclair

Web Librarian
Government Studies, Faculty of Extension,
University of Alberta

Government Studies, a unit in the University of Alberta Faculty of Extension, provides internet-based distance education to practitioners of municipal government. The Unit also maintains the MuniMall website (www.munimall.net), an educational portal for municipal officials. An important feature of the website is the MuniMall Newsletter, a weekly roundup of municipal news around the province and soon the country.

The MuniMall Newsletter is an HTML attachment emailed out every Thursday evening to some 800 subscribers, most of whom work in local government. Content is gathered by Editor, John Sinclair, a librarian with 21 years experience in the news industry. John peruses the web-based weeklies and dailies of the prairies, searching for stories of interest to municipal practitioners. Using his tabloid experience, John reworks most headlines into a concise, punchy format which combines humour with brevity. The headlines

double as a hypertext link back to the story on the newspaper website. A one-sentence lead, sometimes edited down from the news story, supplements the headline and gives the reader a good feel for the content of the article.

The fusion of email technology, tabloid format, and solid news content appears to be a winner. Feedback is almost universally positive, and the subscription base grows at an annual rate of 50%. The information has considerable utility in day-to-day practice, and subscribers appreciate the entertaining manner in which it is delivered

The Newsletter also serves as a promotional vehicle for the website and the educational offerings of the Unit, increasing both hits and enrollment numbers. To see the latest MuniMall Newsletter, drop by www.munimall.net, and follow the Newsletter links. ■

best in all educational circumstances and the ineffective use of technology can impede rather than facilitate learning. Technologies can be used to convey content, provide feedback, support interactive activities, and manage ODL. If one-way communication is required in real time, then radio and television broadcasts can be used. If two-way communication in real time is required, then the telephone, audio-conferencing, audiographics, video-conferencing, and the Internet may be used. Computer conferencing offers interactivity, but not in real time. However, the resources available to developing countries may be quite limited—perhaps only printed materials, facsimile machines, audiocassettes, and videocassettes are easily accessible. These latter resources, along with broadcast media such as radio and television, have been used successfully in developing countries such as China. The China Central Radio and Television University uses broadcast media to reach more than 550,000 students.

Internet and satellite communication services, such as those being developed in Brazil, will play a greater role in the delivery of instruction in developing countries. However, the following concerns must be addressed:

- the need for a reliable and cost-effective electrical and telecommunications infrastructure;
- the extent to which students and instructors have access to hardware, software, service providers, and reliable, inexpensive electrical and telecommunications services;
- the cost associated with purchasing and maintaining technology;
- the extensive support students and instructors may need in order to use computer technology effectively;
- the potential introduction of foreign social and cultural norms via the Internet and other media;
- the availability of significant financial resources to establish and operate technology-based educational systems.

As a country develops, so will the electrical, transportation, and telecommunications infrastructures that are required to support a diversified ODL system.

Should materials be adopted, adapted, and/or developed?

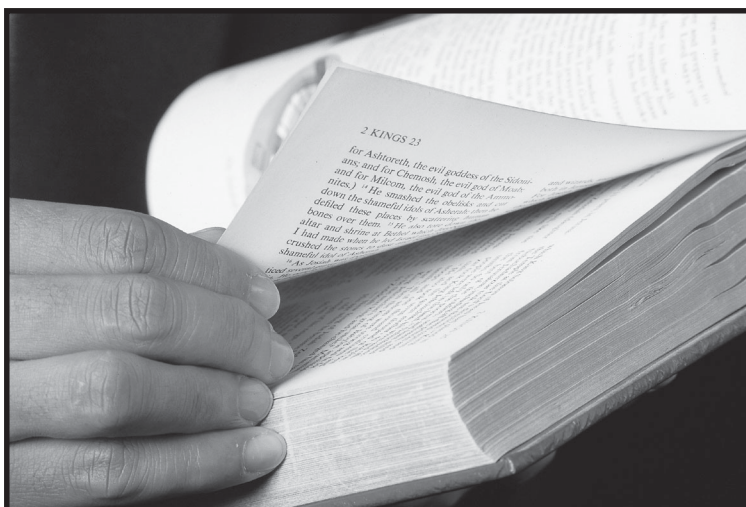
It can be a monumental task to develop learning materials for an ODL program, especially if countries lack the knowledge,

skills, and resources required to create a quality product. Consequently, developing countries often have sought to adopt or adapt materials developed elsewhere. This procedure can reduce the time needed to develop suitable materials, but learning and support material from other countries may introduce cultural and religious values that are not acceptable to a particular developing country. In addition, examples used in the materials may not be relevant to the learners and instructors who will use the material, and the rights to use the material may be costly to obtain. In order to address these concerns, the nine members of the Southern African Development Community jointly developed a teacher-training program that could be used by all the

countries involved, and the post-secondary institutions in the predominantly English-speaking countries of the Caribbean are jointly developing the Caribbean Tourism Learning System in order to improve tourism-related training in the region. These regional development programs are successful because all participants have ownership in the process, the materials that they produce are relevant to their learners, countries jointly share and develop their expertise, and

the cost of development is borne by several nations. In order to obtain the long-term benefits of these collaborative efforts, the curriculum and learning materials must be updated regularly and incorporate information that will enable graduates to function effectively in a global environment.

Developing countries could use regional development programs as the basis for establishing a regional virtual campus for the benefit of all countries in the region. The African Virtual University, for example, will initially serve 25 institutions throughout Africa. Under this arrangement, no one country will dominate the development and delivery of courses within the region. As a response to a request made by the Commonwealth Ministers of Education, The Commonwealth of Learning is currently considering the possibility of establishing a virtual university to serve the small states of the Commonwealth. The proposed institution would support collaborative efforts in the development and use of databases and learning management systems, provide ►



ODL continued from page 11

Clayton R. Wright

leadership in the design and planning of programs, and offer student support services.

Will instructors be provided with the necessary training and support?

Instructors cannot be expected to adopt a new educational system without training and support. Thus, instructors need to be exposed to ODL methods, be provided with professional development opportunities, and be supported as they perform their new duties. When hardware and software are purchased, a sum at least equal to the value of these items should be set aside to provide training and support. Frequently, instructors and educational administrators are sent overseas to Australia, Europe, and North America for training, or consultants are invited from developed countries to offer workshops in-country. Educators have been able to register for courses or programs offered over the Internet by institutions such as Athabasca University, Royal Roads University, and the University of British Columbia. Although these methods can yield satisfactory results, developing countries also need to seek expertise in their immediate surroundings. Currently there is enough ODL experience and expertise in Africa, Asia, South America, and the Caribbean that developing countries do not need to seek a significant amount of advice outside of their regions. Using regional expertise can enable them to “own” their ODL programs and develop pride in their ability to design educational systems without the significant involvement of “outsiders.” Regional experts may be better able to understand the local issues and solve educational problems in ways that are acceptable to local populations.

Will students be provided with the necessary support?

If students are to succeed, they need support. They need access to course materials and educational resources, and interaction with others, especially with their tutors or instructors. Ideally, students should receive frequent and timely interactive feedback, but this may only be possible in large urban areas where transportation and communication systems are well-developed. In rural areas, different approaches may have to be implemented. Throughout Africa and Asia there has been some success with the establishment of local learning centres where students can pick up and drop off materials, access computers and the Internet, conduct laboratory exercises, participate in activities with

other students, and meet with their tutors. Learning or study centres may cost less to build and support than traditional educational buildings. Developing countries have also found it effective to use local tutors or mentors in rural areas. However, it is still a challenge to provide adequate support to learners who live in sparsely populated or remote areas or who migrate as the seasons change. Developing countries need to recognize that the provision of effective student support is crucial to the success of ODL. The term “distance” in ODL should not mean “out of sight, out of mind.”

How will ODL be managed effectively?

All educational enterprises must be managed efficiently and effectively. Educational leaders and managers must be accountable for their actions as they assume the huge responsibility of ensuring that an equitable and high-quality ODL system is implemented and maintained. It is likely that developing countries will seek experienced managers from the traditional educational system to take on the role of managing the ODL system, but these managers may not be entirely suitable for the task of ensuring that ODL systems reach their full potential. Successful ODL enterprises require managers who are flexible and compassionate, yet fair. They must be able to adapt quickly, implement new procedures or methods as situations change, and fully appreciate the contributions

and the roles of all players in the ODL system, including course designers, editors, graphic designers, technology experts, instructors, tutors, mentors, and students. Conservative bureaucrats will not manage ODL with creativity and enthusiasm. Effective ODL managers are change agents who value education, the public’s thirst for knowledge, and the people involved in the learning and teaching process.

The availability of funding seriously affects the ability of managers to implement and maintain a quality ODL program or system. In the foreseeable future, developing countries will never have enough resources to fund ODL at the level to which it is funded in developed countries. However, in several African nations, the government has assigned ODL operations the same level of funding that it assigns to conventional educational programs. When ODL and traditional educational programs are supported equally, the public’s perception of this equality can increase the status and acceptability of ODL.

As developing countries lack suitable management expertise in ►

“If students are to succeed, they need support. They need access to course materials and educational resources, and interaction with others...”

ODL, they may seek foreign advice or international assistance regarding the development of ODL policies, management techniques, learner support mechanisms, educational technologies, and assessment strategies. International funding agencies and overseas educational institutions can provide this greatly needed assistance.

What quality assurance systems must be implemented?

Unless quality assurance systems with appropriate checks and balances are implemented for all facets of the ODL program or system, it will be difficult to maintain quality and to assess the success of the ODL enterprise. A major reason for the poor acceptance of ODL in developing countries is the perceived lack of quality. The perception may be false, but it is also true that the lack of quality may be due to the lack of resources, the rapid implementation of ODL systems, the poor professional development of ODL instructors, the lack of an appropriate technological infrastructure, and inadequate student support.

It may not be possible to address all shortcomings at once, but it may be possible to alter the general perception of ODL by the public. Institutions must focus on learning outcomes. If, for example, students in ODL are required to take and pass the same final examination as students in the conventional educational system, the outcomes from both systems can be compared, but this may not be the ideal solution. The desired outcomes of ODL programs may be different from those of traditional programs, as ODL students may have flexibility in selecting their learning objectives and activities.

Developing countries must develop and maintain quality assurance systems in order to ensure that their ODL programs are at least equal to comparable programs offered by traditional institutions within their country and ideally, equivalent to those of overseas institutions students most likely would attend if they had the necessary resources. However, developing countries should note that it could be difficult to overcome the desire of their people to attend prestigious universities in Europe or North America.

How can countries work successfully with external agencies or groups?

Developing countries rarely launch ODL enterprises on their own. They often seek assistance from external groups and agencies such as The Commonwealth of Learning, Commonwealth Secretariat, Canadian International Development Agency, World Bank, and UNESCO. Help is also sought from large corporations such as Apple, IBM, and

Microsoft. However, when business or industry is involved, institutions are usually concerned about the potential loss of academic freedom and their ability to partner with other vendors. Increasingly, when partners are involved, institutions are concerned about intellectual property rights.

In order to work effectively with these agencies or businesses, developing countries and their partners must:

- share a common vision;
- have open communication;
- trust each other;
- respect each others' points of view, including views on social, cultural, and economic issues;
- be willing to be flexible;
- set reasonable expectations;
- assign and ensure accountabilities for different facets of the initiative;
- determine the intellectual property rights for the outcomes of the initiative;
- discuss how the initiative will be sustained and marketed once the collaborative initiative ends.

Developing countries need to overcome their suspicions of the motives of developed countries that offer to help them, and developed countries should not impose restrictions or obligations on developing countries that they would not impose on partners at home.

Conclusion

Although the above questions are aimed at educators, administrators, and politicians in developing countries, they are also applicable to personnel in industrialized countries who want to establish ODL programs or systems. Their situations and thus their answers to the questions may differ, but the questions are the same. Although it is frequently stated that lack of resources, especially funding, hinders the establishment of ODL systems in developing countries, the real inhibitor is the lack of determination to establish a sustainable ODL enterprise. Do educators and politicians have the will to break from traditional learning systems in order to embark on a new journey that requires them to develop and deliver learning opportunities in a new, less conventional manner? Are they committed to their long-term vision of providing flexible educational opportunities to all, and do they have the will to overcome the challenges they will face? ■

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The Transformative Potential of Education

Jennifer Geary

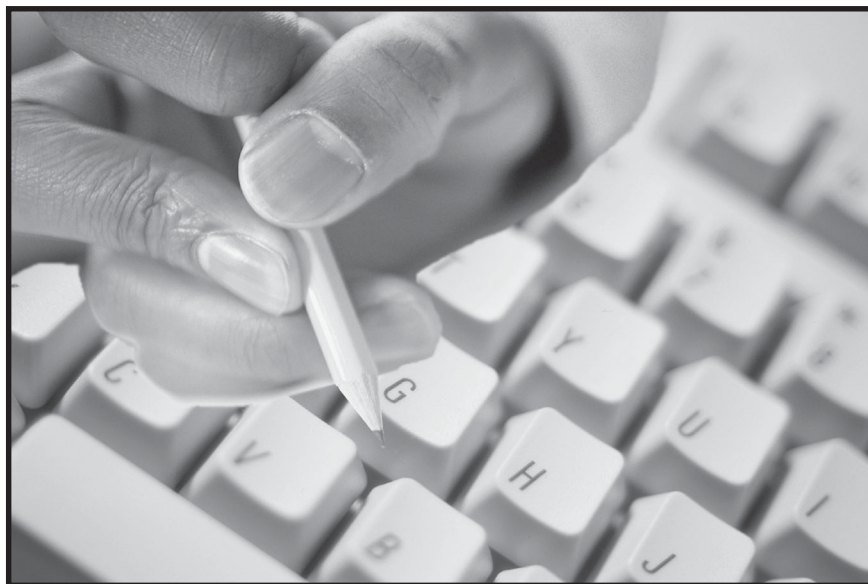
Trident Foundation

Over the past two decades there has been a significant rise in the number of adult learners in the student population. Wooden, Baptiste and Reyes (1994,p.18) refer to Knowles and indicate that adult students may have been a hidden population of learners.

The benefits of distance education are being acknowledged in various fields including legal education. Some educators are developing programmes that are well conceived technically. These educators seek to distribute information through computer-mediated communication whilst offering limited support to address student needs. One of their intentions seems to be to assist in developing informational resources to enhance access to justice for the disadvantaged. Their intentions are laudable, however, their approach to instructional design may be ill conceived.

The writer as a participant observer is concerned that pedagogical issues are perhaps not being given due credence in the area of legal education. Students who undertake teething courses based upon self-help in the legal system may become dissatisfied with a learning approach based heavily upon rote factual learning. This approach may not equip them appropriately to analyse, synthesise and evaluate materials to enable them to negotiate idiosyncratic, social and structural processes involved in our legal system (Yeh, 1992, pp. 12 - 16). This could reflect poorly upon the fields of legal and distance education. These educators face constraints and challenges associated with the environment in which they practice. However, they are likely to be called upon by students to transform their practices to better address the needs of the community.

Educators are under much pressure to introduce mass education to the distance education environment (Scapp, 2002, p. 32; Valadez, 2002). Educators should consider broader environmental factors that may lead to disadvantage and facilitate transformation of society into a more egalitarian structure (Mezirow, 1996, p. 161). Students should be motivated to develop skills that help them to transcend historical, eco-



nom, social and political factors that have led to the exploitation of the disadvantaged (Finger, 1998, p37; Hall,1983, p. 28)

Allman and Wallis (1997, p. 114) indicate that Friere believed that educators should respect the potential, existing knowledge and strengths of students. Tennant and Pogson (1995, p. 110) refer to symbolism and meaning that can occur as a result of interaction with others in social institutions. In the interaction between educators and learners interrelationships are transformed and students will ideally be encouraged to think critically (Friere, 1984; Yeh, 2002, p. 12). Friere is perhaps one of the best-known proponents of the radical approach in education. Allman and Wallis (1997, p. 113) suggest that Friere focused on being reality focused.

Feenberg (1981) refers to “transcending action” this process would seem to take place when the immediate human condition is transcended. Cavaliere (1992, p. 52) indicates that some students come from humble backgrounds. However, they may have the sheer will to find the time to meet their learning objectives. Educators who are student centered usually act as a resource and guide to transform the autonomous customized learning experience of students regardless of issues pertaining ►

to ethnicity, creed, disability or gender (Caffarella and Barnett, 1994, p. 32; Knowles, 1998, p. 4).

The good standing of the academic institution involved can influence the attractiveness of students to prospective employers. More politically motivated institutions may lose credibility due to the lack of political and corporate support. It can be difficult for cultural institutions to effect changes in attitude without experiencing a lack of support from those who have vested interests in maintaining the status quo (Carr, 1992, p. 21; Dubin and Okun, 1973, p.7; Ford, 1994, p. 22). This article provides routine observations aimed towards motivating educators to dismantle the patterns identified herein. ■

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Updates From the Field



Academic Development Centre

The following is an excerpt from a presentation prepared by the Instructional Design Team and presented at the CADE conference.

A Developer's Road Map to Online Education

Exploring the Peaks and Valleys of an Ever-changing Landscape

Patty Moore, Pattie Mascaro, Amanda Coolidge, Maris Mosenko, Amanda Veinotte



Mount Royal College Instructional Design Team (from left to right) Amanda Veinotte, Amanda Coolidge, Patty Moore, Maris Mosenko, Pattie Mascaro

Many people wonder, “what does the process for planning, designing, and developing an online course look like?” Well, to tell the truth, it depends. It depends on which designer you talk to, and when. It also depends on what type of project you are developing and the level of its complexity and scope.

At Mount Royal College (MRC), we don't tend to think of our core process model as something permanent and stable, but rather, as something **living, transitioning, and continuously evolving**. Our process model is much like a well used, finely tuned road map – a map that provides both clear direction and flexibility in helping one choose the best path to reach their goals. It is an ever-present reminder of the many wrong turns, hard won lessons learned, and successes we have had along the way. It is a reliable, yet imperfect, map for developers with a passion for continuous learning and for exploring new methods, tools and ideas amidst an ever-changing landscape.

The core process model that we have used, reworked, and refined over the past year is comprised of six key phases: Define, Design, Prototype, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate. We believe all six of these phases are fundamental to developing any type of web-based educational technology project. We believe the most important of these phases is defining the project — a process of research and reflection, a process of thoughtfully and actively gathering and assessing all the information needed to successfully develop an online course.

At every phase of our process, we always return to three key issues:

- teaching and learning
- students' needs and preferences
- the appropriate and effective use of technology

Each phase possesses a similar focus in terms of reflecting on and evaluating the answers to questions concerning goals, needs, scope, outcomes, and greatest return on investment.

Our core process model is both useful and reliable (it will get you where you want to go). However, we aren't deeply attached to its present shape or content. Our model will inevitably change as new technologies emerge and old ones fade, as we continue to experiment with new methods and drop those which no longer work, as we face and climb new obstacles, and learn from our mistakes.

If you would like further information about our Core Process Model or wish to view portions of our presentation from the IODE/CADE Conference in May (Calgary, Alberta), please visit our web site:

<http://www.acad.mtroyal.ab.ca/adc/adeta/>

We welcome your feedback and ideas for future collaboration, so on behalf of our Instructional Design Team please contact Patty Moore (pmoore@mtroyal.ab.ca) at Mount Royal College's Academic Development Centre:

www.mtroyal.ab.ca/adc. ■



LCC's Bachelor's Degree in Applied Corrections

Wendy Musial

Lethbridge Community College with support from the Federal Correctional Service of Canada has developed a unique Bachelor's Degree in Applied Corrections (BDAC) available via distance education and on-campus study. LCC faculty members, Ian Hepher and Barb Mantello, began planning the program in 1998. A curriculum review followed by an industry survey resulted in redesign of the on campus Corrections Diploma and creation of the Applied Degree. In May 2001 Alberta Learning approved the program, however no funding came with the approval, but LCC persevered and fast tracked the design and development of 3 degree level courses for distance delivery in January 2002. Course design and development marches on today with the goal of having all courses within the program available for distance delivery in early 2003!

Cohort group training has also proven successful. The program has offered two courses in Edmonton and one in Drumheller. Ian Hepher anticipates increased group training throughout the Prairie Provinces in the months to come.

The Applied Degree follows LCC's mission "to develop the present and future workforce by providing high quality lifelong learning opportunities based upon knowledge and skills required by the community, business, and industry." The Correctional Service of Canada identified the need to enhance the skills of current correctional workers allowing these employees to further their careers taking on roles as Case Workers and managers, within the correctional system. The BDAC program allows correctional employees to apply prior post-secondary educational experiences as well as on-the-job training for credits towards the Applied Degree. LCC can then satisfy the educational gaps with distance education, cohort training, and directed field studies.

The degree program starts with a two-year diploma in Criminal Justice with a specialization in Corrections. The first two years of study give students a comprehensive introduction to relevant course material and the criminal justice system. Then students build on this knowledge in the third year of study through curriculum designed to help students analyze emerging issues in Corrections such as community justice, ethics, behavioural management, and crime related

victimology. During the fourth and final year of the program, students have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and abilities in a real-world correctional environment. Students spend the fourth year of study through Directed Field Study. Students who are currently employed can choose to spend this study time at their current correctional institution or agency, while LCC can help on campus students find employment through which they can complete their studies. At the end of the program, students will have a comprehensive, practical understanding of corrections with a diploma in Criminal Justice (Corrections) as well as a Bachelor of Applied Corrections Degree. Best of all, the skills and knowledge will serve successful students well and be in demand anywhere in Canada.

The program will continue to grow as correctional professionals discover it. Interest is growing within provincial correctional services. In fact, effective in the fall 2002, BDAC courses will be approved for professional certification by the Alberta Correctional Services. This recognition is of great value to the program, and will assist with its growth and development in the months and years to come. ■



LCC instructor, Barb Mantello, demonstrates proper handcuff procedure to Criminal Justice students



Academic Technologies for Learning

Academic Technologies for Learning (ATL) is integrating with staff at the TELUS Centre for Professional Development under the leadership of the Faculty of Extension. The revitalized TELUS Centre is using a model of engagement to partner within the university community and with external clients. The Centre will work with clients to create customized e-learning solutions to meet their organizational and educational needs. ATL will continue to support the university community in the areas of evaluation, faculty development, instructional design, and research. ATL is excited about this opportunity to use the Centre's exceptional capacity to explore and assess e-learning applications and environments.

Distributed Learning Projects

Learning Technology Faculty Institute (LTFI)
This initiative, part of the national Partnerships for Learning, Innovation and Technology (PLIANT) research project, enables faculty to share ideas on how they are using learnware to overcome instructional bottlenecks. Since March 2001, this initiative, with partners at the Universities of Waterloo, Calgary, and Alberta, has rotated faculty presentations between each site using synchronous technologies to allow faculty involved in the development of technology-enhanced courses, CDs or websites to showcase their work and discuss its uses with their particular students. The synchronous delivery mode allows faculty to get feedback and new ideas from content experts from across the country. For more information, visit <http://www.pliant.ca/LTFI/> or contact Katy Campbell at katy.Campbell@ualberta.ca or Ellen Whybrow at elw@ualberta.ca.

ICT in High School Learning

Stanley Varnhagen and the ATL evaluation team is conducting an evaluation of the ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in High School Learning, an online professional development course developed by Chinook College in conjunction with Alberta Learning and the Calgary Board of

Education (<http://www.chinookcollege.com/pd/>). The course was designed to provide an alternative mode of professional development to assist teachers with the infusion of the ICT program of studies. The evaluation included two groups taking the course; a group participating at a distance, and one with three face-to-face sessions. The evaluation included an initial survey and end-of-course survey, an end-of-course focus discussion with both groups, as well as a follow-up survey and focused discussion four months after completion. The evaluation completion date is set for December 2002. For more information contact stanley.varnhagen@ualberta.ca.

Virtual Self Care Lab

Shaniff Esmail from the Department of Occupational Therapy in the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine is developing an educational object called the Virtual Self Care Lab. The Virtual Self-Care Lab allows students to view, examine and select the appropriate equipment for case study assignments. The resource also supports students as they develop their needs assessment skills during fieldwork placements. The template, developed in collaboration with Sandra Dowie and the ATL instructional development team, is available at <http://www.atl.ualberta.ca/edObjects/virtualLab/>. Along with courses in WebCT and online case studies, the Virtual Self Care Lab is one more step towards making the Occupational Therapy program available at a distance.

Implementing Blended Learning for Professional Development

This initiative is part of an Office of Learning Technologies (OLT)-funded research project entitled, *Evaluating Learning Technologies Initiatives (ELTI) in Continuing Professional Development*. The online symposium was led by Kevin Campbell and Elizabeth Hanlis, (TELUS Centre for Professional Development) and the Institute of Professional Development at the University of Alberta, in collaboration with the ELTI research team. Participants included educators, researchers, and training specialists in Canada. The symposium was delivered through a blended learning model using asynchronous and synchronous technologies. The symposium's purpose was to gather and disseminate information regarding the process of implementing learning technology initiatives in the workplace and evaluate the use of a blended learning model for professional development. The symposium was a successful implementation of the blended learning model. The study results found that the synchronous virtual classroom environment more effectively supported group collaboration and discussion compared to the asynchronous learning environment.

English Language Program, Faculty of Extension, Synchronous Audio Conferencing

In order to offer effective courses at a distance, the Faculty of Extension's English Language Program (ELP) needs to include both listening and speaking components to there existing text-based resources that are in widespread use, most notable being Web-CT. Sandy McIntosh, from the ELP and Elizabeth Hanlis from the TELUS Centre completed a pilot study to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of synchronous instructional tools for listening and speaking, as well as the appropriate instructional methods to use with these products. Four (4) synchronous online sessions using CentraOne Symposium were delivered for the pilot study. These sessions were used to enhance the speaking and listening portion of an English as a Second Language course (Business English) intended for international students in their early 20s. The pilot study was very useful and resulted in many recommendations for the implementation of a synchronous online tool for English as a second language instruction.

Clinical Health Sciences, Synchronous Delivery in a Virtual Classroom

Peter Hatcher, Associate Professor, Public Health Sciences in collaboration with Kevin Campbell and Elizabeth Hanlis, (TELUS Centre for Professional Development), coordinated the planning and delivery of 2 synchronous online seminars that addressed health systems in Canada, Great Britain, and the Netherlands. These seminars explored the use of virtual classroom software for continuing medical education. Participants included health care professionals located in both Canada and Europe. This pilot was funded by the Continuing Medical Education Department, in the Faculty of Medicine. The sessions were delivered online via CentraOne Symposium. Within this synchronous, virtual classroom environment, 2-way audio VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) was utilized for presentation and discussion purposes, along with white boarding, text chat, surveys and evaluations. ■

Conferences & Events

November 12 and 13, 2002

Hybrid Learning: Keys to Student and Instructor Success

Grant MacEwan College, Main Campus, Edmonton, AB

Advances in educational technology allow us to develop hybrid learning systems by blending electronic course delivery options and traditional teaching methodologies. This synthesis of face-to-face and online learning can enhance instruction and provide learning opportunities for students who have varied learning styles and skills.

Hybrid Learning: Keys to Student and Instructor Success will focus on new educational technology and strategies for integrating it into the contemporary classroom. This conference will be hosted by McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Grant MacEwan College, and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. It will take place at the Grant MacEwan College Main Campus in downtown Edmonton.

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