

# The Journal of Distance Learning

## Abstracts

**ARCHEE, R., & SAUNDERS, S. (2001).** **Converging modalities for distance education in professional communication: Implications from flexible delivery.** *Journal of Distance Learning*, 6(1), 5–17.

Distance education (in the United States of America) and flexible learning (in the United Kingdom) are popular catch-phrases that utilise the Web and other electronic media for new courses of study in both the academic and corporate arenas. In this paper we consider the feasibility of teaching appropriate knowledge and skills in professional communication by using converging modalities in flexible delivery (including print materials and Web-based learning) to provide for distance education. An analysis is given of literature and the authors' own experiences of communication education in undergraduate and postgraduate courses in professional communication in Australia in the School of Communication and Media at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean, and the Faculty of Education at the University of Technology, Sydney. Four case studies are used to explore seven main themes for facilitating flexible modes of distance education: learning style; personal contact with academic staff; interactivity and learning communities; technical and other support; computer-mediated communication and learning; student problems with technology; and implications for academic staff.

**CAMPBELL, N., YATES, R., & MCGEE, C. (2001).** **Making a “net” for the Net.** *Journal of Distance Learning*, 6(1), 18–25.

The rapid development of open learning has seen a major change in the traditional tertiary student profile. Many new students have come

to tertiary education with varying backgrounds that are often limited to less than three years of secondary schooling. There has been a major change in the age and background profile of the New Zealand tertiary student population. Open learning has been an influential part of this change by offering the chance for tertiary study to students who not always have gained access in the past. Students whose secondary schooling was limited need strong support if they are to bridge into university study. A programme of teacher education called the Mixed Media Programme (MMP) at the University of Waikato has been delivered successfully for three years. The need to provide strong student support has been an integral part of a programme. It has contributed to a high success rate. This paper discusses the way in which support structures have been devised and implemented. It refers to the support provided by the University as an institution, support from tutors and the way in which students have been encouraged to support themselves.

**KINSHUK, PATEL, A., OPPERMAN, R., & RUSSELL, D. (2001).** **Role of human teacher in Web-based intelligent tutoring systems.** *Journal of Distance Learning*, 6(1), 26–35.

The advent of the Internet as a global communication medium has brought about a new focus on an area of research in designing intelligent tutoring systems (ITS), that has not been adequately considered so far mainly due to the localised nature of most academic environments. The area is brought into focus due to the need for adaptation to local contexts in the case of ITS used by students in different parts of the world. The issue, however, is not limited to the use of academic resources at vast distances only. There is bound to be a

distinction between the roles of “ITS designer teacher” and “ITS implementer teacher”, with those involved possessing different personality attributes, styles, and preferences. Researchers frequently come across teachers who distrust the ITS as embodying the beliefs of the ITS designer and not their own pedagogy. This paper argues for the need of a *Human Teacher Model* in the ITS which provides adequate consideration of the attributes and role of a human teacher—both as a designing collaborator and a teaching collaborator within a joint cognitive system consisting of the ITS, students and human teachers.

different types of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning are used by the instructors and students.

**RABEL, R., & HIGGINS, A. (2001). Flexible learning for a large undergraduate history paper: Implementation and outcomes.** *Journal of Distance Learning*, 6(1), 36–44.

This paper describes the conversion of a first year History paper at the University of Otago into a flexible learning paper. The work involved using distance learning techniques to generate a paper that went some way to achieving flexibility of time, place and pace of student learning.

**STEVENS, K. (2001). A four-step process for the development of knowledge-building communities in a digital intranet.** *Journal of Distance Learning*, 6(1), 45–48.

A school district in the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador has implemented a program that uses information and communication technologies to enhance the rural educational opportunities for senior students. This paper describes the program’s four main steps: creating a digital intranet; developing virtual classes (particularly for specialized subjects, such as mathematics and science); developing knowledge-building communities; identifying pedagogy appropriate to telelearning. The program’s uses of specific hardware and software products are discussed, as well as how