

Maggie McVay Lynch
 Editor

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WAOE Electronic Bulletin (W.E.B.) Going to a Permanent Bi-Monthly Schedule

It was bound to come sooner or later. The combination of lack of contributions from members, and limited time of the editor has forced us to move to a permanent bi-monthly schedule for the newsletter. Perhaps this will allow members a little more time to craft their contributions, and allow both members and others in the online education community a little more time to read the newsletters as well.

For 2004, the W.E.B. will be published in February, April, June, August, October, and December. Please submit all contributions to [Maggie Lynch](#) whenever you have them ready and they will be incorporated in the newsletter.

WAOE Website In Arabic

Thanks to the hard work of Dr. Ala Al-Mosawi, WAOE is now also represented in Arabic. You can link to it through the drop down language box on the main site or go directly to the Arabic pages at <http://e-education.ca/waoe/>.

Dr. Ala plans to gradually upload more links, materials and e-Learning technology tools & features, such as an Arabic discussion board for WAOE members and a virtual conference room for officers' meetings including voice chat.

Progress on Mentoring Initiative

There has been some great starts on four projects and prospects for two more in the new year. Chair, [Nick Bowskill](#), has been deftly monitoring progress and encouraging continued participation. In addition, two guides are in development-A Guide for Mentors and A Guide for Project Holders. We hope in the near future to be able to post these guides to the WAOE website for all to view.

Nick's email message to WAOE mentors and project participants best summarizes what has happened this year and how the project may continue to move forward in January 2004. The key parts of that message are presented below.

We've only had one real push to market the initiative to mentors and then to possible project-holders. Out of that we've had 30 volunteers and 4 projects plus one maybe two more in the pipeline for our return. I think we've got a good sense of the issues, problems and some of the solutions for a new push to come soon. I would say we're near to a system that works. On top of that Bonnie and Mike have both expressed a willingness to explore support and development ideas for those involved

and maybe a break now will allow space to think about that.

*I think this model can work *very* well and I think we've achieved a lot for what I see as a pilot. The first project started in August so we've had just 4 months as our first developmental cycle. I am convinced we can do a lot more and that it will be a lot more rewarding for everyone involved in cycle 2. I'm encouraged by, grateful for and admiring of your kindness and involvement. (email Dec. 10, 2003 to teampool@lists.pdx.edu)*

For those who have not been able to participate in these projects, you may still gain from the projects as they are completed. The resulting documentation will include case studies as resources for those within and outside the initiative. These studies will provide a resource for WAOE of documentation, best practices, and history. It is hoped that these resources will also spawn other projects and activities. As Nick stated "Those case studies would *witness* the activities, the participants and the work done as well as containing narratives from the perspective of each person involved."

UNESCO Sponsored 2003 World Summit of Presidents and Vice Chancellor of Worlds Largest Universities at Shanghai

For two days in early November, a Global Summit of Mega-Universities met in Shanghai, China. The participants to the World Summit were the Presidents or Vice Chancellors, of Mega Universities from several countries like China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Pakistan, Spain, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America. The main purpose of the summit as per UNESCO's Call was to develop a worldwide Network called Global Mega University Net (GMUNET) to promote mutual understanding and academic solidarity and explore ways and means of co-operation between mega-universities. Besides the above themes the Presidents and Vice-Chancellors of mega-universities from different regions of the world, also discussed challenges as well as opportunities facing distance and open learning system to consider and evolve some concrete proposals for co-operation between mega-universities.

To learn more about the details of the summit and the decisions announced review the [WAOE Views posting](#).

Member Profiles -- Dr. Lya Visser

[Lya Visser](#) is someone who has lived in many places around the world, but has maintained a focus on motivating students to learn in whatever environment they have available. Over the past six years she has concentrated her expertise in motivating students in the distance learning environment. Her own words best describe her findings:

My research shows very clearly what many people already know intuitively, but what is often not adequately applied by many distance education institutions, namely that much of the success of students depends on the warmth of human relationships that surpass the physical distance between them, and between them and their faculty.



Originally from the Netherlands, Dr. Visser currently makes her home in France. Lya obtained her Ph.D. at the University of Twente, and she has taught at many institutions of Higher Education—most recently working with doctoral students at Nova Southeastern University in Florida. However, her vast experience is much more broad. She has been involved in international educational development for over 20 years, spanning four continents and over 30 countries. Her most recent work has concentrated on learning projects in developing countries in Africa, such as Botswana, Congo, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Through the Learning Development Institute she has also undertaken projects in Mexico. Dutch is her native language, but she also speaks English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Deciding to leave her work in academia, Dr. Visser is now the Training Director for the [Learning Development Institute \(LDI\)](#), a non-profit agency which specializes in creating learning environments that care for people both emotionally and cognitively. Most of her work is in mentoring those who teach.



The Malaysian e-Learning Community of Practice

Making Instructions Work & Learners Learn

Launched by [Hazarizal Zainodin](#), this [blog site](#) invites Malaysian practitioners to contribute articles, feedback, or comments to the blogs. You can contribute articles by emailing [Harzarizal Zainodin](#). You may also ask to be part of the editorial team.

The categories so far for these blogs are:

- Editorial** - Voice for Advocacy, Highlights, Announcements, Features
- Events** - Highlights, Call for Papers, Who's Presenting|Attending What?
- Graphics Designs** - Trends, Issues, Tips, Portfolios, Publications
- Grid for Learning** - Trends, Updates, Links
- Instructional Designs** - Trends, Issues, Tips, Portfolios, Publications
- Knowledge Repository** - Papers, Links, Metadata, Queries, Experts
- Learning Objects** - Trends, Issues, Tips, Portfolios, Publications
- Learning Technologies** - New, Emerging, and Obsolete technologies for learning and education
- Multimedia Programming** - Trends, Issues, Tips, Portfolios, Publications
- Metadata** - Trends, Issues, Publications
- Projects & Implementations** - Highlights, Ratings, Features
- Standards & Guidelines** - Content, Instructional Design, e-Learning Systems



Upcoming Conferences

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 2004 International Multiconference in Computer Science and Computer Engineering (18 Joint Int'l Conferences) Monte Carlo Resort, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, June 21-24, 2004

If you have a conference you wish to advertise in the next newsletter, please send information to [Maggie Lynch](#).

You are invited to submit a draft paper (see instructions below) and/or a proposal to organize a technical session/workshop. All accepted papers will be published in the respective conference proceedings. The names of technical session/workshop organizers/chairs will appear on the cover of the proceedings/books as Associate Editors.

The 2004 International Multiconference in Computer Science and Computer Engineering is composed of the following 18 conferences - each event is the premier conference for presentation of advances in their respective subjects. All conferences will be held simultaneously (same location and dates: June 21-24, 2004, Las Vegas, USA):

1. The 2004 International Conference on Parallel and Distributed Processing Techniques and Applications (PDPTA'04)
2. The 2004 International Conference on Artificial Intelligence (IC-AI'04)
3. The 2004 International Conference on Imaging Science, Systems, and Technology (CISST'04)
4. The 2004 International Conference on Modeling, Simulation and Visualization Methods (MSV'04)
5. The 2004 International Conference on Software Engineering Research and Practice (SERP'04)
6. The 2004 International Conference on Information and Knowledge Engineering (IKE'04)
7. The 2004 International Conference on Embedded Systems and Applications (ESA'04)
8. The 2004 International Conference on Internet Computing (IC'04)
9. The 2004 International Conference on Wireless Networks (ICWN'04)
10. The 2004 International Symposium on Web Services and Applications (ISWS'04)

11. The 2004 International Workshop on Wearable Computers (IWWC'04)
12. The 2004 International Conference on Security and Management (SAM'04)
13. The 2004 International Conference on Mathematics and Engineering Techniques in Medicine and Biological Sciences (METMBS'04)
14. The 2004 International Conference on Machine Learning; Models, Technologies and Applications (MLMTA'04)
15. The 2004 International Conference on Communications in Computing (CIC'04)
16. The 2004 International Conference on VLSI (VLSI'04)
17. The 2004 International Conference on Engineering of Reconfigurable Systems and Algorithms (ERSA'04)
18. The 2004 International Conference on Algorithmic Mathematics and Computer Science (AMCS'04)

A link to each conference's URL can be found at <http://www.world-academy-of-science.org/IMCSE2004>

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Australian Computers in Education Conference 2004 (ACEC2004), July 5-8 2004, Adelaide, South Australia

Conference theme: Research, Reform, Realise the Potential''

The 2004 Australian Computers in Education Conference (ACEC) is hosted by the Computer Education Group of South Australia (CEGSA) under the auspices of the Australian Council for Computers in Education. ACCE is an Australian body whose members are the State Computer Education Groups and the Australian Computer Society (ACS). ACCE is affiliated with the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) and the Technology Education Federation of Australia (TEFA).

In 2004, ACEC 2004 will be held in Adelaide, South Australia, from July 5-8, 2004. Adelaide is indisputably one of Australia's most beautiful cities. Home to more than 1 million people, it is surrounded by stunning beauties including the internationally renowned Barossa wineries and the Kangaroo Island. Adelaide flaunts a cosmopolitan and unique lifestyle influenced by its multicultural population.

Further updated information about ACEC 2004 will be available at the [ACEC2004 home page](#):

We would like to invite you to attend ACEC2004 and submit proposals for papers, symposiums, posters and workshops. The proposals will examine the use of information and communication technology in education and training. Proposals on papers, symposiums and posters will be reviewed for inclusion in the conference program. Accepted papers and symposium summaries will be published in the refereed conference proceedings.

The theme of the ACEC2004 is: Research, Reform,.. Realise the Potential '' with the following sub-themes:

- Leadership and change
- Innovative pedagogical practices
- Thinking skills
- Life long learning
- ICT in learning areas
- ICT in early childhood education
- Indigenous learners and technology
- Inclusivity and equity
- E-learning
- Virtual learning communities
- Learning agents
- IT/Computing studies
- Information management
- Networks and infrastructures

Enquiries regarding proposals (papers, symposiums, workshops, and posters) should be directed to:

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CALL FOR PAPERS

IEEE 2nd International Workshop on Technology for Education in Developing Countries

<http://www.ee.columbia.edu/dvmm/tedc/>

In Conjunction with IEEE International Conference on Advanced Learning Technologies (ICALT 2004),
August 31, 2004, Joensuu, Finland

The goal of this second international workshop is to bring together researchers, and educators to discuss various issues involved in developing new techniques and on novel uses of technology for education in developing countries.

In developing countries, conditions, constraints, and resources differ sharply with industrialized nations, creating special challenges for the technical and educational research communities.

This workshop will build upon the first TEDC workshop that included several invited papers, regular papers and a panel.

We seek high quality submissions of original unpublished research on all aspects of technology for education in developing countries. Researchers and educators with new perspectives on applications of technology in this context are strongly encouraged to submit their work. Accepted papers will be published in the ICALT 2004 conference proceedings.

The main topics of the workshop include but are not limited to:

- Teaching Tools and Applications
- Multimedia applications
- Intelligent learning/tutoring environments
- Applications for low-cost devices
- Literacy applications
- Open source tools for teaching
- Educational databases
- Distance Learning
- Distributed tutoring/learning
- Asynchronous applications
- Portals/web tools
- Information retrieval for slow/unreliable connections
- Web-based instruction/teacher training
- Impact of Technology
- Project deployments
- Cultural issues in educational development
- Minority language requirements
- Cross-language interfaces
- Human Computer Interfaces
- Resource Sharing
- Collaborative learning in local environments
- Human Computer Interfaces for resource sharing
- Teaching resource management
- Grid computing infrastructures

provides frameworks for active online learning. Rather than providing technology examples, Salmon sticks with facilitation and motivation online.

E-tivities are defined as motivating, engaging, purposeful activities developed and led by an e-moderator. "E-tivities" explores not only the importance of interactive options in online learning, but also provides a five-stage model of teaching and learning online that translates into specific ideas for designing and running "e-tivities." The book is backed up by extensive illustrations and case studies, and includes a unique collection of 35 Resources for Practitioners

TOOLS

No tool reviews were done for this newsletter.



School Behind School - Concepts for the future interactive e-learning for elementary and secondary schools

We help students to learn / and teachers to teach We have developed an eLearning service (more than 20.000 lessons) being offered to schools and students in the Czech Rep. We want to: - develop more interactive multimedia that would precisely fit the needs of teachers and students. - Formulate innovative novel eLearning concepts and spread them across Europe. We are looking for partners in both areas: multimedia and national partners.

PROPOSER : Centre for Modern Education (CZ), an eLearning research company with strong inhouse knowledge and expertise in developing and operating e-service for the future "School behind school".

Specific target segments:

- elementary and secondary schools
- students and their parent

For more information [see proposal](#)

Do you have something for this section? Send your partnership requests to [Maggie Lynch](#) for inclusion in the next newsletter.

The Rewards of Effective Online Instruction

a guest article by [Diane Howard](#), Ph.D.



Effective online instruction can lead students to develop higher-order, critical- thinking skills. Best practice online cognitive instructional strategies involve students in active, not passive learning. Active learning facilitates deeper understanding and processing of information. Effective online instruction encourages a posting and writing process that involves brainstorming, collaborating, drafting, and revising. Effective cognitive teaching online strategies are not focused toward a correct number of student responses, that are more behavioral in nature; but they are directed toward encouraging independent thinking, that includes process, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information. The goal of effective online facilitation is not to encourage passive responses to information but active, independent sense-making. It encourages meaningfulness, as it facilitates links between fresh insights and new ideas.

Effective online instruction facilitates practical, real-world learning tasks. It encourages construction of meaning and connection between abstract ideas and concrete, useful applications. It assists learners in what to know but more importantly in how to know and to utilize meaning (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001). Positive online facilitation impacts affective, social, and cognitive domains of learning. Effective online instruction integrates social interaction and problem or project-based cognitive learning models. This integration includes and facilitates small team assignments that involve inquiry, solving problems, group work, collaborative learning, and cooperative projects.

Effective online instructors can positively impact students' attitudes and learning (Bruning et al., 1999). They can provide constructive tones, standards, goals, objectives, deadlines, learning activities, assessments, and evaluations of students' projects and progress. They can model, generate enthusiasm, and convey positive expectations toward learning. Their modeling can have a productive impact on their students (Bandura, 1986). They can generate interest in topics. They can encourage confidence in the significance and relevance of material covered in a course.

Online instructors encourage more independent productivity, when they actively ask questions of learners and provide consistent, constructive feedback. They facilitate high-level, independent learning when they instruct inductively, constructively, and positively. Effective teaching strategies can make a profound difference and impact on the level and output of online learners.

References

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.; Prentice Hall.

Bruning, R., Shraw, G., & Roming, R. (1999). *Cognitive psychology and instruction* (3rd edition). Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Prentice Hall.

Eggen, P., Kauchak, D. *Strategies for Teachers, Teaching Content and Thinking Skills*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Diane Howard

<http://www.dianehoward.com>

Developing Effective Interaction in Online Courses

a guest article by [Maggie McVay Lynch](#), Ed.D.



Most of us have heard the admonition for online course design: “Interaction, interaction, interaction.” But, what does this really mean? Does this mean a course should consist primarily of hyperlinks? Does it mean that having a multiple-choice quiz with immediate feedback is sufficient? Or does it exhort us to build time-consuming and costly simulations with high quality graphics and video streams? I would suggest that though all of these are ways to provide interaction, none of them are necessarily needed or important. First and foremost, interaction with knowledge occurs in the mind of the student. It is the teacher’s and instructional designer’s role to enhance that cognitive processing in the best way possible given designer resources and understanding the abilities and available infrastructure of the students.

Before beginning to design an online course or a curriculum containing several courses, it is important for you to first define online instruction for your specific course(s). Not every online course is taught 100% on the Web. In fact, the majority of current online courses are hybrids of traditional classroom environments, interactive video environments, and even correspondence courses. Forms of online instruction include:

- Sharing information on a Web site (examples: course syllabus, instructor notes, test results)
- Providing practice for new concepts by using an online tool such as a simulation or game
- Conducting asynchronous discussions by using a threaded discussion tool (e.g., WebBoard or a CMS discussion board)

- Conducting synchronous discussions by using chat software
- Communicating one-to-one or one-to-many via email for instructional purposes
- Holding office hours via chat
- Giving practice tests or self-evaluations by using online forms and databases
- Submitting assignments electronically via email attachments, discussion board postings, and chat transcripts
- Delivering library resources via the Internet through electronic databases or electronic books/papers on reserve

Your course may use all of these forms of instruction or only a few depending on the needs of your environment. A course taught exclusively online would best use all of these forms of communication and teaching in order to assure that student participation and understanding is maximized.

USING INTERACTION TO ENHANCE LEARNING

Since leaving a Web page is as easy as clicking the mouse button, too often new designers focus their attention exclusively on what attracts and retains the attention of the casual browser. The use of graphics, color, animation, and sound do provide external stimuli to arouse attention – at least momentarily. However, these ultimately do not provide motivation, nor will it maintain learner attention. Attention, and thereby motivation, is best stimulated through cognitive interaction. A page bereft of graphics, sound, and multimedia can still provide excellent teaching and learning benefits because the student is invited to interact.

Interaction requires significantly more than clicking a mouse and following a hyperlink; it requires involvement in higher-order thinking skills such as synthesis, application, and interpretation. This type of interaction can be encouraged through inquiry, in which learners encounter a problem, contradictory information, or a mystery to be resolved. Other methods include establishing relevance or value of the material for the users (e.g., asking them to reflect and write about its use in their work environment) or by having the students generate links to related information or direct application. The key is designing the course so that the learner must actively process and make sense of the information presented. It is only during interaction that learning actually takes place.

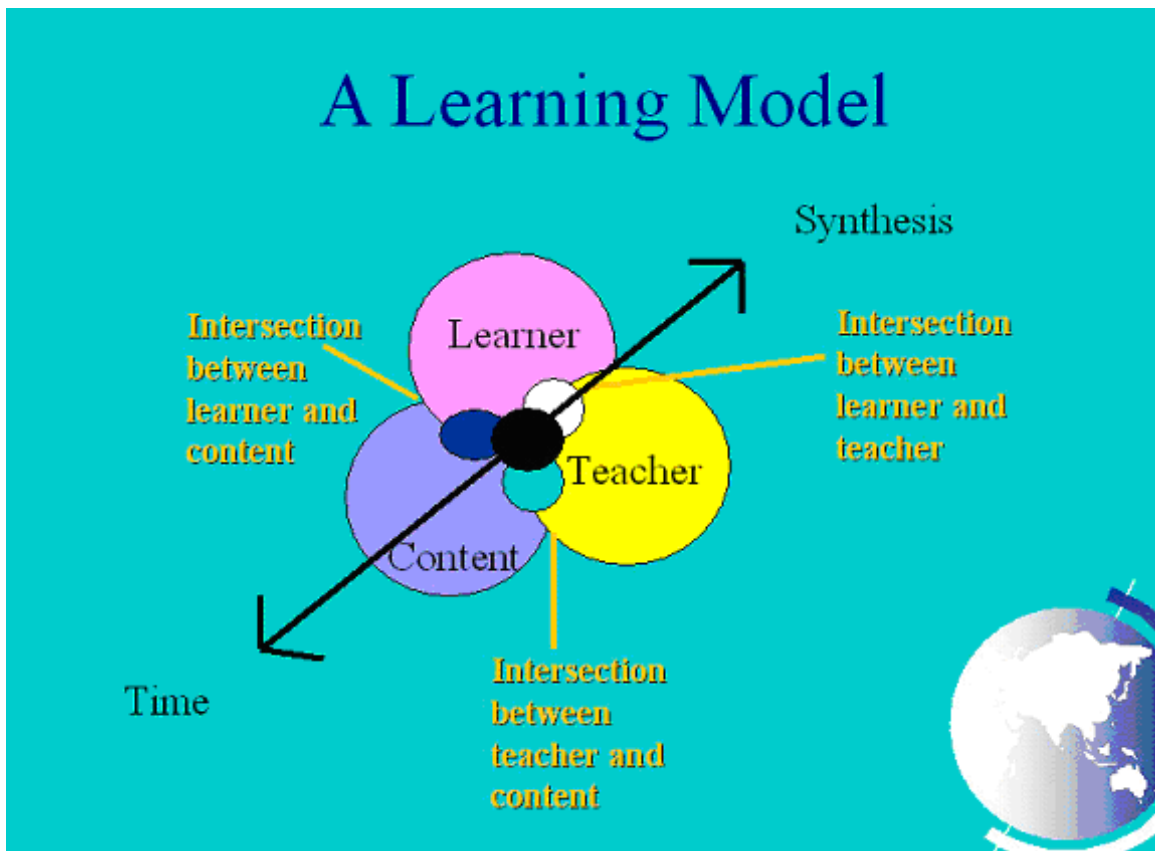


Figure 1. McVay-Lynch (1998) Model for intersection of learning and teacher control over time. Conference presentation.

In the model depicted in figure 1 we see that the three primary elements of teacher, content, and learner impact knowledge acquisition. Time, as a fourth dimension,—often measured through reflective writings—provides the final interactive element that moves the learner

toward synthesis. As a designer you can control some of these primary elements. However, the key to design is to enhance what occurs at the intersection of these elements as that is where the majority of learning truly occurs.

Interaction occurs on four levels:

1. Interaction with the content
2. Interaction with the instructor
3. Interaction with classmates
4. Interaction with self

As a course designer, you have a great deal of control over the first two types of interaction, and some control over the third type. However, you have no control over the interaction students experience with themselves – comparing new knowledge to old, generalizing mental models, selecting and discarding information – the act of cognition. Nevertheless, by designing the first three levels of interaction you can help to assure that the student’s mental processing is more likely to select concepts and methods that you deem important to the learning scenario.

Interaction with Content

As stated above, interaction requires more than hyperlinks and clicking from one piece of content to another. For the student to interact with content, you must consider how to design the content so that it can provide guidance and feedback. This feedback can be provided either during the learners' exploration of Web material or afterward, by critiquing the representations of their exploration. For example, during the exploration of course Web pages, many hyperlinks are simply shown by highlighted text in which the text itself serves as a descriptor for the topic. Users will tell you, however, that often these descriptors turn out to be misleading or even irrelevant. This is particularly true when an instructor lists perhaps ten links and asks the student to select three to read, or worse the instructor links to a meta-site that provides a plethora of hyperlinks with no helpful annotation or categorization scheme. A more meaningful system would be to present your links in a guided fashion with categorizations such as “definition,” “example,” or “non-example” when teaching concepts or principles, and “defined path,” “shortest path,” or “alternative path(s)” when teaching a procedure.

Another method to develop interaction with content is to give several opportunities for learner self-assessment. This can be done through quick questions or mini-tests that provide immediate feedback but are not recorded in grades or limited to the number of attempts. If these types of interactions are used to determine appropriate or inappropriate responses by the learner, pages linked to their answers can be used to either reinforce the correct response or explain the rationale of an incorrect answer and guide the user to a more appropriate answer or other remediation. Increasing the sophistication of this type of content interaction would include CGI or Java scripts (available in most CMS systems) that can analyze responses and give detailed information and alternative choices. Feedback can be as specific as the designer wishes to code and provide individual students with deeper explanation of the consequences of their choices. Simulations and expert systems are the most complex example of this type of content interaction; in these applications the program captures learner variables and “reacts” by presenting additional scenarios based on those variables.

Interaction with the Instructor

Less software-dependant but more time consuming during the delivery of the course, is interacting with the instructor. As discussed previously, in the online environment the instructor becomes a mentor to the student. Students need to feel comfortable capitalizing on that mentorship relationship. The instructor can help build that feeling of ease and trust by implementing six design facets in the course and by the manner in which he or she models these facets in response to student queries.

1. *Articulate a shared goal* – state the course goal clearly in the syllabus or at the beginning of each unit, then encourage students to mold the goal to their application. Try to find a compromise that will meet both course and students' needs.
2. *Set a tone of mutual respect, tolerance, and trust* – the teacher sets this tone from the initial Welcome Letter through every communication, be it email, discussion board posting, or student feedback. Furthermore, the manner in which the instructor deals with (or doesn't deal with) disruptive students will also set the tone.
3. *Provide continuous but not continual communication* – communication comes in many forms: through Web pages, postings, email, etc. The instructor pre-selects the manner in which he or she will communicate throughout the class. It is impossible and certainly not desirable to be always available to students (though it sometimes seems that is their expectation). It is important that the types and timing of instructor communication is clear to the learner. For example, if you only answer email three times per week, then you need to make a statement to the students like, “I will be responding to your emails on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Nothing is more frustrating to a student than expecting an immediate response and not getting one, or worse, having feedback promised for a particular time and not receiving the feedback or a response identifying a new timeframe.

4. *Offer and encourage both formal and informal environments* – The information on Web pages, the essay assignments from students, and perhaps the opening letter are all formal environments. Most students understand this, but it doesn't hurt to reiterate them. Also offer informal environments through discussion board postings, chat rooms, and other contexts. Modeling an informal mode of communication will help the students feel more comfortable doing the same. One way to do this is to engage in some self-disclosure when in an informal environment. For example, when starting your chat office hours you might take time to chat about hobbies, the weather, or an upcoming holiday with your students before getting into the question and answer period.
5. *Do not always expect or desire consensus* – The instructor is the final arbiter in all decisions. Though it is valuable to have students take ownership of certain things – like group work assignments – it is important that students clearly understand how evaluations and assessments will be done. Also, in the case of interpersonal difficulty among students, it will still remain the instructor's responsibility to arbitrate.
6. *Create a sense of "social presence" online* – physical presence is often mentioned as a problem with online courses. This does not need to be the case if a sense of "social presence" has been established. This is done by providing opportunities for social knowledge, interaction, and self-disclosure. Techniques such as student biographies, pictures posted to a shared page, shared email addresses, and allowing "small talk" at the beginning of synchronous activities all help to build this social presence. As discussed in a previous chapter on building learning community, it is this social presence that generates comments from online students such as, "I felt closer to my classmates online than I ever did in a regular classroom – even though I never physically met them."

Interaction with Classmates

Humans are a social species, and particularly in the Web-based environment it is important to provide opportunities for this natural tendency to operate. This is done with small group activities. A small group is defined as learners, working together in groups of two to eight to discuss, question, pursue problems cooperatively, and report. Not only do small groups provide an opportunity for socialization and building on the social presence previously described, but it also presents an opportunity for students to synthesize the content and improve their communication skills.

A number of different techniques can be used to encourage interaction within small groups. These are articulated below.

1. Discussions can take place either synchronously (chat rooms, telephone or video conferencing) or asynchronously (discussion board). This is an opportunity for facts, ideas, and opinions to be exchanged. The discussions can be moderated by the instructor or centered in the group itself. They can be formal and graded or informal and only participation is counted. The instructor sets the tone and must articulate the format.
2. Case studies provide learners with detailed information about a real-life situation. All related circumstances, issues, and actions of persons involved are carefully described. Students then study and analyze the situation as presented. They decide what was done correctly and what mistakes might have been avoided. In some case studies the students may be asked to solve the problem presented. Case studies, like discussions, may be done synchronously or asynchronously.
3. Role-Playing and Simulation allows for spontaneous reactions and problem-solving by two or more learners. Each person takes on and acts out a role as he or she feels it would be played in real-life. Depending on the scenario, other learners may observe and report or the entire small group may be enmeshed in the dramatization, undergoing the same stress and pressures they would experience in reality. If all group members are role-playing, then the instructor discusses and evaluates the results. These are most often done synchronously (chat or MOO/MUD or virtual world). However, it is also possible to do this asynchronously through a time-limited discussion board activity (e.g., everyone must post responses and play out role and problem-solving within 48 hours from the commencement of the simulation).
4. Games are formalized simulation activities where two or more participants or teams compete in attempting to meet a set of objectives relating to the topic. Depending on the goal, games may be synchronous or asynchronous. They may be as simple as looking at a picture and "guessing" the number of objects (to later demonstrate conformity or authority) to as complex as the type of games currently sold for entertainment with points and defined winners and losers.

Whatever cooperative learning format is selected, it is important to plan well in advance what concepts will be reinforced, what group and individual rewards will be granted, what type of accountability you will expect, and how you will ensure equal opportunity for success. The primary student complaint about any type of group activity is accountability of individuals versus that of the group. Therefore it is very important to have a clear and well-articulated plan regarding assessment of any group activities.

Interaction with Self

The one part of interaction that teachers have no control over is the act of cognition – interaction with self through reflection, comparison, and generalization or specialization of knowledge. However, you can encourage this type of interaction in your course design by specifying time for self-interaction and asking students to share that process as much as possible; the primary tool is reflection. Reflection can be encouraged on a continuous basis throughout a project, such as asking students to post quick thoughts or reactions regarding

statements; or can be encouraged after certain concepts or after the completion of a course. These latter reflections are often used to help the student summarize and apply their learning or realize how far they have come in their knowledge.

Three formats are most common to use for reflection:

- *Personal journals* – usually kept throughout a course and used to reflect on knowledge, problems, or applications. The journals may be submitted at the end of learning units or concept modules, or at the end of the course to show the continuous process of reflection and learning.
- *Reflection essays* – assigned to focus on a particular process or concept, or to reflect on the course at completion. Sometimes these essays may also provide information to the instructor about what went well and what needs to be improved, as well as what the students found most interesting or motivational.
- *Reflection postings* – used particularly in courses where correct and incorrect responses may not be well-defined (e.g., ethics, religious studies, political analysis, etc.). These are usually generated by the instructor posting a dilemma or statement to the discussion board and asking students to reflect on the item and post feelings, experiences, or applications.

Whatever type of reflection interaction you build into your course, it can truly bring the “big picture” together for students as they learn new concepts. Reflection gives learners an opportunity to articulate to themselves and/or to you how they are generalizing their mental models to incorporate the new knowledge. It is a great way for instructors to get a snapshot of the applicability of the knowledge at that moment and to adapt course material and activities for the future. As the course is not face-to-face and often students involved in Web-based courses are very busy people, taking time for reflection is not usually high on learners’ priority lists. Thus it is up to the instructor to ensure this important self-interaction takes place.

MATERIALS THAT SUPPORT WEB-BASED COURSES

New online designers sometimes make the mistake of attempting to develop a course that uses only materials available on the Web. The belief of these new designers seems to be that it will be easier for the student to access materials, and it will allow them a wide range of search functions. Both of these assumptions are true. However, limiting the entire instruction to the Web also limits the effectiveness of the learning experience to a small number of activities and students. Just as you use a variety of media in a classroom, so also should you expect to use a variety of media in your Web-based courses.

Contrary to popular belief, textbooks are not going to disappear in the Web-based classroom environment. In fact, many students truly appreciate having a textbook to supplement their learning. The textbook provides a different way of organizing information, as well as a kinesthetic tool for many learners. One complaint about materials available only on the Web is that students cannot read or learn when away from the computer. Many institutions have reported that students print 95% of the material they find on the Web so they can have the pages with them as they travel to work, on trips, or wait for services. This is where the textbook becomes an important partner to your course design.

Other text-based supplements to your online course include articles, instructor notes, and assignments. In fact, there is an ongoing controversy among educators as to whether it is better to place all text materials online or to distribute them as a course packet along with the textbook. If students are going to print all of the online material anyway, there is good reason to avoid putting so much text online and simply supplying it to your learners in the format they prefer. On the other hand, some designers would argue that having all the text online allows for better search, hyper-linking, and tracking of student use. The point is not to dismiss the possibility of having additional text-based paper elements that the student purchases or receives that is referred to online but not duplicated.

Though technology now allows us to develop streaming video, quick time movies, and large audio files to be delivered over the Web, it doesn’t mean that this is the best way to deliver the material. Bandwidth is still a huge issue for most students accessing their courses from a home or business computer. This is particularly true in rural areas and in countries where the infrastructure is not fully developed. Someone accessing the Web with a 56K modem (the typical speed at this writing) will have many problems downloading audio, video and quick time movies. In some cases, the video will not play at all. In others, the video plays but the audio is not synchronized because of latency. Also, if the video signal is received the latency makes it difficult to view or to evaluate. If presenting video or audio is an important element in your course, you are better advised to use a CD.

Like textbooks, CDs are an important media partner to course design. A CD can hold a great deal of material. You can stream audio, video, tutorials, and a variety of other material to a CD and the student will see it exactly as you prepared it without all the problems of dialing-in with their modem. Within your Web-based course you can instruct your students to put in their CD, watch a movie clip, and then respond on the discussion board as you deem appropriate. In this way, you have provided good instruction and can still guide the students' experience and understanding of the content, even though it is not delivered directly from your Website. Audio and video tapes

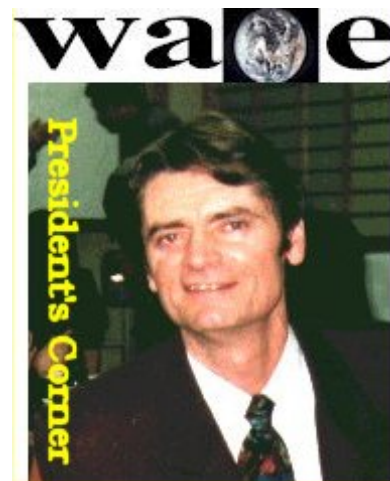
are still viable media partners, as are several other presentational tools.

The key to selecting media is to follow the same rules that guide all course design: First define the goals and objectives, then determine the best means by which to teach the material and assess mastery. Selecting media based on this rule will always assure the best course development possible.

Note: This material is adapted from Chapter 5 in Lynch, M. (2003). *The Online Educator: A guide to creating the virtual classroom*. London: Routledge

Connectivity: The 'Line' in Online Education

By [Steve McCarty](#), President WAOE



The [previous installment](#) explored basic parameters of online education, discussed the context in Japan, and raised questions for brainstorming. The invitation for feedback was met with responses on the WAOE Views discussion list. In this installment, some of those highlights are summarized, and addressing the question of what the 'line' in 'online' and 'offline' is may shed light on the nature of online education.

Richard Lemmer of Chugoku Junior College in Japan wrote that "[o]nline education is better suited to mature individuals who are self-motivated and have a good sense of purpose. It is also a good means of developing a culture of lifelong learning which would benefit the society on a macro" level. He is alluding to the traditional teacher-dependency that East Asian style education inculcates. With regard to culture, he continues: The development of online learning communities and the open, collaborative and supportive environment they produce may be alien to the traditional approach to education in Japan. It is still very much a top-down hierarchy, whereas more successful online learning comes from a shared experience, with basic structure provided by the instructor, but in a manner that allows each individual student the opportunity to explore her/his particular areas of interest within a broad topic." Western programs cannot simply be transplanted into non-Western cultures, because common sense assumptions about the parameters are very different. Student-centered approaches like constructionism are contemporaneous with online education, but is there a necessary relationship between them? That is, educators may be taking on a dual challenge of pioneering technologies and pedagogies, both of which may be new to many students in the world, requiring much preparatory training and education. Indeed, with regard to time, Richard wrote that "[a]nyone interested in starting online programs [should realize] that they are very labor intensive for both student and faculty. It is also necessary to ensure that before any program is initiated the institution is ready to provide long-term support. This means that structures for financial, technological and people support need to be in place from the outset. The transition from F2F to WBI takes careful planning and time if it is to be done properly and successfully." (<http://www.lists.pdx.edu/waoe-views/current/0739.html>)

He is implying that such institutional support may be hard to get. While online education is good for opening educational opportunities to the underserved, overcoming space, time and so forth, it cannot be a good way for administrators to save money by automating education.

Another parameter I suggest is face (the two F's in F2F), which figures strongly in Japanese social reality, and may be universally human. In Japan there is an *a priori* assumption that distance education cannot measure up to in-person education. Yet online educators are concluding that the aim is not to approximate/simulate F2F classes or even in-person relationships generally. The goals are more far-reaching, including non-linear (hypertextual) learning, telepresence, international class participation, and more.

Lisa Thomas of the Office of Web-Based Learning at Dunwoody College of Technology in Minneapolis addressed the questions about online education in detail, which gave an interesting insight into the current situation in the U.S. (<http://www.lists.pdx.edu/waoe-views/current/0740.html>) But the line in online needs be better understood, as it provides a key to the nature of online education. In a most basic sense, online education may just mean having networked computers available to some extent for educational experiences. That is, it could be for part of the time as in blended approaches, and online education also takes place in networked computer classrooms that are not a case of distance education. In a physical sense the 'line' is the cables, routers and so forth

that connect networked computers in a LAN, Intranet, or to the worldwide Internet. Incidentally, with m-learning by mobile phones, PDAs and other information appliances connected to the Internet, there are networked computers (servers, etc.) down the line even when the Internet is accessed via satellite or wireless networks. Then the "line" in online starts to take on a more metaphorical meaning of connection to networks or connectivity.

John Lincoln at QueZhou College of Technology in China raised his own set of far-reaching questions of online education in another response. He wrote in part: "let us focus globally on the differences and similarities between the developing and the developed nations, the urban and the rural..." Please see the mid-November 2003 posts for the full details

<http://www.lists.pdx.edu/waoe-views/> and send further responses to the [Views list](#) or to waoe@waoe.org

Collegially, Steve McCarty

Online library: http://www.kagawa-jc.ac.jp/~steve_mc/epublist.html



Troubleshooting the WAOE Website, Discussion Boards, and List-Servs

Because WAOE is a virtual organization, members are dependent on using their computer to see information and participate in all aspects of this organization. In this section the Webmaster will answer questions about the WAOE site or discuss common problems that members may experience. With the large variety of software and hardware used today, most often the problem is resolved with a configuration change. Send your questions to [Maggie Lynch](#). She will try to answer you within two days to immediately resolve your problem. If your question is a common one, she may then use your question (anonymously) in this column so that other members can benefit as well.

Q. *Depending on what computer I use, sometimes I can't see all the buttons at the top of the WAOE main page. Why does this happen? I'm using the same browser and software on both computers.*

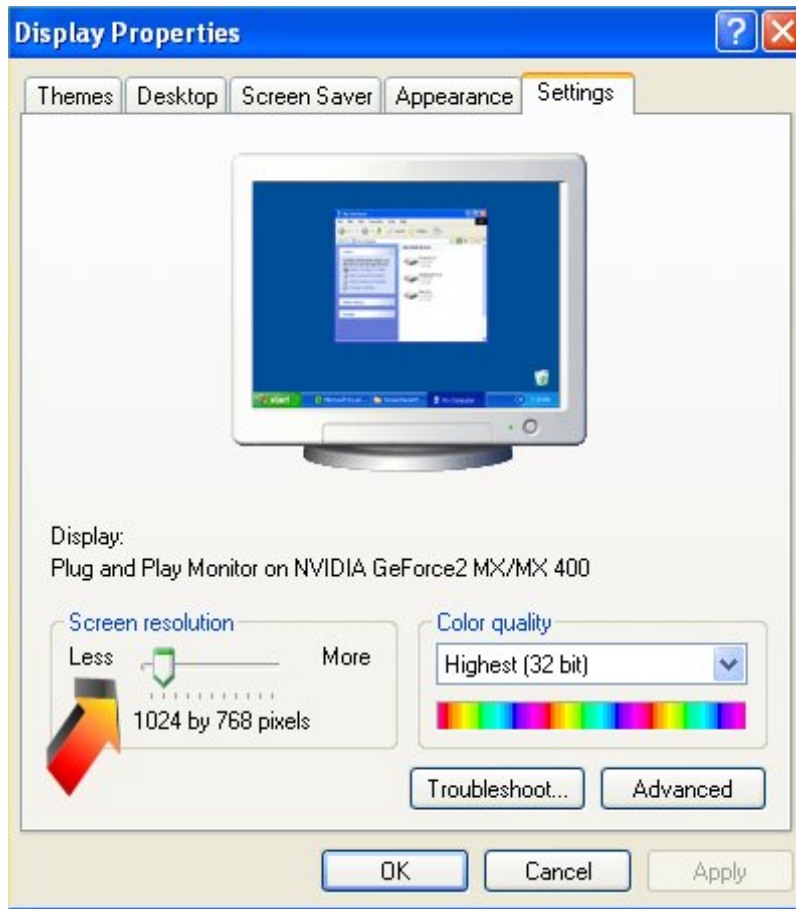
A. The WAOE site is optimally designed for a computer with resolution set to 1024x780. Some people choose to set their resolution differently because they like the larger font size. Also, some people have older computers (older than 5 years) that don't go this high. If you cannot see all the buttons at the top of the page, such as the "Members Only" button then you need to use the scroll bar on the right. (see arrow in picture below). If you scroll down you will see the rest of the buttons.



If you would like to check or change the resolution on your browser, here are the instructions for any Windows-based machines. (Resolution refers to the sharpness of screen fonts and images)

1. Go to the "Control Panel." (Usually accessed from the START button).
2. Select "Display."
3. Click on the "settings" tab.
4. Change the "screen resolution" by clicking and dragging the small green marker. The resolution that all WAOE screens are designed or is the one shown on the right (1024 by 768 pixels).
5. Click the OK button to make your changes appear immediately.

If you move the slider to the left the resolution goes down but the size of the fonts is bigger. If you move the slider to the right, the resolution goes up but the size of the fonts is smaller.



Q. I know you sent me my password for the members-only site but I've lost it. What should I do? Also, can I change it to something that is easier to remember?

A. If you have forgotten your password, contact [Maggie McVay Lynch](#) and she will send it to you again. We are working on a program that allows you to select your own password, but that program is not yet available. In the meantime, if you find your password too difficult to remember, you can request a different one by writing [Maggie](#) and telling her what you would like your password to be. She will then enter it into the password encryption system for you.

Q. I tried to access the WebBoard with my members-only username and password but it didn't work. Why doesn't the same information work everywhere on the site?

A. The WebBoard is run on a different server than the main site and so it has different rules for usernames and password. As much as possible, we've tried to keep things similar. First, the WebBoard is for members only. Second, it is set up using your email name (as given when you become a member) as your username. The password for everyone is "waoe." If you have a problem accessing it, then please contact [Michael Warner](#).