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The AJDE Volume 13, Issue 1.

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Institutional Restructuring: Is Distance Education Like Retailing?!

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I Know My Instructional Technologies:
It's These Learners That Perplex Me!

Mauri Collins

Abstract

The role of technical support personnel in higher education and corporate training has traditionally been confined to the areas of hardware and software. Now technologists are often asked to serve as corporate trainers and advisors to faculty in the choice and integration of educational technology into teaching and learning. Based on her own training and personal experience, the author suggests and discusses three areas of study within adult education that can assist persons with a technical background to make this role transition. The areas of study include 1) introduction to adult education, 2) adult learners and learning, and 3) program planning. The combination of technology training and knowledge in these three areas will provide a solid foundation for the expanding role of technologists.

Methodology for Cost-Benefit Analysis of Web-Based Tele-Learning:
Case Study of the Bell Online Institute

Tammy Whalen and David Wright

Abstract

Educators, trainers, and business people need to be able to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of Web-based training in order to make informed decisions about the extent to which this new media should be used in their organizations. The present study hypothesizes that there are several key design elements that should be considered in costing Web-based training projects. The relative importance of these elements is examined using a case study approach. The methodology used in this case study can be employed in future cost-benefit studies of Web-based training. This case study also provides a detailed cost-benefit analysis, including the breakeven number of students required to recover Web-based course development costs and the return on investment over a five-year period.

Dimensions of Educational Transactions in a Videoconferencing
Learning Environment

Yau-Jane Chen and Fern K. Willits

Abstract

Moore's Theory of Transactional Distance suggests that dialogue, structure, and learner autonomy are the key elements delineating the educational transaction in distance learning environments. However, the conceptualizations of these concepts in a telecommunication era have not been systematically addressed. By investigating 121 learners' experiences with videoconferencing, this study identified the dimensions (factors) constituting dialogue, structure, and learner autonomy in such a learning environment. Exploratory factor analysis using a principal axis factor method was carried out. It was concluded that each of these three concepts represented multifaceted ideas. Dialogue consisted of three dimensions: in-class discussion, out-of-class electronic communication, and out-of-class face-to-face interaction. Structure contained the dimensions of course organization and course delivery. Learner autonomy was comprised of independence and interdependence. The results of this study can inform videoconferencing researchers and practitioners of the factors of the educational transaction that should be considered in videoconferencing courses.

Theory and Distance Education: A New Discussion

Michael Simonson, Charles Schlosser, and Dan Hanson

Abstract

Theories guide the practice and research of distance education. Traditionally, theories of distance education have been derived from classical European or American models based on correspondence study. Recently, telecommunications systems have significantly altered the practice of distance education in the United States and have produced a uniquely American approach to this field. This has created the need for a new theory to guide the practice of distance education. This theory, called Equivalency Theory, is described and compared to the historical theories of distance education.

Interview

Speaking Personally--with Jeff Livingston

Don Olcott, Jr.

E. Jeffrey Livingston is Dean of Continuing Education at Weber State University and former Chief Executive Officer of the Western Governors University (WGU), a private non-profit institution incorporated in Utah. As CEO of WGU, he worked closely with the chief academic officers from the nine institutions in the Utah System to coordinate all academic programs, develop academic policies, and promote the use of technology to enhance academic services. Prior to his appointment as CEO, he was a member of both the design and implementation teams for WGU. He has also been Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Associate Commissioner for Technology in the Utah System of Higher Education. He has taught at Weber State University and the University of Montana. While at Weber State he was chair of the Department of Management and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Livingston was interviewed by Don Olcott, Jr., Associate Dean of the Extended University at the University of Arizona.

Book Review

Mega-Universities and Knowledge Media

James H. Ryan

Mega-Universities and Knowledge Media: Technology Strategies for Higher Education by Sir John S. Daniel. (London: Kogan Page. Distributed in the U.S. by Stylus Publishing, Sterling, VA, 1998, 224 pp., \$24.95.)

Notes on Authors

The American Journal of Distance Education Volume 13, Issue 2.

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Monitoring and Evaluation

Michael G. Moore

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LEAD ARTICLE:

Comparing Distance Learning and Classroom Learning:
Conceptual Considerations

Patricia L. Smith and Connie L. Dillon

Abstract

Comparison studies have been widely criticized as offering little conceptually to the field of distance learning. However, these studies can serve an important role in advancing our understanding of the phenomenon of distance education. The problem with comparison studies lies not in the "comparison," but with the media/method confound. This article proposes a schema system based on media attribute theory that can be used to classify both media and delivery systems based on research related to learning and motivation. It is important that comparative studies explain more than just which technologies were used; they must also explain why and how the media and delivery systems were used to support learning and motivation.

REVIEW OF LEAD ARTICLE:

Toward a Systems Theory of Distance Education

Farhad Saba

AUTHORS' RESPONSE:

Toward a Systems Theory of Distance Education:
A Reaction

Patricia L. Smith and Connie L. Dillon

A New Method for Analyzing Patterns of Interaction

Daniel C. A. Hillman

Abstract

This case study examined a new method for analyzing patterns of interaction in face-to-face and asynchronous computer-mediated classrooms. Using software and a coding system developed by the author, the text of all spoken and written discourse was analyzed from four face-to-face (FTF) courses and two courses taught via computer-mediated communication (CMC). The results indicated that the interaction patterns in the computer-mediated courses resembled discussion, whereas the patterns in the FTF courses resembled recitation. In addition, problems with comparing

synchronous FTF courses and asynchronous CMC are examined.

Avoiding the Industrialization of Research Universities:
Big and Little Distance Education

D. Randy Garrison and Terry D. Anderson

Abstract

The pressure to increase access to higher education while reducing costs raises serious questions with regard to the purpose and goals of the traditional research-intensive university. Moreover, there is considerable rhetoric about reinventing universities based on adoption of communications and learning technologies without clearly defining or articulating educational goals. In contrast to the big industrial model of distance education, an approach to distance education is described that is consistent with the traditional goals and values of creating knowledge through a critical community of learners. This approach, or model, is labeled "little distance education," and its characteristics are defined. Meeting the needs of a new market for continuing professional education available at a distance is also discussed.

Grass Roots

Looking at Distance Learning through Both Ends of the Camera

Joan M. Whitworth

Abstract

This case study follows an instructor and her students (thirty-three elementary teachers) as they experience for the first time a graduate-level science course delivered via compressed video technology. The study focuses on teacher learning and coping strategies. Data were gathered from videotaped records of classes, informal interviews with students and site facilitators, open-ended student surveys, and instructor and student journals. Findings are reported in the discussion section of the study.

Implementing an Internet Tutorial for Web-Based Courses

Sherry Smith and Andrea Bencotter

Abstract

The Division of Criminal Justice at the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) offers an entire criminal justice degree program via distance learning, principally through computer-based Internet courses. During the Spring 1998 semester, an Internet tutorial was provided during the first week of classes to students in all Internet courses in the program. Its purpose was to familiarize students with basic computer skills and Internet usage. This article focuses on the use of the Internet tutorial in Web-based courses, including an explanation of the tutorial, a discussion of its benefits for students and faculty, and implications for future computer-based Internet courses.

Interview

Speaking Personally-with Neil Butcher

Modupe Irele

Neil Butcher is the Research Coordinator and Information Manager of the South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE). He has worked extensively with South Africa's national Department of Education and with many of the country's foremost providers of education. Neil also acts as advisor to many of South Africa's national information technology and education projects. He was recently asked to sit on the Advisory Board of the World Bank's Global Distance Education Network and to coordinate the development of its Southern African Web site. Neil was interviewed by Modupe Irele, a doctoral candidate in Adult Education at The Pennsylvania State University.

Book Review

Objectives, Competences and Learning Outcomes

Darcy Hardy

Objectives, Competences and Learning Outcomes: Developing Instructional Materials in Open and Distance Learning by Reginald F. Melton. (London: Kogan Page. Distributed in the U.S. by Stylus Publishing, Sterling, VA, 1997, 192 pp., \$29.95.)

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The American Journal of Distance Education Volume 13, Issue 3.

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Editorial

Charles Wedemeyer, In Memoriam

Michael G. Moore

Articles

An Argument for the Application of Copyright Law to Distance Education

Tomas A. Lipinski

Abstract

This article presents a legal analysis of the application of copyright law to distance education environments, particularly as it applies to Web-based instruction and the construction of electronic reserves, or so-called virtual libraries. The author argues that revision of copyright law to allow for the reproduction, display, and performance of works in these settings is consistent with national policy and existing and developing copyright law. The dangers of moving toward a schema of universal or compulsory licensing of information products and services are also explored. Finally, the author suggests several possible components that new legislation or "fair use" guidelines might include.

Factors Influencing Interaction in an Online Course

Charalambos Vrasidas and Marina Stock McIsaac

Abstract

This study examines the nature of interaction in an online course from both teacher and student perspectives. Major components of a conceptual framework to identify interaction were identified. Data analysis suggested that the structure of the course, class size, feedback, and prior experience with computer-mediated communication all influenced interaction. Results of the study reconceptualize interaction as a theoretical construct and emphasize the importance of socially constructed meanings from the participants' perspectives.

Perceptions and Effects of Image Transmissions during Internet-Based Training

Robert A. Wisher and Christina K. Curnow

Abstract

This article reports on a study that examined the influence of a student's visual access to the instructor during Internet-based audiographics training. A four-day factual course on information operations was taught through lecture and slides over the Internet to n = 110 students situated at seven remote sites. The availability of instructor video was manipulated. For two instructional modules, the transmission of the instructor video was disabled for half of the students while the other half could view the instructor; this procedure was reversed for two other modules. The results showed that increasing the video capability of an Internet-based course does not necessarily improve the learning of factual information.

Telemedicine for Patient Education

David L. Byers, Cheryl Hilgenberg, and Dent M. Rhodes

Abstract

A telemedicine project was conducted to explore the delivery of childbirth preparation classes originating at a large regional hospital to a remote site at a small rural hospital. Over six months, three series of classes were included in the project, with twenty-four participants at the originating site and twenty participants at the remote site. A two-way, audio/video teleconferencing system with multiple cameras and monitors was employed for instruction. A registered nurse taught the class and a site facilitator assisted at the remote site. Evaluation of the project was done through surveys, interviews, and observations. The classes were well received by project participants at both sites. Principal advantages cited were increased availability of the programs, improved attendance, and convenience to rural participants. The principal disadvantages cited focused on technical problems, particularly audio quality.

Grass Roots

The Great Conversation at a Distance: Using Journals in an Anthropology Telecourse

Nancy P. McKee

Abstract

A substantial number of university faculty who teach at a distance express distress at the loss of the face-to-face contact they consider to be the hallmark of the "great conversation" that is the essence of higher education. With respect to student-teacher contact, this paper explores the idea that student journals might make many of the same benefits offered to on-campus students available to distance students.

Interview

Speaking Personally with Dr. Richard S. Jarvis

Rick Shearer

Richard Jarvis is Chancellor of the United States Open University and was interviewed for the AJDE by Rick Shearer, Senior Instructional Designer at Penn State University's World Campus.

Media Review

The Emergence of eBooks: netLibrary

Russell Poulin

An electronic book, or eBook, is the completely digital incarnation of a book that can be read on a computer or in a specialized hand-held device. Russell Poulin outlines the advantages of eBooks, addresses policy obstacles, discusses the implications for Distance Educators, and makes note of eBook companies.

Notes on Authors

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The Pennsylvania State University
110 Rackley Building
University Park, PA 16802-3202
Tel: (814) 863-3764 Fax: (814) 865-5878
E-mail: ACSDE@psu.edu
http://www.ed.psu.edu/ACSDE/

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