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3pLearning, vLearning and eLearning

Donald G. Perrin Ph.D., Editor

In the beginning was the word. It was used for tutoring by Socrates and for lecturing by men of wisdom. And the word was good.

Men inscribed words in stone and on papyrus, and replicated it using wooden blocks and ink. This made words cheap and they could be transmitted to millions of people.

Distance learning was invented using a principle called correspondence. At first it used Print, Paper and the Postal service (3pLearning). And the word was good. It was circulated widely and people became educated. They took jobs in cities and enjoyed libraries and museums and theatres. And some became lawyers and politicians.

3pLearning was challenged by video (vLearning). Video enabled instant communication to thousands of learners at the same time. Now it was possible for one teacher to teach to a thousand classrooms and save 999 teacher salaries, but the result was *not* good. The Ford Foundation in Hagerstown, Maryland and Anaheim, California, tried to make it work, but students needed supervision, discipline, control, punishment, and on occasion feedback, tutoring, and nurturing. So the best teachers taught on television so others could sit in the back of the room and rest awhile in the long teaching day. And sometimes the word was OK. But academicians could not set clocks on their VCRs and they lost all sense of time.

Then came computers, networks, and interactive technology that extended the works of great teachers to masses above the digital divide. And inequity grew so that the rich learned more and earned more, and those less fortunate became slaves of ignorance. And the government intervened with eRate and other ways to collect money without calling it taxes, and the result was better. Learners were lost in cyberspace, and teachers failed the technology test because information technology was advancing at the speed of light. And the word was corrupted because teachers and scholars did not use spell checkers and did not know how.

Information technologies stored all knowledge in computers and only librarians knew how to access it. Knowledge became intellectual property, a commodity to be traded by the wealthy and plagiarized by the masses. The explosion of knowledge reduced its half-life so learning to access information was more important than knowledge itself. A great ignorance spread across the land. People needed machines to do simple addition and computers to find information. Many students failed because their computers locked up. And Microsoft was punished by the Courts for errors in its operating system.

And the new tools fell into the hands of wizards, game makers, e-commerce, and purveyors of evil. Towers crumbled, worms and viruses corrupted the word, and the world returned to ignorance from which it had come. And eLearning rose from the ashes to do battle with "Back to Basics," the McGuffey Reader, and outmoded testing programs.



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Editor's Note: The debate comparing values of face-to-face vs. online communication continues. One element is the loss of visual cues that enable teachers to more accurately focus communication. Another relates to possible miscommunication when the contextual cues are not present. A third relates to careless communication practices that violate privacy or unintentionally hurt peoples feelings. Dereshiwsky, Moan and Gahungu identify instructor perceptions of civility and instructional communication, and seeks to identify underlying variables associated to differences of opinion.

Faculty Perceptions Regarding Issues of Civility in Online Instructional Communication

Mary I. Dereshiwsky, Eugene R. Moan and Athanase Gahungu

Introduction

“The medium is the message.” Marshall McLuhan’s classic quotation serves as an appropriate metaphor for the challenges of communication faced in different teaching environments. The advent of Web-based and Web-enhanced teaching has been accompanied by concerns about potential misinterpretations of the written word. Without visual and other body language cues, is it possible to accidentally misconstrue good-natured humor as a hostile personal attack, for instance? Can disagreement on issues more easily escalate into flame wars? Is it possible to share private concerns effectively with one’s instructor and/or fellow students if the only means of doing so is an e-mail message? Perhaps most significantly: are there special challenges regarding issues of civility in online instructional communication of which instructors and students need to be aware, and for which they need to be carefully prepared?

Electronic communications have undoubtedly become a commodity in the educational setting. Yet these contemporary media of communication, including e-mail, Internet, World Wide Web page construction and maintenance, electronic mailing lists, Telnet, uploading and unloading files, are emerging fields in which usage competencies and civility procedures are often limited or sparingly understood (Shea, 1994). Despite the existence of comprehensive guidelines such as Arlene Rinaldi’s (1998) “The Net: User Guidelines and Netiquette” (<http://www.fau.edu/netiquette/net/>) researchers hypothesized that students and the community at-large often lacked skills not only in drafting electronic messages (Phan and Thoms, 1997), but in all aspects of common courtesy. Of special concern is the fact that a number of users tend to resort to electronic communications to “avoid face-to-face meetings on tough issues” (Barclay and York, 1999). Others are unaware of the public character of electronic communicating via computer networks, or they may engage in other unethical conducts due to their own lack of awareness of any underlying impropriety. That is why Rinaldi’s (1998) work cautioned users about their responsibilities, and in addition it strongly advised them against common practices of forwarding e-mail without other parties’ consent,



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sending chain mail, or not following proper Web-based communication procedures.

Of special mention were the following guidelines:

- Never assume that your e-mail can be read by no one except yourself; others may be able to read or access your mail. Never send or keep anything that you would mind seeing on the evening news.
- Never send chain letters through the Internet. Sending them can cause the loss of your Internet access.
- Follow the appropriate chain of command procedures for corresponding with superiors. For example, don't send a complaint via e-mail directly to the "top" just because you can.
- Be professional and careful what you say about others. E-mail is easily forwarded.
- Cite all quotes, references and sources and respect copyright and license agreements.
- It is considered extremely rude to forward personal email to mailing lists or Usenet without the original author's permission.

In order to make electronic communications an effective teaching tool in schools and a useful resource in the work place, other researchers stressed staff development as the key to technological change. Thus Johnson (1999) developed basic and advanced computer literacy rubrics for training classroom teachers and media specialists in the skillful and purposeful use of Internet. Johnson's rubrics comprised 1) Internet basics, 2) e-mails and electronic mailing lists, 3) the world wide web, 4) search tools, 5) newsgroups, gophers and Telnet, 6) obtaining, decompressing, and using files, 7) real-time and push technologies, 8) web page construction, 9) learning opportunities using the Internet, and 10) netiquette, on-line ethics, and current issues surrounding Internet use in K-12 schools.

Similarly, Anderson (1998) recommended that it was urgent that staff be introduced to skills in Internet use that many did not know they needed. According to Anderson, today's students are the true first digital generation. Teachers must be adequately prepared to better provide these digital age students with relevant learning opportunities. Finally, as Perks (1997) cautioned, the key to maximizing the potential that Internet presents and bringing technological change in education and in contemporary life, in general, lies in instituting Internet-acceptable use policies in schools and campuses.

Purpose of the Study

The researchers sought to identify instructor perceptions regarding various issues of civility in online instructional communication. In cases of instructor disagreement on such issues, the researchers sought to identify some potential underlying variables or factors related to online instruction that appeared to be associated to differences of opinion.

Methods and Procedures

The researchers developed a survey containing a number of fixed-choice statements concerning issues of communication in online instruction. These included such issues as whether the same standards of courteous communication should apply regardless of classroom format (traditional face-to-face, Web-based or interactive television-based), whether students engaged in flame wars (angry online exchanges) where the instructor had to intervene, whether subjects perceived enthusiasm to be more difficult to convey in the online interactive environment, and whether the lack of visual and body language cues in Web-based instruction makes it more difficult for instructors to get a 'read' of their students. Respondents were also asked to check off which forms of online communication they routinely used with their students, such as student-instructor e-mail, subscriptions to Internet-based listservs, and special class listservs. In addition, the survey included a number of more general fixed-choice statements regarding online teaching and learning. These statements had to do with such issues as whether students expressed missing the face-to-face classroom, whether instructors felt adequately prepared to teach online, and whether they believed

there were certain subject areas that could not be successfully taught online. Demographic information included how long the recipient had been teaching online, how many different online courses he/she had taught to date, and what level(s) of students he/she instructed online: graduate, undergraduate or both. Finally, the last page asked subjects to share three successes and challenges experienced with regard to online communication in their own words. A complete copy of the post-pilot revised survey may be found in Appendix A.

The study sample consisted of all Northern Arizona University instructors who used the asynchronous bulletin board posting area known as the Virtual Conference Center (VCC) for all or some of their instruction for the academic years 1999 – 2001. This list was obtained directly from the NAUOnline VCC Web-based listing. In one case, the instructor had recently converted her online course to WebCT, which is being gradually phased in by NAUOnline as its preferred asynchronous posting program. The study sample comprised 39 online instructors in total.

Each study subject was e-mailed the survey as a Microsoft Word file in mid-October of 2001. The accompanying e-mail cover note provided assurances of confidentiality and anonymity as per Northern Arizona University’s Institutional Review Board guidelines for research with human subjects. The recipient was asked to word-process his/her survey responses directly onto the file and to return it to Dr. Dereshiwsky as an e-mail file attachment. A follow-up e-mailing was conducted after two weeks with those study subjects who had not yet returned the completed survey. This resulted in a total response from 32 subjects, or 82.05% of the study sample.

Findings and Results

Summary descriptive statistics were computed for each fixed-choice survey item. These statistics consisted of the total number and percent of subjects who selected each response choice per survey item. In addition, the total number and percent of missing values (non-responses) were tallied for each survey item.

Table 1 displays the absolute response frequency for Items 1 through 18 contained in the “Attitudes and Behaviors in Online Communication” section of the survey. The modal (most frequently selected) response category is starred for each item.

Table 1.

**Absolute Response Frequencies per Survey Item:
Attitudes and Behaviors in Online Communication**

Item Number	Item Topic	Frequencies of Responses
1	More Challenging to Express Emotions Online	Strongly Disagree: 4 Moderately Disagree: 9 * Moderately Agree: 10 Strongly Agree: 6 No Response: 3
2	Easier to Misinterpret Written Communication Online	Strongly Disagree: 2 Moderately Disagree: 7 Moderately Agree: 9 * Strongly Agree: 13 No Response: 1
3	Instructor Felt Adequately Prepared for Online Classroom Communication	Strongly Disagree: 4 * Moderately Disagree: 12 * Moderately Agree: 12 Strongly Agree: 3 No Response: 1

4	Standards of Communication Should Be Identical Regardless of Classroom Format	Strongly Disagree: 6 * Moderately Disagree: 10 Moderately Agree: 4 * Strongly Agree: 10 No Response: 2
5	New Online Students Need Help with Communication	Strongly Disagree: 2 Moderately Disagree: 6 * Moderately Agree: 11 Strongly Agree: 10 No Response: 3
6	Students Have Typed in All Caps	Always: 0 Frequently: 0 * Sometimes: 17 Never: 14 Don't Know: 0 No Response: 1
7	Students Focus on Issues in Expressing Disagreement	Always: 7 * Frequently: 21 Sometimes: 3 Never: 1 Don't Know: 0 No Response: 0
8	Students Have Deleted Instructor's E-mail Before Reading	Always: 0 Frequently: 0 Sometimes: 6 Never: 4 * Don't Know: 22 No Response: 0
9	Students Have Deleted Other Students' E-mail Before Reading	Always: 0 Frequently: 0 Sometimes: 1 Never: 4 * Don't Know: 26 No Response: 1
10	Instructor Has Had to Stop Flame Wars Among Students	Always: 0 Frequently: 0 Sometimes: 11 * Never: 19 Don't Know: 2 No Response: 0
11	Students Use Emoticons Appropriately	Always: 1 Frequently: 4 * Sometimes: 21 Never: 6 No Response: 0
12	Easier for Shy Students to Withdraw Online	Strongly Disagree: 10 * Moderately Disagree: 14 Moderately Agree: 6 Strongly Agree: 2 No Response: 0
13	Easier to Misinterpret Directions Online	Strongly Disagree: 4 Moderately Disagree: 12 * Moderately Agree: 13 Strongly Agree: 3 No Response: 0

14	Harder to Express Enthusiasm Online	Strongly Disagree: 6 * Moderately Disagree: 11 * Moderately Agree: 11 Strongly Agree: 4 No Response: 0
15	Students Are Comfortable Sharing Private Communication with Online Instructor	Strongly Disagree: 1 Moderately Disagree: 3 * Moderately Agree: 15 Strongly Agree: 13 No Response: 0
16	Online Students Miss Face-to-Face Classroom	Always: 1 Frequently: 4 * Sometimes: 21 Never: 6 Don't Know: 0 No Response: 0
17	Lack of Visual Cues Makes It Harder to "Read" One's Online Students	Strongly Disagree: 6 Moderately Disagree: 6 * Moderately Agree: 13 Strongly Agree: 7 No Response: 0
18	More Tempting to Respond with Anger to Online Messages	Strongly Disagree: 5 Moderately Disagree: 10 * Moderately Agree: 14 Strongly Agree: 3 No Response: 0
19	Too Inhibiting to Express Candid Emotions Online	Strongly Disagree: 14 * Moderately Disagree: 16 Moderately Agree: 2 Strongly Agree: 0 No Response: 0
20	Subject Matter Counts re Optimal Classroom Format	Strongly Disagree: 6 Moderately Disagree: 1 Moderately Agree: 10 * Strongly Agree: 15 No Response: 0

Four survey items yielded bimodal, or approximately bimodal, response distributions. These items are as follows:

- Felt Adequately Prepared to Teach Online (Item 3);
- Standards of Communication Should Be Identical Regardless of Classroom Format (Item 4);
- Easier to Misinterpret Directions Online (Item 13);
- Harder to Express Enthusiasm Online (Item 14).

As a result, the responses for the preceding items were collapsed across the 'strongly' and 'moderately' agree and disagree choices. These items, along with their absolute and relative response frequencies and related histograms, are illustrated in Figures 1 through 4. (Please note: item subtopics are shown in abbreviated form in these tables. Please refer to Appendix A for the listing of complete items.)

Figure 1.
Frequency Distribution and Histogram for
Instructor Felt Adequately Prepared for Online Classroom Communication (Item 3)

Frequency Distribution for Felt Adequately Prepared

	Count	Rel. Freq.	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	.125	12.500
Moderately Disagree	12	.375	37.500
Moderately Agree	12	.375	37.500
Strongly Agree	3	.094	9.375
No Response	1	.031	3.125
Total	32	1.000	100.000

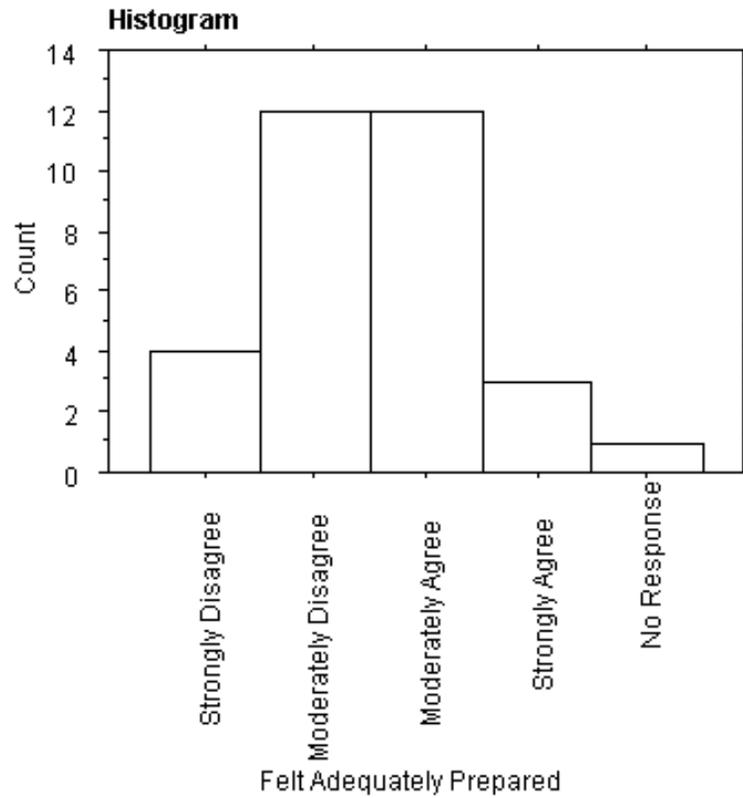


Figure 2.

Frequency Distribution and Histogram for Standards of Communication Should Be Identical Regardless of Classroom Format (Item 4)

Frequency Distribution for Courtesy Standards Identical

	Count	Rel. Freq.	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	.188	18.750
Moderately Disagree	10	.312	31.250
Moderately Agree	4	.125	12.500
Strongly Agree	10	.312	31.250
No Response	2	.062	6.250
Total	32	1.000	100.000

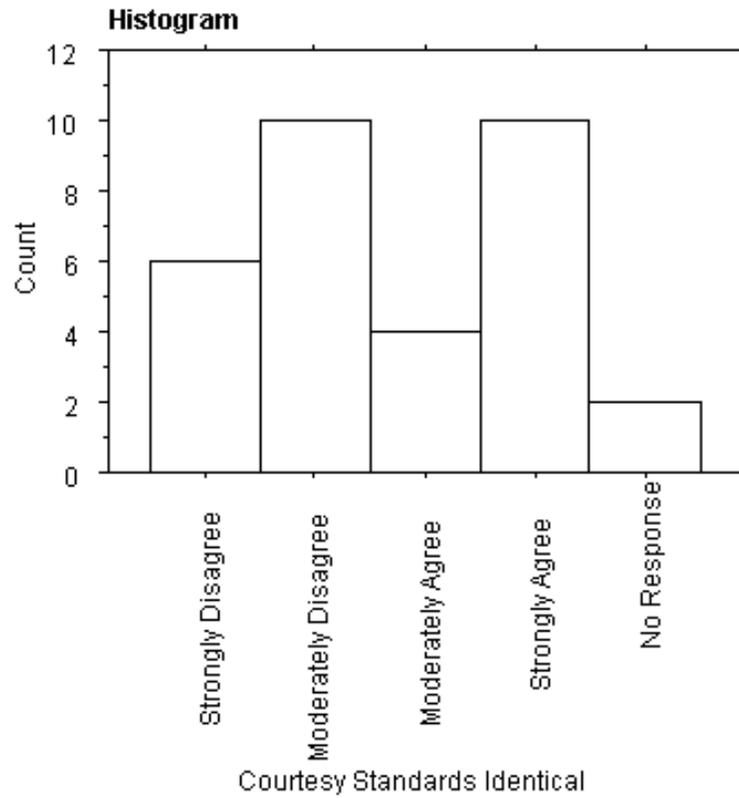


Figure 3.

Frequency Distribution and Histogram for Easier to Misinterpret Directions Online (Item 13)

Frequency Distribution for Misinterpret Directions

	Count	Rel. Freq.	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	.125	12.500
Moderately Disagree	12	.375	37.500
Moderately Agree	13	.406	40.625
Strongly Agree	3	.094	9.375
Total	32	1.000	100.000

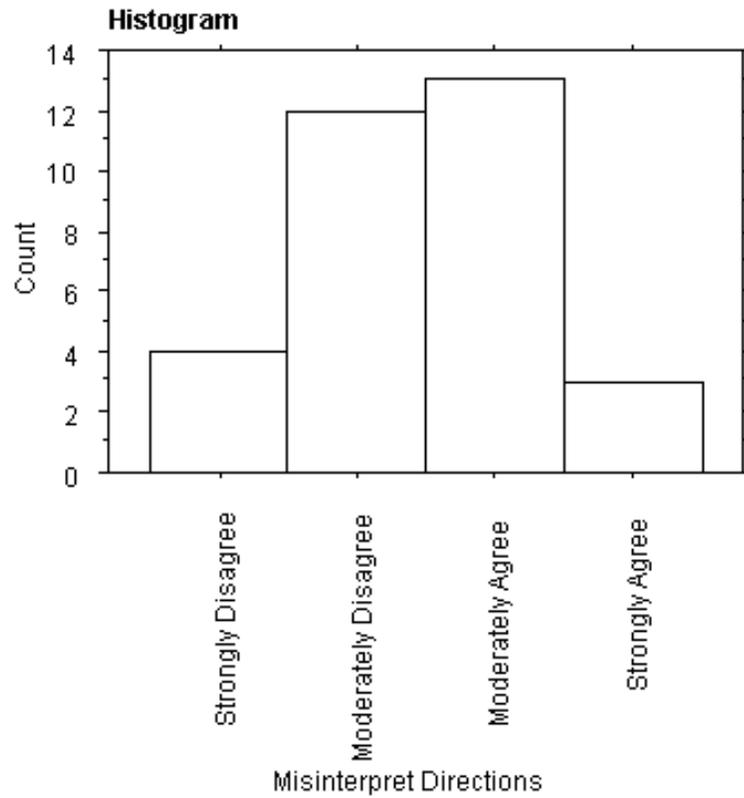
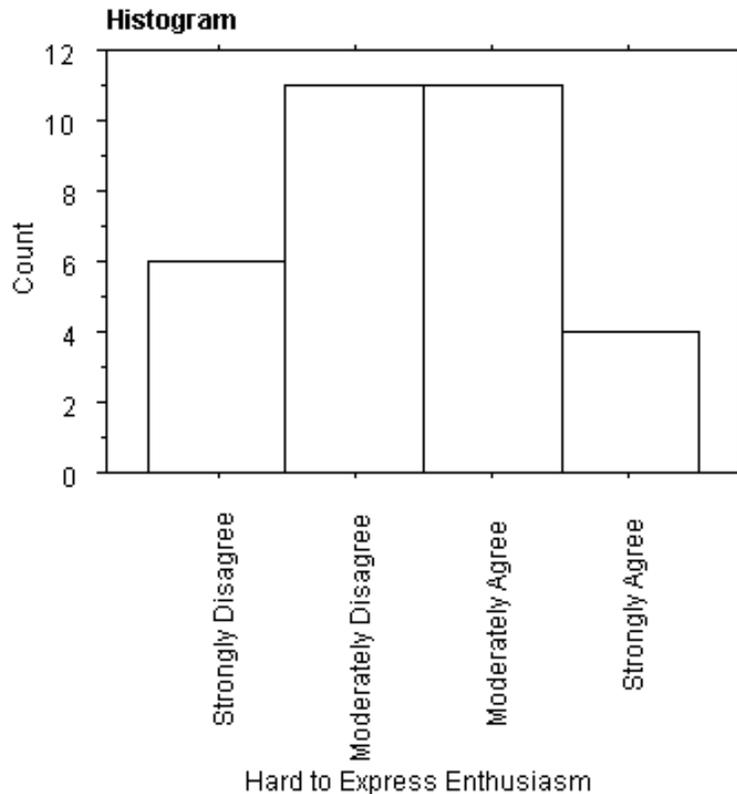


Figure 4.

Frequency Distribution and Histogram for Harder to Express Enthusiasm Online (Item 14)

Frequency Distribution for Hard to Express Enthusiasm

	Count	Rel. Freq.	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	.188	18.750
Moderately Disagree	11	.344	34.375
Moderately Agree	11	.344	34.375
Strongly Agree	4	.125	12.500
Total	32	1.000	100.000



In an attempt to account for these apparent splits of opinion, each of the preceding survey items was cross-classified with each of the following items:

- whether it is more challenging to communicate online (Item 1);
- whether the student has expressed missing the face-to-face traditional instructional environment (Item 16);
- whether the lack of visual cues in the online environment makes it more difficult for an instructor to get a 'read' of his/her students (Item 17);
- whether it is more tempting to respond with anger to an online message than to communication in the traditional face-to-face classroom (Item 18);
- whether the instructor believes that certain subject matter cannot be effectively taught in the Web-based or Web-enhanced classroom (Item 20);
- the level of student taught (graduate, undergraduate or both).

To facilitate interpretation, the 'agree' and 'disagree' response choices were collapsed across 'strongly' and 'moderately' levels. Non-responses (missing values) were subsequently omitted from the analysis.

Given the exploratory and descriptive nature of the present study, it was not the researchers'

intention to interpret the resulting chi square statistics in an inferential or hypothesis-testing sense. For purposes of identifying variables that may be related to the splits of attitude depicted in Figures 1 through 4, during the second phase of the analysis the researchers sought to identify all contingency tables whose related chi-square statistic had an associated level of significance of 0.05 or less.

Of the preceding two-way cross-classifications of survey responses, the three pairings shown in Table 2 yielded associated chi square levels of significance of 0.05 or less.

Table 2.

Statistically Significant Cross-Classifications of Survey Responses and Associated Test Statistics (Chi Square and Related Alpha Level)

Cross-Classified Survey Items	Chi Square	Associated p-value
“Lack of Visual Cues Online” (Item 17) and “Subject Matter Counts re Optimal Classroom Format” (Item 20)	8.887	0.003
“Challenge to Communicate Online” (Item 1) and “Easier to Misinterpret Directions Online” (Item 13)	7.744	0.005
“Challenge to Communicate Online” (Item 1) and “Harder to Express Enthusiasm Online” (Item 14)	4.144	0.042

Table 3.

**“Lack of Visual Cues Online” (Item 17)
Cross-Classified by “Subject Matter Counts re Optimal Classroom Format” Item 13)**

Response	Disagree	Agree	Totals
Disagree	6	6	12
Agree	4	12	20
Totals	7	25	32

As shown in Table 3, subjects who felt there is a relative lack of visual cues online also believed that subject matter counts in selecting the optimum classroom format (i.e., traditional face-to-face, Web-based, Web-enhanced, interactive television). This is reflected in the second row and second column of Table 3. However, for those subjects who disagreed with the premise that the online teaching environment lacks visual cues (first row), they were split in their beliefs as to whether subject matter counts in terms of the optimum classroom format (first row, first and second columns, respectively).

Table 4.

**“Challenge to Communicate Online” (Item 1)
Cross-Classified by “Easier to Misinterpret Directions Online” (Item 13)**

Response	Disagree	Agree	Totals
Disagree	10	3	13
Agree	4	12	16
Totals	14	15	29

As shown in Table 4, instructors who believed it is more challenging to communicate online also felt that it is easier for online students to misinterpret directions, and vice versa (diagonal items, first two rows).

Table 5.

**“Harder to Express Enthusiasm Online” (Item 14)
Cross-Classified by “Challenge to Communicate Online” (Item 1)**

Response	Disagree	Agree	Totals
Disagree	9	5	14
Agree	4	11	15
Totals	13	16	29

Table 5 shows that instructors who felt that it is more challenging to communicate online also believed that it is harder for students to express enthusiasm in the online classroom, and vice versa (diagonal items, first two rows).

Discussion

Table 6 summarizes those areas of online communication where there was relative agreement and/or a predominant direction of opinion by respondents, as well as the areas of remaining controversy (i.e., splits in agreement vis-à-vis disagreement with the corresponding survey item).

Table 6.

Areas of Relative Agreement and Controversy with Respect to Issues of Civility in Online Communication

Areas of Relative Agreement or Predominant Direction of Opinion	Areas of Controversy
It is more challenging to express emotions online;	Whether or not the online instructor felt adequately prepared for online classroom communication;
It is easier to misinterpret written communication online;	Whether standards of courteous communication should be identical regardless of classroom format (i.e., traditional face-to-face; Web-based; Web-enhanced; interactive television based);
New online students need help with communication;	Whether it is easier for students to misinterpret directions in the online classroom;
Students are comfortable sharing private communication with their online instructor;	Whether it is harder for students to express enthusiasm in the online classroom.
Lack of visual cues makes it harder to ‘read’ one’s online students;	
It is more tempting to respond with anger to online messages than in the traditional face-to-face classroom;	
It is not easier for shy students to withdraw in the online classroom;	
It is not too inhibiting to express candid emotions online;	
Subject matter counts vis-à-vis optimal	

classroom format (i.e., traditional face-to-face; Web-based; Web-enhanced; interactive television based)	
--	--

In addition, an online student is one who may be characterized by the following profile:

- Tends to focus on issues rather than personalities in expressing disagreement online;
- Is not likely to engage in flame wars with other students;
- Sometimes types in all capital letters in e-mail messages and/or online postings;
- Sometimes uses emoticons (online shorthand) appropriately in such communications;
- Sometimes misses the face-to-face classroom environment.

Study results suggest that some civility concerns may be more potential than actual in nature. On the one hand, instructors are more likely to believe that online communication is more challenging and that it is more tempting to respond with anger to an online communication than to a verbal communication. On the other hand, they have rarely had to intervene to stop flame wars. Students have tended to focus on issues when expressing disagreement, rather than resorting to personal attacks. Instructors have also shared that their students tend to be able to express enthusiasm through their online communications. In addition, their students are not shy about participating in instructional interaction in general, nor about sharing private and candid communications with their instructors. These results suggest that such student candor in expressing emotions needs to continue to be positively channeled to prevent misunderstandings in communication.

Online students sometimes type in all capital letters, which implies shouting according to rules of netiquette. At the same time, some students are using emoticons (online symbolism to depict emotions) appropriately. It should not be automatically assumed that typing in all caps is intended to convey anger. For instance, this action could be due to not knowing how to enlarge the font on the screen in order to view one's typing clearly.

The above-listed areas of controversy regarding online communication, particularly the uncertainty as to whether standards of communication should be identical regardless of classroom format, and whether online instructors felt adequately prepared for the communication issues they faced, may be reflective of two factors:

1. The relative newness of teaching and learning online. Draves (2002) has likened our current state-of-the-art Web-based instruction to being at the Model-T stage of the evolution of the automobile. While we have come a long way and continue to make progress, at the same time we still have much to learn about teaching and learning online. Furthermore, with regard to online communication, Draves has stated: "We don't know how to talk online yet." Future research might continue this exploratory and descriptive line of inquiry via a needs assessment to identify instructors' "wish lists" concerning orientation to online instruction; and in particular, what sorts of preparation they would like to have in order to successfully moderate communication within the online classroom.
2. The perceived relationship of specific subject matter taught to the classroom format. The majority of study subjects felt strongly that not every subject area can be taught successfully in the Web-based format and that some subject areas were more suited to the traditional face-to-face classroom environment. In the second phase of the quantitative analysis, subject matter appeared to be a more robust explanatory variable than level taught (graduate, undergraduate, or both). The current study sample spanned a variety of individual subject matter areas. This may also account for some online students sharing with their instructors that they missed the traditional face-to-face classroom setting. Future research should attempt to identify the optimal match of individual instructional topics to the classroom format (i.e., traditional group face-to-face; Web-based; Web-enhanced; interactive television based). A potential starting point for such a line of research might be to test Draves' hypothesis that 21st century instruction will consist of a blend of 20% all-online, 20% in-person and 60% mixed-mode interaction (2002).

Additional research should identify the perspectives of the other key stakeholder group that is partner to the online communication: namely, the students. What differences, if any, exist between students' perceptions of issues of civility in online communication and those of their instructors? Finally, the reasons behind both instructor and teacher perceptions should be explored in depth via qualitative data collection procedures, whether through open-ended survey questions, individual interviews, or group interviews with both instructors and students. This methodology would elicit subjects' first-person accounts—their 'stories' of their experiences with online teaching and learning. Researchers could then determine the recurrent patterns, themes or trends regarding successes, problems and recommendations for improvement regarding online communication issues.

Concluding Comments

Since its inception, technologically mediated instruction has begun to show great promise as a viable alternative classroom format. Central to all successful instructional activities is courteous communication among students and instructors. Courteous communication sets the stage for the formation of a genuine scholarly community where all participants can feel safe and secure in higher-order learning. Issues of civility in communication therefore warrant continued investigation in the cyber-classroom of the 21st century.

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Appendix A.

Civility in Online Communication Survey

The following survey deals with issues in online communication that you and your Web course students have experienced. It should only take five to ten minutes to complete.

Your Experience in Online Teaching:

Total number of semesters you've taught online: _____

Number of *different* online courses you've taught: _____

Your online students are (please check *one* response below):

_____ Graduate

_____ Undergraduate

_____ Both

My online students and I use the following to communicate (please check *all* that apply):

_____ E-mail between individual student and instructor

_____ E-mail among students

_____ Class-wide listserv

_____ Virtual Conference Center (VCC)

_____ Subscriptions to existing Internet listserv(s)

_____ Other (please specify): _____

Attitudes and Behaviors in Online Communication

Directions: For each of the following items, please check *only one* response:

1. It is more challenging to express emotions via the written word than in face-to-face communication.

_____ Strongly Disagree

_____ Moderately Disagree

_____ Moderately Agree

_____ Strongly Agree

2. It is easier to misinterpret written communication than face-to-face communication.

_____ Strongly Disagree

_____ Moderately Disagree

_____ Moderately Agree

_____ Strongly Agree

3. I felt adequately prepared for online communication prior to teaching my first course on the Web.

Strongly Disagree

Moderately Disagree

Moderately Agree

Strongly Agree

4. Standards of courteous communication are identical for all courses regardless of format: online, face-to-face, or interactive television-based.

Strongly Disagree

Moderately Disagree

Moderately Agree

Strongly Agree

5. New online students need help in learning how to communicate courteously in the Web classroom.

Strongly Disagree

Moderately Disagree

Moderately Agree

Strongly Agree

6. My students have typed in all caps in their written communications.

Always

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

Don't Know

7. My students express disagreement in online communications by focusing on issues rather than attacking personalities.

Always

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

Don't Know

8. My students have deleted e-mail from their instructor before reading.

Always

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

___ Don't Know

9. My students have deleted e-mail from one another before reading.

___ Always

___ Frequently

___ Sometimes

___ Never

___ Don't Know

10. I have had to intervene to stop flame wars (angry exchanges) among my students in their online communications.

___ Always

___ Frequently

___ Sometimes

___ Never

11. My students use emoticons (smiley faces and other Internet shorthand to express emotions) appropriately in their online communications.

___ Always

___ Frequently

___ Sometimes

___ Never

___ Don't Know

12. Online communication makes it easier for shy students to withdraw.

___ Strongly Disagree

___ Moderately Disagree

___ Moderately Agree

___ Strongly Agree

13. It is easier for students to misinterpret class directions in the online environment than in traditional face-to-face classes.

___ Strongly Disagree

___ Moderately Disagree

___ Moderately Agree

___ Strongly Agree

14. It is harder to express enthusiasm via written online communication than in the traditional face-to-face environment.

___ Strongly Disagree

___ Moderately Disagree

___ Moderately Agree

___ Strongly Agree

15. My students are comfortable in sharing private communication with me via e-mail.

___ Strongly Disagree

___ Moderately Disagree

___ Moderately Agree

___ Strongly Agree

16. My online students have shared with me that they miss the face-to-face communication of the traditional classroom.

___ Always

___ Frequently

___ Sometimes

___ Never

17. The lack of visual cues in the online teaching/learning environment makes it difficult for me to get a 'read' of my students.

___ Strongly Disagree

___ Moderately Disagree

___ Moderately Agree

___ Strongly Agree

18. It is more tempting to respond with anger to an online message than in the traditional face-to-face mode of communication.

___ Strongly Disagree

___ Moderately Disagree

___ Moderately Agree

___ Strongly Agree

19. The online communication format makes it too inhibiting to express candid opinions.

___ Strongly Disagree

___ Moderately Disagree

___ Moderately Agree

___ Strongly Agree

20. There are some subject areas for which the online classroom is not an adequate substitute for face-to-face communication.

___ Strongly Disagree

___ Moderately Disagree

___ Moderately Agree

___ Strongly Agree

Three things my students and I do especially well in our online communications are:



Three areas where my students and I could use improvement in online communications are:

Thank you very much for taking the time to share your thoughts on online communication with us!

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Research Advice for Today's Online Doctoral Students

Brent Muirhead

Introduction

Distance education students are naturally anxious about completing their doctoral dissertations. The task is challenging because students must do the majority of the work apart from having face-to-face meetings with their committee members. The focus of this month's column will highlight ways to conduct an effective literature review.

Problem Formulation Stage

The problem formulation stage is the first step in the research process because it establishes the basis for the entire project. On the surface, identifying a problem to investigate appears quite simple because their area host of social, business, educational issues to study. In reality, it is one of the more difficult aspects of the research process. Students have an assortment of ideas about possible research ideas but are not sure what area merits their attention. Graduate students need to devote time to selecting a research problem that is significant because their study can have positive impact on their academic and professional life. Gay & Airasian (1996) observe that students usually start with a general research question. Then, they will need to devote time narrowing their focus of their investigation. The problem formulation process can be frustrating because it sometimes takes awhile to identify a relevant educational or social issue that can be handled by students with definite time and financial restraints.

Research problems exist because people are perplexed about an issue (i.e. the problem of homeless people). Often, individuals believe there is not enough available information to answer their question. The absence of knowledge can lead people to study a topic. How do students become aware of educational or social problems that need further investigation? Merriam and Simpson (1995) state, "The process of problem identification involves refining and narrowing the topic of interest. This process can be helped along by reading widely on the topic, talking with other people, especially those who are familiar with the area, observing closely situations pertinent to the problem, taking notes as thoughts on the topic occur to you, and so on (p. 17)."

Conducting an Effective Literature Review

It is somewhat comforting to know that there are no formulas to creating realistic research problems. Rather, students should be encouraged to be use their creativity and common sense during their selection of a research problem. The literature review is a valuable opportunity to take a critical view of research studies that are related to your work. Leedy & Ormrod (2001, p. 70) highlight the benefits of a review of the literature:

- It will increase your confidence in your topic if you can find that others have an interest in this topic and have invested time, effort, and resources in studying it.
- It can provide you with new ideas and approaches that may not have occurred to you.
- It can inform you about other researchers conducting work in this area---individuals whom you may wish to contact for advice or feedback.



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- It can show you how others handled methodological and design issues in studies similar to your own.
- It can reveal sources of data that you may not have known existed.
- It can introduce you to measurement tools that other researchers have developed and used effectively.
- It can reveal methods of dealing with problem situations that may be similar to difficulties you are facing.
- It can help you interpret and make sense of your findings and, ultimately, help you to tie your results to the work of those who have preceded you.

It is important to realize that the literature review is not just a summary or concise description of various studies. The review must identify vital relationships between different studies while showing how it relates to your project. Students can avoid writing a superficial review by using critical thinking techniques that reflect an in-depth of analysis of the subject matter. The Internet offers sites that have a diversity of perspectives and their credibility must be evaluated like printed materials. Browne, Freeman & Williamson (2000) note “there is no governing board or editorial staff whose responsibility is to ascertain that Internet sites well-informed conclusions or even truthful statements (pp. 395-396).”

An Example of Literature Review Material

The author has taught numerous graduate online research classes for the University of Phoenix. Students appreciate having concrete examples that help them understand important research principles and practices. The author has used the following example of a literature review on moral theories to provide insights into this vital research task.

Contemporary writers have heavily criticized Kohlberg’s cognitive-developmental theory. Woolfolk (1990) notes that his stage theory fails to show how people make moral choices. Often, people will operate within several stages within a moral episode. Additionally, the sequence of stages reflects a bias for Western values such as individualism. Some cultures place a greater emphasis on family or group oriented decision-making. Feldman (1997) raises concerns that his theory does a better job of describing moral judgments and struggles when predicting actual behavior. For instance, one experiment revealed that students who were considered to be operating in the postconventional stage (highest moral category), 70% of them were found cheating on a task. The study reveals that knowing what is right or wrong does not always translate into positive moral behavior. Woolfolk (1990) cites a research study of 1,100 high school students who gave three reasons for cheating: “too lazy to study, fear of failure, and parental pressure for good grades” (p. 108). Every moral developmental theory must deal with the fact that individuals can have ethical knowledge but choose to ignore it.

The studies cited demonstrated various dimensions of investigating moral theories. A valid and logical question for researchers is how can they evaluate moral development theories before encouraging others to use them in schools and business settings? Moral developmental literature contains an advocacy element that sometimes complicates the reader’s ability to evaluate the educational merit of every theory. Individuals need to devote time and energy into studying the validity of moral development theories.

Thomas (1997) has done extensive investigations into analyzing moral theories by asking specific questions and here are several that are quite relevant:

1. *Moral versus immoral*: from what kinds of evidence and modes of investigation does the theory draw its substance?
2. *Sources of evidence*: what guidelines do the theory offer for deciding whether a thought or act is moral or immoral?
3. *Moral development reality*: what is the theories conception of reality?
4. *Length of development*: how is the length of a person’s moral development calculated, and is

such development more intense at one time of life than at another?

5. *Personality structure*: what components of personality are important for moral development, and how do these components function?
6. *Directions, processes, and stages*: how is the development defined in terms of directions, processes and /or stages of growth?
7. *Individual differences*: what sorts of differences between individuals are regarded as significant, and what are the causes of those differences?
8. *Nomenclature*: what terminology used in the theory is especially important?
9. *Popularity*: who subscribes to the theory and why? (pp. 3-4)

Tips on Writing Your Literature Review

Teachers need to remind their graduate students to always focus their literature review on the major purposes of their project. The brief example involving moral theories revealed that the writer had two primary goals:

- Highlight problems or flaws with contemporary moral theories.
- Stress the importance of analyzing moral theories to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.

Students should always read research materials with a definite purpose in mind.. They must learn to discern what ideas and information are worthy of being put into their review. Then, decisions must be made about whether to briefly mention the information, include a more detailed discussion of the data or not mention the study in their review. Students should read information and note whether the articles have similarities or differences from their study (i.e. find a gap in the information). The reading process will provide the framework to clearly define the research problem by narrowing the focus of the study. Also, the investigation of materials might involve locating articles or a completed dissertation that might operate as a model for their project (Varekka & Fenn, 2001).

Yet, students should learn to integrate writing into their daily plans. Writing rough drafts provides another way of thinking through issues and reflecting upon the information. Students who delay their writing until they have completed their intensive reading of materials are risking the possibility of forgetting valuable insights (Asian Institute of Technology, 2002).

Students should have a basic plan to implement and effectively complete their review of the literature. The review should constantly remind the reader that the literature is related to the research problem. Leedy & Ormrod (2001, p. 84) suggest practical ways to develop a synthesis of diverse studies:

- Compare and contrast varying theoretical perspectives on the topic.
- Show how approaches to the topic have changed over time.
- Describe general trends in research findings.
- Identify discrepant or contradictory findings, and suggest possible explanations for such discrepancies.
- Identify general themes that run throughout the literature.

Conclusion

Today's online doctoral students must devise a relevant plan to conduct their dissertation research. The literature review is a key element in the research process. Ultimately, students should create a meaningful summary of studies that highlights their relationship to the research problem. A well-written review will provide new knowledge to the academic community and establish a basis for future journal publications.

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Editor's Note: This is the second of three reports on a collaborative distance learning program involving Duquesne University in the United States and University of Ulster in Ireland. The third report will be published in the August issue of USDLA Journal.

Setting Everyone Up for Success - Part II

International Program: Duquesne University and University of Ulster

Linda Wojnar

Moving forward from our writing in the April 2002 Issue, the focus shifts toward the middle phase of the International Masters in Instructional Technology Program: Distance Learning Strand that partners Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA with the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland.

The courses that will be discussed in this Issue are:

1. Technology and Education, which was taught in a weekend face-to-face format by Duquesne University faculty and covers integrating technology into the classroom,
2. Management of Instructional Technology- taught jointly between Duquesne University faculty and Northern Ireland administration, and
3. Multimedia Literacy-taught in Northern Ireland by University of Ulster faculty

The Dean of the University of Ulster and two tutors from the University will share their experiences from the summer visit to Pittsburgh. Two participants will describe their experiences of the courses listed above.

Since the focus of the programme was distance learning, the International Masters was intentionally designed so that the location of the courses would rotate between Northern Ireland and Pittsburgh. The programme was also designed to demonstrate teaching using a variety of teaching technologies and methodologies:

1. Face-to-face,
2. Hybrid (a combination of classes taught on-site and online),
3. Totally online using learning management systems that supported asynchronous (participants responding at different times) and synchronous platforms (everyone online at the same time),
4. Videoconferencing,
5. Individual and Team Teaching

Only by participants experiencing these instructional technologies and methodologies first-hand as participants and as end-users will they know which ones to select for their own teaching.

The August Issue will discuss:

1. The holistic approach to the instructional design of the Distance Learning programme,
2. The social planning before and during the summer residential by the Ireland Institute,



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3. The Pittsburgh residential component,
4. The culminating stages of the programme highlighting excerpts of all participant course work, transcript dialogues, case stories, photos, graduation, and
5. The final programme assessment and evaluation by Duquesne University, the University of Ulster, and the Northern Ireland Government

Consider the high stakes for every person involved in this innovative initiative:

1. Designing a programme's framework and instruction that passes the test of quality content in distance and online learning and context relevance adapted to a specific country and evaluated by three stakeholders: Duquesne University, the University of Ulster, and the Northern Ireland Government, and
2. Projects that need to be created by each participant that will move their country forward in ICT

If they are fortunate, educators will experience this magnitude of instructional design, pedagogy, and participation found in our experiences at least once in their lifetime. As the programme and the process progress, the emerging spirit of the experience is life changing.

The First Instructional Technology Course: GITED 511, Technology and Education

Larry Tomei

Although I spent 22 years in the US military, Northern Ireland was to be my first experience traveling across the Atlantic. My previous overseas encounters were in Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea. The lessons learned during this first instructional technology course offering would entail traveling to new locations, revisiting my own personally teaching styles, and modifying (on the fly mind you) the very foundations of the instructional technology program and the courses that comprise it. A most exhilarating side benefit was the exploration of a beautiful country and an extraordinary people – or maybe that should be an extraordinary country and a beautiful people – that is Northern Ireland.

Upon my arrival at the Belfast Airport, a courteous agent tried unconvincingly to offer this American a choice of rental cars – all with steering wheels on the wrong side and left-handed standard shift column. I had never driven on the left side of the road, never purchased gasoline by the liter, and I certainly had no idea what a “roundabout” was. So, I was having none of that. We eventually found common ground with an automatic transmission and a bright green shamrock hanging predominantly from the mirror. As I look back on it, I now firmly believe that the shamrock must be an international warning signal for first-time visitors since most of my fellow drivers were quite courteous while providing a particularly wide berth for my right-hand turns.

How many times I have told my own students to document their learning experience, collect the most important artifacts, and showcase successful learning outcomes? I was so excited to visit Northern Ireland on my own for the first time that I completely forgot to follow my own advice. So, I am particularly appreciative of this opportunity to share the experiences surrounding my instructional experience in the Northern Ireland Programme in Educational Technology. As the story unfolds, it will address the pre-course agenda (preparations for Northern Ireland), the conduct of the first instructional technology course, and the interpersonal dimensions of offering an international program of study.

Pre-Course Agenda.

I arrived in Belfast the morning before the first day of class. It was agreed via email and telephone calls that the first instructional technology course would be taught in a three-weekend format using all-day sessions Friday and Saturday sessions. However, before this initial IT course was even to begin, issues with the first elective course arose. At home, we insist that all first-semester participants enroll in one non-IT, graduate-level, education foundation course that prepares the new participant for the educational psychology elements of the program. Since the Program in Instructional Technology emphasizes instruction as much as it does technology (one of the reasons the program is so successful) participants must be well-grounded in principles of teaching and learning. Most participants opt for the theories of teaching and learning course to fulfill these requirements and so, with the University of Ulster as our partner, we decided to place the UU “best practices” course first in our modified program of studies. However, Northern Ireland participants expected a healthy dose of immediate technology and were taken aback by what appeared to be a non-essential course in educational fundamentals. Lesson Learned #1: Looking back, we would certainly begin our international program with a technology course. We would most certainly have included the best practices course in the program of studies; just a little later in the schedule.

After some synchronous discussions, the first Instructional Technology course selected was GITED 511, Technology and Education. This course lays the foundation for the Program in Instructional Technology and “levels the playing field” with respect to a common understanding of what constitutes instructional technology in the classroom. A discussion of the instructional elements of the course follows.

Instructional Elements of GITED 511.

In 511, participants are introduced to established principles of teaching and learning followed by an examination of various technologies found in today’s classrooms.

Instructional Technologies.

Each participant selects a different technology for further study. Some choose laptops, others decide to explore LCD projectors, still others opt for handheld personal digital assistants (PDAs), wireless labs, special education adaptive technologies, or educational software packages. Each participant is required to exam the components and applications of the technology in light of two excellent articles explicating the strengths and weaknesses of the technology with respect to learning styles and teaching strategies. Participants finalize their reports and offer 12-15 minute presentations of their findings. By the conclusion of this exercise, participants are introduced to, in the case of the Northern Ireland cohort, 17 different technologies. The purpose of the assignment is to garner a respect for the field of instructional technology as more than just desktop computers.

Journals, Leaders, and Standards.

Participants are expected to understand the impact that instructional technology has had on education as evidenced in the major technology journals, instructional leaders, and professional standards. The standards explored resulted in the second lesson learned. Lesson Learned #2: international students, while cognizant of American leadership in technology, are often more widely read than their US counterparts. They are often just as familiar with European and Asian technology journals, cognizant of a wider range of experts, and accustomed to a broader application of accepted technology standards. A successful, off-campus, international program invites instructors to incorporate the journals, leaders, and standards of the home country.

The Technology Facade.

GITED 511, as a matter of course, delves into an aspect of technology programs first introduced in our program. We call it the Technology Facade. Over the years since the program’s inception, participants have shared a variety of stories and scenarios revealing the health of technology programs in their particular schools and organizations. A technology program is still viewed by many as just another undertaking during an already over-tasked school day. Some describe their

computer facility as a locked fortress accessible only to the computer teacher and her chosen legions. Based on a book by the same name (Tomei, 2002), participants survey their institutions and assess their technology programs. In short classroom presentations, they offer qualitative rankings running the gamut from Outstanding to Satisfactory programs, to Modest, Moderate, and Severe phases of the facade. An outstanding rating is rare; modest and moderate evaluations are the norm. Objectively documenting an institution's strengths and weaknesses may be an issue for international participants. While Americans often downplay a poor rating, attributing low scores to a variety of factors outside their personal control, the international participant considers the many nuances of their culture. Lesson Learned #3: An international cohort should be allowed to develop their own qualitative scores, rankings, and interpretations for the Technology Facade. Their own checklist would be more appropriate.

Interpersonal Dimension of Teaching.

The first weekend of the course was conducted in relative comfort of a local hotel seminar room.

In the Classroom.

The formal atmosphere of a university classroom, plus the traveling demands of participants selected from locations throughout Northern Ireland, had the potential of placing unnecessary barriers to the development of interpersonal relationships that would ultimately spell success or failure of the program. The Friday and Saturday concentrated format offered considerable time to get acquainted. Participants remained overnight at the hotel and there is nothing quite like an unhurried, Northern Ireland dinner. Lesson Learned #4: Set the stage for an international program in the context of a relaxed, personalized, classroom environment.

On the Road.

Interpersonal relationships began in the hotel seminar room, but they flourished in the offices, classrooms, and workplaces of the cohort members. Over the course of the three weeks, I managed to add some 2,000 kilometers in literally all road leading from Belfast. Personally, I found the inter-country highway system easy to follow and very well posted for the uninitiated. During those visits, I was invited to an truly inspiring spring musical courtesy of Ballyclare High School, and the most endearing student performance from St Brigid's elementary school. In her previous visit Linda Wojnar had visited the same school and returned with her stories of their Beatle's rendition and Irish folk songs. So, I was prepared with my digital camera to capture the entire production number. I considered these visits the highlights of my Northern Ireland experience. Actually, I had the time of my life -- until one of the first graders asked me if I was Dr. Wojnar's father!

In the Workplace.

Visiting cohort members in their workplace allowed me the opportunity to grow as an educator in the country, culture, and spirit of this international community. Lesson Learned #5: When commencing an international program in education, begin by concentrating on the informal interpersonal relationships. Ultimately, the program will sell itself. Individuals create the interpersonal atmosphere for it to be successful.

Conclusions.

The first instructional technology course was a tremendous success by any measure. As program coordinator, my visit to Northern Ireland solidified the relationship with this cohort of 17 professional educators. The visit resulted in four key lessons learned. First, begin a technology program with a technology course but do not underestimate the importance of a solid understanding of teaching and learning principles. Second, it is incumbent upon an instructor to become thoroughly familiar with the host country and all aspects (including variations in terminology, research, and implementation) of the content area under study. Third, anticipate

modifications to course materials, student performance expectations, and certainly accepted assessment practices. Fourth, consider a mixer both formally in the classroom and informally to set the atmosphere for a personalized program of study. And finally, fifth, establish the interpersonal relationships as soon as possible in the program. In the end, they are a truer measure of a program's success than any grades or participant tasks.

IMScET GITED 514

John Anderson

GITED 514 – ‘Managing Education Technology’ was a good example of an original Duquesne University module, taught by Jerry Slamecka, Assistant Superintendent from Butler County near Pittsburgh, as ‘Managing Instructional Technology’, which was adapted in collaboration with John Anderson, Education Technology Strategist from Northern Ireland, to marry the study of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) policy and management in the US and in Northern Ireland into one module.

For the Northern Ireland participants, the study of the legislative requirements and expectations in the United Kingdom and in Northern Ireland, which now has its own jurisdiction for education, was important. It mattered that the module was revised to incorporate British content, however, the exploration of US policy and management practice brought a valuable outside perspective and a ‘reality-check’ to local Ulster assumptions and preoccupations; a chance to stand-back and look at ourselves from a distance, through the eyes of another education service, and from a different cultural context.

As the fifth module in the series, almost at the halfway point in the International Masters program, it was timely for the participants to set their study and development work in the design and development of online applications in the context of the educational policy environment of Northern Ireland. And what better place to engage in an extended two-day residential study session than a hotel in the most historic of Ulster port of Carrickfergus, stepping off point for the Plantation of Ulster back in the 13th century, and in sight of one of the oldest surviving Norman castles in the British Isles.

The module was valuable for everyone, teachers included, but especially for those participants with less prior experience in management or in strategic planning. Perspectives and issues covered included: strategic and policy planning at regional and state levels and at local and county administrative levels, and their interdependencies; vision creation and goal setting, especially at school level; budgeting and procurement issues; public-private partnerships and the concept of ‘total cost of ownership; and strategic review and evaluation.

The single assignment, to evaluate the existing government strategy for education technology in Northern Ireland, pulled together all of the strands of the module and was conducted by four groups of course participants. Respectively, the groups each examined a separate dimension of the strategy:

- Curriculum (teaching and learning; assessment and accreditation)
- Teachers (initial teacher education; induction and continuing professional development)
- Management and quality assurance (policy-school senior management teams and school governors; inspectorate)
- Infrastructure (computer deployment, networking and access; user support)

The collective reports produced by the groups were both an authentic and a high-value exercise, and have subsequently been an important contribution to the strategic review being conducted for the Northern Ireland Assembly in early summer of 2002.

GITED 514 was notable in its methodology as well. It was the first time in the Masters program when face-to-face and online methods of study were combined to teach a single module. The work

initiated by the study weekend, which Jerry Slamecka and John Anderson double-headed, was continued online over a further period of six weeks.

Jane Healey's infamous book "TITLE" provided the stimulus for an ongoing asynchronous discussion online between Jerry and the participants. On a weekly basis, Jerry posted provocative quotations from Healey's text and requested a response from each participant on various assumptions about computers and learning. It was noticeable that what began as a limited 'question and response' form of dialogue developed into a more open and evaluative debate as participants began to identify the lack of academic rigor and heavy dependence on anecdote in the Healey's thesis, and to challenge its worth as a critical text on the role of computers in the teaching and learning process.

Participants would later identify the importance of face-to-face group work preceding the use of online communications as an important guiding principle learnt from their experience of this module.

A final, serendipitous, opportunity arose when the module was being planned which added another layer of value to an already rich international study of ICT schools policy. John Anderson was coincidentally planning a joint Japan/Northern Ireland ICT schools policy symposium, which built upon 10 years of links between teachers and pupils in Japan and Northern Ireland. A delegation of the most senior education and ICT policy makers from the Japanese Ministry of Education (Monbusho) visited Ulster in the August week prior to Jerry Slamecka's Carrickfergus weekend. The symposium mounted a detailed series of comparative and analytical presentations of ICT schools policy in Japan and Northern Ireland. The Master's participants attended the sessions and brought high quality active engagement to the discussions that took place with the Japanese delegates.

GITED 514 succeeded in setting academic and practical endeavors into an educational policy context. It was successful in improving the understanding of this group of exceptional educators in the importance of policy evaluation and review. It also ensured that their engagement in innovation in online teaching and learning was set firmly in the context of their critical understanding of the priorities, needs and challenges facing the education service in the province.

Our Pittsburgh Experience – Steeling Ourselves

Linda Clarke and Victor McNair

Preparations

As Lecturers in the School of Education at the University of Ulster we had both been asked by our Head of School, Prof. Anne Moran, to work on the development of modules of a MSc course in ICT. It was hoped that this course would play a major role in the Education Technology (ET) Strategy, which was to revolutionise ET in Northern Ireland. At that time we had no idea just how revolutionary the first incarnation of this course would be. The early indications were promising - Victor had been involved in interviewing the student cohort and we both met with Dr Linda Wojnar on her planning visit to the University of Ulster. Linda seemed to embody an engaging combination of warmth and practicality, vision and pragmatism, pure gold ...and tensile steel. She shared her vision for the course with us and, during our discussions, suggested that we should (must) come to Pittsburgh for the last week of the NI cohort's work there. There were two reasons why this was important for us although we did not realise this at the time. The first was that we needed to experience the new culture of online learning that the cohort were going through so that we could effectively engage with them back in NI. The second, and perhaps more important reason, was that we ourselves needed to develop our thinking about the nature of online learning. These experiences would, in turn, allow us to be part of the new paradigm for ICT-based teaching

and learning in NI. It worked.

Pittsburgh

Landing in Pittsburgh in mid-July 2001, a warm welcome awaited us, provided by the Ireland Institute, the Faculty of Education at Duquesne University and the International Masters Cohort. The latter group was, in equal measure, both exhausted and exhilarated by their Pittsburgh Experience. Those who were to be our students invited us to participate in the online lessons that they had developed on the Duquesne Blackboard server. These lessons focused on a range of topics reflecting the diverse backgrounds of the participants and hence addressed a broad spectrum of teaching and learning needs and opportunities for Northern Ireland education. . The common professionalism, along with the desire to push their understanding of the educational potential of the technology, seemed to provide an excellent springboard for the advancement of online learning. The educational use of the Blackboard synchronous chat facility was new to most of the group was and it was this quick-fire aspect of participation that banished our jet lag.

During the brief visit, we strongly sensed that we were engaged in something that was set to change the face of education in NI. We were made very aware of the cohort member's perceptions that they would have to be the instigators and facilitators of change 'back home'. As they returned to their 'traditional' teaching and learning contexts, they would face colleagues and students who would present challenges, barriers, fears and indeed, prejudices about online learning.

As lecturers, we were encouraged to feel very much part of the Education Faculty of the University of Duquesne and our time there allowed us to work together in a way which is best described in Larry Tomei's phrase 'ratcheting up of the collaborative' (USDLA, April 2002). Linda Wojnar provided private tutorials where we realised that her oft-stated commitment to 'setting everyone up for success' was more than rhetoric, more than sincere and, more importantly, extended to us.

At the end of the visit we were both impressed with the commitment to the success of the course and to the natural way in which online teaching and learning is accepted as part of normal education. This was a case of one culture meeting and supporting another.

And Back to Northern Ireland

We took up the invitation to host our modules on the Duquesne Blackboard server. This meant that we were also looking at other ways to redesign these modules to facilitate seamless integration with the Duquesne modules. While the Multimedia Literacy Module had to have some face-to-face sessions, due to the need to teach the application software – Dreamweaver – the synchronous and asynchronous dialogue provided excellent preparatory and follow-up learning, as well as cutting down on traveling. The lasting impression of these sessions was that, with a careful focus on constructivist teaching and learning, absolute clarity of instructions, carefully thought-out and structured lesson planning, success is guaranteed.

The Collaborative Learning Online (CLO) Module was refocused to provide a venue that would allow students to take their Duquesne experience back into their individual work contexts in Northern Ireland. This would, in many ways, be the acid test of the transferability of the Duquesne collaboration and the participants would be invited to consider the sustainability of their work 'back home'.

Discussions about sustainability and how it could be supported were closely linked to those of assessment. Initially, discussions with the cohort about assessment focused on rubric clarity, the need for them to provide evidence and (for them) the burning question of 'how much we should do'. However, it was during these discussions that we agreed that sustainability was best supported through assignments that were not only relevant to teaching and learning, but also linked, where possible, to policy initiatives within their employing organisations. It was also understood that, when back in NI, the students had to promote sustainability on at least two levels. At user level, there was confidence that the 'hearts and minds' of students and colleagues could be won, given the lessons learned in Pittsburgh about on line education. However, at policy level, there had to be a

clear signal from the students that teaching and learning could be enhanced through these assignments, that the initiatives were cost-effective, and that the environments there were to eventually create would advance policy and practice. McNair (USDLA, 2002) outlines some of these activities and demonstrates how the range of projects undertaken, and the use made of them by practitioners and policy makers alike, have indeed begun to support sustainability. We stated at the start of this paper that we were 'steeling' ourselves for the task of carrying the Duquesne work on into the NI education context. This has been, and continues to be, a challenge. However, the experience has taught us that good partnerships always promote a synergy that blends common interests, create new and wider horizons and generate lasting friendships.

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Editor's Note: Many of Dr. Guy Bensusan's articles were unpublished at the time of his death last October. Other writings are awaiting editorial assistance to integrate themes from personal dialogs, list serves, notes, and unfinished works. His stories distill the essence of his explorations and ideas about learning. He encourages us to adapt and experiment with his ideas rather than to imitate them.

"What I offer is not a foolproof chart, it is my personal blueprint. It comes from a professor trained in history and experienced in teaching humanities, arts and culture courses.

I do not offer my path as one to be imitated. Only I can be Guy Bensusan. Rather I hope that the ideas, principles and tactics described will be considered, molded and adapted, adjusted and modified by each navigator to his or her specific desires, locations, areas, needs and goals. I sincerely hope they will be useful as springboards for experimentation."

Applying The Hexadigm

Guy Bensusan

Imagine you plan a project explaining Mexican poetry, discussing village agriculture or evaluating some local festival. As you begin your study, what would you do to get started? Recalling my own university days, I would immediately have headed for the library card catalog to look up some books and magazine articles to read -- but that was before I invented the HEXADIGM.

As student, I went after information first, rather than taking some time at the outset to consider a context into which that specific data might fit and relate. Now, as professor, I see the importance of first establishing the framework and surrounding circumstances, and also recognize that I am responsible for helping students become aware of "the big situational bowl of conditions, events, persons, spectrum and dynamics." Therefore, rather than going to the library first, I would now, as an older "student," think about the Hexadigm and how its interrelating precepts would apply to my assignment.

What would I think about, specifically? I would start with reminding myself of the six-part pattern:

Cultural Sequences Mutual Influences Regional Diversities Modernizing Technologies Expanding Comprehensions Revised Interpretations

I would then work up an outline that started with the first layer in the Cultural Sequences and remind myself that in the above matter of poetry, agriculture or a village festival, Indians approached those subjects in one fashion while the second cultural layer of Spaniards approached them differently. In similar fashion, the subsequent layers of Africans and Chinese, Later Europeans and the 20th century globals appended their divergent colorations. Added together, the total would lead to an evolved vision of how things got to be the way they are today.



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After dealing with the Cultural Sequences, I would consider the basic mutual influencing which would have come into play when Spanish culture affected and was affected by Indian culture -- adding each mutual influence stratum in ever-expanding ripples as layer after layer of cultural sequence appeared and settled in.

Then I would contemplate the geography part: a notable differentiation of climate, topography and resources -- factors which are variously felt in the several regions of Mexico, based on the elevation, the location in relation to areas of influence or importance, on the condition of being rural or urban, on the ratio of ethnic mixtures, the closeness or remoteness from Mexico City, Puebla, Veracruz and the main colonial era trade corridor from Acapulco to Veracruz, and so forth.

Next I would remind myself of the Modernizing Technologies side of things. I would consider the time-frame of my topic, and the state of technology then. That means, for instance, the level of manufacturing or industry, the circumstances of printing and distribution of knowledge, an awareness among the local people of what was being done elsewhere, ease of access by travel which would bring new people into the scene, or availability of new information from the outside world: features that would alter the pace of cultural change, or keep it static.

After that I would examine how changes in conditions then brought about Expanded Comprehensions, either in a growing awareness of new ideas or continued reinforcement of older ones, or with conflicts over how things should be accomplished or which procedures and styles were being considered "best."

Finally, I would consider the Revised Interpretations, the new explanations, defining of things that had arisen, were argued about, and in some cases were accepted at the time of the event I was studying. I would also pay attention to the conflicts in intellectual life that are going on today, both in terms of the academic discipline as well as interpreting the past. I would particularly keep in mind that the reference books and informational tools of today would reflect our own intellectual atmosphere, and therefore would direct my thinking towards one or more "schools of interpretation."

THEN, and only then would I do research in the library.

I know it seems like working backwards -- I also know it is possible to create a topic-oriented project without doing it. But, there are four powerful reasons for pursuing this multilevel procedure in this course:

1. The HEXADIGM is an alternative paradigm or pattern which has been created for the purpose of dealing with multicultural arts and culture in a way that goes beyond mere relativism.
2. By using this alternative model, you will learn to "CONTEXTUALIZE," which is, after all, one of the prime characteristics in being able to THINK CRITICALLY AND CREATIVELY.
3. By relating your topic to a cultural context, you will analyze, compare and evaluate as you develop the audio-visual presentations you are required to present over Interactive Instructional Television.
4. By working towards these goals, you will advance beyond the reactive-descriptive level on the ladder, and will broaden your abilities rapidly -- your effective GROWTH is the only standard I use for grading.

Some possible areas of study, ranging through the university curriculum, are:

Agriculture
Archaeology and Ethnology
Architecture and City Planning
Biology - Botany - Zoology
Business - Marketing - Advertising
Costume and Clothing

Consumers and Consumption
Cultural Subgroups
Dance, Gestures and Body Language
Ecology-Environmental Concerns
Economics - Resources - Workforce
Education, Schools and Universities
Etiquette, Proprieties and Manners
Festivals and Celebrations
Folklore and Folkways
Food, Drink, Cuisine
Forests and Products
Games, Toys and Sports
Health, Healing and Medicine
History and Interpretation of the Past
House, Home and Family
Indian or Native Studies
Jewelry and Metalwork
Labor and Organization
Language, Structures and Dialects
Literature and Poetry
Manufacturing and Industry
Markets and Fairs
Military, War and Defense
Museums, Study Centers, Archives
Music (Folk, Art, Religious, Popular, Autochthonous)
Musical Instruments
Myths and Legends
Painting and Sculpture
Politics, Structure and Organization
Pottery, Basketry and Weaving
Regional Studies
Religion and Church
Sciences and Technology
Social Welfare
Tales and Stories
Theater, Mime and Stage
Transportation - Roads, Rails and Wings
Water and Resource Uses

As working examples to illustrate some of our pre-research thinking, let us focus upon the following four areas:

1. Language,
2. Painting and Sculpture,
3. Architecture and City Planning,
4. Religion.

Each is a big and important subject, each is a distinctive humanistic art form and each is intertwined with others. People communicate, they move about in an organized materially constructed set of patterns, and they ideologically-spiritually envision the universe and its rules in which they function. However, instead of my writing an essay about each of these several areas, I wish instead to pose some questions and ideas that may evoke some thoughtful, organized construction for a project context.

LANGUAGE:

If we start with Cultural Sequences, what can we say about the languages of the first peoples, the

second peoples, and the inter-blending that would come about when they met? When we did this in music we established some topical criteria that we could use to make comparisons with. For instance, we used: (1) musical scale, (2) musical instruments, (3) emphasis on melody, (4) emphasis on harmony, (5) emphasis on rhythm, (6) stylistic elements, (7) what meters were primarily used, and (8) what ways was the voice generally used.

When we considered foods, we divided things into several food groups by kind and point of origin. We listed ways of preservation, methods of preparation, and types of ordinary daily as well as special festive customs. With clothing, we looked at what was worn, how it was adorned, the various types of materials, adaptation of clothing necessary for warmth, occupation, or festival rites, sources and diversifications, trends and cycles in fashion, and similar elements.

Then what should we do to contextualize language? What are essential features we can use as points of comparison? Subtopics might be grammar, syntax (or sentence arrangements), vocabulary, language families or roots, tonalities, non-verbal cues, the territorial extent of usage, and so on.

Consider vocabulary; what is it called in Spain and what is it called in Mexico, or beyond that, in Regionally Diverse parts of Mexico?. Another aspect is what happens to the vocabulary in "mutual influences?" Some place names are obvious at first glance -- the Nahua Popocatépetl and Citlaltépetl as opposed to the Spanish Pico de Colima or Nevado de San Pedro. Likewise, in Spain they call an avocado "palta" while in Mexico it is "aguacatl." Tomato is easier; the native "jitomatl" became "tomate." Peanut was "cacahuatl" in Mexico and became "maní" in Spain.

How about intonation? In many places in Spain, Spanish is spoken with a rapid pace and with little rise and fall in tone. Many Spaniards say they can recognize Mexican Spanish immediately because the "Mexicans sing when they talk" -- that is, the intonation is noticeable from the perspective of the listener, whose intonation does NOT go up and down.

There are also special usages, such as the Mestizo diminutive of "ito," which is not common in Spain. In similar fashion, the augmentative word "enormous" in Spain is said as "grandísimo," in Mexico it is "grandote."

What others can you think of? For instance, what might happen to the Spanish language in political circles when the Hapsburg (Germanic) Dynasty died out in 1700 and was replaced by French Bourbons related to Louis XIV? The first Spanish Bourbon king was Philip V, who assumed the Spanish throne in the early 18th century, bringing to Madrid a large entourage of economists, politicians, governmental officials, military men, artists, personal staff, musicians, theater and dance folk, and various hangers-on.

Given the power elitism of high court circles, French customs would have affected language in Madrid almost immediately. Some Spaniards might have snickered about it, or objected to the Frenchification, but the way real-life works, you don't laugh at the boss with impunity. Thinking about the spread of the French effect, how long would it have taken for such language intonations and vocabulary to disseminate into the largest provincial cities in Spain, plus into the capitals and chief cities of colonial government overseas?

With culinary Regional Diversity, one can eat one's way from one end of the Mexican-US border to another, finding that the salsa changes from lots of tomatoes and onions near San Diego to very spicy, red and green mixes with lots of cumin, coriander and garlic on the New Mexico line, into a pure, fiery, chopped or pureed jalapeño liquid near Matamoros on the Gulf coast.

Moreover, the names of the dishes change -- a flauta in one place is a taquito in another and a pícaro elsewhere; the same applies with tostada, chalupa and gordita. From those, what can we assume about French vocabulary as one moved from one province to another across Mexico? Where would French likely be stronger, where weakest, and where in the various in-between stages?

For Modernizing Technologies, how about universal public education, rail-bus-air transportation,

radio, movies and television? What effects for language maintenance or for transformation have they exercised and continue to have? One may now buy audio and videotapes to help learn one's own language as well as foreign languages. They used to emphasize standard speech, but that has changed; regional dialects are now available.

Here we might ask, "How do we perceive the Hexadigm continuing to encompass an explanation of language evolution as well as assisting, through the marvels of modernizing technologies, our ongoing expanding comprehension about language, plus helping us revise our comprehensions about what language really is and how it constantly evolves?"

This type of awareness might be enlightening for those advocates who demand laws be passed and enforced to prevent "our English" language from changing, or to force non-English speakers to abandon their languages and speak only English. Perhaps a good question would be "Which English will we adopt? When I taught in Western North Carolina in 1985-1986, I struggled to train my ear to understand the "different" pronunciation, intonation and vocabulary. And does this response point out my own biases?"

PAINTING AND SCULPTURE:

If we apply the Hexadigm to art forms, what are some categories? One could be materials; what are they using to make paintings and sculptures with; what do they paint on, or paint with, how do they make the paints, what colors do they use, and what do they use to bind the color to the surface? Navajo sand painters, for instance, travel far to get special rocks and minerals for their art colors, while Acoma potters walk (there are no roads) to distant and secret locations to find the precise clays they need.

With sculpture, the question would be what sort of stone or wood, bone, metal, sand, brick or other substances are being used -- and how does that choice relate to what is found in the immediate locale in contrast to what must be brought in from afar. Michelangelo brought marble from Carrara to Florence and Rome in the performance of his work; the texture, density, color and quality of marble (and other rock) varies from place to place. If we think about jewelry as sculpture, then the idea of using shells from a far-off coast or colored stones from a distinctive but remote site gives a different value and quality to the jewelry-making act, as opposed to simply using local materials.

What of tools that are used: the old traditional types versus those made possible by the new modernizing technologies, like sledge hammers versus pneumatic jack-hammers, or chisels versus chain-saws, or hand-drills, versus electric drills versus lasers, or smoothing and polishing by using stone-on-stone versus sand-blasting or power-buffing. Battery-operated miniature tools now allow professional artists and home-hobbyists to do highly delicate work.

Another subtopic might be, "what is the subject matter?" What is depicted, and how does it function for that society in a literal, figurative or symbolic fashion? For hunting peoples, as an example, is a deer merely a pretty animal to be seen in the wild or a practical commodity to be hunted and eaten? Is the deer regarded as a fellow-being we share space and life on the earth with? A "Bambi" from the Disney cartoon? A "trophy" to be taken as a display of prowess in hunting, giving social stature to the hunter? Or is the deer one member of a larger harmonious system of life's balance whose existence serves the whole, and whose removal must be apologized for? All of these perceptions are appropriate to specific conditions and therefore alter the meaning of the actual sculpture.

The same could be true of "color." Where do the ideas of blue, green or red come from and what do they mean or imply -- and exactly what shades or tones of those "colors" are used? Are they merely coloration? Or does the color relate to a specific object or commodity which makes the color more symbolic of something else, thereby allowing the painter to express ideas on more than one level at the same time? Examples here might be blue for sky and a covering mantle, green for plants and living growth, red for blood and therefore fire or war or life.

Challenges to easy interpretation arise when the color symbologies of two or more sets of cultural sequences come together, are compared and mutually influence each other. Then the yellow of

Indian corn, representing earth's bounty and the gift of the gods becomes contrasted with and/or confused with the Spanish and European yellow of gold, implying richness of another sort in buying capacity, political power and possession.

With corn, Indian farmers collaborate with nature, exchanging labor and cultivation for harvest and sustenance. With gold, miners either pick up the alluvium or dig holes and take the ore -- the mineral bounty of "Mother Nature" is extracted, with no wish to later replace it.

Moreover, "arts" ideas of Africans, Later Europeans and subsequent Globals also get added into the overall mix of the centuries. In each case there are conditioning inheritances and traditions from the remembered culture -- what was thought and believed in the earlier place -- which means shapes, symbols, colors, icons, surfaces, textures, substances.

These add to the savor of the stew as well as to the interpretation of meaning posed from various cultural perspectives. Certainly the condition and heritage of each group in the Sequences along with their experiences in the new land help to account for the way they perceive the art objects, both their own and those of other groups in the developing American society.

Developing and changing conditions also have effect. Regional Diversity means that all the basics for "making art" will not be encountered equally in all places -- resources, access, techniques, traditions, families of artists, demand, and so on. That, along with the diverse experiences brought about by varied elevations, climate, location, racial mixtures, ways of life, etc, will contribute to dissimilarities in artistic products from different locations.

Modernizing Technologies help make it possible to create art out of manufactured materials, while more rapid transport hastens accessibility and expanded verbal-visual ideological communication, in turn bringing external ideas to local persons, influencing thinking and artistic creativity. The rapid growth of audio-visual aids make it possible to see and consider (albeit out of live context) various global arts from your own living room and classroom.

Contrast that type of Arts Education with what our great-grandparents had. Does it not suggest expansion of comprehension, leading almost inevitably to revisions of one's interpretation about what art, painting and sculpture truly are and do, and how they have variously evolved?

ARCHITECTURE AND CITY PLANNING:

What do you build with? In Northern Arizona and New Mexico, ancient Indians created Pueblo Bonito and Wupatki out of natural red sandstone which came in layers and was easily stacked in a land where earthquakes did not topple such things. In warmer southwestern climates, Indians dug pit-houses, placing upright juniper poles around the periphery to support a roof covered with brush. Sometimes walls would also be made from brush and long sticks, which would then be covered with mud. Others mixed mud with corn-husks and cobs into rectangular adobe blocks to be sun-dried for later stacking.

Farther south, in wetter, rain-drenched lands, leaves and fronds kept one dry, while centuries of MesoAmerican evolution gave rise to cities and centers whose enormous pyramidal constructions seemed to copy surrounding volcanoes, especially around Teotihuacán, near Mexico City, which lay on a frontier between agricultural lands and the drier regions of the north where hunting groups abounded. In such places, igneous rock was quarried, shaped, transported, carefully oriented, mounded, embellished and painted for festive, commercial, sacred, as well as strategic purposes -- and about which we are still learning.

Euro-African-Asian Mediterranean developments, conversely, came from a series of different early architectural or constructional experiences. Egyptians developed monumental constructions from huge quarried blocks. Near-Easterners used bricks made in their relatively rockless alluvial plains, while Greeks established temples from cut and carved rock. Each established-urban or ceremonial complex was planned to suit the purpose, while architectural concepts became categorized into principles of post and lintel, columnar synthesis, and arch, vault and dome under the practical Romans.

Later Medieval additions included religious architectural extendings of Catholics and Moslems into high-arched cathedral and tiled mosque styles, culminating in Renaissance architecture and city planning (after the Crusades and territorial "purification" of the faith helped royal states such as Spain and Portugal to emerge).

Mutual encounter by all of these in the New World therefore brought building and purpose into a conflict which would be immediately won by the invaders, whose destruction of Aztec (and other) temples created both location and the building materials which would be used in the construction of new (now Catholic) "temples" for the victor, and signifying the overthrow of the vanquished gods as well as their human followers. (Some folks prefer to believe American Indians were influenced in their building by early trans-Atlantic voyagers, but there is little proof for this, and it certainly is not a necessary precondition for understanding Early American architecture.)

Still, after the colonizers arrived, it was the vanquished Indians who continued to quarry stone, move it to the desired location, shape it, construct the new buildings and decorate the interiors. A walk through Mexico's and Peru's Catholic cathedrals and churches with attention to decoration clearly indicates that the "conquest" (in an ideological sense) was limited.

Though Spanish edicts commanded that their religious buildings be built in accord with the floorplan and style of Seville's cathedral (reputed to be the largest in Christendom outside of Rome's St. Peter's), the execution never was carried through. Instead, many Mexican churches (and others in Latin America) are monuments not only to mutual influences, but to the ongoing ideology of Indians perpetuated in symbologies that the Europeans have interpreted (erroneously) as evidence of Catholic conversion.

Cultures came and influenced in sequence; Aztecs had expanded their island's central ceremonial complex with a surrounding orderly labyrinth of canals and chinampas (anchored rafts of gardens), producing the city's food. Spaniards transformed that with commercial, governmental and religious structures laid out in a different pattern, and dominating the former Indian cityscape -- the farms were now on the outskirts.

With the arrival of Later Europeans after Independence, especially the French, the older quadrangle pattern of downtown was expanded by creating Paris-style tree-lined, multi-laned, diagonal boulevards, particularly the Avenue of La Reforma, leading to the imperial castle in Chapultepec Heights. The word itself, "boulevard," is French and not Spanish. Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Santiago (Chile) and many other cities share that Gallic pattern.

Modern architecture developed a new phenomenon. Instead of piling stone on stone from the ground up, skeletons of steel are erected so that glass and masonry walls can be draped from the I-beams, high above city streets, though dangerously at risk in the city's earthquake-and-smog-ridden environment. And the farms are having to be ever-farther away, even if their produce hurries to town on roads and rails.

Regional Differences also functioned: big capital versus provincial town versus frontier settlement versus isolated mission; sea coast, island, plateau, mountain, valley. What was land worth, where would construction occur, who did the work, what were the prior traditions, what materials would be used and where would they come from, what purposes would the buildings serve, what money was available for construction and maintenance?

These matters helped augment the extraordinary differentiation which so intrigues students of Mexican architecture and planning. Despite variations of form, some consistency of theme and idea are to be found everywhere as the unifying concepts of the faith found expression in stone and wood.

But modernizing technologies in industrial smoke and gases as well as the pollution of the personal and public traffic of twenty million may bring about extinction of modern life in that capital. The splendid beauty of city gardens and nearby mountains, highly visible in 1950 and 1960, is now obscured and foggy with smoke, grime, black soot, as well as ever-increasing crushes of people. Clearly Mexico City, as well as Puebla, Guadalajara, Morelia, Monterrey and other metropolises

cannot continue to develop without some relief and change; another challenge to Expanding Comprehensions and Revised Interpretations.

RELIGION:

Take the first layer of the Cultural Sequences; Indians had their own beliefs, which we can subdivide into the bloodier Aztec type and the more bird-and-flower-oriented Quetzalcoatl-Topiltzín variety. This most likely represents an evolution of Pre-Conquest population-flows over millennia. Moreover, according to scholar June Nash and recent archaeological evidence from the Templo Mayor, a pre-existing female-focused religion existed. Beliefs and organization were community-centered and strongly formalized, with rather strict rules of conduct.

Lesser gods existed within many natural elements, and while it was believed that cycles of existence would terminate every fifty-two years, there was also emphasis on the interrelationship of persons to the god or elements of nature. Thus all beings had responsibility, and as plants and animals gave up their spirits to be "utilized" (including eaten by humans), men and women also were expected to give up their lives for the well being of the gods. The human sacrificial aspect of this seems most troublesome (repugnant?) to Christians. At the same time, it is now recognized that more humans were sacrificed in the Roman Colosseum after Christianity was adopted, than before: suggesting that members of the same faith who previously were in the arena now became the viewers!

Without seeming to excuse the Aztecs, two factors should be kept in mind. The Aztec era was one of rapid expansion, with religion playing a major unifying and militarizing role. Religion here may very well mean "tribal or community way of life" rather than church as a social institution one attends on Sundays. Aztec soldiers were expected to capture (rather than kill) enemies in battle so they might be sacrificed to Huitzilopochtli. In fact, one was promoted to higher military orders based on the number captured; a feature of very significant social, political, military and cultural consequence.

Also, any historical documentation we read on Indian Religion comes from the perspective of Spanish Catholics, who saw things from a different worldview, conditioned earlier by centuries of fierce struggle against "heretical" Moslems and who also necessarily rationalized the destruction of the powerful politico-religious foundation of the society they were trying to conquer. We, as Indian or Non-Indian, are descendants of the events five centuries later -- we will probably never be able to see the situation in a truly balanced and objective manner. We are partially trapped, intellectually, by the books in our libraries.

The subsequent layer in the sequence was Spanish Catholic, highly organized in Spain, with a Spaniard as Pope, coming from a long heritage of religious struggle against what was termed "heresy" in the case of Islamic Spaniards, and at least "major dissent" (if not outright apostasy) in the case of Spanish Jews and Gypsies. Both groups were ordered expelled from Spain in 1492 as a result of strong urging by Inquisition leaders that Spain rid itself of deviancy in order to be pure and strong.

Sixteenth Century Spanish American Catholicism was ironic: filled with orthodox militant zeal, yet permeated with countless (and uncountable) secret practitioners of other faiths who rapidly moved into frontiers of conquest, later settling in remote parts of colonies and becoming "crypto-Jews, Gypsies and Moslems." These matters are increasingly well documented by Abraham Chanin's Southwest Jewish Study Center at the University of Arizona.

Consequences of the immediate encounter disestablished Aztec practices and destroyed temples, with Catholic cathedrals and churches built on top of them, just as the new Catholicism in Indo-America would superimpose itself on Indian foundations. Secular and regular clergy under an Archbishop of Mexico would build churches and missions throughout the land, would influence expansion, education, commerce, health and medicine, care and training for Indians, governing policies and many other socio-cultural-intellectual aspects of life.

Still, mutual influences played a major role. Indian beliefs, ways of worship, festive activities and ideological principles deeply affected the outworking of Catholicism in Mexico. The degree of synthesis and syncretism is almost impossible to perceive -- one is always at the mercy of one's own perception and sources of information. To read the words of clerics and missionaries, Catholic Conquering Conversion was a major and thorough success, but then, they had their own ideas and purposes; they may well have considered the formality of mass baptism sufficient.

Later, in the 18th century, other clerics became convinced that the effort had failed, and that Indians would never become good citizens in the Spanish fashion. However, the later clerics were at a different time, with a different set of challenges to their authority and had their own distinctive agenda in public pronouncements. We cannot take them at face value, either. Reading studies by pro-indigenists today, one concludes that most Indians kept on with their own ways, merely changing the names, as in Tonantzín to Virgin Mary.

It is also clear that African-derived religious practices were felt in Mexico. Mulatto or Americanized-African santería customs are better known and publicized in Caribbean Islands and shores, but they also exist along Mexico's eastern lowlands, northward into Louisiana. As in the cases of crypto-Judaism and crypto-Islam, Black Catholicism is an embryonic focus of academic study, and we will know more in time.

By the era of Independence, the power of Mexico's Church was enormous: many of the highest officials holding significant secular power. In fact, that tends to be one major difference in the thinking of North Americans and Latin Americans. When the word "Church" is mentioned, the former tend to think in terms of beliefs, creeds and a social community attending services in a building, rather than governmental power. Latins tend to think much more in political rather than doctrinal terms, making it somewhat difficult to have a religious discussion because each party has a different definition and set of assumptions.

Later Europeans, even Catholic ones, began arriving in the 19th century, long after the decline of Vatican power and prestige. Napoleon's influence was far more secular than religious, the church in nearly all western European states having been subordinated to the crown or central government. In Europe, Protestantism had become a very significant force, even though it would not penetrate into Latin America in any meaningful way until late in the nineteenth century.

The rise of European-based and also home-grown religious denominations in the United States as well as enthusiasm for the expansion of Manifest Destiny resulted in large numbers of missionaries entering Mexico and Latin America. In the early days they encountered much governmental and popular resistance. On the one hand, xenophobia or dislike of foreigners played a role, where hatred of Yankees was deep-rooted because of the horrors of the Mexican American War. At the same time, the depth of popular tradition perpetuated the strength of Catholicism, at least in name. Many governmental officials were suspicious of North American religious evangelizers, fearing additional losses to their northern neighbor in spite of their own hostility towards Church power -- seen thoroughly in the Cristero Rebellion of the 1920's.

The real explosion of conversion away from Catholicism would not occur until motion pictures, along with radio and television evangelism in the twentieth century, most especially after 1950 -- one more illustration of the impact of Modernizing Technologies, but also a testimony to the major dissatisfaction by Mexican Catholics against unsatisfactory socio-political conditions in their own country. The act of leaving the traditional faith and joining one that comes from the outside is, after all, a deliberate political statement and action.

Finally, it should be clear that we have merely scratched a few surfaces of four disciplines of study in these few pages. Much more could be said and worked out logically if we were methodically to work our way through the six elements. The Hexadigm must be considered as being merely one tool for our use, helping us find ways to explore the larger picture and context about a discipline of study and its relation to other aspects of the total culture being considered.

At the same time it continually shows us that the thing called cultural heritage is a if not the totality and that politics, economics, art, literature and others are subordinate to and a part of that much



broader feature, The Cultural Heritage. Just as there is no History without Geography, and no language without art and music, there is no Culture without People, Ideas, Practices and Evolution -- all are components of the Whole.

I hope the six-part structure will continue to help you expand as well as organize your thinking. However, as with any tool, it is a methodology rather than a "Truth" in its own right.

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Student Exchange

Editor's Note: This is "The Midnight Camels" group essay from an online course taught by Professor George Takis, UMUC. The course was designed to provide subject matter professions in depth learning experiences in effective communication technologies for Internet teaching at both college and graduate levels. It was demanding!

Producing an On-line Community

Vaughn Jenkes, Nana Korsah, Henry Petersohn, and Elizabeth Perrin

Introduction and Meta Analysis:

"Community"

As we consider the critical, for Distance Learning, concept of an on-line community, it behooves us to identify the defining qualities of "community" per se. With these in hand, we can both qualitatively and quantitatively identify aspects of technology based, on-line association and determine whether an "on-line community" can exist, operationally and pedagogically, as an effective learning entity.

Community (ka myo6/ni te), n., *pl.* -ties. 1. a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and have a common cultural and historical heritage. 2. a social group sharing common characteristics or interests and perceived or perceiving itself as distinct in some respect from the large society within which it exists (usually prec. by (the): *the business community; the community of scholars*). 3. *Eccles.* a group of men or women leading a common life according to a rule. 4. Ecol. an assemblage of plant and animal populations occupying a given area. 5. joint possession, enjoyment, liability, etc.: *community of property*. 6. similar character; agreement; identity: *community of interests*. 7. the community, the public; society: *We must consider the needs of the community*.

Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, Random House, 1989.

The first definition makes physical closeness a critical building block of "community". This might prove troublesome for our on-line community. On-line students do not reside, necessarily, in 'a specific locality' nor 'have a common cultural and historical heritage'. However, in a certain sense, they do share government: the rules and processes of the Distance Learning Institution. If we move to definition number two, however, this is as valid for on-line communities as other communities... "a social group sharing common characteristics (i.e. one of our identifying common



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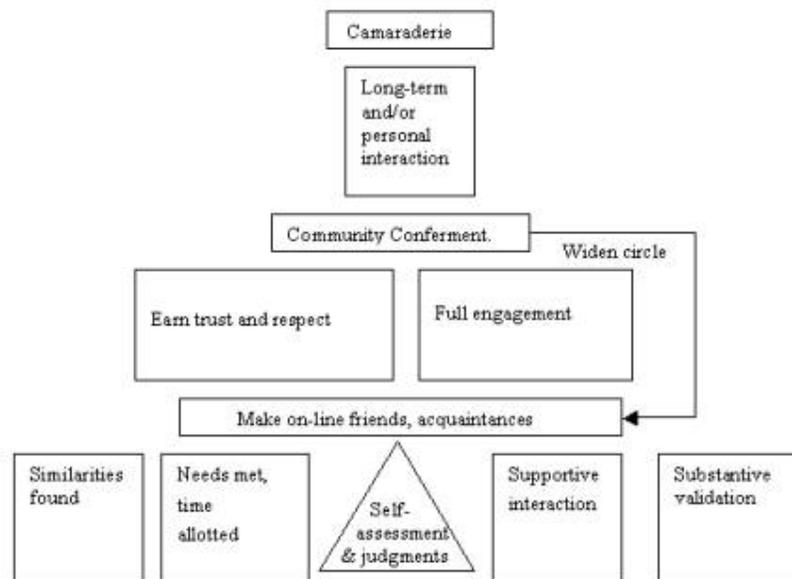
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characteristics is our technology-based communication system) and perceived or perceiving itself as distinct in some respect, again, Communication Technologies, from the large society within which it exists. Our second definition illuminates community qualities that are achievable on-line, and one that is particularly pertinent **the 'on-line' community of scholars.** Definition 5, *joint possession, enjoyment, liability, and community of property*, has identity with the on-line community. **'Community of property'** is as much **community of intellectual property** as of physical property and is particularly appropriate for members of the 'on-line' community as they create together new formations, clusters and learning, evoking knowledge in the sharing of common experience. Numbers 6 and 7 are equally appropriate as identifiable characteristics shared by both "community" and "on-line community": Communities on line exist as entities as valid and as 'real' as any "off-line" community. In the future, there may be more substantive exchanges within communities on-line than off-line. If business, economics, and scientific research are true indicators of our emerging world, the on-line communities have capacity, flexibility and vision for our societies that well may be hampered by the constraints of mere land-locked, "off-line" communities!

Process:

Building Blocks for On-line Communities

Figure 4. The Process



Brown, Ruth, The Process of Community Building in Distance Learning Classes, JALN Volume 5, Issue 2, P 11 - September 2001

Implementation:

Realization of Process: Producing an On-Line Community

Building community in an on-line classroom is a significant undertaking. Its members include people located all over the world who possess differing backgrounds and experiences. This community includes mixed sexes, varying age groups, family situations, and educational and professional backgrounds. As on-line facilitators, it is our challenge and responsibility to take these many characteristics and meld them to produce an on-line community that operates efficiently and effectively and is viable. This on-line community must be free to interact, to share ideas, and build relationships needed to enhance their learning.

So, where do we begin? [Craig Newmark](#), President of [Fast.Company.com](#), indicates that there needs to develop "a sense of connection, an intimacy, and a feeling that we're all in this together." [Kathleen Mieszkowski](#), writer for Net Company, states that, "Community is about connecting people." It involves, "people who have the potential to interact with one another while having a shared experience". Our challenge, as instructors, is to initiate communication and assure an open line is always present for the members of our community. We, the community's members, all have a great deal we bring to this on-line learning environment. The experiences and knowledge of our students combined with ours are significant benefits to assure the community thrives and survives. Our success in building this on-line community revolves around our ability to provide the means to initiate an open and effective communication process.

So, how then can we assure this will happen? We must establish "ground rules" under which all community members will function. We must allow time for our community to become comfortable with the available technology used in our on-line environment. One task is for us to provide a comprehensive and effective orientation to the on-line concept. This will lessen the confusion and frustration easily resulting in a learning environment very different from the typical face-to-face classroom.

We have various options to communicate with the community's members - email, group work, use of collaborative documents, etc. Early on in the development of our community we must decide the most effective methods for communicating, inform the members how we will communicate, then assure these forms be the norm throughout the life of the community. The use of too many forms of communication could result in an information overload leading to wasted time and frustration.

Lastly, we must assure that continuous and effective communication by community members is established and maintained. As on-line facilitators, we are responsible to start this process but should then allow our community members to take charge and lead the way to learning. Mieszkowski concludes, "It's all about people helping one another".

Final Assessment:

To fully implement a productive and viable on-line community, we, within education, must encourage our students to help each other while we facilitate the actions of our newly developed viable, thriving, successful community.

The Midnight Camels
Elizabeth, Hank, Nana and Vaughn

Resources:

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TECHNOLOGY EXCHANGE

Learning Objects

An interesting website and one that may be of value to many of our members who want to know more about learning objects is found at: www.reusability.org/. An excerpt appears below:

Many people are interested in reusability and learning objects because they offer a solution to the teacher bandwidth problem. "Teacher bandwidth" is a term describing the number of students a teacher can service (think about the amount of data that can travel across a phone line). In this sense teachers can be seen as bottlenecks that limit the number of students who can gain access to educational opportunity. Or the number of potential customers who can be paying for your instruction at any given time.

Pick your own paradigm. There are currently three main lines of research relating to learning objects and the teacher bandwidth problem. They are presented below in order of their current popularity...

1. **automation** Intelligent tutor system-style interests look to overcome the teacher bandwidth problem by replacing the teacher with an intelligent computer program that automatically selects and sequences learning objects for students. You can find research that supports this type of work in the Instructional Use of Learning Objects or Learning Object Design and Sequencing Theory. Most commercial work in learning objects, as well as the work of specifications bodies like ADL/SCORM and the IMS, is focusing in this area. [If you go to the website, each of the blue titles represents an active link.]
2. **by-hand** About two years ago we started a project to legitimize the efforts of human beings who put learning objects together. Computers aren't the only ones who can assemble and reuse existing resources in the service of teaching and learning: teachers can do it, too! Our Instructional Architect project provides tools for teachers to find and use learning objects in their instruction. We talk about some of the issues facing human learning object assemblers in terms of metadata and granularity. There is also a general purpose defense of by-hand assembly.
3. **by-community** John Seely Brown and others continue to point to the value of the informal learning that takes place in social groups without a formal teacher. The Internet provides hitherto unknown access to large, diverse social groups. Unsurprisingly, these groups collaborate to reuse existing resources in extremely interesting ways. The "by-community" research area is a strange nexus of self-organization, activity theory, and economics. Our current understanding of Online Self-Organizing Social Systems is limited, but we're just beginning some interesting research with more help from the National Science Foundation. A book that may be of interest to you is, *The Instructional Use of Learning Objects* by editor, David Wiley. You can read the full text of the online version of the book for free at: www.reusability.org/read/ The book is divided into five major sections.
4. Learning Objects Explained
5. Learning Objects and Constructivist Thought
6. Learning Objects and People



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7. Learning Objects Implementation War Stories

8. Learning Objects and the Future

The book can also be purchased. If you are interested in a slow-paced interview with the editor, David Wiley, and Andy Walker, both billed as learning object authors and experts, go to www.coolgenius.com/ and click on the lower, left-hand box titled, "Featured Genius."

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Technology Exchange

Mentergy Adds Instructional Design Capability to Macromedia Dreamweaver Through New Designer's Edge Extension

SALT LAKE CITY (June 3, 2002) – Mentergy(TM), Ltd. (NASDAQ: MNTE), a leading global provider of blended e-Learning solutions, today announced at the ASTD 2002 International Conference & Exposition in New Orleans, La., the immediate availability of its Designer's Edge(R) extension for Macromedia Dreamweaver. The new extension enables collaborative and streamlined communication between Designer's Edge developers, content creators, designers, and Dreamweaver users to create Web-based training (WBT). With the extension, all team members are connected through Designer's Edge, the industry standard instructional design tool for trainers, a central repository for media and design information for their organization's training projects.

Effectively enhancing the instructional design capability of Dreamweaver, the extension integrates the Dreamweaver user into the training design team by enabling the developer to directly incorporate a remote view of the Designer's Edge project content into Dreamweaver, which eliminates the need to work separately off of hard copy storyboards or through lengthy face-to-face review processes.

"Mentergy recognizes Macromedia Dreamweaver as a major player in the development of Web-based training and as a complementary environment to our learning-based design and development tools," said Ron Zamir, senior vice president, Mentergy, Inc. "By creating a marriage between a leading industry Web development tool and the leading instructional design pre-authoring environment, we have created, for the first time, an integrated suite to drive instructionally sound Web development for Web-based courseware. By adding a significant communication and a work process vehicle to Dreamweaver, as well as the instructional design support, we believe we are able to significantly lower development time for content creation and allow teams across large organizations to work together to create instructionally sound content."

The Dreamweaver extension for Designer's Edge integrates a direct view into a Designer's Edge project from within Dreamweaver, including the content outline, storyboard, and all storyboard-associated content created by the design team, to develop an instructionally sound Dreamweaver WBT course.

"With the new extension, the Designer's Edge team can now work in parallel with the developer, leaving notes for the developer while he's working in Dreamweaver," said Carl Miner, Mentergy Inc. product manager. "On the flip side, as the Dreamweaver user is doing his magic, he can define graphic needs, or leave his issues, concerns and questions for the design team as well."

Pricing and Availability The Dreamweaver extension for Designer's Edge is immediately available from Mentergy and free-of-charge to Designer's Edge users. The extension can be downloaded by



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visiting http://www.mentergy.com/products/authoring_design/designer/dreamweaver.

About Mentergy:

Mentergy, Ltd. (NASDAQ:MNTE), formerly Gilat Communications, Ltd. (NASDAQ: GICOF), is a global e-Learning company, providing e-Learning products, consulting, and courseware development services for large enterprises. With over 21 years of expertise in the learning industry, Mentergy assists businesses worldwide to make a cost-effective shift from traditional learning to a blended e-Learning approach. Mentergy Ltd.'s North American operations comprise of the Allen Communication Learning Services division and the LearnLinc Live e-Learning division (Mentergy, Inc.), in addition to John Bryce Training UK Ltd. in Israel and Europe, and a global sales and marketing operation that includes Mentergy Europe. www.mentergy.com

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STATE AND INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

Michigan

MSU'S GLOBAL ONLINE CONNECTION PARTNERS WITH WORLD BANK ON DISTANCE LEARNING

EAST LANSING, Mich. - MSU Global Online Connection at Michigan State University is launching three distance learning programs for the World Bank's Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) - a series of videoconferences on the safety of organic foods, and two online courses, one in watershed concepts and another in international food law.

The two-part Food Safety Global Dialogue on organic food safety and international markets, featuring experts from MSU's National Food Safety and Toxicology Center (NFSTC), will be available in Spanish and English. During two-hour videoconferences on June 12 and July 31, ideas will be exchanged and pertinent regional issues identified. In between the videoconferences, a facilitated e-mail list will allow for the further exploration of ideas.

Participants in the dialogue are located in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Peru. They come from government health and agriculture agencies and private sector organizations, including the food industry. They hold positions as microbiological and toxicological researchers, risk assessors and risk managers, food law specialists, sociologists, outreach coordinators and environmentalists.

"Participants in this global dialogue event will explore issues impacting the safe production and distribution of organic foods, as well as the social and economic issues related to the industry in developing countries," said Ewen Todd, NFSTC director and lead MSU faculty member on the project.

The five-week watershed management course, which begins on Aug. 26, will be taught by an international faculty and consist of local case studies and data collections from regions outside the United States. Course participants will learn the elements of effective watershed management through an introduction to both technical and socioeconomic factors.

The international food law course, which runs Aug. 26 through Dec. 6, is the first in a series of region-specific food law courses intended to provide a survey of the system of food regulation used in the various regions of the world.

By harnessing the latest technology tools, GDLN members are linked via high-speed



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communications technologies. They are part of a worldwide exchange of learning activities through courses, seminars and discussions on key development issues. Using interactive video, electronic classrooms, satellite communications and Internet facilities to help break down the digital divide, the network allows people to share their know-how and experience, regardless of time zones, distance or national boundaries.

"We recognize the importance of knowledge sharing and new technologies for development," said David Gray, senior knowledge management officer for the Latin American and Caribbean region of the World Bank. "We are pleased in the region for the growing partnership with our colleagues at Michigan State University."

MSU Global Online Connection is an academic business unit at MSU that is responsible for developing and marketing online and hybrid (online with face-to-face instruction) programs, products and services to working professionals and other lifelong learners in Michigan, the United States and around the world.

More information on these programs is available at <http://www.msuglobalinstitute.com/gdln>

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nEW jERSEY

New WCET Website on "Creating Web-Based Student Services for Online Learners"

Check out the new website for the LAAP project "Beyond the Administrative Core: Creating Web-Based Student Services for Online Learners." In the About the Project, there is more information about the visions for the modules that each of our partners--Kansas State University, Kapi'olani Community College, Regis University, and SCT-- are developing. Current plans call for the modules to be implemented on their campuses this fall. The partners' project directors will demo their modules in a preconference workshop at the WCET annual conference in November in Denver and talk about their experience in developing them. If you have specific questions for one of them now, you can email her/him from their partner page.

Also, please check out the Resources section where we have overviews of several student services authored by experts in the field and links to examples of good practice. Don't miss the related topics on setting up a call center, providing online services to students with disabilities, and how staffing can change in an electronic environment. We plan to continue adding more information and models of good practices to this section so if you have any suggestions, please send them along!

In the Webcast Series, you will find archived versions of presentations on several student services topics. Our next webcast will be on orientation with Dan Volchok from WebCT. (This is a rescheduled presentation as a result of audio difficulties experienced in some areas of the country during the April presentation). On June 24 Marianne Phelps and Norm Finlinson will discuss financial aid for distance students and take us on a tour of BYU's state-of-the-art online system.

Finally, please let us know how we could make this site more useful for you.

To check out the site, go to <http://www.wiche.edu/telecom/projects/laap/index.htm>

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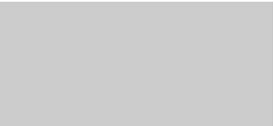


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The School obtained the full 24/24 for Teaching Quality and the QAA subject report says of the MEd: "The MEd in E-Learning is testimony to the innovative approach to course design, embracing appropriate technologies in order to meet changing needs"

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Editor's Note: Online learning requires students to be self motivated and assume greater responsibility for their own learning. Success in distance learning requires students to become self-reliant. This study shows significant growth in the locus of control as students participate in a distance learning course.

Experimental Effects of Online Instruction on Locus of Control

Yuliang Liu, Ellen Lavelle, James Andris

Abstract

Although research regarding online instruction has grown in recent years, the effects of online instruction on learners' psychological factors have not received enough attention. The goal of this study was to investigate how online instruction affects locus of control (LOC) as a belief in one's own competency, for graduate students enrolled in an online class in Instructional Technology. Two LOC instruments were administered three times: one at the beginning, one in the middle, and one at the end of the spring semester. Results indicate that (1) learners tended to be external at the beginning of the online course and (2) online instruction affected learner's LOC significantly from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester. Implications for teaching and research are included.

Experimental Effects of Online Instruction on Student's Locus of Control

In order to meet the range of learners' needs, more and more educational institutions are increasingly offering distance courses, especially online courses to their undergraduate and graduate students. Online education differs from traditional education in that online education includes a variety of formats: asynchronous web-based instruction, bulletin board discussion, e-mail communication, as well as synchronous online chat and net conferencing (Kearsley, 2000). Recent research involving the effects of online education has emphasized dimensions such as the learners' performance (Russell, 1999) and course evaluation (Kearsley, 2000), but has largely ignored the role of student characteristics as linked to instruction. The purpose of this study is to examine locus of control of adult students as impacted by participation in a graduate online course in instructional technology.

The Institute for Higher Education Policy (1999) proposed that distance education research should address distance learners' unique characteristics and needs. A report by Schlosser and Anderson (1994) did not cite a single study investigating characteristics of online students. From a pedagogical perspective, it is important to consider student differences in designing a flexible and technologically rich medium (Smith, 1997). When critical personal differences are ignored, course design may become technologically driven, rather than allowing technology to serve as a resource to support students' needs. Since Schlosser and Anderson's report, there has been a growing body of research. For example, Wang and Newlin (2000) studied the cognitive-motivational and demographic characteristics of online and traditional students in different sections of Psychological Statistics. They found that online students exhibited a greater external locus of control than



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traditional students although no significant differences were found in demographic information, learning style and achievement motivation. However, not much is known about the characteristics of students who choose to enroll and succeed in online instruction.

The instructional effects of media have provided a platform for diverse opinions. On one hand, Clark (1983, 1994) maintained that media do not influence learning in any condition. In contrast, Kozma (1994) argued that technologies such as computers and video influence learning by interacting with an individual's cognitive and social processes in constructing knowledge. More recent literature has supported Kozma's above argument (Phipps & Merisotis, 1999). However, the effects of online instruction on learners' characteristics have not received enough research attention. In recent years, there have been a few studies investigating the specific predictors of online success. Locus of control (LOC) is one of these predictors recently studied in this area. According to Rotter (1966), locus of control, a generalized belief regarding one's personal efficacy, is characterized as internal, maintaining a belief that performance outcome is contingent on one's own behaviors, and, external, being related to a belief that an event is beyond one's own control. In addition, compared with externals, internals perform better when they are more in control of their environment (Joe, 1971).

According to Spitzer and Keller (1978), locus of control is one of the important components in student's academic motivation. Recent research has indicated that an internal LOC is strongly correlated not only with completion (Parker, 1999), but also with academic success in distance education (Dille & Mezack, 1991). That is, learners with an internal LOC tend to have higher rates of completion in distance education because they put in the necessary time and hard work and they expect this effort to affect their academic success (Dille & Mezack, 1991; Parker, 1999). In addition, internals tend to significantly outperform externals in academic success in technology-mediated environments (Dille & Mezack, 1991; Santiago & Okey, 1992; Wang & Newlin, 2000). Therefore, based on research, it seems that an internal LOC is associated with self-directed learning (Kerka, 1996).

Self-directed learning is a critical feature of distance education (Garrison, 1987; Seaton, 1993) and according to Visor, Johnson, Schollaert, Good, and Davenport (1995), there is a need to continue to study of LOC since it affects achievement as a predictor of persistence in higher education. In addition, given the rapid development of instructional technology as well as support for the instructional efficacy of technological interventions, it is important to examine the effects of technology intervention on student's characteristics. According to Swan, Mitrani, Guerrero, Cheung, and Schoener (1990), computer-based instruction can facilitate the learner's perceived locus of control toward internality which may be especially beneficial to disadvantaged learners. However, no research has been reported specifically regarding the effects of online instruction on student's locus of control.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the online instruction in a graduate instructional technology course affects the learners' locus of control. Specifically, this experimental study is aimed at (1) studying the LOC characteristics of students enrolled in an online instructional technology course and (2) examining how online instruction influences the online learner's LOC in that online course. Based on the above, the specific research hypotheses are stated as follows:

- Hypothesis 1: Graduate students enrolled in an online IT course will tend to be external at the beginning of this online course in terms of the scores in the LOC instrument.
- Hypothesis 2: Graduate students enrolled in an online IT course will tend to be internal at the completion of this online course, compared with at the beginning of this online course in terms of the scores in the LOC instrument.

Methods

Participants

The lead investigator in this study was the instructor of an online instructional technology course (Distance Education) at a medium sized, midwestern state university in Spring, 2001. Initially, this

course was scheduled as an off-campus course for a 17-week semester. However, in order to pioneer online course delivery and to begin preliminary testing of the instructional efficacy of the intervention, the lead investigator delivered the course online.

All twelve graduate students in that online course were solicited for participation in this project during the first week of spring 2001. Students were offered incentives for participation in this study such as receiving extra course credit for participation. After all students agreed to participate, they were asked to complete consent forms and demographic surveys. For most participants, this was their first time taking an online course. No students dropped out throughout the semester in this study. All participants were Caucasian females; eleven of them were in the IT graduate program and the other one majors in education.

Definition of the Independent Variable

The major independent variable was online instruction, which was delivered completely online in a WebCT environment. A hybrid of online instructional techniques, which have been considered as very effective involving the use of technology (Clark, 1999), were employed in the course. All of the major features of WebCT were used throughout the semester and each student was required to complete the following: (1) An online objective chapter quiz was administered every week. The maximum time for each quiz was 60 minutes. Each quiz was allowed for only one attempt and was graded automatically. Therefore, students got immediate feedback about the quizzes. (2) The bulletin board was used to discuss and answer each chapter's weekly essay questions. (3) The biweekly online synchronous chatroom was used for course assignments, discussion, and communication. (4) Students were required to design a personal web page presenting himself/herself and his/her course assignments. (5) Students were required to complete a cooperative two-person group project through various interactive communication methods, such as private e-mail communication, bulletin board discussion, online chatrooms, and phone calls. In addition, in order to reduce the learner's learning anxiety and to maximize learning efficiency, three FtF meetings were conducted at the beginning, middle, and final week of spring 2001. This schedule was consistent with other previous online course studies (Wells, 2000).

Instruments and Data Sources

In order to improve the validity of this study, two LOC instruments were used. One is Trice's academic LOC scale (1985), including 28 "True" or "False" items. For instance, "College grades most often reflect the effort you put into classes". This scale was selected because it is highly related to student's academic environment. The maximum score for each item is 1 point. So the maximum total for this scale is 28 points. The other one is Rotter's LOC scale (1966), including 29 forced-choice items ("a" or "b"). For instance, item 2 is like this: "a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck. b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make." This scale was selected because it is related to any general environment and has been widely used since 1966. The maximum score for each item is 1 point. So the maximum total for this scale is 29 points. Some items are reversely scored in this scale.

For both of the above scales, higher scores represent greater externality, and vice versa. The cutoff score for internality and externality in both instruments is 14. Both scales had high validity and reliability and have been widely used in recent relevant research. Both instruments were administered in the paper-and-pencil format in three face-to-face meetings at the beginning, middle, and final week of spring 2001. The pretest measured the initial state of the learner's characteristics before online instruction. The posttest 1 in the midterm and posttest 2 in the final week were administered in the middle and final weeks respectively, measuring the developmental state of those characteristics affected by online instruction over the semester.

Experimental Design

This study involved a single group pretest-posttest design. Specifically, the participants in this

study were pretested with two LOC instruments in the first week. Then the participants were exposed to the online WebCT environment from the second week through the final week. In addition, the participants were posttested with the above two LOC instruments in the middle week (posttest 1) and final week (posttest 2).

Results and Discussion

All data were coded and analyzed in SPSS 11 to test for significant differences among the pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2 in terms of academic locus of control and Rotter's locus of control using repeated measures ANOVA procedure. Generally, both research hypotheses were supported and the results are specifically shown in the following four tables.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Academic LOC and Rotter's LOC Scores in Pretest, Posttest 1 and Posttest 2

LOC Scores	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
ALOCS1	20.7500	2.98861	12
ALOCS2	9.9167	3.52803	12
ALOCS3	6.833	3.18614	12
RLOCS1	15.0000	4.08990	12
RLOCS2	9.5833	3.42340	12
RLOCS3	7.2500	5.17204	12

Note: (a) ALOC1 means academic LOC score in pretest; ALOC2 means academic LOC score in posttest 1; ALOC3 means academic LOC scores in posttest 2. (b) RLOC means Rotter's LOC score in pretest; ALOC2 means Rotter's LOC score in posttest 1; ALOC3 means Rotter's LOC scores in posttest 2.

Table 2

ANOVA Results of Within-Subjects Effects for Academic LOC and Rotter's LOC Scores among Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Partial Eta Squared
ALOC						
Sphericity	1282.167	2	641.08	54.003	.000	.831
Assumed Error	261.167	22	11.871			
RLOC						
Sphericity	379.389	2	189.69	8.141	.002	.425
Assumed Error	512.611	22	23.301			

Note:(a) Computed using alpha = .05

Table 3

A. (I) ALOC	(J) ALOC	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	10.833	1.655	.000	6.165	15.501
	3	13.917	1.510	.000	9.659	18.175
2	1	-10.833	1.655	.000	-15.501	-6.165
	3	3.083	0.957	.024	.384	5.782
3	1	-13.917	1.510	.000	-18.175	-9.659
	2	-3.083	.957	.024	-5.782	-.384
B. (I) RLOC	(J) RLOC				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	5.417	2.002	.061	-.228	11.062
	3	7.750	2.591	.037	.443	15.057
2	1	-5.417	2.002	.061	-11.062	.228
	3	2.333	.964	.102	-.385	5.052
3	1	-7.750	2.591	.037	-15.057	-.443
	2	-2.333	.964	.102	-5.052	.385

Note:(a) Computed using alpha = .05

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for academic LOC scores and Rotter's LOC scores in pretest, posttest 1 and posttest 2. The results of both LOC instruments indicate that students tend to be external at the beginning of this online course since the means of both of the LOC instruments exceeded the cutoff score of 14. Thus, hypothesis 1 in this study was supported. In addition, this result is consistent with the recent findings in other studies (e. g., Wang & Newlin, 2000).

Table 2 indicates a significant difference among pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2 in both Academic LOC score and Rotter's LOC score. Specifically, there is a significant difference among pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2 in academic LOC scores ($F_{(2, 22)}=54.003$, $\alpha = .00$). The effect-size measure indicates that 83% of the total variance in academic LOC score is explained by the independent variable, online instruction. Meantime, there is also a significant difference among pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2 in Rotter's LOC scores ($F_{(2, 22)}=8.14.003$, $\alpha = .01$). The effect-size measure indicates that 43% of the total variance in academic LOC score is explained by the independent variable, online instruction.

Table 3. In order to find the specific differences among pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2 in both academic LOC score and Rotter's LOC score, Bonferroni's pairwise comparison procedure was conducted. Specifically, in terms of academic locus of control scores, there was a significant difference between pretest and posttest 1 ($\alpha < .001$), between posttest 1 and posttest 2 ($\alpha < .05$), and between the pretest and posttest 2 ($\alpha < .001$). In addition, in terms of Rotter's locus of control scores, a significant difference was only found between pretest and posttest 3 ($\alpha < .05$). This supports hypothesis 2 and is consistent with the results in previous studies (Swan et al., 1990).

Thus, the present study supports that online instruction is an effective method for changing learner's locus of control from externality to internality. That is, online instruction has been found to change learners' locus of control from external to internal at least in this online graduate

instructional technology course.

Additionally, all students remained enrolled in class and developed a high level of competence as reflected in grade in this course as a measure of academic achievement. Indeed, LOC has been associated with self-directed learning (Kerka, 1996) and with academic persistence (e.g. Dille & Mezack, 1991; Parker, 1999) and the present study serves to validate and extend this research.

Conclusion

The research findings regarding changes in locus of control in this exploratory study are very promising. The findings extend research on online instruction and learning to include consideration of personal belief factor, locus of control. That is, online instruction can improve students' sense of personal competence, self-responsibilities, and beliefs about their own learning. In other words, online instruction can be an effective method to promote change from external locus of control to internal locus of control. The relationship of students' beliefs to learning is a critical dimension especially since personal beliefs relate to online instruction. By understanding how it is that beliefs in one's own competence, which moderate with on line instruction, impact performance, educators are able to offer more effective instruction. Specifically, our study suggests that instructional intervention is a powerful variable in promoting personal change. Suggestions for further research include examination of the dimensions of online instruction as relate to changes self-efficacy and other personal or individual difference variables in large samples across other courses.

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