

# Announcing the Release of Volume 15 (2001) of [The American Journal of Distance Education](#)

**The AJDE Volume 15, Issue 1**  
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## Editorial

The Editorial Board

Michael G. Moore

## Articles

Critical Thinking, Cognitive Presence, and Computer Conferencing in Distance Education

D. Randy Garrison, Terry Anderson, and Walter Archer

This article describes a practical approach to judging the nature and quality of critical discourse in a computer conference. A model of a critical community of inquiry frames the research. A core concept in defining a community of inquiry is cognitive presence. In turn, the practical inquiry model operationalizes cognitive presence for the purpose of developing a tool to assess critical discourse and reflection. The authors present encouraging empirical findings related to an attempt to create an efficient and reliable instrument to assess the nature and quality of critical discourse and thinking in a text-based educational context. Finally, the authors suggest that cognitive presence (i.e., critical, practical inquiry) can be created and supported in a computer-conference environment with appropriate teaching and social presence.

Implications for Improving Access and Outcomes for Individuals with Disabilities in Postsecondary Distance Education

Weol Soon Kim-Rupnow, Peter W. Dowrick, and Laure S. Burke

During the past decade, there has been tremendous growth in the number of online distance education courses offered by postsecondary institutions. Does this growth imply better access to higher education for individuals with disabilities? This article examines individual

and institutional case studies identified through a search of ERIC and other major databases. The findings are summarized in terms of student characteristics, technology trends, support and accommodation provided by postsecondary institutions, and the overall impact of distance education on people with disabilities.

### Identifying At-Risk Students in Videoconferencing and Web-Based Distance Education

Viola Osborn

Based on the multivariate framework of student attrition developed by leading researchers in the field of distance education and instructional technology, this study centers on a method of assessing the ability of a student to complete a distance learning course. The focus of the investigation is construction and validation of a brief survey instrument to identify at-risk students enrolled in Web-based and videoconferencing courses.

### Timeless and Timely Issues in Distance Education Planning

Michele D. Bunn

Distance education planners make complex decisions that result in substantial investments and have long-term implications. This article provides a framework to categorize planning issues into four distinct program stages and three decision areas. The framework brings to the surface and highlights numerous areas of uncertainty and potential disagreement among decision makers and provides an organizing backdrop to improve the distance education planning process.

### Distance Training for Operating Equipment: A Cost-Benefit and Return-on-Investment Analysis

Constantine Osiakwan and David Wright

This study takes the perspective of an equipment vendor that is providing training on its equipment. The study shows that the total cost of Remote Access Distance Learning (RADL), training provided over a voice and data network, is higher than the total cost of classroom-based training (CBT). However, the profits from RADL are higher than the profits from CBT, since it is possible to charge students a higher price for RADL than for CBT.

### **Interview**

Speaking Personally with Carol A. Twigg

Connie Dillon

Carol A. Twigg is executive director of the Center for Academic Transformation. She is the former vice president of EDUCOM, where she founded the National Learning Infrastructure Initiative. Previously, Dr. Twigg was associate vice chancellor for Learning Technologies for the State University of New York. Her expertise is in the development of policies that foster innovative education; she is particularly interested in exploring ways by which technology can help us evolve new and more-effective forms of student-centered learning. One of her responsibilities in her current role at the Center is to give away \$6 million dollars to support the Pew Learning and Technology Program. She is interviewed by Connie Dillon, director of the Research Center for Continuing Professional and Higher Education at the University of Oklahoma.

## Book Reviews

*Assessing Open and Distance Learners*

Ingrid Day

*Assessing Open and Distance Learners*. Chris Morgan and Meg O'Reilly (London: Kogan Page, 1999, 240 pp., \$29.95).

*The Virtual University: The Internet and Resource-Based Learning*

Michael Anderson

*The Virtual University: The Internet and Resource-Based Learning*. Steve Ryan, Bernard Scott, Howard Freeman, and Daxa Patel (London: Kogan Page, 2000, 179 pp., \$24.95). A title in the Open and Distance Learning Series edited by Fred Lockwood.

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**The AJDE Volume 15, Issue 2**  
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**Editorial**

## Surviving as a Distance Teacher

Michael G. Moore

### Articles

#### Barriers to Distance Education: A Factor-Analytic Study

Lin Muilenburg and Zane L. Berge

This article reports on a large-scale ( $n = 2,504$ ), exploratory factor analysis that determined the underlying constructs that comprise barriers to distance education. The ten factors found were (1) administrative structure, (2) organizational change, (3) technical expertise, (4) social interaction and quality, (5) faculty compensation and time, (6) threat of technology, (7) legal issues, (8) evaluation/effectiveness, (9) access, and (10) student-support services.

#### Differences in Competencies between Doctoral Students On-Campus and at a Distance

James R. Lindner, Kim E. Dooley, and Tim H. Murphy

This article describes differences between on-campus and distance learners by knowledge, skills, and abilities. On-campus doctoral students at Texas A&M University were compared with doctoral students enrolled in a distance education program offered jointly with Texas Tech University. Student perceptions of their competency levels were gathered using a mixed mailed/Internet questionnaire. On-campus and distance education students had different levels of competence. Competency models can serve faculty and administrators as an assessment tool for strategic decision making and development of courses and curricula. This study provides a model for benchmarking competencies and provides baseline data for making such changes.

#### Computer Self-Efficacy, Academic Self-Concept, and Other Predictors of Satisfaction and Future Participation of Adult Distance Learners

Christina Kyounghee Lim

The purpose of this study was to develop a predictive model of satisfaction of adult learners in a Web-based distance education course and their intent to participate in future Web-based distance education courses. The factors examined were computer self-efficacy, academic self-concept, age, gender, academic status, years of computer use, frequency of computer use, computer training, Internet experience in a class, and participation in a workshop for a Web-based course. Computer self-efficacy was the only predictor variable that was statistically significant. There was a positive relationship between learners' satisfaction with

their Web-based distance education courses and their intent to participate in future Web-based courses.

## Writing Web-Based Distance Education Courses for Adult Learners

Evan S. Smith

This study examines faculty writing style in Web-based courses aimed at adult learners, a key audience for university-level courses. Taking into account independent-study courses and others, the investigator conducted faculty interviews, looking at written and oral strategies implicit in teaching; print vs. Web formats; and adherence to educational philosophies. Faculty who were interviewed revealed minimal experience in both print and Web realms, minimal style differences beyond teaching netiquette or using occupational jargon, and adherence to active learning or social constructivism.

## Interview

Speaking Personally with Michael J. Sousa

Robert Wisher

On July 10, 2000, the US Secretary of the Army announced the Army University Access Online (AUAO) program, also known as eArmyU. Designed to offer soldiers a streamlined “portal” approach to a variety of online postsecondary degrees and technical certificates, the program leverages distance learning technologies to enable enlisted soldiers to complete degree requirements. The army conducted an open contract solicitation and source selection process, and on December 14, 2000, awarded a \$453 million contract to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to serve as the prime contractor.

Michael J. Sousa is the deputy program manager at PwC for the eArmyU project. He is responsible for recruiting and selecting prospective education partners and managing the current education partners and the Council on Academic Management. Mr. Sousa is a frequent presenter at industry conferences on the subject of e-learning and e-business in higher education and is coauthor of “Preparing Your Campus for E-Business” (in R. N. Katz and D. G. Oblinger, eds., *The ‘E’ Is for Everything*, published by EDUCAUSE 2000). Mr. Sousa has a B.S. degree from Boston College and an MBA degree from Boston University. He is interviewed by Robert Wisher, a member of the AJDE’s editorial board and a senior research psychologist at the Army Research Institute in Alexandria, Virginia.

## Book Review

*The Convergence of Distance and Conventional Education*

James Perley

*The Convergence of Distance and Conventional Education*. Alan Tait and Roger Mills, eds. (London: Routledge, 1999, 232 pp., \$29.99).

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**The AJDE Volume 15, Issue 3**  
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### **Editorial**

Standards and Learning Objects

Michael G. Moore

### **Articles**

Knowledge Retention as a Latent Outcome Measure in Distance Learning

Robert A. Wisher, Christina K. Curnow, and Robert J. Seidel

Two experiments investigated the retention of knowledge as a latent measure of learning outcome. Based on an analysis of previous classroom studies, a prediction of a 15% relative loss of knowledge that had been gained during original learning was made for two video teletraining courses, one concerning air traffic control and the other battle staff duties. A total sample of  $n = 90$  participated in the distance learning versions of either of the two courses; a total sample of  $n = 137$  participated in a comparable residence classroom version of either course. Retesting of the same content was conducted ten, twenty, or forty weeks after completion of the course. Results demonstrated knowledge losses of between 14% and 16%, in line with predictions. The merits of knowledge retention as a construct for examining initial evidence of learning is discussed, especially for training related to the safety of others.

Review of Research in Distance Education, 1990 to 1999

Zane L. Berge and Susan Mrozowski

This review examines the research literature in distance education over a ten-year period from 1990 to 1999. Using four prominent, peer-reviewed, English-language distance education journals and the dissertation abstracts that were related to the field of distance education, the authors found 1,419 total articles and abstracts. Only those articles reporting a research methodology (n = 890) were included in this study. A categorization system based on Sherry (1996) was used to categorize the content. The patterns across journals and dissertation abstracts indicated a predominance of pedagogical issues being researched. Three-fourths of the articles and dissertations used a descriptive methodology. Implications for reviews such as this include that, while they can not correct sloppy or short-sighted research, they can begin to address gaps in past distance education research. They can dramatically show the need for a research agenda and future vision in the field of distance education.

### Systematic and Systemic Approaches to Reducing Attrition Rates in Online Higher Education

Seung Youn (Yonnie) Chyung

Prior to 1997, the Department of Instructional & Performance Technology (IPT) online program at Boise State University faced a high student dropout rate. The IPT turned to Keller's ARCS model, Kaufman's Organizational Elements Model, and Kirkpatrick's evaluation model throughout the processes of improving the motivational appeal of the online course for the first-time adult learners and solving the attrition problem. In this article, the author describes a long-term evaluation case study and explains how she systematically designed and implemented various instructional interventions to reduce attrition. She also presents the results of systemic evaluations.

### Synchronous and Asynchronous Interactions of Bilingual Hispanic Pre- and In-Service Teachers in Distance Learning

Luisa Lara, Richard Howell, Jeronimo Dominguez, and José Navarro

This study investigated differences in online written interactions of bilingual Hispanic pre- and in-service teachers across two types of online discussion groups: synchronous and asynchronous. Participants were exposed to a shortened version of a wholly online special education course and participated in instructional activities as well as synchronous and asynchronous discussion groups over a six-week period. The research used both an alternating treatment design to gather quantitative data, and interviews and questionnaires for qualitative data. The results support the contention that synchronous discussion group interactions are an important feature of successful online courses with Hispanic students.

## Interview

Speaking Personally with Dennis Bancroft

Joseph T. Savrock

Dennis Bancroft is director of Oscail, the National Distance Education Centre, which is based on the campus of Dublin City University in Ireland. He has been in this position since 1999, having formerly worked for some years in the School of Education at the UK Open University. His research interests include the effective use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in distance education and in the support and retention of disadvantaged students. Dr. Bancroft is an active member of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU), the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE), and Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP).

Dr. Bancroft recently was a visitor at The American Center for Study of Distance Education, where he was interviewed by the Center's Joe Savrock, with the assistance of Suzanne Bienert.

## Book Review

*Leadership for 21st Century Learning: Global Perspectives from Educational Innovators*

Don Olcott, Jr.

*Leadership for 21st Century Learning: Global Perspectives from Educational Innovators.*  
Edited by Colin Latchem and Donald E. Hanna (London: Kogan Page, 2001, 267 pp., \$32.50.

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