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Queensland: A Unique Distance Education Landscape

Nicole C. Green

Education Queensland's Schools of Distance Education are derived from the original Schools of the Air and Correspondence Schools. Currently, there are seven Distance Education Schools in the State of Queensland, with each school catering for students and their families working in different contexts and/or living in different life situations. My inquiry will be with families at a School of Distance Education which caters predominantly for students who are enrolled as Distance learners — students who are geographically isolated from ordinary schools (The State of Queensland, Department of Education, 2002-2003). The school caters for students living in an area of 402 712 square kilometres.

The school offers a home-based Kindergarten program which provides teacher-prepared theme kits and booklets related to a specific topic and contains activity ideas for the home tutor, as well as such learning resources as musical instruments, art tools, poems, picture books, musical tapes and CDs, physical education equipment and games for all areas of the curriculum. The Elementary Program caters for children in Years 1 - 7. All primary students work from instruction papers which consist of a fully integrated language package. Each Unit is ten days, two school weeks, and Science and Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) is alternatively presented with the Language and Mathematics learning. The school also offers a Secondary Program for students in Year 8 - 10. All students study four core subjects and may choose additional subjects as well. The number of Secondary students is consistently small due to most students attending boarding school in larger cities to complete their secondary schooling. After completing Year 10, students have the option of attending another school to Year 12.

Queensland continued on page 8

About the Author

Nicole Green

Nicole Green is a Doctoral student in the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta, Edmonton. Nicole has a Bachelor of Education from the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, and a Master of Education from the University of Alberta. She has enjoyed teaching and learning with students in Kindergarten to Grade Six in both regular Elementary Schools and at a School of Distance Education. Nicole's current research focuses on home educating families' experiences, in particular, Distance Education in Queensland, Australia.



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Editor's Message

Camille Jensen

Volume 2, Issue 3 is the final issue in 2003. Once again you've sent me an astounding collection of articles and updates to fill this 24 page issue. The Fall issue is filled with announcements, articles and updates, plus two additions.

First the ICDE brochure insert: thanks to Athabasca University for providing the brochures announcing the rescheduled ICDE conference in Hong Kong (February 18-21, 2004). If you download *The Distance* from our website, you can access all the ICDE information at www.ouhk.edu.hk/hk2004.

Second, a new editorial column on the back page titled *Sidethought*. Sidethought is an editorial column available for you to contribute your thoughts and opinions on educational issues. Jon Baggaley provides our first piece of comic relief with his alternative views on "Grant Getting". If you have something on your mind you'd like to share with the membership, please send it to me.

Reminders and joking aside, the Fall issue contains three solid articles. Nicole Green's cover article describes the learning landscape downunder. Clayton Wright's article on evaluating online courses spans the centrefold. Finally, Susan Chrichton and Elizabeth Childs share their most recent research on classroom teachers as online educators.

We've got a lot of ADETA news tucked in this issue too. Ingrid raises the significant concern regarding our PD sessions. Christine provides information on the upcoming PD session (November 13) and offers a synopsis of the Fall Workshop. Then <insert fanfare here>, on page 6 and 7, check out the latest information on Interface 2004: e-Learning Magic! Planning is well underway!

No issue of *The Distance* would be complete without the Updates. A total of eight organizations contributed to this issue. There is plenty happening in our small community. Grab a coffee or warm beverage of your choice and take a look!

Ciao,

Camille

About this Publication

The Distance is published quarterly by the Alberta Distance Education & Training Association as a service to its members. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Send comments by email to the Editor, Camille Jensen (camille.adeta@shaw.ca) or by regular mail:

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Membership Information:**Individual Members:**

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

Annual Individual Membership: \$35.00

Student Members:

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

Annual Student Membership: \$10.00

For more information:
www.adeta.org



President's Message

Opportunity for Innovative Ideas

Ingrid Stammer

Long ago and not so far away, EDUTEL was an Alberta organization whose purpose was to identify educational institutions using audio conferencing to deliver courses. The members would meet to create a provincial

schedule of the audio conference courses. By taking a province wide approach, resources could be managed effectively, and courses could be advertised in the local communities. An EDUTEL directory of contacts and equipment was produced and distributed. The directory was an excellent resource for anyone in Alberta planning courses, or sessions. The spirit of EDUTEL was one of cooperation and collaboration. Wherever possible arrangements were made so that those people and institutions using the network would incur no costs.

Eventually some of the people involved with EDUTEL, and others, felt there was a need for another organization. Other technologies were appearing to support learning at a distance, and people needed to know how to use the new equipment effectively. In addition, government would need to be lobbied to implement policies that would support the successful introduction of new technologies. As a result the Alberta Distance Education and Training Association was formed. The ground-work done by EDUTEL and the resources created by the organization were essential to the success of ADETA in the early years.

Since then, a major function of ADETA has been to provide professional development (PD) opportunities to its members. Through workshops, conferences, the listserv and website it has been possible to examine emerging technologies, plan for change, and discuss effective strategies. ADETA has seen the development, acceptance, and disposal of a variety of technologies. The association will see the implementation of many

more technologies and continue to deliver PD session to support the changes.

A technology that has been constant in our efforts to keep connected and informed has been the telephone. It has been the most reliable and ubiquitous of technologies. The provincial network of audio conferencing bridges and related equipment has been critical to ADETA's PD program. In recent years, ADETA has been able to offer lunchtime PD sessions at no cost to its members by using the Athabasca University bridge, with its toll free numbers. In addition, the SAIT and Norquest bridges provided their services to Calgary and Edmonton participants.

While organizing the November PD event it became painfully evident that ADETA will need to reconsider how it delivers the lunchtime PD sessions. Athabasca no longer maintains a teleconference bridge. The SAIT bridge has significant technical problems and its fate is in question. The Red Deer College and Norquest bridges were available, but without toll free lines. The traditional options are reduced, and "free" not an option.

At present, the ADETA board reviews possible topics, potential speakers are contacted, dates are set, bridges booked, promotional material sent out, registrations accepted, and the session presented. The speakers deliver their presentations without the expectation of any payment. The sessions are available to anyone interested in the topic. As a result there have been participants from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the Northwest Territories. Participants include faculty, technicians, students, support staff, instructional designers, and developers. It is an altruistic enterprise.

It is time to review the processes, technology, and costs of the PD sessions. Over the next few months the board will look at alternatives. Key to any option will be accessibility, value, and continued delivery of timely information. To help the board make an informed decision, your feedback is vital. Please send your comments to the listserv at adeta-net@sait.ab.ca. ■



We are looking for your suggestions and solutions!

Read Ingrid's President's Message to learn about our PD dilemma. Help us seek out PD delivery options.

- Do you know of a new teleconferencing technology?
- Are you presently using a new technology that could work for us?
- Start a discussion the listserv.
- We want to hear from you!

ADETA listserv: adeta-net@sait.ca

Announcements

PD Session: From Learning Objects to Learning Commons: A Manitoba Perspective November 13, Noon to 1:00pm MST

Presenter: Paul Little

This one hour teleconference will take a general look at distributed learning activity in Manitoba including an overview of the newly formed Manitoba Association for Distributed Learning and Training (MADLaT), Campus Manitoba and specific developments in provincial and national projects such as Campus Canada, Learning Objects Projects and Learning Commons.

Paul W. Little, is currently Director of the Curriculum and Learning Resources Division at Red River College. In his current role he leads academic institutional planning and management of the following college-wide support services: Program & Curriculum Development; Library and Media Services; Teaching and Learning Technology Centre, eTV Video Production Department; and the College Webmaster. He has a particular role in supporting the design and delivery of technology media learning. Paul is also the first president of the newly formed Manitoba Association For Distributed Learning and Training (MADLaT).

Paul's background includes a B.A. Degree in English, a B.Ed. in Secondary Education and a Master's Degree in Adult Education. He has also been the recipient of several awards including:

- Recipient of an International Institute for Educational Planning Fellowship (a UNESCO affiliated institution) for

their Advanced Training Program in Educational Planning and Administration (Paris, France; 25th session, 1988-89). One of 40 people selected from around the world (the first Canadian) to study the administration and planning of education around the world.

- Recipient of a Japanese Institute for Social and Economic Affairs Fellowship (1985) for a 16-day travel study in Japan. One of 24 North Americans (1 of 4 Canadians) selected to visit Japan to investigate particular focuses in education. The tour was based on distance learning and the application of technology in education.
- Recipient of the Nuffield Foundation, Commonwealth Relations Trust Bursary (1983), the Canadian Adult educator selected in the year for a three-month travel study in England. Study focused on Distance Learning, Open Learning, Computer and VideoDisc Technology applied to education; also investigated Adult Basic Education schemes throughout the country.

His career includes employment at the Universities of Alberta and New Brunswick and three Alberta colleges. ■

To register contact:
Sonja Quirouette at
squirouette@bowvalleycollege.ca
403.410.1649

'Keeping it Simple for the Learner' was simply successful!

Fall Workshop Synopsis

Christine Marles

The ADETA Fall Workshop 2003 was held at Olds College in Olds, Alberta on a glorious Alberta fall day – and by all accounts was a rousing success! Our group of more than 40 participants were treated to wonderful food, great conversation, engaging sessions, a college tour and warm hospitality provided by Olds College and ADETA.

Folks attended from Slave Lake to Lethbridge, and we even had a special visitor from British Columbia! The theme of the workshop was "Keeping It Simple for the Learner.." Each of the sessions addressed this by providing information on converting print materials to online delivery, developing effective study guides, providing online counseling support, developing quality assurance guidelines for online courses, and choosing effective resources for online learning. You can check the ADETA website (www.adeta.org) for some of the session materials, but here is a synopsis.

Ingrid Stammer, ADETA President, opened the workshop and introduced Bob Wilson, Vice-President Academic Services, Olds College. In his keynote address he gave a verbal tour of the Olds College boutique of programs. Most of the programs have developed from Home Economics and Agricultural programs. He spoke eloquently about the future of agriculture and its impact on us all. He explained that Olds College has not found a need to embrace technology mediated distance delivery. Students are satisfied with correspondence courses. When considering digital learning Bob cautioned that we need to "keep in mind how what we do adds value to the learning experience." Bob is a professional agronomist with 30 years experience in education. He has worked in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario. He expects to finish his PhD before he retires.

Daph Crane, Bow Valley College and Ingrid Stammer, Canadian Pacific Railway, presented on *Reconstructing Learning Resources*.

Daph provided a sample print module groups then used to develop proposed online sessions, while Ingrid demonstrated examples of CPR print materials that have been developed into online offerings. The importance of interactivity and the different requirements for K-12 versus adult learners, asynchronous versus synchronous and cohort-based versus continuous entry courses were just a few of the discussion topics in the debriefing from this engaging hands-on session.

In the session titled *Choosing Effective Resources*, Sheila Swan, Bow Valley College and Daph Crane answered the course developers' question: "How do you select resources for your online course that actually help achieve the learning goals?" Parameters were provided to the workshop participants. The resources chosen depend on the learning outcomes of the course, how easily the learner can navigate through the resources, the experiences you want to provide for your learners in the course, and the workload the students have. The overview of resource types included electronic resources, Internet resources, audio-visual resources as well as guest speakers and field trips.

Daph and Sheila also talked extensively about the quality of the resources. Some of the factors to be considered in investigating resources are the date of the material, its copyright, the format of the resources, the organization of the resources, the cost, and determining whether the resource is important enough to the course to pursue copyright permissions ...which brings us to the most important information of the session: copyright. Daph and Sheila explained how to cite material, and the liability of the individual who breaks copyright. Questions and answers helped participants check their understanding of the issues of resource development. The session on *Choosing Effective Resources* was itself effective.

John Howie, Red Deer College, led a lively session on Dedicated Distance Learning Services at Red Deer College. RDC is developing new online initiatives and John shared information on RDC's standards and guidelines for online courses. We enjoyed exploring many of the issues around evaluating good online courses, how to provide effective support to instructors and the principles of good online course design. Participants

came away with an appreciation of the effort John and his colleagues are putting into distance education at Red Deer College. Contact john.howie@rdc.ab.ca for more information.

Rod Corbett, University of Calgary, shared invaluable information and tips on *Designing Simple Yet Effective Study Guides*. He took us through a process of understanding how to implement the "guidance" role of a study guide. Study guides are meant to help learners in an asynchronous distance education course move through the content and learning activities. Rod highlighted considerations such as type of learner, types of media, preparation, feedback and how to assess the quality and effectiveness of the study guide. We were then able to apply these concepts in planning our own study guides.

Jenny Geary, Trident Foundation and Linda McKay-Panos, University of Calgary presented a thought-provoking session on *Online Counselling: Student Support to Women Offenders*. Jenny and Linda provided an overview of the importance of counseling to support distance education students, and the problems that may arise in using this technology. The importance of computer-mediated conferencing in electronic outreach is well-documented, and Jenny and Linda offered us some insights into the special needs of women offenders that can affect the success of this approach.

As the ADETA Fall Workshop Chairperson, I would like to thank all of the presenters both for sharing their expertise and for their willingness to provide their session materials on the ADETA website. Thanks also go to Dave Patterson, Olds College for his invaluable support in preparing for the workshop and in looking after the on-site support. We are very grateful to the Faculty Development Committee, Olds College for their sponsorship of the workshop; to Andrea Leffler and Susan Goyette, Olds College Conference Services for looking after us so well; to Mike Wareman, AV Technician, Olds College, for handling our AV needs; to Barb Pearce, Norquest College, our ADETA Treasurer, for handling registrations and the financial aspects; to John Howie, Red Deer College, for assisting at the Registration Desk; to Susan Kerr, Norquest College, our ADETA webmaster; and to Camille Jensen, Editor of the ADETA Newsletter, *The Distance*. ■

You could host the Fall Workshop 2004!

We are seeking a willing and eager organization to host the 2004 Fall Workshop. The Fall Workshop is an ideal opportunity to:

- promote your organization
- offer professional development to your staff
- actively participate in ADETA.

Express your interest and intrigue to
Ingrid Stammer, President, ADETA
ingrid_stammer@cpr.ca



Interface 2004: e-Learning Magic



A generous group of volunteers have already begun planning for our next conference, Interface 2004: e-Learning Magic. The Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) has kindly offered their facilities for the event. After setting the date (June 16 - 18, 2004), we spent a lot of time discussing the name and theme of the conference. *e-Learning Magic* is meant to capture the notion of wonder and enchantment surrounding our industry.

We work in a world where technology is perceived as the elixir of manual labour and the solvent of dwindling budgets. Those of us who research, design and teach in e-Learning are aware of the illusion technology creates. We are cognizant of the realities of technology and human resource costs. We are committed to the learning efficacy and wonderment an e-Learning environment establishes.

Interface 2004 is the venue to share experiences, illusions and reality among e-Learning practitioners. We welcome your suggestions and encourage all ADETA members to become involved in the conference.



Volunteers Needed for Interface 2004

We are seeking volunteers for all areas of the conference, especially...

- ➔ committee members
- ➔ design and maintain conference web page
- ➔ help at the registration desk

Contact:

Helen Siemens
hmsiemens@shaw.ca

Interface 2004 Organizing Committee

ADETA President:

Ingrid Stammer: ingrid_stammer@cpr.ca 403.319.7245
Ingrid is the Grand Wizard behind the event. She brings her vast array of experience in Interface conference planning.

Conference Chair:

Leona Dvorak: leona.dvorak@sait.ca 403.210.4293
Leona keeps us organized and on task. If you are not sure who to call, check with Leona first.

Volunteer Chair:

Helen Siemens hmsiemens@shaw.ca 403.547.5628
If you are ready to help, Helen will be sure to find the right volunteer opportunity for you.

Program Chair:

Jim Zimmer jzimmer@mtroyal.ab.ca 403.440.7204
Jim is our authority on keynote speakers, presentations, sessions, etc. Jim's team will review all proposals and preparing the conference schedule.

Marketing Chair:

Judy Adams judy.adams@sait.ca 403.284.8693
Judy is heading up marketing and public relations. Judy's team will promote the conference, prepare the conference brochures and a whole lot more. If marketing is your intrigue, contact Judy.

Registration Chair:

Bev Grigo bev.grigo@sait.ca 403.284.8427
Bev has taken on the complex task of registration. Bev's team will register delegates, handle payment and run the registration desk during the conference.

Facilities Chair:

Ann Larson anne.larson@sait.ca 403.284.8969
Ann is our key master. She has been working closely with the SAIT facilities folks to arrange rooms, exhibition space and equipment for the conference.

Sponsorship Chair:

Camille Jensen scribesolutions@shaw.ca 403.241.5336
Camille is the Interface 2004 opportunist. She is seeking generous offerings from potential sponsors and welcomes other opportunists assistance.

Exhibitor Chair:

Dean Caplan dcaplan@bowvalleycollege.ca 403.410.1646
Dean is on a quest to fill exhibitor space. He will arrange the vendor area at the conference.

Social Chair:

Randell Cater randellwhcater@hotmail.com 403.255.5033
Randy will keep our belly's full and our taste buds satisfied.

Hospitality Chair:

Pattie Mascaro pmascaro@mtroyal.ab.ca 403.440.6723
Pattie is arranging the conference hotels and preparing information for our out-of-town guests.

Call For Proposals

ADETA and the Interface 2004 Planning Committee invite you to submit proposals for Interface 2004: e-Learning Magic. Please submit proposals for the following:

Interactive Presentation:

Presentation of a paper, including overview and discussion, followed by audience interaction. (60 minutes)

Panel Discussion:

Up to five individuals express opinions and discuss an issue, with the audience interacting by asking questions, raising arguments, and sharing relevant experiences. (60 minutes)

Pre-conference Workshops:

Presentation of an interactive session that offers the audience new skills. The presenter is expected to introduce the workshop, lead participants through activities, and interact with the audience throughout the presentation. These June 16 pre-conference workshops will be scheduled as full or half-day blocks.

Proposal Format:

1. Proposed title
 - proposed title should be descriptive of the content
2. Presentation objectives
 - 50-60 words
3. Relation to conference strand (see below)
 - 90-100 words
4. Presentation abstract
 - plan for organization and delivery of the presentation
 - 50-60 words
5. Contact information, presenter and co-presenters
 - include for each person: name, organization, address, e-mail address, phone number, fax number
6. Presenter(s) biography
 - 50-100 words
7. Media and A/V equipment requirements
8. Presentation strands

- ADDIE: new ideas in analysis, design, development, implementation or evaluation of e-learning
- Innovative methods for the delivery of student services for e-learners
- Novel approaches to faculty professional development for e-learning
- The business case/strategic planning for e-learning
- Policy considerations and e-learning
- Demonstrations of innovative projects/initiatives

Submissions

Submit completed proposals by **December 19, 2003** to:
 Jim Zimmer, Interface 2004 Program Chair
 Academic Development Centre
 Mount Royal College
 4825 Richard Road SW
 Calgary, AB T3E 6K6
 e-mail: jzimmer@mtroyal.ca

Selection Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed by the program committee with consideration of the following:

- Objectives: a clear statement of purpose
- Strands: presentation is consistent with identified conference strands
- Content: focus on new or innovative knowledge and ideas
- Presentation Plan: format and technique; interaction with audience.

Notification

Those selected as presenters will be notified no later than January 30, 2004.

NOTE: Presenters will be invited to submit their paper or presentation (e.g. PowerPoint slides) by April 30, 2004 for inclusion in a publication of Conference Proceedings on CD-ROM.

Share your *Best Practices* on the ADETA website

Check out the ADETA website (www.adeta.org) for the latest "Best Practices." This informative box on the home page presently features a piece by Jenny Geary entitled, *Online Counseling for the 21st Century*.

We would love to hear about your "Best Practice!" Please submit your ideas to:
 Camille Jensen at camille.adeta@shaw.ca

Have you renewed your membership?

For only \$35.00 you can be an ADETA member. Your membership includes:

- Tri-yearly newsletters
- Professional development opportunities by way of traditional and distance delivery modes
- An annual conference to promote communication among members and to provide an opportunity to examine new developments in distance education
- Electronic discussions on relevant distance education topics (ADETA-NET) ... and much more!

ADETA
 Alberta Distance Education & Training Association

Queensland continued from page 1

Nicole C. Green

Technologies have provided the way to reduce the vast distances that can exist between all members of the school community. Students are 'on air' for thirty minutes each school day with their peers and class teacher at the School of Distance Education. On air lessons use the medium of a UHF radio. For the remainder of their school day, students work with their home tutors ~ predominantly a parent or a hired governess. Extra curricular activities are offered in addition to the half hour school lesson each day. Students can participate in a variety of clubs and other activities on air such as Project Club, Travel Buddy, Music, Cubs and Brownies.

Each Elementary and Secondary family is supplied with a computer by the school. The introduction of email has been very successful on the school landscape as it saves time and money, thus encouraging more frequent communication, and improving confidence and competence with computer technology. The school is currently in the process of changing over to the digitization of returnable materials and there is the possibility of migrating to telephone delivery for on-air lessons in the near future.

Since its introduction in 1996, telephone reading has become increasingly available for beginning readers as parents and students indicate very high levels of support for the program which has significantly improved the overall reading standards of the students and reduced the number of students in Year 4 to 10 requiring ongoing learning support programs. Depending on the students' reading ability, their teacher may phone them from one to four times per week. Sets of levelled reading books are mailed to the students, and both the teacher and student will have the book in front of them for each telephone reading session, which lasts approximately 15 minutes. Many students have head sets attached to their telephone, making their hands available for tracking the text and turning pages.

The library at the School of Distance Education provides over 10 000 resources and support to meet the educational and recreational needs of all children, students, parents, home tutors, teachers and non-teaching staff.

All school programs are enhanced by regular face-to-face contact at various times throughout the year by participating in school activities or field services such as track and field and swimming sports carnivals, home visits by the teacher to the student's place of residence, a week-long Minischool, "clusters" organized once per term (four times per year) for students to meet with their class teacher in a town venue or one of their properties for a day of 'school', and school camps.

Home Tutors are involved in all forms of field services activities as well as school-based projects. The school has a very active and informed Parents and Citizens' Association, which conducts monthly meetings on air. The school council is

another avenue to strengthen school community partnerships, and a bi-annual, two-day Home Tutor Workshop, planned by a committee of Home Tutors and staff members from within the school community, provides home tutors with valuable training and assistance for the challenging job of teaching their children at home.

A personal experience of strangeness

When I first began to work at the School of Distance Education, it felt extremely strange working in an office area, rather than creating a classroom community with a group of students. It was strange developing relationships with families and students over the radio, through letters and emails, on the telephone and eventually during short face-to-face visits. However, as Bateson (1994) believes, "each person is calibrated by experience, almost like a measuring instrument for difference, so discomfort is informative and offers a starting point for new understanding" (p.17).

As a teacher at the School of Distance Education, my day was arranged into sessions and tasks as it would be at a regular school, but my routines were shaped by a radio timetable, telephone reading timetable, days away from the school, the arrival of students' work and an expectation that the students' work would be returned within two weeks. Families were also shaped by these same routines, timetables and expectations. This has caused me to wonder, how do teachers structure their day? How do home tutors structure their day? In what ways do home tutors prepare for the teaching and learning of different subject areas presented in the correspondence papers? How do children experience on air lessons as a daily routine? How is the school space they have at home designed? What structure, routines, rules and expectations exist in both the school setting and the home setting? Do these compliment one another?

Knowles' (1988, 1998) research indicated four sources of teacher role identity which emerged from personal histories written or recorded by home educators ~ childhood experiences of family, teacher role models, memories of school, and the impact of significant others or experiences. Tomlinson, Coulter and Peacock also found in their 1985 study that "parents bring with them conceptions of classrooms which relate back to their own primary school experience", suggesting that, as well as being guided by the distance education curriculum, home tutors are also working within their own experiential framework (p. 30). This has caused me to question, what were their experiences of school, life and learning, and in what ways do these experiences influence the home tutors' thinking and learning in relation to their children? I wonder about exploring the insights and knowledge home tutors have and the ways in which these insights and knowledge are valued by staff at the School of Distance Education in leading to a deeper understanding of children and the places for learning which are provided.

Beginning a position at the School of Distance Education, where parents predominantly teach the children their school-work, certainly fell outside of my experience as a student and as a teacher. This has caused me to explore, in the unique form of schooling I am on leave from, how do home tutors view themselves, or see themselves viewed in the Distance Education context? How is this view formed? What role do home tutors see themselves as having in the Distance Education community? Who is the "teacher" in this context? Why do we separate the role of teacher and parent? Are we not all pedagogues? Would 'home educator' require a shift in thinking? An acknowledgement that home tutors are teachers, "crucial to the school's existence, the child's education..." (Fitzpatrick, 1982, p.189).

This is a short selection of the differences I encountered which caused me to reflect on how I learned as a student who had traditional experiences of schooling and how students enrolled in Distance Education learn. I also encountered many differences which caused me to rethink my role as a teacher and how my understandings and beliefs about learning fit with the concept of home schooling.

Perhaps for another issue...

Unfortunately, there is not the desired space in this article to discuss previous research inquiries and literature written about Schools of Distance Education in Australia. However, both previous research literature, and my own autobiographical reflections, have led me on this journey and have highlighted the significance of the inquiry I plan to enter into. ■

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Call for Short Articles

Encyclopedia of International Computer-Based Learning

The growth of distance learning and computer-based learning is an international phenomenon. In fact, the large-scale uses of distance learning technologies have been primarily developed through the mega-universities in countries such as Great Britain, South Africa, India, and China, rather than in America. This international character has led to the current challenge to both the field's scholars and professionals to find comprehensive resources that distil the dispersed global knowledge of computers used for educational purposes. Focusing on international best practices in computer-based educational pedagogy, management, and public policy, this volume will be an excellent resource for researchers and practitioners worldwide who seek to better understand this dynamic movement. The *Encyclopedia of International Computer-Based Learning* will be distributed worldwide among academic and professional institutions and will be instrumental in providing researchers, scholars, students and professionals access to the latest knowledge related to distance and computer-based learning. Contributions to this important publication will be made by scholars throughout the world with notable expertise.

Coverage: The *Encyclopedia of International Computer-Based Learning* will provide a compendium of terms, definitions and explanations of concepts, processes and acronyms. Additionally, this volume will feature short articles (3,000-3,500 words) authored by leading experts offering an in-depth description of key terms and concepts related to different areas, issues and trends in international distance learning.

Invited Submissions: Individuals interested in submitting short articles (3,000-3,500 words) on suggested topics (See the listing of our suggested topics) or other related topics in their area of interest should submit an email listing 5-7 selected topics by December 1, 2003. We strongly encourage other topics that have not been listed in our suggested list, particularly if the topic is related to the research area in which you have expertise. Upon acceptance of your proposal, you will have two months to prepare your article (3,000-3,500 words) and 7-10 related terms and their appropriate definitions. Guidelines for preparing your short piece and terms and definitions as well as a sample article and terms and definitions can be found on the main menu of this project at <http://www.idea-group.com/custom/berg/>. Please forward your e-mail of interest including your name, affiliation and a list of topics (5-7) on which you are interested in writing a short article to Gary A. Berg, editor at gary.berg@csuci.edu no later than December 1, 2003. You will be notified about the status of your proposed topics by January 15, 2004E. This book is tentatively scheduled for publishing by Idea Group Reference (an imprint of Idea Group Inc.) in the Spring of 2005. ■

Criteria for Evaluating the Quality of Online Courses

Clayton R. Wright, PhD

Initially, the evaluation criteria may seem overwhelming, but each item was selected because it identifies specific course components, qualities, or procedures proven to be helpful to learners and/or instructors. When using this list, focus first on the major question or questions under each heading. Then, as you review or develop a course, refer to the bulleted items to ensure that these criteria have been met. As you become more familiar with the items on the list, you will need to refer to it less frequently.

Many courses are evaluated by internal and external reviewers. Consider asking each reviewer to evaluate a specific aspect of the online course by focusing on the list of specifications under one heading.

General Information

At the beginning of the course, are learners provided with general information that will assist them in completing the course and in understanding its objectives and procedures?

- If the course is intended for an international audience, the level of reading proficiency (such as a TOEFL score) necessary to complete the course successfully in the language in which it is written is specified.
- A brief description of the course includes a goal and learning objectives and/or outcomes.
- A program map and/or rationale indicates how this course is related to other courses in the program and the credit value of each course.
- Prerequisites and/or corequisites are identified.
- A list of required and recommended resources includes all textbooks, courseware, and online resources necessary to complete the course. If learners must access online databases, instructions are provided for locating and accessing these resources, including password information. If the materials are located in a library, learners are told whether the items are on reserve and, if so, for how long.
- Special requirements are identified, such as recommended modem speed or Internet bandwidth, hardware (computing speed and storage capacity), software (including an e-mail program adequate for handling assignments and other attachments), and plug-ins. Online sources for these items are provided.
- The estimated time required to complete the module and/or course is stated. If feasible, a timeline is provided that outlines dates by which specific activities must be completed.
- Guidelines for participating in online discussions, also referred to as “netiquette,” are provided, as well as sugges-

tions for handling incoming e-mail, e-mail attachments, viruses, and e-mail filters.

- Learners are informed about group-work activities, the guidelines for forming groups, grading criteria for group participation and assignments, and their responsibilities as group members.
- The introduction to the course takes into account the learners’ backgrounds, ability levels, and expectations, including their personal learning goals and objectives, or specifies the attributes of the learners for whom the course is designed.
- The availability of technical support is stated, and links to online technical information are provided. The hours during which technical support is available are clearly identified, including the time zone.
- The availability of the instructor is specified, as is the turn-around time for responses to learners’ questions.
- Learners are directed to a source for answers to “frequently asked questions” pertaining to online learning. This source may provide information covering many of the items listed above, as well as items related to plagiarism, virus protection, and firewalls.
- Learners are informed about their right to privacy and the conditions under which their names or online submissions may be shared with others.
- Learners are directed to a Web site that helps them determine whether online education is appropriate for them.
- The developers and reviewers of the course are listed. Brief biographies may be provided to assure students of the developers’ knowledge and expertise.
- A copyright statement or disclaimer clearly identifies the owner(s) of the course and the source(s) of the material students are about to use.

Accessibility

How accessible is the course material? Can learners find information quickly?

- The function of each icon or button is explained and/or is naturally evident to the learners.
- A detailed table of contents includes objectives, learning outcomes, or topics.
- Every section of the course or module begins with a preview.
- Every page is linked to the previous page, the start of the module, the beginning of the course, and to e-mail so that learners may contact instructors and other learners for clarification and discussion. Some course management systems do not allow designers to place a link on every page, but links may be placed on the screen frame or interface page.

- Links within the course are provided to other parts of the course.
- Page headers or footers identify where the learner is in the course.
- An index lists key words or topics.
- A glossary defines unusual or technical terms used in the course and may provide links to sources of supplementary information.
- Consideration is given to learners who may have visual or auditory challenges.
- Has the instructor ensured that the infrastructure and server can handle the number of learners enrolled in the course?

Organization

Is the material organized in such a manner that learners can discern relationships between parts of the course?

- The table of contents gives an accurate indication of how the material is arranged.
- The organization or sequencing of the content is appropriate for the subject matter and the intended audience.
- Units of instruction, topics, or learning experiences are divided into subunits or subtopics.
- Subtopics are related to main topics.
- The organization of components is consistent throughout the course. For example, each module may have the following sections: introduction, objectives, pretest, directions, explanatory text including learning activities such as case studies, suggested answers for learning activities and links to additional information, module summary, self-test, self-test answers, references, additional readings, and module assignment.
- Required course elements are clearly delineated from supplementary elements.
- References to other parts of the material are correct.
- Links to other parts of the course or external sources of information are accurate.

Language

Is the level of the language used appropriate for the intended audience?

- The writing style is clear and direct.
- Clear directions are given.
- Familiar or common words are used.
- A conversational tone employs the second person: *you*, not *the learner*.
- Verbs are in the active, not passive, voice; for example, *Maslow developed the theory*, not *the theory was developed by Maslow*.
- Sentences are short.
- Paragraphs are brief.
- Numbers are used to identify sequential steps in a task or process.
- Bullets are used to list items that are not prioritized or sequential.

- The tone of the writing is supportive and encouraging.
- Terms are used consistently.
- Abbreviations and symbols are defined.
- Bullets, dashes, and numbers are used consistently.
- Instructions are stated simply and are easy to understand.
- Spelling and grammar are consistent and accurate.
- The writing conveys no explicit or implicit bias relative to age, culture or ethnicity, race, gender, or sexual preference. However, biased opinions may be included as examples if they are relevant to the course content.
- Has the course material been edited for grammar, language, and content verification?

Layout

Does the layout facilitate learning? Is the material attractive and appropriate for the course content and the intended audience? Note that it may be impossible to design a page that is displayed in the same manner on every computer screen; if the equipment and software available to the learners are unknown, a simple layout is best.

- The layout is appropriate for the content and intended audience.
- Navigational icons or cues are used consistently.
- The typeface is appropriate for the content and common to all programs and computers, such as Times Roman.
- Bold-face type is used sparingly, to highlight important terms, for example.
- Capital letters and underlining are not used for emphasis. Underlining is used only for hyperlinks.
- Key words are highlighted, especially when they are first used.
- Headings and subheadings are used to organize content.
- The format is uncluttered and includes white space.
- Ragged right margins are used or letters are kerned (evenly spaced on the line).
- The contrast between text and the background material makes the text legible.
- Colour is used effectively.
- Graphic elements such as diagrams, tables, and photographs illustrate or clarify information presented in the text.
- Illustrations can be seen easily on a computer screen, and JPEG files are used to accommodate different download speeds.
- Text explaining a graphic is aligned with the non-textual material.
- To assist those who may use screen readers, a description of each illustration is available as an image tag.
- Frames are used effectively to provide a consistent format.
- The material is displayed attractively.

Goals and Objectives

Are goals and objectives provided to outline learning expectations at the beginning of the course and, where appropriate, at the beginning of each module? If you are using a constructivist

Criteria for Evaluation continued from page 11

Clayton Wright

approach, you may ask your learners to select their own goals, objectives, content, learning strategies, resources, and evaluation scheme.

- Goals and objectives cover course content and are related to the program of study.
- They are relevant to the subject matter and to the “real world” in which the content may be applied.
- Objectives specify learning outcomes related to knowledge, skills, competencies, behaviours, and/or attitudes.
- Appropriate action verbs are used in goals and objectives. The accomplishment of objectives should be measurable; therefore, vague words such as “understood” and “realize” are not used.
- Objectives state clearly and concisely what must be done.
- Different levels of outcomes are stated, including those that call for critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Goals and objectives provide a discernable sequence of expectations.

Course Content

Is the content appropriate, given the subject matter and the learners’ backgrounds and abilities? If you are using a constructivist approach to your online course, you may want to substitute the term “learning experiences” for the word “content” below.

The content is:

- Directly related to learning objectives
- Complete, providing all the content or learning experiences needed to achieve the learning objectives
- Appropriate to the learners’ characteristics (ability and maturity level) and experiences
- Comparable and at least equal in rigour to similar on-campus courses
- Accurate
- Relevant
- Current
- Broken into small, incremental learning steps
- Presented in a logical sequence
- Related to other material the learners may have studied or experiences they may have had
- Illustrated by examples and/or case studies when new information is presented
- Linked to other sources, with reading assignments clearly specified

Are all quoted materials cited correctly? Has permission to use copyrighted material been obtained? Was the course reviewed by a second content expert?

Instructional or Learning Strategies and Opportunities for Practice and Transfer

Do the instructional or learning strategies enable learners to learn effectively in a variety of ways and to engage in activities that promote practice and the transfer of skills?

- Instructions or directions are clear and concise.
- Learners are told which activities must be performed synchronously and which may be performed asynchronously.
- Learners are told whether learning activities are sequential or whether they can be completed in any order.
- Learners are informed about their own responsibilities in online learning.
- Expectations are clearly specified for participation in collaborative or team-based learning activities.
- Procedures for grouping learners for team-based learning activities are specified.
- Deadlines are specified, and the consequences of missing deadlines are clearly stated.
- A variety of instructional or learning activities are used to promote interactivity. These may include online discussions, online conferencing, collaborative assignments, and listserv participation.
- Illustrations, photographs, animations, and other forms of multimedia are used to present facts and reinforce concepts. Note that if multimedia material is built into a course, learners may need advanced computer hardware and software, as well as a high-speed Internet connection. If receiving multimedia on a CD-ROM or DVD is an option, this must be stated, as well as any additional costs involved.
- Learners can select activities that are relevant for them, as the activities have been designed with their ages, cultural backgrounds, and experiential needs in mind.
- Learners can proceed at a pace that is appropriate for them and can repeat sections as often as they need to.
- Activities engage and motivate the learners. Learners must frequently respond to questions, select options, provide information, or contact others.
- Activities develop appropriate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills.
- Activities encourage critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Activities and materials are presented sequentially in order of difficulty.
- Learners are encouraged to interact with others and benefit from their experience and professional expertise.
- Learners are linked to resources beyond the course material.
- Activities are sequenced logically, as in a hierarchical or chronological manner.
- The number of activities is sufficient to support learning.
- Activities are realistic and appropriate and can be performed with the resources and time available to the learners.
- Frequent opportunities are provided for practice and knowledge transfer.
- Constructive, relevant, and frequent feedback is provided to promote clarification, elaboration, and transfer.

- Summaries are provided throughout the material, particularly at the end of topics, lessons, and modules.

Is the instructor primarily a facilitator of learning, rather than a provider of content?

Learning Resources

Are the learning resources accessible, appropriate, and accurate?

- Learning materials are appropriate for the learners and the subject matter.
- Lists of learning resources are divided into “required” and “optional” categories.
- Various learning resources are used to ensure compatibility with learners’ different interests, abilities, and learning styles.
- Multimedia clips, such as audio and video clips, are included only if the learners have access to the appropriate hardware and software and these items are specified at the beginning of the course. If students have purchased a computer within the last two years, this should not be an issue.
- The format of multimedia materials is specified, and a direct link to a required plug-in is provided.
- Learning resources reflecting different points of view are provided when appropriate.
- The resource material is accurate, current, and related to the course content.
- A bibliography or reference list includes a variety of material such as Web links (URLs), books and journals, CD-ROMs, and videos.
- Links are provided to material within and external to the course.

Evaluation

Are the evaluative activities feasible, relevant, accurate, and congruent with the objectives, content, and practical applications of the content?

- Learners are given clear expectations and criteria for credit assignments. Examples of assignments that meet the criteria may be included for students to review.
- The number of assignments and their due dates are reasonable.
- Evaluation and grading procedures are clear and explicit.
- Appropriate links to institutional policies on grading and evaluation are provided.
- The relationships between course learning outcomes, evaluation strategies, and course assignments are evident to the learner.
- The relationship between individual assignments and the final course grade is clearly specified.
- Detailed step-by-step instructions are provided for each evaluative exercise.
- Guidelines for submitting assignments are provided.
- Students are informed about the criteria that will be used to evaluate their participation in online activities such as discussion groups.

- A variety of feasible and content-relevant assignments or evaluative exercises are provided.
- The evaluative exercises are relevant to the learners and the career or profession they may pursue.
- Learners are able to track and evaluate their own progress. Self-tests are similar to the final evaluation instruments.
- Criteria and procedures for peer review and evaluation are clearly specified if these elements are included in the course.
- Learners are informed about the consequences of plagiarism and the failure to properly cite copyrighted material.
- Learners are told when they can expect to receive feedback from the instructor.
- Evaluation procedures are congruent with the objectives and reflect any priorities that have been established for the objectives.

Overall

- Is there evidence that the course has been piloted and that learners can achieve the objectives of the course?
- Has the course been reviewed by experts in content and design?
- Is the course up-to-date – current in both content and technical aspects? When was it last revised and the URLs updated?
- If the course will be used by instructors who did not participate in its development, can the course be modified? If so, what permission is needed before this modification can occur?

Online learning is the latest trend in education. Its success will depend on the quality of its instructional design and the academic and technical support provided to learners and instructors. This document, as well others such as the *Canadian Recommended E-Learning Guidelines* available from www.FuturEd.com, will help you ensure that online learning is successful.

The criteria presented in this guide are based on the national and international experiences of staff in the Instructional Media and Design department at Grant MacEwan College. Although they were developed to assist educators in evaluating the effectiveness of online courses, they may also be used as guidelines for course developers. The criteria were reviewed by a diverse group of professionals:

- Wayne Baillie, South Shore District School Board, Bridgewater (Nova Scotia)
- Maureen Baron, English Montreal School Board, Montreal
- Cathy Conroy, Athabasca University, Athabasca
- Rod Corbett, University of Calgary, Calgary
- Genevieve Gallant, Memorial University, St. John’s
- Doug Hamilton, Royal Roads University, Victoria
- Judith Johnson, Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton
- Bryan Shepherd, NorQuest College, Edmonton
- Ingrid Stammer, Canadian Pacific Railway, Calgary
- Val Stewart, Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton
- Michael Szabo, University of Alberta, Edmonton ■

Classroom Teachers as Online Educators

Dr. S. Crichton and E.A. Childs PhD Candidate

Research Summary

As the education community both in North America and abroad struggle to deal with shrinking budgets and resources, many decision makers are looking to blended or hybrid learning environments as a way to address the new realities of and demands on public education (Robinson & Latchem, 2003). School districts, boards and institutions alike are turning to online courseware as a way to manage these organizational, resource and strategic issues (Advisory Committee for Online Learning, 2001). Increasingly, we see the inclusion of online learning as an alternative delivery option in K-12 education (Childs & Hamilton, 2002). Many school districts are now able to receive the same amount of funding per full time equivalent for online students at a time when overall funding for programs has been significantly reduced (Crichton & Childs, 2003). Consequently, these districts are looking at online courseware as a way to deal with increasing enrolments, decreasing resources (staff, locations) and changing provincial requirements for course options.

Research (Coppola, N., Hiltz, S., & Rotter, N., 2002; Crichton, 1999; dos Anjos, Paas & de Moraes, 2001), suggests that preparing practicing teachers to shift their practice to the online environment can be a daunting task. Further Coppola et al. (2002) suggests that there are new roles, responsibilities and technologies to learn and an e-pedagogy to develop (Good, 2001). The growth in online or distributed learning is increasing while the number of trained teacher is not (Advisory Committee for Online Learning, 2001). The question remains, where can teachers begin to develop the skills and knowledge required of them as online educators?

Requirements of Teacher as Online Educators

If the online environment requires different roles and responsibilities of the teacher (Coppola et al., 2002; Crichton & LaBonte, 2003) and by working in the online environment teachers are required to change their teaching practice (Palloff & Pratt, 2000) then it is necessary to provide opportunities for teachers to acquire these skills and develop their model of teaching practice within this new setting and during their pre-service instruction. As well, if the online environment is indeed a different learning environment with different opportunities, constraints, and demands than the traditional face-to-face environment, it is reasonable to assume that preparing teachers for this environment will require a different strategy than the one currently employed for the traditional classroom setting. Therefore, this paper argues that there is a need for an inten-

tional program of pre-service or in-service designed specifically to develop and support a pedagogy to match the online learning environment: an e-pedagogy.

Objectives

This paper presents research that focuses on identifying a knowledge base required for online educators. One of the tangible products of this research is its ability to inform the development of course offerings in pre-service teacher preparation programs, specifically the Master's of Teaching program at the University of Calgary Alberta, Canada, and to prepare and position graduates to work in the online environment. In turn, these graduates would have the potential to influence the effectiveness of schools to build their own capacity for blended or online learning environments by providing them with teachers who are prepared and comfortable facilitating in this setting.

The principal objective of this research is an understanding of the components essential to the development and implementation of a pre-service course/program in distributed learning. However, to achieve this objective, it was first necessary to establish the actual requirements for teaching in the online environment as identified by practicing online educators by allowing them to inform the development of their future colleagues. The study was guided by two overarching research objectives:

1. Identify the skills, knowledge and abilities required in the actual practice of teaching in distributed learning environments, and
2. Identify specific issues that are unique to teaching in distributed learning environments for inclusion in a Special Topics course as part of the course offerings in the Master of Teaching (B.Ed) program at the University of Calgary.

Research Support

The *Teaching and Learning for a Knowledge Era* initiative at the University of Calgary has as its focus the need to transform how teachers are prepared in the Master of Teaching program and how K-12 students learn in the schools in Alberta (www.mt3.ucalgary.ca). This research was funded by an MT3 grant initiative which has four specific components: increasing effectiveness in schools; building the capacity of University faculty; providing essential support within the daily context of University and school-based educators' work and researching, evaluating and sharing knowledge. It is through initiatives such as the above that the research into requirements of teachers as online educators can be explored, examined and incorporated back into the preparation of teachers who can adapt and facilitate

a variety of learning environments to meet the needs of their learners.

Methods and Data Sources

This study followed a qualitative case study design. It involved seven teachers who currently work in distributed learning in two school division in rural Alberta, Canada. All teachers were teaching in a blended form of the online learning environment. However, how that “blend” was structured in the two school divisions was different. Four of the participants taught online the majority of the time. The other three participants allocated the majority of their teaching time to the face-to-face environment and the online environment was used as a supplement.

Data was collected using the survey and a follow up focus group discussion. The survey questions were open ended to encourage rich descriptions by the participants. They were developed from the characteristics of an online learning environment gleaned from the literature and the primary researcher’s professional experience. All

participants completed the survey and participated in the focus groups. The focus group was conducted in an open-ended, semi-structured manner which encouraged the researchers and participants to engage in the questioning and allow the discussion to naturally evolve.

The dynamic nature of qualitative case study research was supported by the simultaneous data collection and analysis that occurred in this study. Merriam (1998) discusses the difficulty in separating data collection from analysis in case study work due in part to the evolving nature of the understandings that are being created. This was certainly the case in this research. The initial frames for this research were the characteristics of a learning environment developed through a review of available literature and the primary researchers actual practice in the field. Based on responses from the survey, trends and themes that emerged were then further explored in the focus group session. The descriptive statistics generated from the survey data also served as indicators of certain common understandings that were further explored during the focus group.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of what skills, knowledge and abilities practicing online educators require to do their job effectively. However, the overarching

objective of this research was to develop an understanding of the components essential to the development and implementation of a pre-service course in distributed learning. The findings of this research suggest that pre-service programs must include:

1. experience in using a range of appropriate technology (working knowledge of the software and delivery system; technical troubleshooting familiarity; computer literacy);
2. development of online pedagogy (support a variety of learners and learning styles; create engaging, effective and individualized content; develop online management techniques and strategies); and

3. opportunities to practice (being a learner first; supported virtual practicum; online time management strategies; continual learning and reflective practice).

To set these findings in context, it is important to note that many teachers involved in this research made the observation that teaching online was different to teaching in the face-to-face classroom. As one participant phrased it, “Replication of traditional school settings online will not work.”

“... for the past fifteen years, teachers who work in online, distributed and/or blended learning environments have prepared themselves ...”

Educational Importance of the Study

The findings from this research support the need to create an intentional pre-service program at the university/college level that will prepare new teachers to teach in online learning environments. This will be exciting work and work that is long overdue as evidenced by the many comments both within this research and in other studies (dos Anjos et. al, 2001; Stein, Smith & Silver, 1999).

It recognizes that for the past fifteen years, teachers who work in online, distributed and/or blended learning environments have prepared themselves. As one participant stated “I did not receive any training; basically I jumped in head first and learned as I went along.” When asked what in-service or professional development activities have helped in their distributed teaching, another participant comments, “We have yet to develop in-service orientation for new staff. Staff must ‘survive’ from day to day until they pick up enough knowledge of WebCT and lesson design.” Both of these examples lend credence to the above observation (Palloff & Pratt, 1999) and a sense of urgency for pre-service and in-service programs to prepare and support teachers who are or wish to be teaching in an online learning environment. The development of a Special Topics course for the MT program at the University of Calgary is step in this direction. ■

Updates From the Field



Calgary Board of Education

AOC and CBE Collaborate on High School Teacher PD

Doug MacLachlan
Program Manager: Online Professional Development
Innovative Learning Services, Calgary Board of Education



The Alberta Online Consortium, in partnership with the Calgary Board of Education, has created a 6-week professional development course, "ICT in High School Learning", in response to the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) curriculum. This course, available at no cost to Alberta school jurisdictions, is designed

- as an alternative mode of professional development
- to assist teachers in their inclusion of ICT in classroom teaching
- to expose educators to the use and application of technology in the classroom
- to explore the implications of this technology regarding their teaching practice.

"ICT in High School Learning" is an online course, complete with content and activities related to the ICT Program of Studies, discussion areas, web space for project work, and other tools to support self-directed study. It is presented in the following delivery models:

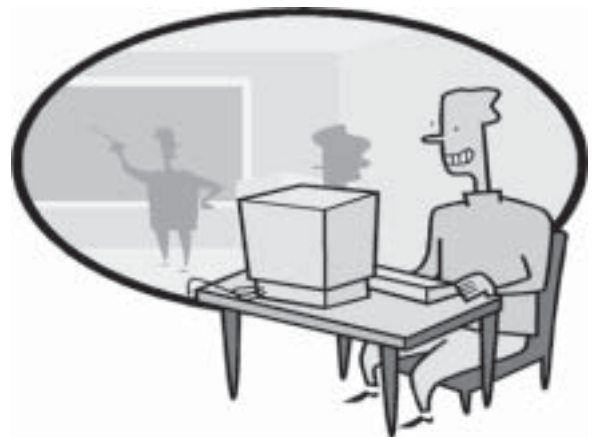
- Option 1: Two or more face-to-face meetings scheduled throughout, led by an experienced facilitator, with the remainder of the course to be completed online, or
- Option 2: One initial face-to-face meeting, full or half day, led by an experienced facilitator, with the remainder of the course to be completed online, or

Option 3: Full online delivery with no face-to-face contact, mediated by an experienced online instructor, requiring approximately 30 hours to complete.

Participants in a course may be from multiple disciplines or the course may be customized to accommodate specific curricular interests, depending on the needs of the jurisdiction. For example, Social Studies teachers from several schools may form a cohort to pursue integration of technology within their classrooms. Or one high school may choose to pursue technology integration in a multi-disciplinary approach. Additionally, a Train the Trainer model may be adopted, whereby your technology leaders complete the course with a view to becoming instructors in future courses offered within your jurisdiction. Finally, a version of the course will be available to those who are interested in learning to integrate Alberta Learning multimedia resources available on LearnAlberta.ca.

Participating teachers will receive a Certificate of Completion and principals of their schools will receive a letter outlining their accomplishments. All the resources created in each course will be made available on a CD. The anticipated outcome would be dissemination of strategies and resources to each participant's school. ■

Courses will be offered starting in January 2004. For more information contact:
Sylvie Monfette
Innovative Learning Services, Calgary Board of Education
symonfette@cbe.ab.ca





Online Learning Flourishes

Moira Fields
Professional Development Officer
Teaching and Learning Centre, Learning Resource Services

Online teaching and learning continues to flourish at Bow Valley College, "The Learning College". Currently, the Teaching and Learning Centre of the Learning Resource Services is developing a pre-service/ in-service curriculum for the Health and Community Care Department at the College. This exciting new project will assess, develop, implement and evaluate a pre-service/in-service plan focusing on adult learning principles for Faculty and Staff of Health and Community Care.

The intent is to show instructors and other staff who have not had the opportunity to teach within an adult learning environment how applying adult learning principles can improve the approach to classroom instruction, one to one tutoring and implementation of skill sets among their students. The online curriculum will be tailored to the specific pedagogical needs of the Health and Community Care instructor. Modules in the online learning environment will be heavily supplemented and enhanced with the addition of a number of interactive learner tools such as discussion boards, chat-based role-playings and feedback. Learner modules will include self-assessment tools to help guide the instructor to evaluate personal instructional strengths and to bolster other areas for further development. The online course will also foster the development of learning partnerships which are

critical to the application of new content to different learning situations. These "teaching circles" will provide support between instructors by providing a social and pedagogical context for meeting and sharing information.

Bow Valley College also plans the development of an online college "community" designed to support the culture of the college. Plans are underway to set the community within the WebCT platform. Scheduled chats, discussion boards, and other community events such as a professional book club will be piloted. A professional development newsletter and upcoming events calendar will also be included in the community.

Bow Valley College is also an eager participant in the eCampus Alberta initiative. "eCampus Alberta is a collaborative initiative of fourteen publicly funded colleges and technical institutes in the province of Alberta that has been established to facilitate increased availability of high quality online learning opportunities for adult learners across Alberta. eCampus Alberta is operated by the Alberta Online Learning Association and officially launched in Fall, 2003." Bow Valley College is a proud partner of the initiative offering many of our online courses, including HS English, Nutrition Manager and Food Service Worker. We are one of the colleges partnering with GMCC in the pilot offering of their Arts and Cultural Management course. ■



NorQuest to Develop Reader for Hearing Impaired Students

Barb Pearce
Centre for Innovation and Development

NorQuest College has received funds from the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) and Human Resources Development Canada to develop reading materials for hearing impaired students working to improve their reading comprehension. The goal of the project is to produce a high quality resource for students and their instructors that reflects the reality of life for adults who are deaf. The initiative will utilize American Sign Language to facilitate English language comprehension.

The *NorQuest Reader* will be available in two formats—Print and CD. The CD form will include hypertext for challenging vocabulary and syntax, interactive pre-reading and post reading exercises, and American Sign Language (ASL) video clips of text. The stories will reflect essential elements of good narrative and non-fiction, will include appropriate vocabulary and a variety of sentence structures to demonstrate literal and figurative English text.

Improvements in instructional design and technology have made it possible to produce instructional materials that are appealing and interactive. Since hearing impaired Canadians depend on visual modes of communication, technologies incorporating visual display of information, are highly successful. The interplay of video clips, text display and interactive exercises will be accessible to any student with a computer and CD-ROM drive.

The final project will result in the development of a storybook for students and a set of CD-ROM disks containing the stories and interactive pre and post-reading activities. The anticipated result of this project is that students and practitioners will embrace this innovative resource for adult students and begin integrating it into their program of studies. It is hoped that this resource serves as a springboard for the development of more resources for this particular group of students engaged in literacy development.

For more information on this project, contact Flo Brokop or Bill Persall in Learning Support Services. ■

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Updates From the Field



The new LearnAlberta.ca is here!

Kandis Lock

Special Projects Coordinator, LearnAlberta.ca

The new LearnAlberta.ca (<http://www.LearnAlberta.ca>):

- continues to provide engaging digital learning resources for Alberta students, teachers and parents including: International Languages, Sciences, Mathematics, English Language Arts, and much more!
- offers improved navigation making it easier to find resources.
- provides English user interfaces customized for different grade levels. French interfaces will be available soon.

LearnAlberta.ca UserID and Password

Some of the resources on LearnAlberta.ca are licenced by Alberta Learning for authorized users only (Alberta students, teachers and parents). Authorized users in the post secondary community include faculty members, instructors, library staff, and students registered in course(s) offered by Faculties of Education or offered as part of education programs in post-secondary colleges. Faculty members, instructors, library staff, and students participating in upgrading programs within the Kindergarten to Grade 12 context are also considered authorized users under the licence agreements. The site is therefore password protected. UserID's and Passwords have been emailed to jurisdiction technology contacts and principals of all publicly-funded K-12 schools as well as to appropriate post secondary program heads.

New Resources Available

International languages

- **German Language and Culture 10 and Spanish Language and Culture 10:** These animated audio/visual learning experiences provide virtual "field trips" to various cities. Each city presents the learner with a variety of activities based on a vocabulary theme. Location specific cultural notes, worksheets and strategies are also included.
- **Ukrainian:** This resource is designed to address a variety of language proficiency and reading learning outcomes from the Ukrainian Program of Studies and will provide emergent Ukrainian readers with exposure to two simple books that deal with situations familiar to young children — getting dressed, clothing and colours.

Social Studies

- **Ideologies and the News Media:** This resource allows the student to assume the identity of a newspaper reporter assigned with the task of writing an editorial describing a historical event from one of the following perspectives: extreme left wing, extreme right wing, neutral, etc.

English Language Arts (ELA)

- **ELA Live! and ELA More Live!:** These segments portray students in real life settings dealing with various topics such

as: using prior knowledge; understanding tone, voice and irony; making use of figurative language; preparing for presentations; effective collaboration in a group; using the power of texts to influence peoples' values and behaviours.

- **Researching and Making Presentations:** This interactive resource supports learning outcomes in the ELA programs of study for grades 5-9. It shows students discussing and modeling strategies in real-life contexts.

Mathematics

- **Mathematics Discovery Applets (secondary):** These exploratory tools created by Ron Blond provide opportunities for students to manipulate various parameters in order to learn and better understand certain mathematical relationships.

Science

- **Physics 20 – 30:** These multimedia lessons and discovery applets have been designed to illustrate, explain and review key concepts from the Physics 11 and 12 Programs of Study including: projectile motion, friction, circular motion, electromagnetism, half life, and the photoelectric effect.
- **National Geographic Science Centre:** The National Geographic Science Centre offers resources licensed from The National Geographic Society including videos, teachers' guides, activity sheets, data pages, quizzes and transparencies correlated to sixteen natural science units from the Alberta program of studies.

French

- **Pour réaliser des projets de communication:** This online resource offers planning, managing and evaluation of various oral and written projects.
- **L'intimidation, parlons-en:** L'intimidation is a resource that deals with the issue of bullying. It is designed for students in grades 5-9 and contains four- five minute video segments.

New to the Online Reference Centre

Early Canadiana Online (ECO)/Notre Mémoire en Ligne

- Early Canadiana Online (ECO) is a digital library providing access to over 1,145,000 pages of Canada's printed heritage. It features works published from the time of the first European settlers up to the early 20th Century. ECO is produced by the [Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions \(CIHM\)](#), a nonprofit organization for preserving and providing access to early Canadian publications, first on microfiche and now online. The works featured are images of primary historical sources such as books, papers, maps and more. The resource will be more useful for older students and will provide resources to support student research and teacher planning in Social Studies. The resource contains many works in French and has a full French version (**Notre Mémoire en Ligne**). ■



News from Mount Royal College's Academic Development Centre

Norm Vaughan
Educational Technology Integration Coordinator

This fall has been a busy time for the Academic Development Centre at Mount Royal College with the introduction of new faculty development programs and upgrades to our learning technology systems. The following are some of our highlights:

Summer Sandbox Program

The maintenance and sustainability of digital learning materials (e.g. web pages, scanning/digitizing course materials, Power-Point) has been identified as a significant challenge by faculty members at Mount Royal College. In their responses to a recent College-wide educational technology survey, faculty members indicated that lack of time and, in some cases, technological expertise are barriers to the integration of technology into their courses.

In response to this challenge, the Academic Development Centre hired two students over the spring/summer period of this year to complete a series of maintenance/sustainability projects. This initiative also provided an opportunity for these two computer science and information systems students to complete their first-level directed field studies placements.

A call for proposals was circulated to all credit-faculty (full and part time), early in the spring. Interested faculty completed a one page application form describing the type of support they required. An upper limit of 30 hours of support was established as the guideline for each project with the work to be completed between the May to August time frame. By the end of August 2003, a total 23 projects had been completed for 17 faculty members. The range of project types included:

- Repairing known bugs which compromise usability in existing courseware
- Providing technical editing and revising to already existing content in order to enhance currency and usability of materials
- Developing digital learning objects (e.g. Macromedia Flash animations) for use in online courseware and/or in the classroom
- Scanning and digitizing course related material
- Developing digital test banks

Faculty Learning Community on Blended Learning

A blended (hybrid) learning course at Mount Royal College indicates that a significant portion of the learning activities have been moved online, and time traditionally spent in the classroom has been reduced but not eliminated. The goal of these blended courses is to join the best features of in-class teaching with the best features of online learning to promote active, self-directed learning and reduce class seat time.

Over the past three years, Mount Royal College faculty have been developing this type of course on their own with limited support from the Academic Development Centre (ADC). In order to increase the level of support and interest in developing blended courses a faculty learning community model has been adopted.

A faculty learning community (FLC) consists of a group of faculty members who engage in a structured, year-long experience designed to enhance teaching and learning. The FLC design offers seminars and activities designed to provide both professional development and community building opportunities for faculty participants. The FLC on blended learning focuses on using the Blackboard course management system to adapt an existing course or directed field study for blended delivery. Over the fall and winter semesters faculty will participate in FLC seminars and activities, while they work toward the completion of their blended course. Support for the technical development of their Blackboard course site will be provided by students in Mount Royal College's Student Technician and Resource Tutor (START) program. Currently, there are twelve faculty members actively involved in our FLC on Blended Learning.

MyMRC Web Based Portal System

Over the summer, Mount Royal College's Information Technology Services (ITS) department successfully integrated our course management system (Blackboard) with our student information system (SCT Banner). This now enables students, staff and faculty to use just one unique username and password to access all College related information and resources through MyMRC (<http://www.mymrc.ca>), a central portal system. MyMRC consists of four key components:

My HomePage:

Announcements about courses and program that students are enrolled in, campus news, personal calendar, and links to learning resources, campus resources and departments.

My Courses

Direct links to Blackboard course sites that students are enrolled in and a personal course schedule.

Online Services

Online registration, admission, grades and transcripts, information on financial aid and awards and update contact information.

Around MRC

Organizations for students, MRC news and events. Links to information on all aspects of student life, learning resources, campus resources, academic departments. ■

More information about these and other learning technology initiatives at Mount Royal College can be found through the Academic Development Centre's web site:

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



e-Learning Online Showcase and Certificate

Rod Corbett
e-Learning Specialist
Faculty of Continuing Education

The University of Calgary is pleased to host a brand new online resource for anyone working in the field of e-learning or who are interested in learning more about e-learning. The purpose of this site is to facilitate sharing of best practices in e-learning with others from around the world. Some of the regular features include:

- Monthly presentations from experts in the field of e-learning, showcasing their best practices in e-learning. These presentations are available at no cost along with an opportunity to participate in follow-up discussions with the presenters.
- Monthly online workshops offer a week-long hands-on learning experience to improve your skills and expertise on specific topics.
- Daily features include an e-Learning quote and Cool e-Learning site of the day, along with ongoing discussions about e-learning topics in general.
- A monthly newsletter is e-mailed out at the beginning of each month that will notify you of the new presentations and workshops for the month. You can register for this on the site.
- All activities on the site are offered asynchronously so that you can participate at any time from any where with Internet access.

The Best Practices in e-Learning Online Showcase Web site can be found at <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/showcase/>

The Faculty of Continuing Education of the University of Calgary is please to announce the launch of a brand new Certificate in e-Learning: Design and Facilitate Learning Online Program. This program will help anyone working in the field of e-learning to gain the required training, expertise and credential they will need to be successful. Features of the program include:

- All courses are offered online asynchronously so you can learn at any time from any where with Internet access.
- The program is designed to accommodate the part-time learning demands of busy professionals. Any course can be taken without being admitted to the program.
- All courses are practical orientated with project based assignments.
- No degree is required as prerequisite although the program is well suited for degree holders.
- You may be eligible for advance credit if you have already taken related courses.

Courses offered in the up-coming Winter term include:

- e-Learning: Principles and Practices
- e-Learning: Building Online Courses
- Facilitating Learning in Synchronous e-Learning Environments
- Designing Engaging e-Learning Experiences

The Certificate in e-Learning: Design and Facilitate Learning Online Web site can be found at <http://www.cted.ucalgary.ca/elearn/certificate/> ■

Teachers as Online Educators continued from page 15

Crichton and Childs

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The Learning Commons

Heather Kanuka, PhD
Associate Director, Learning Commons



Following the success of the Winter 2002 International Perspectives on Literacy lecture series offered by videoconference at the University of Calgary, University of Alberta and University of Prince Edward Island, the UofC is once again collaborating with the UofA, UPEI and now UBC, to offer a new lecture series, Building Capacity for Diversity in Canadian Schools. The 12-week videoconference lecture series will showcase Canadian scholars who will discuss prominent issues related to diversity in Canadian schools such as: ESL, gifted students, focusing on the family, learning disabilities, working with first nations and education policy. Master of Teaching students, graduate students, teachers, parents, psychologists and administrators attend these lecture series. A total of 11 speakers presenting from a different institution each week will allow participants to see and interact with speakers in person as well as live and via video," says coordinator, Dr. Anne McKeough. Technical details are being coordinated by the Learning Commons.

In August this summer the Learning Commons hosted **Teaching Reflections, 2003**. The conference theme was *Reflective Inquiry*, which supports post-secondary instructors in creating meaningful learning environments through critical thinking and reflective inquiry. Included in our presenters were distinguished scholars in higher educational research, Dr. Stephen Brookfield (University of St. Thomas, MN) and Dr. Janet Donald (McGill University) as Keynote speakers. Concurrent sessions addressed a variety of topics including teaching theories and strategies,

inquiry and blended learning, assessment and evaluation, online instructional design and development, and more.

This fall we are continuing with our institutional transition from WebCT to Blackboard. To date, we have had over 500 attendees and provided over 50 sessions (since the transition). We currently have 950+ courses, with over 13,000 distinct users and approximately 58% utilization.

Upcoming this winter will be the introduction of a faculty development program on blended learning and inquiry methods. This initiative envisions the creation of new courses and programs that capitalize on the potential of blended learning to teaching and learning supported through inquiry approaches.

The *Learning Commons* provides services to the University of Calgary in the following areas:

- *Teaching Development and Leadership*, which includes consultation, support for new faculty and graduate students, online teaching and learning resources, learning development workshops, inquiry learning support and a summer institute.
- E-learning, which includes consultation, program coordination, distance learning, Blackboard, CentraOne, video and audio conferencing support.
- *Multimedia and technology development*, which includes consultation, audio/visual production, website development/design, learning objects, CAREO and ALOHA. ■

Learning Commons' Website: <http://commons.ucalgary.ca>



University of Alberta: Academic Technologies for Learning Grade 9 Science e-Textbook Research and Development

Cheryl Whitelaw

Alberta Learning has contracted Academic Technologies for Learning to assess the effectiveness of e-textbooks in the delivery of Grade 9 Science curriculum in urban, rural, and virtual schools in Alberta. Partners in the project include Alberta Learning, textbook publishers and Alberta teachers and students.

In this project, teachers will use PDF versions of two Grade 9 Science textbooks enhanced by digital resources. Approximately 25 teachers from school jurisdictions across the province will participate as formal teacher-researchers collecting information from students, parents and other teachers. An online survey is also in place where students, teachers and parents can submit feedback on the initiative (<http://www.atl.ualberta.ca/etextbook/survey.cfm>).

The research project will examine the feasibility of e-textbooks within the learning system and whether data gathered from this project will suggest potential viability for e-textbook use in other areas; e.g., social studies. ■

For more information, contact
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Cheryl Whitelaw at cheryl.whitelaw@ualberta.ca.



University of Alberta: Academic Technologies for Learning Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics to Pilot Web-4M

Ellen Whybrow, M.Ed., Instructional Designer

Academic Technologies for Learning has been working with Dr. Lynn McMullen of the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics to pilot "Web-4M" the university's new synchronous collaborative tool as a virtual classroom to review food microbiology concepts. Web-4M is third party software that has been integrated into WebCT Vista, the new course management system at the University. Its features include chat, white board, audio conferencing, interactive slide shows and conference archiving for review later.

As food safety issues increase in society, there has been a demand to offer the course at centres other than the University of Alberta. Previously, the course had been offered via video-conference to the University of Calgary. Web-4M is being piloted as a possible alternative in a pilot that offers tutorial

sessions to students to prepare for mid-term and final exams. This allows for testing of the technology without sacrificing regularly scheduled exams. Events are recorded and archived so students who are unable to attend may play these sessions at their convenience.

The sessions consist of PowerPoint slides with audio conferencing with the instructor. Questions that test students ability to apply background knowledge and judgment with food safety issues are built in at frequent intervals. The sessions are evaluated and a general evaluation of the pilot will be available in 2004. ■

For more information, contact
Ellen Whybrow at 780-492-8404 or
Dr. Lynn McMullen at 780-492-6015.



Technology Enhanced Learning Team at Lakeland College

Sheila Whitmore TELT Coordinator
Victoria Person Editor/Technical Writer

The Technology Enhanced Learning Team (TELT) at Lakeland College has been busy this past summer with a variety of projects in preparation for the fall semester. Here's a quick look at why the members of the TELT have no summer tans to boast about.

School of Business: Bachelor of Applied Emergency Services Administration (BAppESA)

Creating the 30-module curriculum for Lakeland College's innovative Bachelor of Applied Emergency Services Administration (BAppESA) degree has been taking up most of the team's time. The BAppESA is designed for on-line, distance, part-time delivery to maximize accessibility for professionals working in the field. This applied degree is expected to be the industry standard for management level education in Canadian emergency services sectors, including fire services, police and corrections services, emergency medical services, military, and disaster management.

The program was launched with an Orientation Weekend for the first cohort in mid-September, and feedback on the weekend, including the orientation to WebCT, was extremely positive. Clara Thalheimer, Coordinator of Curriculum Development and Instructional Design, and Sheila Whitmore, Coordinator of Technology Enhanced Learning served as Subject Matter Experts, designers and developers for the program's two communications modules, and will team teach both modules as part of ongoing module design evaluation.

School of Agricultural Sciences

The TEL team has just completed work with Todd Ree, an instructor in the School of Agricultural Sciences, on the re-development of MA 100, an Agricultural Math course requisite for first year students in Agricultural Sciences. MA 100 is available in both print and web-based delivery modes. A follow-up study will compare course completion rates, grades, and course evaluation comments for the re-developed course with the previous course's statistics. TELT is in the early stages of developing an interactive CD for AE 106, an Agricultural Bookkeeping course.

Basic Fire Apparatus Maintenance: School of Trades and Technology

Our TEL team developed print-based modules to serve as course guides referenced to a new textbook on Fire Apparatus Maintenance authored by Don Henry, a Trades and Technology instructor at the College. This course is currently offered across Canada to Emergency Vehicle Technicians and mechanics involved in the fire service.

Website Revision

Scott Bossert, the TEL team's Application Specialist, spent some of his summer revising the website for the Center for Academic Support and Innovation (CASI). Check out Scott's work and what CASI and TELT at: <http://tlm.lakelandc.ab.ca/casi/TELT.shtml>

The TEL team is also working with the Marketing team to revamp the Lakeland College website. Scott is playing a key role in recommending navigation for the College website, as well as providing technical support for the re-development and implementation of the new website. ■

A New Approach to Grant-Getting

Jon Baggaley

I was thrilled recently to receive an e-mail from a prince in Nigeria who deeply respects my work. I'm not sure how he heard of me, but I have done various projects in Africa, so that must be it. The poor fellow's father was murdered by guerrillas, and his family has fallen on hard times. The prince asked me to intervene personally with quite a large bank draft. I told him that I would have to wait until the next pay cheque.

A few days later, I received another request, this time from the chaplain to a deposed president in the Congo, where a large currency transaction has been obstructed by petty and corrupt bureaucrats. The chaplain also referred to the eminent regard in which his countrymen hold my academic work. I was filling out the cheque for him, when it dawned on me that both of the e-mails contained the same formatting and punctuation. Could it be that they came... from the same person?!

Actually I don't think so, for I don't believe that anyone who respects me so highly could stoop to such artifice. It seems more likely that there is a consulting firm out there that handles these begging e-mails, taking the deserving cases and forwarding them to me using a tried-and-tested format.

This idea has put me in mind of a new approach to academic grantsmanship. Recently, I have been conducting research into the use of synchronous delivery methods in distance education. The work is going well, though we could still use more funding for research assistants, team meetings in the Greek Islands, and to buy some of those expensive new Learning Management Systems. I have been using the African begging e-mail method to raise some very useful supplementary funding - \$10 million dollars in the first week!! I admit that this approach may not sound completely honest, but it works really well. And there is obviously so much money to go around that I am happy to share the idea with others. Try adapting the following template to your own research ends, and see just how well you will do. Good luck !

From: <Insert your name here>

To: (Undisclosed Recipient)

Subject: I need many academic research funds

I am the first son of the late Revd. Dr. Ungawa Phillippe Baggaley, the founder of distance education in my country. You may be surprised that I am contacting you by the asynchronous method of e-mail owing to our mutual fondness for synchronous education techniques. My beloved father overcame the problems of asynchronous education in the Ungawa Territory by creating weekly 'synchronous learning' sessions in central villages. The local people travel to these sessions sometimes for as long as 3.5 days, and hold an educational conversation lasting half-an-hour before returning to their homes for an hour's rest prior to the next session. My father made 36 MILLION DOLLARS (US) from the provision of 'synchronous learning facilitators' (SLF) - hardy mules that convey the learners on their 'learning journeys'. Our family now wishes to expand this lucrative educational model to your country, but restrictive currency practices in our own bureaucracy in our way. You have been recommended to us by a key official in the capital town of your country as an ideal partner in this worthy enterprise. Please create a Caymans bank account for us immediately, containing 36 MILLION DOLLARS (US), and send me the access codes. We will then add another 36 MILLION DOLLARS (US) to your account, at which point you will be free to return your own 36 MILLION DOLLARS (US) to your private account. We will then provide you with a personal 5 MILLION DOLLARS (US) as fee for this valued service, and a further 10 MILLION DOLLARS (US) to be used as bribes for the reviewers of federal grant applications in your country. We will then empower you to administer my father's synchronous educational model in your country, funded by the remaining 21 MILLION DOLLARS (US) of our family's money, with absolutely no accountability on your part.

For your enlightenment, a picture is attached taken by one of our learners en route to a synchronous learning session. My heartsick family looks upon you, esteemed colleague, as the saviour of our nation, of our family's fortunes, and of the name of its beloved patriarch Dr. Ungawa Philippe. We feel confident that you will not delete this e-mail but will reply to it with leaping heart at the prospect of cementing ties between our two nations in this profitable manner. (Please do not forget to include your personal access code with the Caymans account number.)

Your colleague at a distance,
Ungawa Profiterole Baggaley, Junior.

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