

# The Journal of Distance Learning

## Abstracts

**ROY, P. (2005). Learning management systems and the realities of using open source software.** *Journal of Distance Learning*, 9(1), 5-14.

Open source software has gained prominence thanks to the Internet and the ability to establish communities, share ideas, and distribute software. It embraces the academic ideals of cooperation and knowledge sharing, as well as being seen to have a low Total Cost of Ownership, greater flexibility, and adaptability. However, many projects have been created from funding that sees their success dependent upon financial support, while the voluntary nature of developer involvement means projects are susceptible to internal politics. Those contemplating an open source Learning Management System should look at its history, community, and technical requirements, as well as reflect upon the stability of commercial software alternatives.

**MAJOR, J. (2005). Teacher education for cultural diversity: Online and at a distance.** *Journal of Distance Learning*, 9(1), 15-26.

While student populations in English-speaking contexts are becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse, teaching populations remain predominantly mono-cultural and monolingual. It is therefore critical that initial teacher education programmes effectively prepare prospective teachers for the diversity they will encounter in modern classrooms. Recent initiatives in initial teacher education in New Zealand have seen the development of distance education opportunities for students. New technologies associated with the Internet offer potential for enhanced distance learning experiences. Effective experiences during initial teacher education are important in developing teachers who have the attitudes and skills to

meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse children. This paper explores the extent to which effective teacher education for diversity can occur at a distance using online technologies.

**BARBOUR, M. (2005). Design of Web-based courses for secondary students.** *Journal of Distance Learning*, 9(1), 27-36.

This study considers the perceptions of course developers, teachers, and students on the characteristics of effective Web-based design for secondary school students. Through interviews and document analysis, the views of the participants on Web-based components, instructional strategies, and the effectiveness of both are investigated in a virtual high school context.

**KUIPER, K., McMURTRIE, C., & RONALD, G. (2005). E-lectures within an integrated multimedia course design.** *Journal of Distance Learning*, 9(1), 37-45.

Course design should be student-centred in that courses are designed for students. But the consequences of that imperative differ from course to course and from student to student. This paper describes two courses that take student-centredness seriously. It also contextualises the way in which these courses are presented. Since students have different cognitive and affective styles and different social and personal backgrounds and approaches, a variety of presentational approaches are outlined which are integrated in each course. The courses are presented traditionally in lectures, practical workshops, and tutorials, but also in a textbook, downloadable PowerPoint slides, and, innovatively, as QuickTime movies in which the PowerPoint is integrated with a voiceover

from the lecture. Online quizzes and surveys are also provided so that students can receive feedback on their progress and on communal views. None of this is possible without accommodating presentation vehicles. These are also described.

**ALFORD, M., OLENIUK, C., & ROFFEY, S. (2005). Flexible learning templates for dispersed learners: Expanding the role of the content expert without pain. *Journal of Distance Learning*, 9(1), 46-57.**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides training for staff at 200 locations worldwide and in an extreme range of conditions. This article describes the processes involved in undertaking the development of a series of easy-to-use templates for the development of learning and training materials by UNHCR staff. The templates provide a repertoire of tools and resources for subject matter experts wishing to develop self-directed or flexible learning guides for particular groups of learners. Challenges facing the creators during design and implementation phases are discussed and a set of lessons learned from both phases is outlined.