

In This Issue...

Editor's Message	2
President's Message	3
Articles	
Accessibility Begins by Offering Options	1
<i>Karen McCall</i>	
Emerging Frontiers	11
<i>Jennifer Geary</i>	
A View from 30,000 Feet	14
<i>Dr. Eugene Kowch</i>	
Moving Skills Online	18
<i>Christine Marles</i>	
Larger Online Classes	22
<i>Faye Wiesenberg, PhD.</i>	
Announcements 4	
ADETA Board Elected	
Interface 2004	
Interface 2005	
ADETA Research Award	
Call for Committee Members	
PD Sessions	
AOC Online Symposium	
Updates from the Field	
LearnAlberta.....	25
Lakeland College	26
University of Calgary Cont. Ed.	26
Sidethought	27

Accessibility Begins by Offering Options

Karen McCall, M.Ed. ATAC

In July I had the pleasure of attending the 3rd Pan Commonwealth Forum on Distance Education sponsored by the Commonwealth of Learning [COL]. It was an unusual conference in that papers submitted were not presented. Instead we broke into working groups and tackled such topics as best practices, latest developments, emerging issues and research. The topic I chose, and was assigned to, was emerging issues. As an aside, one of the intriguing perspectives to come out of the best practices group was the concept that there were no “best” practices given the diversity of the commonwealth countries. This group has emerged with the phrase “appropriate practices based on context” which is more suitable to a learner centric environment.

Having appropriate practices based on context acknowledges the learner’s right to control their learning process and the context in which they learn. From my perspective, this in turn allows learners with disabilities who are using adaptive technology to acquire access to digital environments and information. I’m sure this will become an emerging issue. With the development of LMS’ [Learning Management Systems] which permit Pavlovian control over students under the guise of engaging the learner, can we have appropriate practices based on context? Will our best practices be “reformatted” to be best practices of learner control?

There were some interesting discussions around terminology in the emerging issues group. First, we had to separate what we saw as trends from what we saw as issues or uncertainties. It is out of the uncertainties that issues will arise. Trends will come and go. What will be the underlying issues created by them...or in isolation of them? How might these issues manifest themselves? One of the tasks of our topic group was to create scenarios based on what we identified as emerging issues and place those scenarios in the year 2015. ►

Accessibility continued on page 10

About the Author

Karen McCall, M.Ed., is the owner of Karlen Communications, Adaptive Technology Consulting and Training Practice. Karlen Communications provides educational and workplace accommodations for people with disabilities, technical writing, consulting on digital document accessibility and usability and hands-on training on adaptive technology. Karen has over 8 years experience in distributed education, adaptive technology assessment and training, and digital document accessibility.

Visit Karen’s website at: Web site: <http://www.iprimus.ca/~martha/table.htm>

ADETA Board of Directors**President**

Sandi Barber
780.471.8417
sandib@nait.ab.ca

Past President

Ingrid Stammer
phone: 403.319.7245
ingrid_stammer@cpr.ca

Vice President

Pattie Mascaro
phone: 403.680.2645
pmascaro@mtroyal.ab.ca

Treasurer

Judy Adams
phone: 403.284.8693
judy.adams@sait.ca

Secretary

Shelia Whitmore
phone: 1.800.661.6490 ext 495
Sheila.Whitmore@lakelandc.ab.ca

Director at Large

Leona Dvorak
phone: 403.284.7374
leona.dvorak@sait.ab.ca

Director at Large

Brigitte Lepine
blepine@bbwebmedia.com

Editor's Message

Camille Jensen

Wow! What a summer it has been. For many of us, we welcomed summer with Interface 2004: e-Learning Magic. Three jam-packed days at SAIT were filled with informative sessions, engaging keynotes and networking galore! The organizing committee and dedicated people at SAIT made a great conference. Many thanks to all involved!

If you were as impressed with the Interface sessions as I was, then this issue is for you. The Fall issue is five articles strong. (The most ever since my tenure as Editor..) Four of the articles are extensions of presentations given at Interface 2004. Conference keynote, Karen McCall takes the cover with an inspired discussion about incorporating accessible design in our e-learning products. The 2004 ADETA Research Award recipient, Jennifer Geary's article on Vicarious Traumatization follows. Jenny's article reveals an intriguing relationship between counsellor and client. Next, Eugene Kowch continues his analogy from his Interface 2004 presentation. Thirty thousand feet may seem like a long way up, but often the best way to gain perspective is by stepping back ... way back. Former ADETA Board member, Christine Marles, shares her insights on employability skills and describes the TOWES (Test for Workplace Essential Skills) project on page 18. Finally, Faye Wiesenbergs encapsulates her practical experience facilitating large online classes in a series of principles.

No issues of *The Distance* would be complete without our regular features. We begin with a message from our brand new President, Sandi Barber, followed by an overview of our new Board. Pages 4 to 9 are filled with lots of exciting news and announcements. As expected, Updates from the Field fill the back pages. I did save room for another commentary in the Sidethought. Jon Baggaley contributes his firmly tongue-in-cheek prediction for new technologies he has coined "f-Learning".

The Fall issue is 28 pages strong. I hope you enjoy perusing it as much as I did compiling it! Your comments, suggestions and submissions for the next issues are always welcome!

Ciao,

Camille

About this Publication

The Distance is published three times a year 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:

The Distance

c/o ADETA
Box 47022
62 Edmonton Centre
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4N1

Editor: Camille Jensen

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

Contents copyright ©ADETA, Alberta Distance Education and Training Association, 2004. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced or duplicated without written permission of ADETA. All rights reserved. Printed in Canada.

Publications Mail Agreement No.
40749535

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

The Magic of Collaboration

Sandi Barber

I've been doing some reading over the summer. Not the type of reading you'd expect to do while sitting on the beach in BC. I didn't finish the latest "whodunit" or a juicy romance story. My reading sounds more like homework. I've been

digging deep into ADETA bylaws, past newsletters, journal articles, and recently received yet unopened textbooks. Crazy as it may sound, it *is* exciting! Being elected your new President is a great honour, but I have so much to learn, and I want to be ready for the challenges ahead.

The Essence of ADETA

The purpose of ADETA is to "actively foster collaboration, cooperation, and understanding among those involved with distance education and training in Alberta.¹ We endeavour as an association to achieve these goals. It isn't always easy.

Collaboration in the past has been carried on formally through professional development activities and informally through individual networking with fellow members. ADETA membership lends itself to networking. I am sure that many of you have contacted other ADETA members in the past for advice, assistance, and/or a nice cup of coffee. It is this spirit of collaboration that allows the ADETA Professional Development (PD) and conference committees to offer ADETA members new and exciting events each year. Our PD and conference committees look forward to your continued contributions for the upcoming year. PD activities in the works will take the form of a one-day Fall and Spring workshop and the 2005 Interface conference. In addition, monthly synchronous PD activities are being planned.

Our profession is always changing. Each of us is constantly learning new tools, facing new challenges, and expending energy and effort to stay current and relevant. Since we reside in geographically diverse areas, staying connected to each other during the year is always challenging. ADETA's PD activities are one way of staying connected. Though offering these events takes effort and expertise, ADETA members have a history of being a **cooperative** bunch of folks. Our new board is looking forward to this spirit of cooperation to fulfill its PD mandate this year.

Is there an opportunity to expand our membership and extend our scope? Our mandate certainly identifies that we aim to **serve those in distance education and training sectors**. How are we doing in this regard? I have always looked forward to and enjoyed our PD events and especially our annual Interface conference. Our small, folksy gatherings and events are, I believe, a well-kept secret. Do we have the will to grow and share our "secret" with others? If you have a passion for helping us answer this question, a new committee on membership may be for you! (See *Call for Committee Member Volunteers* in this newsletter).

Interface 2005

Since the new board has been active, several of you have offered suggestions as to the shape of our next Interface conference. Many ideas hold promise. After careful consideration, I am pleased to announce that Interface 2005 will be hosted by NAIT, June 8 to 10.

Interface 2004

One word describes our conference hosted at SAIT this year: **magic!** Thanks to the planning committees for creating a great event. Special thanks to Leona Dvorak of SAIT as this year's conference chair who fashioned our conference into a profitable event!

Our **keynote speaker**, Karen McCall, demystified the issue of accessibility and usability of distributed education. Karen demonstrated firsthand what usability could look like for online learning. She is truly an inspiration to all of us who aim to make accessibility and usability key criteria in our education offerings. Equally compelling and always interesting was Dr. Rory McGreal and his presentation "*Free Post-secondary Education*." It was a relief to hear Rory's comment: "...if you're not confused, you don't understand."² Whew! I guess I'm OK then. All kidding aside, the presentation was interesting and gave me more things to ponder...

Research Award Granted

ADETA's goal to promote research into distance education practice and theory was met this year by Jennifer Geary who received the ADETA Research award. Check our website for information on Jenny's work.

Annual General Meeting

The ADETA annual general meeting was well attended. I am excited about our new board! We have representation from all corners of our province. Special thanks to those board members who are stepping down this year. We appreciate their hard work and dedication to ADETA. Barb Pearce, Stephen Walker, Christine Marles, Fae Jackson, and Daph Crane will be missed.

Future Direction and Focus

I would like ADETA to begin the creation of a **strategic plan** that will allow the current and future boards to meet medium- to long-term goals. For example, I am very interested in the possibilities of pairing ADETA's conference with another association's conference. To plan and realize a joint conference will take considerably more than a year. Our board will be meeting in Red Deer during the Fall Workshop to begin this process. In addition, I would like to **survey** the membership to learn more about your views and gather feedback as to how ADETA can serve you. Finally, I am interested in exploring opportunities to **enlarge our membership**.

As you can see, we have a lot to do! There won't be much time for beach reading in my immediate future! If you have any comments, suggestions, or just want to chat, please feel free to contact me at 780.471.8417 sandib@nait.ab.ca. ■

Footnotes

¹ ADETA bylaws 2004. <http://www.adeta.org/bylaws.html>

² McGreal, Rory. 2004. *Is free post-secondary possible?* Interface 2004 Conference Proceedings. <http://www.athabasca.ca/html/collab/adeta/interface2004/McGreal%20-%20Free%20rump.ppt>

Announcements

ADETA Board Elected at Annual General Meeting

In the midst of Interface excitement we managed to squeeze in the ADETA Annual General Meeting. Ingrid Stammer chaired the meeting and led us through the voting procedure. We bid farewell to those dedicated outgoing members: Barb Pearce, Stephen Walker, Christine Marles, Fae Jackson, and Daph Crane. Remaining members Ingrid Stammer and Pattie Mascaro are pleased to welcome many new and eager faces!

President:

Sandi Barber
sandib@nait.ab.ca

Sandi Barber has been a faculty member at NAIT for over 15 years. Sandi's career includes adult education experience as a teacher, trainer, instructional designer, project manager and private consultant. Sandi also teaches in the ALIVE Online programme at NAIT and looks forward to designing and facilitating course for the eLearning Program and the University of Calgary in the upcoming year.

Recently Sandi has been involved in the development of curriculum for a variety of programmes including ALIVE Online (www.nait.ab.ca/alive) and Alberta Safety Codes Council. She also recently acted as the project lead for the Mobile Learning Project (www.nait.ab.ca/mobilelearning/). Sandi has been recognized for her accomplishments, most recently as instructional designer on a team that received an award for excellence in online design and delivery by CADE (Canadian Association of Distance Education).

Sandi is active in her community and enjoys cycling, hiking and camping with her family. Sandi is excited about taking on the challenges of the President of ADETA and looks forward to hearing from anyone who has new ideas and opportunities for ADETA to explore.



Past President:

Ingrid Stammer
ingrid_stammer@cpr.ca

Ingrid Stammer is with the Performance Technology Design Group at Canadian Pacific Railway. As a Lead Designer she provides support to CP business units by assessing employee technical skills and performance, then developing, implementing, and evaluating performance improvement initiatives. Current projects include the introduction of several technology mediated training programs.

Ingrid has an extensive background in distance education. She has developed and implemented programs and training



resources for faculty, staff and students at post-secondary institutions as well as in a corporate setting. In recent years she has shifted her focus to Human Performance Technology. Her current interest is in humanizing technology mediated instruction.

Vice President:

Pattie Mascaro
PMascaro@mtroyal.ab.ca

Pattie Mascaro's favourite quote is by Joseph Campbell: "Follow your bliss . . . and doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be." Following her own bliss, Pattie has encountered many open doors. At the University of Windsor, open doors led to a collection of degrees (B.A. and M.A. in English, and a Bachelor of Education).

Another door opened to Newfoundland, where she promoted student learning in literacy and communication (as an Instructor and Literacy Coordinator for Eastern College, and President of the Burin Peninsula Laubach Literacy Council). Her fascination with Educational Technology brought Pattie to her current position as an Instructional Design Consultant in the Academic Development Centre at Mount Royal College. As a member of the Instructional Design Team, Pattie supports faculty in the development of hybrid and online (distance) courses/programs which facilitate flexible learning opportunities for students. Pattie sees her appointment to the ADETA board as another open door, and looks forward to sharing ideas and learning with the ADETA membership.



Treasurer:

Judy Adams
judy.adams@sait.ca

As a manager at SAIT Judy and her team track enrolment activities for distance students, execute marketing activities, and coordinate student and instructor support services. Ms. Adams has more than twenty years experience working in the fields of adult education and human resources in Canada. She has been involved in designing curricula, delivering education and evaluating learning programs. During her career, she has held senior management, project management



and consulting positions, led new service start-ups, and organizational restructurings in both the public and private sectors.

Judy has a Master of Continuing Education (Workplace Learning) degree from the University of Calgary. She is a Certified Human Resource Professional with the Human Resources Institute of Alberta, a member of the Alberta Distance Education and Technology Association, and a member of the Canadian Association of Distance Education.

Secretary:

Sheila Whitmore

Sheila.Whitmore@lakelandc.ab.ca

Sheila Whitmore is the Coordinator of Technology Enhanced Learning at Lakeland College. In this role she leads a talented team of professionals who work with faculty and administration to bring educational technologies into all aspects of the College's programming. She has worked as an instructor, instructional designer, program developer, and project manager in private and post-secondary systems and has a special interest in systems design. Sheila holds a Master of Distance Education degree from Athabasca University.

When not vigorously doing battle with the forces of ignorance, she enjoys meditative napping. She has lived long enough to learn many valuable life lessons. Unfortunately, she has lived long enough to forget most of them, hence her commitment to life long learning.

Sheila has been a member of ADETA for a number of years and is grateful for the contacts and opportunities the organization provides its members. She looks forward to working with the board and members to respond to the changing face of distance education in Alberta.

Director At Large:

Brigitte Lépine

blepine@bbwebmedia.com

Brigitte Lépine has been interested and involved with technology in education for more than ten years now.

Her Master of Education from University of Calgary is almost completed. Her focus has been on Educational Technology. She is interested in online learning environments and distance education. .

She is currently doing instructional design contract work with SAIT, Mount Royal College and Bow Valley College. Aside from this, Brigitte is a trained coder using the Garrison, Anderson & Archer (2000) Community of Inquiry Model to analyse online asynchronous discussions.



Director At Large:

Leona Dvorak

leona.dvorak@sait.ca

Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Dr. Leona Dvorak started her career in adult education at the Regina Plains Community College in the 70s. She designed and taught a series of programs aimed at promoting women, especially Aboriginal women, into new careers in the trades and technologies. Leona believes this was one of the most rewarding jobs she ever held!

By the late 80s she felt a need to enhance her education and decided to obtain a Master's degree in Education. After much research and soul-searching Leona decided to go to graduate school in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Here she gained both her Master's in Education, as well as a Doctorate in Educational Technology.

Dr. Dvorak's areas of research were distance education, adult learning theory, and cross-cultural communications. She graduated with a Doctorate late in 1997 and moved back to Winnipeg to begin working in the northern communities in Manitoba. She ended her time in Manitoba working at the University of Manitoba in the Continuing Education Division, designing courses for distance delivery.

Since she owns a horse and fancy herself a bit of a cowgirl, she moved to Alberta where Leona is employed as Instructional Designer in the Centre for Instructional Technology and Development at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. ■



Did you miss the Annual General Meeting?



- We reviewed our finances.
- We reviewed our membership.
- We reviewed our by-laws.
- We established new membership fees.
- We presented the Research Award.
- We elected a new President and Board.

Check the ADETA website for meeting minutes and bylaw revisions!

www.adeta.org

Fall Workshop: Live and Hands On

Red Deer College
November 17, 2004

Fall is just around the corner! Yes, it's the season of new semester excitement, dappled leaves, trick or treating, and networking at the ADETA Fall Workshop. This year's Fall Workshop will be hosted by

Red Deer College on November 17, 2004.

The ADETA Fall Workshop focuses on networking, and this is a wonderful opportunity for both experienced and 'newbie' distance educators and administrators to explore developments in the field.

There are two options for registration this year. You may mail in/fax the registration form below, or register online via the ADETA website!

If you need more information about the ADETA Fall Workshop, please contact Sheila Whitmore at Sheila.Whitmore@lakelandc.ab.ca

Call for Presentations

Proposals are being accepted for the ADETA Fall Workshop to be held at **Red Deer College on November 17, 2004.**

This year's theme is **Live and Hands On**. The workshop will provide an opportunity for practitioners, neophytes and support staff to discuss and share practices, new technologies, successes, and problems in delivering effective distance learning – with a focus on real time, synchronous technologies and practical applications.

Topics include, but are not limited to the following areas:

- Promoting student engagement in a distance learning environment
 - Tips and tricks in using real-time, synchronous distance delivery
 - Strategies to combat burnout and fatigue when teaching in a distance learning environment
 - Creating relevant practical assignments for distance and hybrid courses, and developing appropriate assessment strategies
 - Hands on technology sessions for workshop participants
- Workshop sessions should be a minimum of 45 minutes in length. There are opportunities for longer sessions if required.

To submit a proposal, please provide the following information:

- Session Title
- Session Format (Presentation or Hands-on session)
- Session Objective
- Content: In 300 words or less, describe the purpose and outline the activities for the session.
- Media Requirements
- Contact Person: Name, address, phone number, email
- Session Presenters: Name, address, phone number, email

DEADLINE for proposals: **September 30, 2004.**

Submit proposals by email to

Sheila.Whitmore@lakelandc.ab.ca

Watch the ADETA listserv and website for updates and information about workshop sessions and registration. ■

Fall Workshop Registration Form

Name:

ADETA

Member: \$60.00

Non

Member: \$80.00

Institution or Organization:

Payment:

Cheque please make cheques payable to ADETA

P.O. Number _____

Address:

including city,
province and
postal code

Mail Registration to:

ADETA Fall Workshop 2004

Centre for Instructional Technology and Development

MB027C - SAIT

1301-16 Avenue NW

Calgary, AB T2M 0L4

ATTN: JUDY ADAMS

Interface 2004: e-Learning Magic It Was Lots of Fun...With More to Come!



**for your help with
Interface 2004!**

...to the Conference Organizing (and sub) Committee(s)

- including Judy Adams, Dean Caplan, Randell Cater, Sheila Donaldson, Leona Dvorak, Bev Grigo, Camille Jensen, Anne Larson, Pattie Mascaro, Helen Siemens, Ingrid Stammer, and Jim Zimmer.
- together with the sub-committee members including Lesley Baker, Wei Chen, Carol Guay, Jeff Hamilton, Jocelyn Kabatoff, Colleen Kawalilak, Chee Lau, Christine Marles, Benny Rao, John Rauchert, Pat Rokosh, Robert Twitchin, Norm Vaughan and Christina White.

...to Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

- for hosting Interface 2004.
- Centre for Instructional Technology and Development for the design, layout, editing and printing of conference publications.
- Centre for Instructional Technology and Development for the design, development, hosting and maintenance of the Interface 2004 website.
- SAIT Facilities for providing classroom, banquet and meeting space.

... and special thanks to

- the vendors who set up booths and provided gifts.
- to our contributors including Angel Light Candles & Gifts, Canada eTraining Hub Inc., D & L Jones, Eclipse Wireworks, Insights Calgary, Maris Mosenko, Thompson Canada Ltd.
- Castle Financial Group Ltd.
- our keynote speakers, Karen McCall and Dr. Rory McGreal.
- all the presenters.
- all the participants who came to learn, share and network. ■

Message from Conference Chair

Leona Dvorak

It just seems like yesterday we were attending our great conference sessions!

The conference organizing committee chairs and their committee members deserve many kudos on behalf of our membership and conference attendees. Thank you committee chairs Pattie Mascaro, Dean Caplan, Jim Zimmer, Randell Cater, Helen Siemens, Anne Larson, Judy Adams, Bev Grigo and Camille Jensen for your extraordinary efforts in making this conference a success! Thank you, Ingrid Stammer, for the broad experience, background and knowledge you brought to all of our meetings. This committee was a great pleasure to work with as conference chair. People doing what they said they would do, when they said they would do it!

On a more serious vein, the conference organizing committee members made themselves available for an entire year given very demanding workloads at work and full lives at home. The attention and care you demonstrated towards your volunteer commitment was greatly appreciated! Thank you!

Our committee has documented our experience as conference planners so we will be able to share this information with the Interface 2005 planning committee. We look forward to our 2005 conference and will assist in any way we can. ■

Congratulations Jennifer Geary! Research Award Recipient



Jenny Geary was awarded the 2004 ADETA Research Award during the AGM at Interface 2004.

Jenny was present to accept her award. She graciously thanked the

members of the research award committee along with the ADETA Board and membership for their ongoing support.

Jenny Geary resides in Canmore and has completed her doctoral studies entirely online. She plans to complete her PhD in Social Science later this year.

Jenny's deserving paper is published in this issue of the newsletter. Be sure to give it a read! ■



Interface 2005

**NAIT, Edmonton, Alberta
June 8, 9 and 10**

**For more information contact
Sandi Barber
President, ADETA
p. 780.471.8417
e. sandib@nait.ab.ca**



Activate your ADETA Membership:

Contribute to a Committee

We are looking for eager and willing assistance on a number of ADETA committees. Have you wanted to see ADETA evolve or change? Now is your chance to get involved and contribute to one of our committees! Time commitments vary with each committee. Contact us for more information!

Interface 2005: NAIT

Join the Organizing Committee for Interface 2005! This year, our annual conference will be in Edmonton at NAIT. You can be involved in planning and coordinating all aspects of the conference. No matter your availability, we can find a place for you in the planning excitement.

To join the team or get more information, contact Sandi Barber at sandib@nait.ab.ca or by phone at **780.471.8417**.

Fall Workshop

The Fall Workshop (November 17) at Red Deer College is soon approaching. If you're planning to attend the workshop, perhaps you could help too.

Contact Shelia Whitmore for more information at Sheila.Whitmore@lakelandc.ab.ca or by phone at **1.800.661.6490 ext 495**.

Professional Development

If you have lots of ideas for monthly PD Sessions, think about joining the ADETA PD Committee! The ADETA PD Committee coordinates monthly Professional Development sessions for ADETA members. These sessions are delivered using distance learning/distributed learning technologies and models.

Duties for Committee members include:

- Brainstorm ideas for monthly PD sessions in a collaborative context with other Committee members.
- Help to coordinate guest speakers and/ or activities for monthly PD sessions.
- Coordinate/ moderate at least one monthly PD session (including a 10 minute "dress rehearsal" a week prior to the session).

If you are interested in joining the ADETA PD Committee, please send an email indicating your interest to Pattie Mascaro at adeta_pd@yahoo.ca.

Membership Committee

Are you creative? Do you like to think outside the box? This team is for you! This new committee will explore the opportunities that exist for increasing the size and scope of the ADETA membership.

Contact Sandi Barber with your ideas: sandib@nait.ab.ca or by phone at **780.471.8417**. ■



Fee Increase, April 1, 2005



**Renew your membership now...
Annual Membership Fee Increase
Effective April 1, 2005**

**Individual Members: \$40.00
Student Members: \$15.00**

Until March 31, 2005, you can renew your membership for only **\$35.00** (individuals) or **\$15.00** (students). 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!

Register online NOW at: www.adeta.org

Thought Provoking Themes at Upcoming ADETA PD Sessions

Stay tuned to the ADETA website and listserv for updates on this year's Monthly PD Sessions. Each of our sessions will be built around the following thought-provoking themes:

- “Eureka! That Works!” – Sessions in this theme will focus on best practices / practical tips for teaching in Distance Education. Speakers will share their “Eureka!” experiences about various aspects of Distance Education.
- “Hot Topics” – Sessions in this theme will focus on topics of current interest in the field of Distance Education. These topics may include new technologies, new approaches to teaching in Distance Education, exploring the latest “buzzwords”, current research in Distance Education, new developments in the Alberta Distance Education scene, etc.
- “Hot Debates” – Sessions in this theme will explore hot and/or controversial topics relevant to Distance Education, in the form of debates. Multiple perspectives of the question will be represented by a panel of two or more speakers.
- “Cultural Exchange” – Sessions in this theme will explore Distance Education outside of the Alberta framework. These sessions may include work by Alberta Distance Educators in a collaborative context with those outside the province or country, or guest speakers from other areas of Canada or the world about their work in Distance Education.
- “Wildcard” – Wildcard sessions or activities do not fit into the above categories. They may include special events, experimental approaches to sessions, etc.

If you have ideas for monthly PD Sessions, please email the ADETA PD Committee c/o adeta_pd@yahoo.ca. ■

AOC Online Learning Symposium 2004 Learn, Think, Change

November 2, 3 and 4
Mayfield Inn, Edmonton, Alberta



The Alberta Online Consortium in partnership with Learning Technologies Branch of Alberta Learning is taking a leadership role in the development of resources to support delivery of online learning in Alberta.

The eighth annual Online Learning Symposium: Learn, Think, Change will explore the impact online learning has on teaching and learning practice. Sessions will focus on models of delivery and development that provide choices to K-12, post-secondary and workplace learners that motivate, excite and positively influence learner outcomes. Practical sessions, research sharing and panel discussions will be included in a program that will be rich in an analysis and understanding of online and distributed learning models that are meeting the needs of diverse learner groups and learner needs. Learn, think and change might be argued as the post-modern approach to living in the twenty-first century and this Symposium will provide an opportunity for educators and relevant stakeholders to discuss, better understand and integrate philosophies and practices that are congruent with the current global context.

The Online Learning Symposium is directed at teachers, administrators and post-secondary instructors who are currently operating online programs and those who may be considering teaching online. The event will begin with an evening reception November 2 and continues November 3 and November 4, 2004. The Symposium will be held at the Mayfield Inn and Suites, 16615 -109 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

The registration fee is \$235.00 plus \$16.45 GST for a total of \$251.45. The registration fee for non-members is \$290.00 plus 20.30 GST for a total of \$310.30. The registration fee includes the evening reception, two continental breakfasts, two luncheons, and access to our trade show. Information concerning membership in Alberta Online Consortium is available on our website at www.albertaonline.ab.ca.

To register online, view a tentative schedule, or for additional information please see the Online Learning Symposium website at: www.albertaonline.ab.ca. ■

Accessibility continued from page 1

Karen McCall

First we attempted to determine the difference between distance, distributed, open and eLearning. Consensus found that open learning invoked the types of learning and knowledge acquisition compatible with our goals and emerging issues. For almost everyone in my group, open learning meant barrier-free learning...the ability of a learner to learn how they wanted, when they wanted and what they wanted. In terms of my interest, this provides a perfect scaffold for discussing universal access to digital environments and information. By creating digital environments that are inherently accessible to people using adaptive technology, these environments are most likely to be accessible to people using handheld devices, traditional telephones and devices we can't see on the horizon yet. Inherent universal design of digital environments and information will also assist people with disabilities living in developing countries achieve knowledge based goals simultaneously with the rest of the population. There won't be a lag time or decades of advocacy for basic rights to learn for people with disabilities in developing countries.

One of the issues I've identified separate from my work in Dunedin, but as a result of it, is that people with disabilities have been "optionalized" out of learning and employment opportunities. The premise and philosophy of those creating standards and guidelines of accessibility in digital environments and for digital based information is that access to these opportunities for people with disabilities is an option decided upon by designers and developers. If designers and developers choose not to implement universal design principles, or accessibility for people with disabilities, they are under no obligation to justify this discrimination. The optionalization of people with disabilities is disguised as "creative license" and thus a designers right to choose to discriminate.

As a person with a disability I don't have the "option" of paying rent, buying groceries, or achieving learning centric goals in my life. If I want to "survive" I need a place to stay, food in my stomach and a level of education that will let me find work that is hopefully meaningful to me. I have the same "franchise-ment" as anyone else in the society in which I live.

There are two levels of disenfranchisement that occur in digital environments and with digital based information. One is the decision someone makes that "people with disabilities won't want to learn that or take this course." Are these types of decisions arbitrarily made for other student populations? When an institution, department or instructor designs a course, is the first statement: "well, no woman will want to take this course." Is the course then designed to prohibit access to women? Then why would it be acceptable to begin with this premise for people with disabilities?

The banner example is a course in brain surgery. Imagine someone who is blind wanting to take a course in brain surgery! What if that person only wants to understand the processes involved? What if that person has a broader vision

of brain surgery and could be instrumental in developing a better technique or even surgical instruments? Aren't there checks, balances, and exams/evaluations that students need to pass to gain credit and acknowledgement of successful completion? The reality is that this extreme example provides the base barrier to learning opportunities that are not at that end of the subject matter spectrum. There are a plethora of subjects between basket weaving and brain surgery.

Once we've overcome the attitudinal prejudice that there are only certain subjects we might want to learn, the next barrier is to the digital environments that house the digital information on those topics, and that digital information itself. This extends far beyond a learning environment into the area of employment. Employment opportunities are now almost all housed in digital environments whether they are off the shelf or in-house digital environments. By giving permission to people developing these tools, environments and digitally based information to optionalize people with disabilities, we are denying intelligent, capable people of making meaningful contributions to their society and civilization.

As a technology based society, we reached the point where we could create accessible digital environments several years ago. We've spent the past few years enhancing the standards and guidelines of accessible and usable digital environments and information as our technological capabilities evolved. Because we did embrace technology as part of our learning and working life, we also embraced the fact that it will always be evolving and "morphing."

Why then, are the students who are graduating from programming and multimedia programs not even aware of these evolutions? Why are we still teaching them archaic technology skills? Why are we not preparing them for advancements in technology, preferring rather, to try and keep technology under our firm control and not letting it evolve. In effect, we are denying these students the creative opportunities to think outside of the monitor. We are preserving barriers to technological evolution. Colleges and universities are littered with proof of concept projects around universal design and improved access to digital environments and information. We've proven that the concept will work and yet we put that evolutionary technology on a shelf and let it rot.

By it's very nature, technology will evolve. As the population ages, as students demand more freedom to learn when they want, what they want and how they want, access to digital environments will change. CITT's and LMS' will have to reinvent themselves if they want to remain part of a students' learning process. As educators and employers we can't afford to optionalize people with disabilities out of learning or working opportunities. The foundation of universal design and universal instructional design provides the scaffolding for the liberation of digital environments and digitally based information so that anyone, with or without a disability can choose their tools and mode of learning. ■

Emerging Frontiers for Distance Education and Online Support

Jennifer Geary

The spirit and objectives of the Alberta Distance Education and training Association, such as to network with other professionals and to provide with them with information about distance initiatives, guided me in my continuing research. I applaud the efforts of instructional technologists; counsellors and distance educators who have at times collaborated to provide the tools that I needed to develop an international study. It is important to develop technologies and to have the vision as to why, when, how and where to deploy them. Distance technologies have the potential to improve the quality of life for the vulnerable in our civil societies. As a PhD student who lives in Alberta distance technologies enabled me to connect with my supervisors in Australia. The topic for my dissertation is the vicarious traumatization of professionals who are involved with domestic violence situations in our justice systems. The methods that I applied for this study involved two telephone based individual interviews and a thirty-item questionnaire. The interviews involved one and a half hours to two hours with each participant.

As this study unfolded participants had an opportunity to reflect upon challenges and solutions to limit work related stress and trauma. By identifying the challenges associated with vicarious traumatization and domestic violence participants, my mentors and I were able to build solutions to enhance human resources in our justice systems. Miley, O'Melia & DuBois (1998, p. 39) mention that in relationships people may impact and be dependent upon others who are members of similar systems. In my thesis I presented the life situations, knowledge and understanding of nineteen participants. I investigated how professionals in justice systems comprehend and mark their involvement with the area of domestic violence. Nineteen participants from Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand were represented in this study. The disciplines that were represented included counselling, psychology, social work, nursing, law, law enforcement and education. This study was not beset by challenges associated with time and geographical location. Distance technologies were a tool that enabled me to interview professionals from multiple disciplines in four countries.

I conducted a thematic analysis of the data. I analysed how gender and culture may have an impact upon professional practices in justice systems. At times professionals may feel at risk and ineffective due to a lack of resources. Professionals may fear the consequences if they admit to themselves and others that they are experiencing trauma perhaps as a result of their involvement with justice systems. If professionals lose hope this may undermine the quality of their practice with clients. Locke, Spirduso & Silverman (2000, p. 241) refer to

teachers and indicate that if they do not have "self efficacy" this may deplete the quality of their work particularly with disadvantaged persons. One counsellor from New Zealand was particularly interested in the concept of online counselling and virtual communities. To provide an overview of the issues the case study of the counsellor appears next.

1. Joanne

1.1 The Participant

Joanne has a multitude of life experiences that may help her to develop rapport with her clients in her work as a corrections officer. She describes that growing up in her family of origin was "lonely, scary, sad, different, frightened with little sense of security". She has been a stepmother to three children and has a biological daughter who is now a teenager. Joanne has experienced poverty and challenges in her personal relationships. She reflects "From the counselling I have done for myself, I understand the base for the destructive behaviour that I have gone through." Joanne indicates that she has become involved in negative behaviour and has suffered from the aggressive conduct of others towards her.

1.2 Professional Well Being

Joanne becomes involved in personal counselling and has a supportive husband. She makes sure that she gets plenty of sleep. She refers to her current husband and states, "He has had a great impact on my self esteem and self image". Joanne enjoys walking with her husband. She also enjoys spending time with her teenage daughter. Joanne comments that her daughter is "wonderful. She's very good at grounding me and she has a wonderful sense of humour." Joanne has a supportive supervisor who she speaks with "twice a month". She obtains support from her peers. Joanne finds that her "boss" does not seem to respect her in part because of her gender and age. Her boss is a male and is younger than her. When Joanne becomes emotionally upset she turns the music on in her car and sings "out of tune" with the rhythm. At times Joanne likes to spend time alone and reads or has coffee at a cafeteria. Joanne would like to access life long learning through distance education.

1.3 Involvement with Justice Systems

Joanne works in a Women's and a Men's Prisons. She writes, "The men have a maximum muster of 420 and the women have a maximum muster of 52 inmates. The women are almost all on remand, waiting to go to court or for sentencing". Others who do become involved with gangs may seek to become part of a "family". The next main ethnic populations that Joanne works with are Pacific Islanders and Europeans. Joanne is involved with

Emerging Frontiers continued from page 11

Jenny Geary

female inmates who have been sentenced and who may need to appear before a court or “the parole board”. The male inmates that she works with may be on remand or have been sentenced. Joanne works with offenders from “low to medium” high risk. As a counsellor Joanne receives referrals of clients from “custodial staff, the medical staff, the courts, the parole boards” and/or self-referrals. She mentions that she often works with clients who have experienced the “end result” of domestic violence. Joanne states, “The vision statement of the Department of Corrections is [reduce reoffending]. As domestic violence is such an underlying factor in people being in prison, I see my role as helping to reduce this issue. I have found that almost all of my clients have experienced or are the perpetrators of domestic violence, although this may not be the presenting issue.”

1.4. Vicarious Traumatization

Joanne defines vicarious traumatization as being “where the counsellor is traumatized by the experiences of the client, i.e. they experience the trauma second-hand. In this case, it is as if they were experiencing the events that the client is describing and experience trauma as a result”. She indicates that custodial staff may experience vicarious traumatization “without even knowing what it is”. To limit and to prevent vicarious traumatization Joanne negotiated to have “one paid supervision per month. However, my boss has no idea why this is necessary”. Joanne is mindful that counter transference may occur in her work with inmates. She mentions that at times her involvement with inmates may contribute to her become “very sad or very angry”. Joanne works through these emotions to maintain her effectiveness as a counsellor. She states, “At the end of the day, I sometimes feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the problem and the social implications of it”.

1.5 Domestic Violence

Joanne mentions that domestic violence can occur between “women to men, young to aged and vice versa, women to women”. She indicates that offences that are committed by women are increasing in New Zealand. Joanne said that there is little relationship between “socio-economic status” and domestic violence issues. Joanne states, “I believe that one of the foundations of domestic violence is that of power and control”. She indicates that often men have used threats and intimidation to exert power over women and children. Joanne mentions that most of her clients have been shaped by a “generational cycle of domestic violence that may span 4-5 generations. Substance abuse is the major contributing factor and [“P” pure met amphetamine] is rising as the most common substance of abuse”. Joanne said that she mainly applies a psycho-educational and cognitive approach in her work with inmates. For example, she may ask “Is this what you want for

your children? How would you wish to bring your children up?” She mentions, “I have to work in a very cognitive way as my clients are often shifted to another prison or get out of jail”. Joanne undertakes reflective listening with clients who are imprisoned. Joanne communicates with inmates in a “soft voice” and applies short silences to develop reflection. She notes that a number of clients who are involved in domestic violence situations have inadequate “relationship skills”.

Joanne indicates that the women inmates seem to respect her more than they do male psychiatrists. She mentions that some women who are imprisoned have found their time in the correctional institution to be a “relief”. She indicates that a female inmate who she works with said to her “It’s such a relief to come in here and to know that when I go to bed at night I’m safe till the morning”. As there are few institutions for women in New Zealand women may be imprisoned far away from their families. Women offenders in institutions may not be able to have access to their children because of cost cutting in the area of corrections. At times Joanne provides clients that are about to be released with referrals to helping professionals. Joanne mentions that if there is continued violence in the home that she may work with social workers to limit that violence.

Joanne believes that one of her roles to reduce domestic violence is to develop “awareness” about the issues associated with violence. She states, “I also educate to empower them to make choices in their lives – whether to accept, better manage or not be an offender of domestic violence”. Joanne works hard to encourage inmates to trust her and this helps to develop therapeutic relationships. At times she will self disclose to develop rapport with clients. She states, “I have never disclosed that I have been the victim of domestic violence with a male inmate”. Joanne indicates that when she develops rapport with male inmates they tend to be “protective towards her”. She helps inmates to develop “self esteem” and self-confidence. Joanne mentions that she may undertake anger management with male inmates. When inmates work through their anger they may come to realise that often they are both perpetrators and victims of domestic violence. As children offenders may have been abused and violated by their carers. Joanne encourages offenders to consider how patterns that they have learned in their families of origin and/or in their relationships with significant others may contribute to their destructive behaviours.

1.6 The Challenges

Joanne indicates that professionals may be at risk in correctional systems due to understaffing. This understaffing has been partly attributable to a reduction of funding in the area of corrections. She indicates that cultures in correctional institutions can become quite insular. She explains that staff that have been with the institution for quite some time “have no contact with anybody

else other than family outside of the prison environment. Their whole world becomes the prison environment and the people that they relate to are their fellow officers and I think that's how they build their support networks." Joanne indicates that health care professionals in corrections get paid less than in the private sector.

Joanne is concerned about the blaming attitudes that custodial staff may have towards victims of violence. She indicates that staff may believe that victims of violence have "brought" domestic violence upon themselves. Joanne explains that staff may blame women victims because they perceive that victims allow the violence to continue by remaining in abusive relationships. She states, "Interestingly enough, this is a view held by both male and female custodial staff, but the female staff are generally more outspoken and less sympathetic". Joanne remembers that at the correctional institution a male inmate assaulted one pregnant woman visitor. Apparently the inmate was angry with his female partner because she had missed a visit with him. The police charged the inmate but the woman felt too intimidated to become involved with the proceedings against the offender. The custodial staff thought that the woman was "weak" and "stupid" in not pressing charges against the offender. Joanne was concerned that the staff did not seem to take the time to reflect why the woman may be involved with the inmate and why she "refused" to take affirmative action against him. She explains,

"that there's a culture that's evolved specially in young guards that have been a long time in the system. They are very cynical if a prisoner requests to see a counsellor, obviously he's a weakling and they ask [why would you want to do that mate?]. The cynicism was in themselves, which they developed as a coping system for an employment that does not recognise their needs as well. So in lots of ways the whole environment is pretty toxic I believe".

Joanne indicates that inmates need to transition from correctional institutions to return to their families and the communities in which they live. Support for women on conditional release seems to be inadequate in New Zealand. Joanne states – "Quite often that's why they end up being in prison because that's familiar territory for them now. They've become institutionalized. James is particularly concerned that there are few resources for first time offenders when they leave the institution. Inmates may experience anxiety associated with being released from the institution. Inmates generally only receive "three hundred and sixty dollars" to help them to adapt to life in the community.

1.7 Key Solutions

Joanne believes that there is a role for virtual communities although she is not currently a member of one. She believes that virtual communities can be a tool for professionals to share their "experiences" She states, "Every day Jenny I hear stories that are incredibly sad or incredibly frightening and I my [clients are my best teachers] but it would be so helpful to share that with other professionals working in the same industry to normalize it a bit." She suggests that virtual communities could help to develop informational resources and relational understanding between different professionals in many parts of the world. She mentions that virtual communities could assist her to know what other professionals do for "self care" and their coping strategies.

Joanne indicates that online counselling "would be very helpful but it would be a totally new concept in New Zealand. There is no online counselling so I think that it would be great." She indicates that online counselling could help her to not feel so helpless when inmates and offenders on conditional release "plead" with her to help them. Joanne states – "I am often pleaded with miss can I see you when I go home? Will you work with my family and me? To be able to do that online would be a wonderful service." Joanne suggests that if she could extend her presence as a virtual counsellor to her clients that she would experience less work related stress. She is concerned that inmates who are released from the institution can face danger associated with abstaining from gang related activities. Joanne said that when she cannot be there to assist inmates she feels as though she may let them down. She states – "For me personally I feel like in a way the system and therefore me has let this person down." It would appear that by omitting to intervene to help inmates in a constructive manner "I see that they are in a way allowing it to continue". Joanne believes that there is a clear role for online supervision to prevent and limit the effects of work related stress." Joanne said that she has "wept" and "laughed" with her face-to-face supervisor. She believes that supervision whether it is face-to-face, online or via mixed mode delivery is a necessary adjunct to practice.

Joanne mentions that if inmates have inadequate legal representation or knowledge of the law they may seek guidance from more experienced inmates. She indicates that inmates do try to advise their less legally informed peers about who may or may not be competent lawyers. These more legally informed inmates might help their peers to prepare court documents. Joanne states, "So there's an internal legal help system that's quite informal but works quite effectively". She believes that this informal system needs to be strengthened by professionals who are knowledgeable about the law. Joanne mentions that due to a gap in law ►

A View from 30,000 Feet:

Perspectives on Distributed Learning Strategic Planning Today

Dr. Eugene G. Kowch

In this article, the author presents general and specific issues influencing public and private sector distributed learning (DL) leadership today, focusing on planning procedures for today's networked organization reality. After introducing the global (macro) policy issues pressing DL planning processes today, the work references an interprovincial study of educational technology leadership influence networks and planners to demonstrate one way to define and conceptualize planning processes in the more complex, networked DL organizations and collaborations.

It's budget time. You need to cost your distance learning projects again this year, and you begin the process of accounting for DL ventures by predicting and proposing budget items for the future. Are you *primarily* focused on funds, technology, employees, your department, your organizational plans, the leadership team, or on learners? Perhaps you focus on the *term* of your plans and on the viability of the projects? Of course our planning foci are both subjective and context-dependent in a more complex, networked world today. One thing is certain. Distance learning planners need to improve our DL planning capacity as the world changes around us, and there is no time to lose (Elek, 2004). The first step is to know where you are in your planning process in order to separate out the strategic plans (*what* to do) from organizational plans (*how* to do) (Figure 1: Norris, 1991).

Distance Learning projects require special educational technology leadership. Do we really consider the wide and narrow scope of factors influencing out projects or institutions – including those issues that are outside our functional grasp? Of late, significant global, national and local level policy research identifies a need for improved education technology management and leadership (OECD, 2003, p. 14; Bennis et al, 2003; LaGrange, 2004). DL exists more often in a socially and technologically networked world where all sorts of co-de-

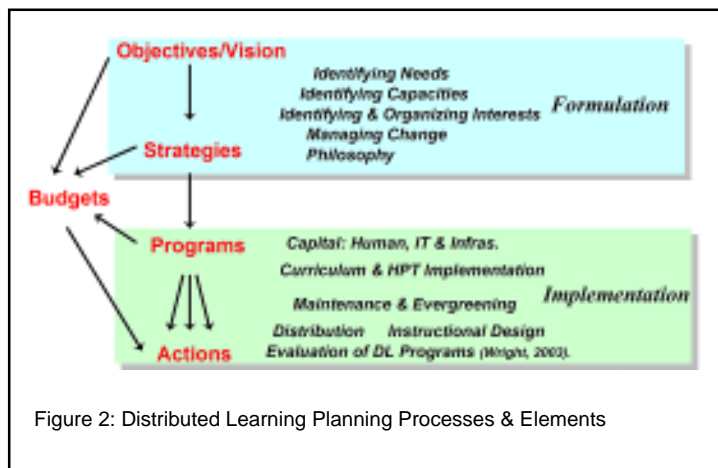


Figure 2: Distributed Learning Planning Processes & Elements

pendent interests, issues and variable stakeholder perceptions of institutions directly impact DL training and learning project or program outcomes. Educational technologists, including DL leadership, lead (or need to lead) at the planning table – a place where educational technologists and DL experts are all too rarely seated (Kowch, 2003). DL planners need a wide angle view (30,000 feet perspective) of new planning process and issues, and need the capacity to zoom in and take a closer view of sweeping and local issues and processes impacting how our DL projects planned and evaluated by policy makers and educational technology leaders. Figure 2 demonstrates a common DL planning model process, modified to note plan formulation and implementation elements for DL planners.

The first step toward DL planning is to understand the “big” global or macro issues to get a clear vision of factors that are influencing your DL plans, much as airport planners consider weather, changing security issues and fuel cost projections.

Current Global (Macro) Level DL Policy Issues: The Jet Stream, Your Airline and Conditions on the Ground.

A good snapshot of global DL related policy issues comes from the high level OECD policy and technology leadership studies (2003). Similar issues arise from recent studies at the national and provincial levels (Daigle, McGraw & Tait for CMEC, 2003; Advisory Committee for Learning for CMEC, 2001). The global issues they define are:

1. The *digital divide*
2. The need to *establish lifelong learning and e-learning societies*
3. The need to *strengthen managerial and employee training*
4. The need to *integrate resources and promote human capacity building*

These issues span nations and states. The *digital divide* – is a metaphor for the difference between distance learning opportunity realized and made available across countries, nations and hemispheres. Howlett states that policy leaders and planners take one

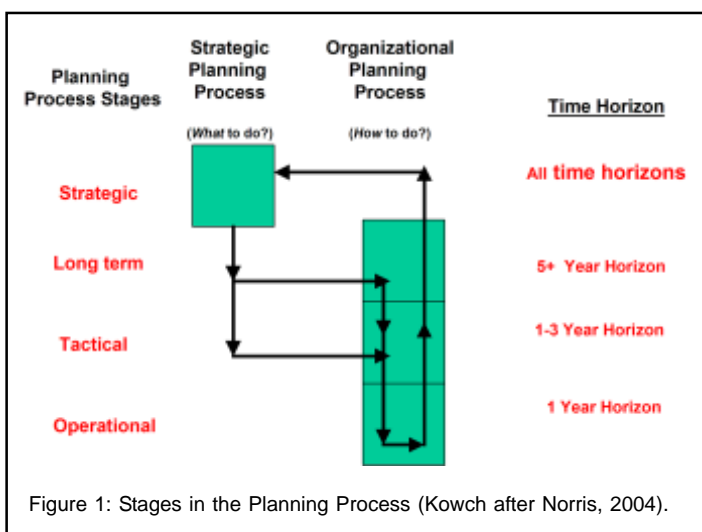


Figure 1: Stages in the Planning Process (Kowch after Norris, 2004).

of two approaches – economic or political (Howlett, 2003) – it is possible that slower moving, macro issues like the divide, factored into your DL plans, will help your long term planning success? Policy experts think so. How do we know if our long range DL plans are influenced by these (macro) digital divide issues? Slowinski (2000) offers some indicators: (1) vacillation about DL credential provision across your learner base, (2) perceived DL design flaws relating to access are a part of your planning reality, and (3) you (as planner) are pressed by the perception that there might be unequal learning opportunity presented by your Distributed learning operations. To refer to the metaphor in this paper, digital divide issues will affect your aircraft as either tail or head winds.

Establishing *lifelong learning and e-learning societies* is a macro policy environment constraint that is shaping World Bank, North American and European government education and training policy (and funding instruments) (Halpin, 2003; Judge, 2004). Elek (2004) indicates that there is mounting pressure for DL planners to:

1. Convert education system planning from supply to consumer centered systems,
2. Create learning networks that add value to the entire community,
3. Educate the civil service for DL policy/planning leadership,
4. Support collaborative skill development within related IT (information technology) sectors (provincially and nationally),
5. Provide joint training for managers and leaders across fields (business, engineering, education, securities, law and HRD,
6. Facilitate coherent quality standards and professional qualifications,
7. Facilitate achievement standards,
8. Facilitate the opening of education and training facilities which transcend national boundaries (Elek, 2004).

Applying these issues to our airline planning metaphor, as planners we will need not only to have great flight routes along the jet stream along with global investment strategies, we will need also to consider that our clients (learners in the DL case) must be a more integral part of the planning process. We must also plan to concurrently build new (performance) capacity for everyone running the airline (and its partners). If we take an economic policy approach, we will likely plan focusing on market capture and proprietary systems which could lead to reduced innovation and sector devolution (Carr, 2004). If we take a political policy approach, we will need to know more about how people define and organize their interests in a networked, more interrelated world (Kowch, 2003; Barabasi, 2003; Rhodes, 1996). The choice is ours.

Other significant global issues include the need to *strengthen managerial and employee training*, and to *integrate resources to promote human resource capacity building* (Elek, 2004). For example, more specific needs analysis will be needed for DL training

(Kaufman, 2003); and the old focus on productivity will shift to a focus on people and creativity in increasingly streamlined organizations where most of the training planning will occur via outsourced consultant organizations – organizations comprised mostly of today's in-house organization training experts (Coltereyhan, 2003). DL planners will need more business acumen and knowledge management skill because the needs of lifelong learners will be contingent upon a clear alignment of plans involving more than one department (Barron, 2003).

National Level DL Policy Issues

Today, national and provincial level policy issues affecting DL map well to global issues. For example, in the CMEC “Framework for the Future” (2003) report, significant issues for Canadian DL planners are:

1. A need for pan-Canadian educational performance indicators at all levels of education,
2. A new focus on distance education, particularly in post secondary education,
3. Development of new linkages and partnerships with students, educators and all stakeholders – and with business sectors and federal civil service departments,
4. A focus on the distribution of wealth among nations in the world – where the importance of education is considered higher than before.

The national action plan for DL from 2001 to 2006 suggested an improvement in DL quality, collaborative funding changes, improved accessibility for learners, and a pan-Canadian Charter or synergy for DL (Advisory Committee for Online Learning, 2001). As we descend from 30,000 feet to the national level at 20,000 feet, it is clear that national issues are in harmony with global issues, and that the theme of inter-national and inter-agency, inter-education institution collaboration, especially at the post secondary level, will be part of the policy environment future for some time.

Provincial Level DL policy issues

At the provincial level (10,000 feet) Alberta Learning and the government had defined, collaboratively, issues as inputs to K-12 and post secondary education plans:

1. High quality learning experiences,
2. Excellence in learner achievement,
3. Well-prepared learners for lifelong learning, the world of work, and citizenship,
4. A highly responsive and responsible ministry.

The themes or issues of **quality, lifelong learners**, inter-organizational **collaboration** and **accountability** processes, along with the need for **highly skilled DL planners** stay with us as we “descend” from macro to consider micro level policy environment issues & tactics. Sooner or later, “ground conditions” matter too! Micro planning processes such as ►

A View from 30,000 Feet continued from page 15

Dr. Eugene G. Kowch

departmental level DL planning and budgeting are beyond the scope of this paper, however by illustration, the author presents results from a study of higher education (educational technology) policy development (Kowch, 2003) where actual policy planners defined, organized and implemented policy based on their interest organization – including, in some cases, the macro issues we discuss within innovative policy leadership/planning networks.

New Planning Processes for Distributed Learning in a Complex World: New Systems, New Airspaces, New instruments

Today, DL planners rarely conceive, develop or implement a DL project within a ‘closed’ department, division, or organization (Kaufman, 2003). This means that we lead projects that must support the organization toward its goals at the same time as delivering quality learning experiences (Prusak, 1998; Wenger, 2002). Emerging co-dependencies due to partnering mean that we must have ways to understand interest organization (*what matters to who*) in order to get things done (Kowch, 2003; Howlett, 2003).

Policy Networks and Policy Communities: A framework for description and Analysis

Policy networks are collections of people who share a common interest, and who coalesce from the policy community (of interest in an issue) to respond to the issue (and to make plans) (Atkinson & Coleman, 1992). By studying who is connected to whom, their relations and their (global, micro) issue or interest organization method and capacities, DL leaders can understand what really goes on, not what the org flow charts depicts. High capacity networks have one common interest, can generate information to unanswered questions, can rise above self interest, and can generate responses (plans, budgets, projects or policy code) as a response to a DL issue (Coleman & Skogstad, 1990). An example of a high capacity planning network is the Alberta network, (Figure 3), where one interest drew members of the network together from across

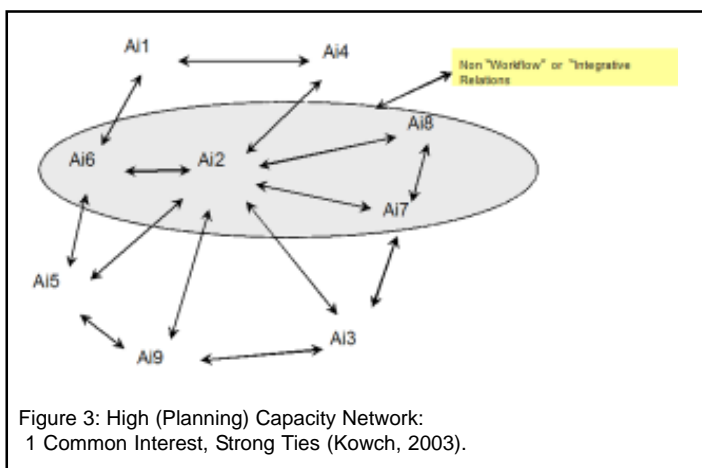


Figure 3: High (Planning) Capacity Network: 1 Common Interest, Strong Ties (Kowch, 2003).

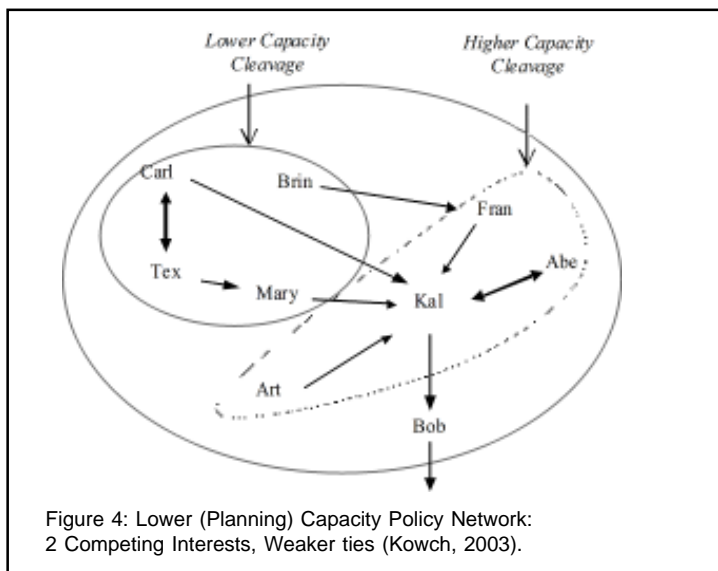


Figure 4: Lower (Planning) Capacity Policy Network: 2 Competing Interests, Weaker ties (Kowch, 2003).

departments, campuses and government departments to create education technology policy for a university (Kowch, 2003).

The network was comprised of people who gathered with varying functional responsibilities, and who came together to create policy from a mission-critical perspective. They had a high level of autonomy, as they negotiated interests with governing bodies to find common ground, and to create plans on that basis. Figure 4 depicts a lower capacity network, because one sub group had different interests (building a distance education function or structure) while the greater group was interested in public perception of the institution as it engages in large technology enhanced learning programming.

This network organized its interests bureaucratically, handing decisions to super ordinate committees. The 2 lobes indicate split (weakened network) interest and a lower capacity to organize interest, and to generate a response. This is a great oversimplification of the findings, but the idea is that by studying relations and the method an emergent group uses to organize its interests, it is possible to describe the structural and dynamic nature of a collection of influential people who really make the decisions. Using the airline metaphor, policy network informed planning considers the relationships between influential, interested pilots, flight attendants, global issues, and informs strategic and tactical plans by defining and considering the network’s capacity to organize issues and interests, rendering complexity more simple (Atkinson & Coleman, 1996).

Flying Better & Faster: How to Build Your Institutional Planning Capacity in a Networked Organization

By knowing the macro issues, your organization can plan for DL. By knowing the national and provincial/local and organizational issues, your organization can create plans and networks of people who can conceive highly innovative plans through flexible relationships (not just through structural functions) that you know exist, but have not understood or described using more closed,

organization structure models. By knowing your planning and leadership networks, you can create plans with a higher chance that the influential networks of people interested in completing the projects will succeed. This planning perspective is summarized as follows:

- Know the global (macro) issues influencing your DL plans.
- Know the national and provincial policy environment issues.
- Know Define/Design who is in your planning *community* (who is interested in the planning issue).
- Understand/Know the relational ties between influential people in the community who plan with you.
- Define/Design *who* is in your planning *network*, and know which issues motivate them to respond or to create plans.
- Understand/Know/Inform their motivation and common purpose (key issues).
- Define/Design their interest organization type (how they organize issues).
- Know your (network's) capacity for change (Kaufman, 2003).
- Know your (network's) technology philosophy (Chandler, 2004).
- Know your (network's) administration/leadership philosophy (Kowch, 2003).
- Plan for high social capital creation in the planning process: Plan for bonding, bridging and linking possibilities for key actors in the planning process (high social capital generation potential).

Planning for the DL airline of tomorrow will depend less on understanding organization structure and function and more on understanding issues, interest organization and processes involved in DL planning and implementation. In our necessarily more flexible, permeable organizations, processes and issues will evolve quickly, and out of our "control", requiring of planners a lot of expertise. Being able to see the big picture, and knowing that high capacity networks might describe organization complexities, our DL plans and results could look their best from any altitude. ■

Dr. Eugene Kowch is an Assistant Professor in the Graduate Division of Educational Research in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary in Calgary, Alberta.
 ekowch@ucalgary.ca
 (See below and page 24 for references.)

References

- Advisory Committee for Online Learning (2001). *The e-learning e-revolution in colleges and universities*. Ottawa: Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC).
- Alberta Learning, (2003). *Alberta Learning Annual Report 2002/03*. Edmonton: Government of Alberta.
- Alberta Learning, (2002). *Campus Alberta: A Policy Framework*. Edmonton: Government of Alberta.
- Atkinson, M., & Coleman, W. D. (1996). Policy networks, policy communities and the problems of governance. In L. Dobuzinskis, M. Howlett & D. Laycock. (Eds.), *Policy studies in Canada: The state of the art* (pp. 193-213). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Barabasi, A. (2003). *Linked*. New York: Plume.
- Barron, T. (2003). It's all about alignment. *Training and Development*, 57, (11), 32-43.
- Bennis, W., Geary, R., Gery, G., Burke, W., Juechter, W., and Tichy, N. (2003). Dead end or an open road? What lies ahead. *Training and development*, 57, (1), (pp. 32-44).
- Carr, N. G. (2003). IT doesn't matter. *Harvard Business Review*, 81, 5-12.
- Chandler, D. (2004). *Technological or media technological determinism*. Retrieved August 13, 2004, from Aberystwyth University of Wales, Media and Communications Web site: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/tecdet/tdet01.html>
- Coleman, W., & Skogstad, G. (1990). *Policy communities and public policy in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Copp Clark.
- Colteryaahn, K., & Davis, P. (2004). Trends you need to know now. *Training and Development*, 58, (1), 29-34.
- Daigle, R., McGraw, B., & Tait, L. (2003). *Framework for the Future*. Ottawa: Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC).
- Elek, A. (2004). *Human Capacity Building for the New Economy: Review of the 1991 APEC High Level Meeting for Human Capacity Building and Potential Next Steps*. Brisbane, Au: Foundation for Development Cooperation.
- Halpin, D., Dickson, M., Gewirtz, S., Power, S and Whitty, G. (2003). Education action zones: Model partnerships?, in Franklin, B., Bloch, M. and Popkewitz, T. (Eds.) *Educational Partnerships and the State: the paradoxes of governing schools, children and families*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Howlett, M., & Ramesh, M. (2003). *Studying public policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems* (2nd Ed.). London: Oxford University Press.
- Judge, R. (2004). Social Capital: Building a foundation for research and policy development. *Horizons* (6), 3, 9-12. ►

Moving Essential and Employability Skills Online

Christine Marles

Both *Human Resources Skill Development Canada* (HRSDC) and the *Conference Board of Canada* have done extensive research into workplace essential and employability skills. Since 1995, HRSDC has been working on the Essential Skills Research Project to develop essential skills profiles for all national occupation classifications. This work built on the 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey, the first multi-country assessment of adult literacy which clearly identified that educational levels and levels of essential skills are not necessarily equal. The Conference Board of Canada has addressed *employability skills* and the *learning recognition gap*, the need to recognize learning beyond formalized schooling and credentialling. Due to the nature of its learners, *Bow Valley College* (BVC) has a keen interest in these areas. Bow Valley College was a partner in the development of the only standardized *Test for Workplace Essential Skills* (TOWES) and has the only curriculum linked to the TOWES. The College is now leading a national project to move this curriculum online by building a diagnostic tool to help facilitators customize curriculum for learners who wish to improve their essential skills. BVC is also involved in the pilot of the Conference Board's Skills Credentialling Tool.

This paper provides an overview of essential and employability skills, background information on BVC's pioneering work in this area, and describes our current Building Workplace Essential Skills Online project and its partners. The paper also provides some insights into the challenges of doing essential and employability skills training "at a distance" and describes how this project fits with our other essential and employability skills activities.

Introduction

Bow Valley College is located in Calgary, Alberta, Canada and serves more than 10,000 students annually. For almost 40 years, Bow Valley College has prepared students for citizenship, lifelong learning, personal growth, employment and further education, with our graduate employment rate achieving 97%. The College serves a wide range of adults who want to contribute to Alberta's success. They include those entering or re-entering the workforce, the unemployed and under-employed, and adults adding to a portfolio. Bow Valley College students are drawn from special population groups such as aboriginal communities, immigrants, older workers, at risk youth, learners with disabilities, international learners, inmate populations, and the front-line workforce. Currently the mean age of students enrolled at Bow Valley College is 33 years with more than two-thirds enrolled in academic foundations and English as a second language programs. Enrolment is rapidly increasing in career programs including business and health care areas. The College has used some form of computer-managed learning for more than 25 years, and is now actively involved in online learning. We currently offer programs in more than 20

locations in Alberta and are now expanding our delivery across Canada.

Bow Valley College has a significant impact on our learners and the community. A recent provincial socio-economic benefits study showed that the College provided taxpayers with a 34% return on investments in the form of new taxes and reductions of government expenditures and government recovers its investment in 4.2 years, provided students with a 23% return on investment that is recovered in 6.2 years, with an average income increase of \$2,782 per year of study for each year of their working life, eased the tax burden for health care, justice and social services by \$2.4 million and contributed \$0.19 billion and 5,567 jobs to the Calgary region's economy. The College is keenly interested in increasing our impact on the economy through expanding our learners' essential and employability skills. We strongly believe that this is the best way for our unique learner population "learn a better living"!

Essential and Employability Skills

According to HRSDC, Essential Skills are the "fundamental skills that make it possible to learn all others". They are "enabling skills that help people participate fully in the workplace and in the community." There are nine essential skills: Reading Text, Document Use, Numeracy, Writing, Oral Communication, Working with Others, Thinking Skills, Computer Use, and Continuous Learning. HRSDC is researching how essential skills are used in the workplace by interviewing more than 4,000 workers across Canada and developing 200 occupational profiles, with more underway. HRSDC is also supporting development of a collection of authentic workplace materials which "illustrate how skills such as Reading Text, Document Use and Writing are actually used in Canadian workplaces." (*Essential Skills*, HRSDC. Downloaded May 23, 2004.) Bow Valley College has been a leader in these activities.

The Conference Board of Canada describes Employability Skills as "the generic skills, attitudes and behaviours that employers require in all their employees. From the point of view of the individual, employability skills are the career capital that a person needs to get a job and acquire job-specific skills on the job." (*Understanding Employability Skills*, Conference Board of Canada, 1999. Downloaded May 23, 2004.) These skills include Communicate, Manage Information, Use Numbers, Think & Solve Problems, Demonstrate Positive Attitudes & Behaviours, Be Responsible, Be Adaptable, Learn Continuously, Work Safely, Work With Others, and Participate in Projects and Tasks. (*Employability Skills 2000+*, Conference Board of Canada. Downloaded May 23, 2004.) Work is continuing on skills and competencies development as the Conference Board's Skills Solutions Forum

Table 1: Outcomes Associated with Skills

	MICRO (individuals)	MESO (firms, communities, schools, families)	MACRO (economies, societies, regions, special population)
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employability • wages • reliance on social transfers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • firm profitability • productivity • adaptability of firms and communities • power distributions within families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overall growth rates • speed of adjustment
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volunteering • community participation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trust • social capital
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical health • mental health • mortality • morbidity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical health • mental health • mortality • morbidity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equity • opportunity costs
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access • persistence to completion • skill level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusion • average • quality 	

Presentation by Scott Murray, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, December 2003.

“develops strategies to help build capacity at the level of individuals, organizations and the Canadian economy as a whole by supporting the recognition, demonstration, development, measurement, and credentialling of skills in the current and future workforce.” (*Skills Solution Forum*, Conference Board of Canada. Downloaded May 23, 2004.) Bow Valley College is participating and will be involved in the pilot of a new *Skills Credentialling Tool* that will help learners track and record their essential and employability skills.

The *International Adult Literacy Survey* findings emphasize the importance of these skills. Literacy “means more than knowing how to read, write or calculate. It involves **understanding** and **being able to use** the information required to function effectively in the knowledge-based societies that will dominate the twenty-first century. ... Governments can formulate strategies for improvement but delivering those strategies to create a literate society requires partnerships between schools, employers, workers, governments and communities. (*Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society*, NALD. Downloaded May 23, 2004.) Bow Valley College is actively involved in these partnerships and strategies. Our Building Workplace Essential Skills Online project is one example of our work in this area.

Why should educational institutions care about integrating essential and employability skills into their programs? The research emphasizes that Canadian workers must have these skills at levels sufficient to maintain productivity. As Table 1 identifies, success in all aspects of one’s life is dependent on these skills. Bow Valley College is excited about the opportunities to help our learners achieve success by gaining these skills as they study at our college. We are also committed to helping our learners continue their development after they leave our college. The Building Workplace Essential Skills Online Project moves our college closer to that goal.

The Building Workplace Essential Skills Online Project

For the past several years, Bow Valley College has been working with industry and college partners to make essential and employability skills testing and curriculum widely available across Canada. Along with our joint venture partner, Skillplan (*BC Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council*) we developed the *Test of Workplace Essential Skills* (TOWES). Workplace essential skills curriculum has been developed for face-to-face delivery but the college needed to increase the accessibility of this training. ►

Moving Skills continued from page 19Christine Marles

In October 2003, we began our Building Workplace Essential Skills Online (BWESO) Project, by signing of a contribution agreement with Human Resources Skill Development Canada (HRSDC) in response to HRSDC's initiative to provide alternative ways of delivering essential skills upgrading in Canada. The BWESO project will help learners improve and enhance their employability through addressing essential and employability skills training. New online techniques and technologies are being used to support this skills-based training – a pioneering approach in Canada. This type of training is also totally unrelated to traditional grade levels and credentials - a true departure from conventional college education. In addition, the project includes an online mentoring and training program for instructors and facilitators who deliver the curriculum.

The project is designed to maximize flexibility in delivery of essential skills training to learners across Canada. The project will address labour market and skills issues including increasing the Essential Skills levels of Canadians in order for individuals to function effectively in the workplace, increasing the number of adults participating in training in industries experiencing skill shortages, such as the skilled trades, building the Essential Skills online delivery capacity in the Canadian Educational system and addressing the need identified by business for a preparation program for TOWES.

Curriculum is being designed to address Document Use, Numeracy and Reading Text and will incorporate a problem-solving model to help learners manage the process of using authentic documents. The approach used will indirectly address manage information and thinking skills as well as computer use and continuous learning. Participants will take the TOWES as a pre- and post-test to assess their essential skill levels.

The objectives of this project are to build capacity of educational institutions in delivering essential skills online and to develop a flexible and accessible learning solution for essential skills by adapting Bow Valley College's *Building Workplace Essential Skills (BWES)* curriculum for online delivery. BWES Online will be a preparatory and remediation tool for the Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES). We will also measure the effectiveness of the program in improving the Essential Skills of a broad spectrum of learners across Canada.

The activities of the project include adaptation of the existing Building Workplace Essential Skills (BWES) curriculum for online delivery in a fully facilitated e-learning format. A unique aspect is the online BWES Learning Path tool that will identify needed remediation related to TOWES test results. Eight pilot partners are participating and support will include the delivery of an orientation session to the pilot partner instructors to inform them about Essential Skills authentic materials,

TOWES, and the BWES Online learning path tool. A mentor will also support instructors online during the project. The project team will develop Learner Orientation Materials, an Online Mentorship Guide, and an Online Instructor Guide to provide resources and support for instructors. We will pilot the new program across Canada with our partners to approximately 100 learners.

Pilot partners have agreed to select an Instructor from the Partner organization to facilitate the online course for the duration of the pilot, ensure the Instructor is available for the duration of the pilot, and select 10-12 participants from the Partner organization to participate in the 3 stages of the pilot. Participants include employees in organizations and students in educational programs.

Pilot instructors will participate in one of the two instructor training sessions scheduled. One of these sessions is to be held in Western Canada, the second to be held in Eastern Canada. Instructors will administer the TOWES pre-test to participants, facilitate the online course, administer the TOWES post-test to participants, provide learner feedback to the Pilot Project Manager in the form of test scores and progress reports and provide instructor feedback on the facilitation experience.

The Future of Essential and Employability Skills at Bow Valley College

So how will the Building Workplace Essential Skills Online Project augment what Bow Valley College is doing to provide our learners with essential and employability skills? Along with this ground-breaking curriculum and delivery methodology, we are developing training to help our instructors integrate essential and employability skills into our regular curriculum. We are developing curriculum models for our integrated training programs that prepare learners for entry-level employment by incorporating authentic documents into their day-to-day lessons so that they can learn how information is managed in the workplace. We are developing college-wide outcomes for all learners that include the acquisition and demonstration of essential employment skills for all programs. We are implementing a college-wide system of learner portfolios that help learners document learning beyond that provided by the college, and prepare them to carry this recognition and documentation into their post-college lives. We are implementing essential and employability skills into every aspect of the college, both as stand-alone curriculum delivered in the workplace and as integrated curriculum delivered online and in the classroom. ■

*Christine Marles is the Manager of Learning Resource Services at Bow Valley College in Calgary, Alberta.
cmarles@bowvalleycollege.ca
(See next page for references.)*

References

- Employability Skills 2000+, Conference Board of Canada.
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.htm>
- Essential Skills, HRSDC.
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/hrp/essential_skills/essential_skills_index.shtml
- Exploring the Learning Recognition Gap in Canada. Conference Board of Canada, January 2001.
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education/reports/pdfs/RecogLearn.pdf>
- International Adult Literacy Survey, National Adult Literacy Database
<http://www.nald.ca/nls/ials/crintroe.htm>
- Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society, National Adult Literacy Database.
<http://www.nald.ca/nls/ials/ialsreps/ialsrpt2/ials2/high1e.htm>
- Skills Credentialling Tool, Conference Board of Canada
http://www.conferenceboard.ca/SSF/backgrounders/skills_solutions_net.pdf
- Skills Solution Forum, Conference Board of Canada
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/SSF/>
- Test of Workplace Essential Skills.
<http://towes.com/whatis.asp>
- Understanding Employability Skills, Conference Board of Canada, April 1999.
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/boardwiseii/temp/BoardWise2GBJNCIEDBLCDIPHLCJFNHHHI2004525170/257-99mb.pdf>
- What is new with IALS? T. Scott Murray, Statistics Canada, December 5, 2003. <http://www.ets.org/all/>

Emerging Frontiers continued from page 13

Jenny Geary

related information for inmates that “I’ve had to bone up very quickly in that area but I think to have that available almost like an online legal advice would be excellent”.

1.8 Metaphors

Joanne reflects that she experiences challenges in her work environment with inmates, and custodial staff and a “boss” who are sceptical about the value of counselling. She explains, “In fact I’ve got two battles one with my clients and one with my environment that I work in.” Joanne describes this situation as being like “a double whammy and from thinking about what you’ve said there are so many factors that effect my work. She states that her supervisor indicates that she “works at the sharp end of counselling”. Joanne reflects that being a sole counsellor in correctional institutions is like “being the lone ranger”.

Counselling and supervision online and virtual communities could assist Joanne to enhance her effectiveness as a lone counsellor in correctional institutions.

References

- Locke, L.F., Spirduso, W.W. & Silverman, S.J. (2000). *Proposals That Work* (4th edition). California: Sage
- Miley, K. M.; O’Melia, M. & DuBois (1998). *Generalist Social Work Practice. An Empowering Approach*. USA: Allyn & Bacon.

Participants in this international interdisciplinary qualitative study described their experiences, challenges and solutions that could assist them and others to prevent and reduce vicarious traumatization and domestic violence. I analysed the effects that professional involvement with justice systems may have upon their well being. Participants were involved in two telephone based interviews and answered questionnaires that were emailed to them. Participants seemed to have found that the interviewing process provided them with opportunities to express their needs, wants, desires and to develop self-efficacy. Many of the participants indicated that challenges associated with justice systems include a lack of resources, such as training and education about vicarious traumatization and domestic violence. Other challenges that were identified in justice systems include emotional and professional isolation, a lack of support from employers, cultural and social discourses about the infallibility of professionals. These challenges may contribute to the process of vicarious traumatization of professionals in justice systems. Solutions that were identified in the study included self-care, virtual communities, distance and legal education and employee family assistance programs. ■

*Jennifer Geary is the 2004 ADETA Research Award Recipient.
info@tridentfoundation.net*

Designing and Facilitating Larger Online Classes

Faye Wiesenberg, PhD.

Introduction

This paper describes a presentation given by the author and her colleague (Dr. Rowena Massey-Hicks) about their experiences co-teaching a large online graduate class on the topic of 'research methods' in the fall of 2002. The presentation was for INTERFACE 2004 and was attended by about twenty practitioners interested in the set of 14 recommendations derived from this pilot regarding designing and facilitating larger online classes. The presentation was enthusiastically received and there was much interactive discussion about how practitioners might apply these recommendations in their own workplace contexts, which ranged from secondary to post secondary institutions to public and private industrial settings.

The purpose of piloting this large online graduate class was to test the feasibility of delivering graduate classes in the Master of Continuing Education program in this larger format, and to discover the changes in the design and facilitation strategies required to do this in a successful manner. The two colleagues began this pilot by agreeing on a set of design and facilitation principles acquired from their combined several years of teaching small online graduate classes. The pilot ended with them producing a revised set of principles for teaching larger online graduate classes described here in terms of three phases of the design and facilitation process: pre-course design; mid-course design modifications & facilitation; and post-course evaluation. The presentation served to further confirm these new principles, which were noted as applying to both small (i.e., up to 25 students) and larger (i.e., over 40) online classes with adult learners in many different kinds of settings.

The revised principles described in this paper were derived after considerable reflection on how the colleagues' initial four key shared assumptions about designing and facilitating online graduate classes were both affirmed and challenged. These four shared assumptions, described below, are based on well established: adult learning principles (Brookfield, 1990); Cranton, 1996; Jarvis, 1999; Kolb, 1984; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999); online learning practices and principles (Berge, 1995; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Salmon, 2000); facilitating adult learning (Brookfield, 1990; Pratt, 1998; Wenger, 1998); and program planning and evaluation (Caffarella, 2002; Gagne, Briggs & Wager, 1988; Wiesenberg, 2000).

Assumption #1:

Students' understanding of themselves as individual learners, which is essential to deep learning, results in understanding and subsequent change on a number of levels – to self, to how they view their workplaces, and to how they view their society.

Assumption #2:

The program planning process is always a complex interaction of institutional priorities, management tasks, stakeholders' interests, and covert and emergent events best done in a flexible, non-linear, and iterative manner.

Assumption #3:

All programs are planned within social (students, instructors), economic (institutional, individual), cultural (communication characteristics), and political (institutional, individual) contexts that often conflict and always interact throughout the program planning and facilitation phases.

Assumption #4:

A safe and supportive 'learning community' is required for students to feel free to engage in in-depth thinking, risk-taking, and meaningful dialogue. This community needs careful initial nurturing and continual support.

Following is a description of each principal presented here as it emerges as critical to the success of the various phases of the program planning and facilitation process.

Pre-Course Program Design Phase

Principle #1:

Research the learners enrolled in the course prior to its start by finding out about their general degree of self-directedness, online learning competence and confidence, and teamwork skills. Much of this information can be obtained from student application or program progress files, as well as asking other teachers who may have taught them prior to the course in question.

Principal #2:

Use multiple communication modes to address the diverse communication preferences and skill sets of students, including face-to-face, voice (i.e., audio-conferences, telephone calls), as well as text-based (i.e., online, faxed, mailed) methods. Use both synchronous and asynchronous communication and make every effort to allow students located across all time zones from which they participate in the synchronous sessions.

Principal #3:

Make student-friendly technical support available during times when full-time working students are most likely to need it (i.e., this will be after 5pm and on weekends if all students are within one time zone and longer if not). While technical online manuals can be helpful to those already experienced in computer conferencing, real technicians are necessary for those who are first time online learners or just not able to effectively utilize online manuals.

Principal #4:

Make sure students understand how much more time effective and meaningful communication takes online than face-to-face so that they can prepare for this extra time requirement by dropping or putting on 'hold', their less urgent non-student roles and responsibilities.

Principal #5:

Make sure that co-teachers agree on an effective and 'fool-proof' (i.e., with built-in backup strategies) set of strategies for dealing with different kinds of student concerns offline as they arise (before addressing them online) in order to reduce student confusion, frustration, and anxiety about them.

Principal #6:

Schedule online courses that contain complex content after students have gained some skill and confidence learning and communicating online. This is especially important if learners are adults returning to learning after a considerable length of time away from a formal educational program.

Principal #7:

Assign one tutor or teaching assistance with good facilitation skills (if not course content expertise) for every small group (i.e., 8-10 students) in larger online classes to maximize student's ability to benefit from this complex mode of learning. If this additional expense is not possible, make sure that the overall 'student-to-teacher' ratio in larger classes is the same as it would be in smaller ones.

Mid-Course Modification & Facilitation Phase**Principal #8:**

Spend considerable time at the beginning of the course deliberately teaching appropriate online communication skills to facilitate the building of a 'safe learning environment'. Do not assume that all students bring these skills into the classroom, even if they are 'experienced' online learners.

Principal #9:

Early in the course, engage students in collaboratively creating a set of class norms that all agree clearly describes respectful communication. Re-visit this 'charter' on a regular basis (more frequently in the first few weeks than in subsequent weeks) to update/modify it as new circumstances arise.

Principal #10:

Early in the course, put students into smaller groups of no more than five or six with private discussion boards for most discussions and all projects, retaining large whole class discussion boards for each key course topic discussion.

Principal #11:

Be very teacher-directed at the beginning of the course, giving detailed clear instructions about: class structure and schedule, all large and small group activities, assignment marking criteria, and acceptable communication routes (private or public) for anticipated and unanticipated issues.

Principal #12:

Deliberately teach the skills required to successfully negotiate Salmon's (2000) five stages of online learning as students move through them, recognizing that not all students will move through them at the same time. Use those who are quicker to pick up these essential skills to teach the ones who are not, in order to move students away from 'teacher dependence' towards 'self- and mutual interdependence'.

Post-Course Evaluation Phase**Principal #13:**

Continuously seek formative feedback from students as you move through the course, using a structured critically reflective process that allows them to understand what works and does not work for them in this learning environment. Then, help them to appreciate how their online learning skills will both assist them throughout the rest of this course, as well as transfer into their workplace environments.

Principal #14:

Spend the time needed to de-brief the co-teaching experience with your co-teacher, critically reflecting on what worked and did not work, whether or not you plan to teach again with this person.

Overall, the experience of co-designing and co-facilitating this larger online course was an invaluable way to critically reflect upon and learn about how to teach in both larger and smaller online classrooms. The recommendations made in this paper resonated strongly with participants' own experiences, confirming their validity as excellent principals upon which adult educators faced with this teaching challenge to start and begin to build their own theories of practice. This is becoming increasingly important as educational institutions move online with credit and non-credit programs at all levels, as well as deal with currently shrinking budgets while maintaining the quality of students' learning. New and constantly evolving communication technologies now becoming available is allowing teachers to more creatively design and facilitate exciting engaging online learning events. ■

References

- Berge, Z. (1995). Facilitating computer conferencing: Recommendations from the field. *Educational Technology*, XXXV(1),22-30
- Brookfield, S.D. (1990). *The skillful teacher: On technique, trust, and responsiveness in the classroom*. San Fransisco,CA: Jossey-Bass. ►

Faye Wiesenb, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Continuing Education at the University of Calgary in Calgary, Alberta. fwiesenb@ucalgary.ca
(See page 24 for references.)

A View from 30,000 Feet continued from page 17

Dr. Eugene G. Kowch

Kaufman, R. (1999). Practicing human performance technology in a global environment. In H. Stolovitch and E. Keeps (Eds.), *Handbook of Human Performance Technology* (pp. 950-967). San Francisco: Jossey Bass Pfeiffer.

Kaufman, R., & Watkins, R. (2003). Strategic Planning for Distance Education. In M. Moore & W. Anderson (Eds.) *Handbook of Distance Education* (pp. 507-519). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kowch, E. (2003). *Policy Networks and Policy Communities in Three Western Canada Universities: Neo Institutional Responses to a Pan Institutional Issue*. University of Saskatchewan. Doctoral Dissertation.

Kowch, E. (2003). *Policy Networks and Policy Communities*. University of Saskatchewan. Doctoral Dissertation.

LaGrange, A., & Foulkes, E. (2004). *Emergent frameworks for ICT integration within faculties of education in Canada*. Calgary: Canadian Association of Deans of Education (CADE).

Norris, D. M., & Poulton, N. L. (1991). *A guide for new planners*. Ann Arbor: Society for College and University Planners.

OECD (2003). *Siezing the benefits of ICT in a digital economy*. Meeting of the OECD council at ministerial level, 2003. OECD: Paris.

Prusak, L., & Davenport, B. (2002). *Working knowledge*. New York: Sage.

Rhodes, R. A. (1996). From institutions to dogma: Tradition, eclecticism and ideology in the study of British public administration. *Public administration review*, 56, 507-523. ■

Designing and Facilitation continued from page 23

Faye Wiesenberg, PhD.

Caffarella, R.S. (2002). *Planning programs for adult learners: A practical guide for educators, trainers, and staff developers*. 2nd Edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cranton, P. (1996). *Professional development as transformative learning: New perspectives for teachers of adults*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gagne, R.M., Briggs, L.J. & Wager, W.W. (1988). *Principles of Instructional design*. 3rd Edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Jarvis, P. (1999). *The practitioner-researcher: Developing theory from practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kolb, D.A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Merriam, S.B. & Caffarella, R.S. (1999). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. 2nd Edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Palloff, R.M. & Pratt, K. (2001). *Lessons from the cyberspace classroom: The realities of online teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Pratt, D.D. (1998). *Five perspectives on teaching in adult higher education*. Malabar, FL: Krieger.

Salmon, G. (2000). *E-moderating: The key to teaching and learning online*. London, UK: Kogan Page.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Wiesenberg, F.P. (2000). A critical appraisal model of program evaluation in adult continuing education. *Canadian Journal for University Continuing Education*, 26(2), 79-109. ■

Advertise affordably in *The Distance*

◀ **Place your
e-learning
message here!** ▶

For as low as \$13 your message will reach...

- the ADETA membership,
- administrators in most of Alberta's post-secondary institutions,
- governmental officials in the Learning Ministry.

For details and information:

[www.adeta.org/newsletter.html/
camille.adeta@shaw.ca](http://www.adeta.org/newsletter.html/camille.adeta@shaw.ca)

Updates From the Field



Come learn, teach and play with LearnAlberta.ca!

Kristy Payne

The beginning of another school year is here and Alberta Learning wants to help get students connected. New friends, new teachers, and new stuff to learn can make for an exciting—yet challenging—journey back to the classroom. However, logging onto LearnAlberta.ca can make going back to the books a little easier and a lot of fun.

LearnAlberta.ca is a web site that provides online learning resources directly tied to what Alberta students are learning in the classroom. With the click of the mouse, students can access a variety of multimedia resources that will help them learn new concepts in a fun and engaging way. Learning math while playing an arcade-style game, getting a science lesson from a pilot, or learning Spanish while visiting a classroom in Spain are just a few of the learning experiences available on the web site. Video clips, animations, interactive lessons, problem-solving strategies, glossaries and much more are available to help take learning to the next level.

Accessible anytime, anywhere, in both English and French, the LearnAlberta.ca website creates a unique learning environment that can help students in and out of class.

New resources are continuously being developed for all grades and subject areas. This fall, look for new English language arts, math, physics, and social studies material. Also coming are six new units for the National Geographic Science Centre. This resource offers licensed material from the National Geographic Society such as videos, teachers' guides, activity sheets, and more that are connected to 16 natural science units from the Alberta Learning Curriculum. What better way to learn about science than to go under the sea with a deep-diving submarine to explore underwater volcanoes and life forms!

LearnAlberta.ca's Online Reference Centre will be new and improved this fall with the addition of the World Book Online. A collection of French and English multimedia encyclopedias, the Online Reference Centre provides material

such as newspapers, magazines, books, maps, pictures, and videos that can be found for all grades and subject areas and can be great tools for class projects and everyday assignments.

LearnAlberta.ca is not just a great tool for students; teachers can use the resources to enhance lesson plans and parents will gain a better understanding of what their children are learning and be better prepared to help at home.

Innovative, dynamic, and reliable, the resources on LearnAlberta.ca are just a click away. Get connected and visit www.learnalberta.ca this school year!

Some of the resources on LearnAlberta.ca were licensed by Alberta Learning for specific audiences within the Kindergarten to Grade 12 learning community in Alberta. Only these audiences or "authorized users" may access licensed resources. Authorized users are currently-enrolled students and their parents, and staff of all publicly-funded Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools in Alberta. This includes Public, Separate, Francophone, Charter, and publicly-funded Private schools. 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, and 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.

In most publicly-funded Alberta schools, access is facilitated technically behind the scenes so teachers and students do not need to enter their userID and password at school. However, userIDs and passwords are required to access these resources from a computer outside of school. To obtain your userID and password, contact your local school or division jurisdictional technology contact, school authority or classroom teacher, or your principal. Post-secondary users should contact their program heads for this information. LearnAlberta.ca userIDs and passwords are issued once each year, in September.



Course development, revisions and conversion

Shelia Whitmore

It's been a busy summer for the Technology Enhanced Learning Team at Lakeland College. Course development, revision, and conversion have taken up most of the summer. Everyone is looking forward to the return of faculty and students for the year ahead. Let the games begin!

Bachelor of Applied Business: Emergency Services

This blended delivery program continues to grow in popularity with the emergency services industry. All but three of the program's 30 three-week modules are distance delivered via WebCT. Three modules dealing with Emergency Preparedness and Resources and are being offered to students in the first two cohorts onsite at the College's **fire etc.** facility this September.

Glen Maddes and Tom Powell, two well-respected experts in the field will be instructing these practical modules in time to coincide with the orientation weekend for the program's third cohort. This will give all three cohorts the chance to network and provides our Technology Enhanced Learning Team an ideal opportunity to get direct feedback on our development efforts.

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

TELT has completed the first phase of the online Farm Succession Planning Workshop project undertaken with Alberta Agriculture. This project is designed to increase accessibil-

ity and reduce costs by replacing a traditional one-day face-to-face farm succession planning workshop for financial planners, business advisors, lawyers, and accountants with an asynchronous WebCT workshop. Built around an expandable series of case studies, the design of this workshop will allow for the addition of technology enhancements such as audio and video files and synchronous components. A pilot of the workshop will run early in 2005 with selected professionals involved in farm succession planning. The TELT hopes to demonstrate the workshop features and present the results of the pilot workshop at the ADETA Interface, 2005.

Faculty Orientation and Support Resources

When Lakeland College faculty members return this fall, they'll be able to access various resources and internal documents via the Faculty Orientation and Support site. Collaboratively developed by the TELT and Rocky Walbaum, Lakeland College Staff Development Coordinator, the site will provide faculty with resources for traditional delivery and alternative delivery, as well as quick access to support from the Center for Academic Support and Innovation. Forms, templates, information on teaching strategies and methodologies, technology tips, and articles of interest will be available. Possible future development of the site includes an asynchronous mentoring system and online workshops. ■



Certificates in Adult and e-Learning

Rod Corbett

The University of Calgary Continuing Education is gearing up for a busy Fall with its new Certificate in e-Learning: Design and Facilitate Learning Online program just ending its first year of offerings and the Certificate in Adult Learning program that can now be completed online. Rod Corbett has just been recently appointed to manage both of these certificate programs. These programs are designed to help professionals in the fields of Adult Learning and e-Learning to gain useful and continuous professional development opportunities online without having to leave their communities. All of the courses in these programs are offered on their Blackboard server in an asynchronous offering that has the flexibility to fit around the busiest schedule yet allow learners to collaboratively learn from other professionals in the course.

Courses offered this Fall include the following:

- e-Learning: Principles and Practices
- e-Learning: Building Online Courses
- Online Testing
- e-Learning Program Planning and Development
- Designing Engaging e-Learning Experiences
- Adults as Learners
- Learning Organization
- Creating Programs in Adult Education
- Workteam Learning
- Evaluating Program Outcomes

For more information on Certificate in Adult Learning program go to <http://www.cted.ucalgary.ca/CAL> and for more information about the Certificate in e-Learning program go to <http://www.cted.ucalgary.ca/CeL>. ■

F-Learning: a digital breakthrough

Jon Baggaley

The first ten years of the 21st century saw rapid technological miniaturization. The laptop gave way to the notebook, which was squeezed into the 'palm pilot'. Distance education (DE) students seized the opportunity to take their courses during business trips and vacations. By 2005, e-learning was eclipsed by 'm-learning', as methods were developed for delivering DE by the new mobile communication devices. But not all of us agreed that m-learning was effective. In my best-selling textbook, *M-Learning: M-Butterfly?* (2007, F-learning Press), I argued that m-learning technologies had created a gadfly, restless style of DE, lacking the concentration previously associated with learning. And the dangers of m-learning became only too obvious. Recall, for example, the sad case of the Athabasca student, taking a tutorial on his cell 'phone while crossing a busy Cancun intersection. Receiving a fail grade from his teacher, he stepped off the curb and... well, the case was an object lesson for us all.

So, in 2008, 'finger-nail learning' was born, the next natural step in the miniaturization process. F-learning's basic philosophy is that the hands play a vital role in learning, too important to be used simultaneously for holding 'cell phones, driving or doing the dishes. The f-learner's hands are held firmly out in front, with the fingers vertical. Touch-sensitive FNEs, or finger-nail emulators, are glued into place over the regular nails. The f-learner navigates around the finger-nail displays using a small stylus. The simplest f-learning kit (FL-Basic) comes with an index finger FNE for routine student-teacher interactions. The 'Digital-10' edition opens up multi-channel learning opportunities on both hands simultaneously, complete with a navigation finger, a finger for audio-mic functions, others for I/O video-displays, a 'nail-buddies' address list finger, a finger for rapid feedback to the instructor, and VDR (vertical display reversal), which allows the nails to be viewed while the fingers are held erect or bent inward into the palm. The whole system can be packed away into an ordinary pair of gloves.

A slight problem with the current FL system is that 99.2% of users find the finger-nail displays too small to read. To overcome this, they purchase an FNE magnifier with 18" x 24" screen (weight 42 lbs). Users love to place their fingers in the scanning slots and to see them come alive on the big screen, brimming with learning experiences.

New f-learning accessories and course packages are developing all the time. As the 'Father of F-learning', I am proud to announce a new partnership with Debbie's Nails of Toronto. Early in 2010, Debbie and I will be bringing new extendable FNEs to the market. When used with the hands held sideways, these allow the viewing of wide-screen video materials. Meanwhile, FL's social marketers are completing their "Don't Bite your Nails – You'll Reduce your Learning" campaign. And our gender-gap department is trying to encourage male learners to use the nail emulators. Our failure to attract any males at all to f-learning so far represents a major marketing challenge.

Those hesitant old 'online learning' days have certainly yielded to a brave new world. So join us – try one of our courses – become an f-learning franchisee – let your fingers do the teaching – and tell your friends about our slogan, "F-learning - it's a Digital Breakthrough!"

Dr. Jon Baggaley is Professor of Educational Technology at Athabasca University, Alberta. His next book, Knowledge at Your Fingertips, will be published by F-L Press in Fall 2010.

Sidethought

Dr. Jon Baggaley is Professor of Educational Technology in the Centre for Distance Education, Athabasca University, Alberta.
baggaley@athabascau.ca

Please forward your Sidethoughts for consideration to:
Camille Jensen
Editor, *The Distance*
camille.adeta@shaw.ca

Statements, opinions, points of view, and statements of fiction expressed by the author do not necessarily represent those of the officers or members of ADETA or the author's employer.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

ADETA

Alberta Distance Education & Training Association

Box 47022

62 Edmonton Centre

Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 4N1

camille.adeta@shaw.ca

