The World of Distance Learning

Technology Seminar

On November 28 this year, DEANZ is hosting a national seminar in Wellington, and members will receive an invitation. The theme is Technology and the Learner.

Those of us working in open learning are well aware of the implications of the use of technology and of rapid technological progress: today's pilot scheme is outdated before the evaluation has even begun, and great concerns over costs of development and of equity of access for the learner, to name just a few.

This seminar will look at open learning schemes which are employing communications are reaching and enhancing their technology. There will be a chance to see what successful schemes are operating, to talk to the people involved, to discuss successes and problems, and to try a hands on approach with experienced practitioners to provide guidance.

Many tertiary providers are unaware of any background students may have had already in educational technology in schools before they reach the tertiary environment. Consequently, the first plenary session will deal with 'The Challenge of the Sophisticated Learner'. That theme will be picked up several times during the day, as will the other major theme, Through Technology to the Learner.

There is no lack of information about the latest advances in educational technology, and its possibilities. What DEANZ will be providing is reflective practice: 'Praxis' – a look at what is really happening for the learner, and for the practitioner, rather than what technology tells us could happen in an ideal world, with an equally ideal budget! The emphasis will be on sharing successful experiences.

There will be fifty places at the seminar. We expect competition for places, but right of first refusal will be given to current DEANZ members.

Unit Standards

At last year's biennial DEANZ conference, the executive was given a clear message by members by members that a qualification in open/distance learning was a priority. Since then, a number of DEANZ executive and ordinary members have been involved in the development of open/distance learning unit standards. The scoping committee consisted of Russell Woolcock of NZQA, Denise Hansen and myself from the DEANZ Executive, Sally Rawnsley from the Correspondence School, Claire McLachlan-Smith from Massey University, Kathy Broadley from ASTU, Martin MacLean from the Open Polytechnic and Gwen Gawith from Auckland College of Education, all happily DEANZ members anyway. At first, the emphasis was on standards for the deliverer, but it soon became obvious that without standards for the learner as well, the development would have little meaning.

Unit standards for learners? We hear much about adapting to individual learning styles and flexible delivery methods, but the truth is that many learners have developed ineffectual learning styles and can be helped to improve their ability to learn, and to take better advantage of the opportunities inherent in lifelong learning. As well, open learning, in empowering the learner, offers particular challenges for that same learner, to help them to become truly independent and self-motivated, rather than teacher/lecturer dependent. It may well be that deliverers themselves would find the learner unit standards challenging!

The unit standards identified by the scoping group are as follows:

Learner skills:

Identify own ODL needs and opportunities
Manage own learning in the ODL environment
Use technology in the ODL environment
Apply information skills to achieve learning outcomes

Provider skills:

Apply principles of learning in the ODL environment
Apply principles of ODL provision
Develop open and distance learning materials and resources
Design open and distance learning materials/ resources
Support open and distance learning through the use of learning technologies
Facilitate open and distance learning
Support open and distance learners

The current developments have been taken before the Adult Education and Advisory Group, which has endorsed them. DEANZ was selected as the representative group to speak to the units, and I attended the advisory group meeting in May for this purpose. The DEANZ wish to see a qualification in distance/open learning was communicated to the group.

The next step, following this important endorsement, is to see whether NZQA allocates funds for the purpose of further developing the unit standards identified by the scoping group. If so, there will be further consultation with the wider DEANZ community.

Glenise Dreaver
President, DEANZ

Interactive Television Pilot Project

The Correspondence School (New Zealand) is implementing a New Zealand Ministry of Education contract to trial interactive television as a means of introducing foreign language teaching and technology education to 100 schools throughout New Zealand. The contract was signed in June 1995 and broadcasts began in April 1996.

The objectives of the pilot are as follows:

• Support the work of teachers and enhance educational opportunities and outcomes, particularly in languages and technology, through the broadcast via television of interactive learning programmes to selected schools;
• Provide professional development programmes for teachers to complement the student learning programmes;
• Facilitate the teaching of languages, particularly to rural schools and for Year 7-10 pupils who may not have a specialist language teacher;
• Explore the impact of television in enhancing learning and teacher development;
• Provide technical information and indicative costings for producing, transmitting and receiving learning programmes via television.

To achieve these objectives, the Correspondence School established a core project team to administer the project, establish a TV network, and produce TV programmes and support materials.

The key elements of the project are:
• The establishment of the TV network: originally the Ministry envisaged a satellite network but this proved to be too costly and unworkable. The network comprises 20 satellite sites in remote areas and 80 UHF sites using SKY TV. The Correspondence School's main subcontractor arranged the installation of the dishes and related technology at the schools, the tail link and uplink, the earth station, the UHF partnership with SKY and transponder time, in other words, a complete turnkey solution.
• The selection and partnering of schools: one hundred schools – primary, intermediate and secondary – were selected, provided with receiving technology, and agreed to implement the intention of the project.

- The upgrade of the Correspondence School's television technology and studio facilities: though improved, funding limited the extent of the upgrade.
- Planning and developing programmes: using the Correspondence School's expertise and overseas material, programme schedules and plans have been developed in Spanish, Maori, Japanese and Technology aimed at Year 7 to 10 pupils. The language programmes assume pupils are beginners.
- Selecting and training presenters and production staff: the entire project team is drawn from the Correspondence School's staff. After auditions and selection, training was provided by our own broadcasting staff and outside experts.
- Developing support materials: printed teacher resources and student materials to use during and between broadcasts have been developed and provided to all participating schools.

All project elements have presented a challenge. The technology and delivery strategies are new to the Correspondence School and the task of informing school partners how to use the programmes has been a major exercise.

A significant teaching challenge has been to develop a range of interactive strategies so that learners are engaged in the learning activities. By various means, but mainly through the partnership of TV presenter and classroom teacher, we have sought to overcome the one way communication usually associated with broadcast technologies for distance education.

The project is being evaluated by an independent contractor and the Correspondence School.

Further information may be obtained from Alan Dodds, Associate Director/ITV Project Manager, Correspondence School, Private Bag 39-992, Wellington, New Zealand. Tel: 64-4-474-4329 Fax: 64-4-499-4717.

The International Course an Open and Distance Learning

The Open University's Institute of Educational Technology is offering an intensive four week training course from 9 September to 4 October 1996. The topics include:

- Planning an open and distance learning system: the external environment, resources and constraints
- Determining the learner profile
- Establishing a student database
- Working in course teams: benefits and costs
- Producing learning materials
- Selecting appropriate media
- Using up-to-the-minute information technology
- Assessing the quality and effectiveness of ODL materials
- Designing and format open learning texts
- Establishing student support systems: tuition and counselling
- Setting up on-line tutoring
- Establishing student assessment systems
- Evaluating the system you design

These topics will be dealt with in core sessions, with time for group work, questions and discussion. A personal programme is interwoven with the core. Participants will be taught and guided by leading experts and be assigned a personal tutor. The course is part of IET's Programme of Professional Development in Educational Technology for Open and Distance Learning (PDET).

The fee is £4529 (inclusive of UK Value Added Tax), and includes £3269 for tuition and £1260 for accommodation. Applications close 1 July 1996.

For further information contact Kay Pole, Course Director, Open University, Institute of Educational Technology, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, Tel. 0044 1908 65263; Fax 0044 1908 653744; E-mail k.pole @ open.ac.uk.

Educational Technology 2000

The Commonwealth of Learning, together with Intertrade Lanka Management (Pvt) Ltd and the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre, is organising an international exhibition and conference on distance education technologies. Educational Technology 2000: Global Visions for Open Learning will take place in the Sri Lanka Exhibition and Convention Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 23-27 July 1996.

The main objectives of ET 2000 are to:
• create a forum at which a dialogue can occur between the educational community and the media/technology industries;
• provide an opportunity for the educational community to articulate their needs to the industry in an effort to seek appropriate media/technology solutions;
• provide the industry with an opportunity to demonstrate the capabilities of a full range of existing and emerging media and technologies which have the potential to address the needs of the education community; and
• demonstrate the potential interface between software and hardware.

The daily agenda incorporates guided tours of the exhibition.

Further information may be had from Dr Abdul Khan, Acting Head, Communications and Information Technologies Division, Commonwealth of Learning, Box 10428, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V7Y 1K4, Tel: 001 604 775 8200; Fax 001 604 775 8210; E-mail info@col.org.

Educational Technology 2000: Creating a Global Vision for Open and Distance Learning

This conference, to be held in Singapore from 15-17 August 1996, is being organised by the Commonwealth of Learning and the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre. The main objectives of ET2000 are to provide:

1. A forum for dialogue between the educational community and the educational media/technology industry.
2. An opportunity for the educational community to articulate their needs to the industry in an effort to seek appropriate media/technology solutions.
3. An opportunity for industry to demonstrate the capabilities of a full-range of existing and emerging educational media and technology.
4. Demonstrations of practical applications and case studies from all educational sectors.

With respect to technology, the conference will focus on multimedia, mixed media, satellite broadcasting, teleconferencing, and computer mediated communication and, with respect to education, higher education, non-formal education, business and industry, technical/vocational education, primary and secondary education, and continuing professional education. The conference will feature exhibits from the communications and information technology industries specialising in educational technologies as well as software and course developers.

Further details are available from the Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver BC, Canada, Fax 001 604 775-8210.

European Distance Education Network 1996 Conference

EDEN held a successful conference in Tallinn (1994) on "Human Resources, human potential, human development – the role of distance education' and in Oslo (1995) on the 'Open Classroom' which concentrated particularly on the school sector of distance education. The 1996 conference will be held in Poitiers, from 8-10 July, and will seek to build on recent work and consolidate the network activities and cooperation in all areas of professionally oriented educational training, in particular training for small to medium enterprises, professional organisations and

associations with responsibility for the personal development of youth, women and the elderly. The conference themes are:

1. Technology: the Information Society
   - Education multimedia and multimedia potential
   - Integrating technology and multimedia vehicles
   - Technology transfer
   - Technology for academic advantage
   - Internet and education
2. Professionally oriented education/training
   - Training the professionals: open space for education
   - ODL for industry and business
   - Re-engineering of education and vocational training methods
   - The learner experience
3. Education and Training
   - organisational environment
   - academic recognition
   - user methodologies
   - credit transfer
4. School level: Open Classroom
   - Home learners
   - European dimension in school education
   - Edutainment: software designed for education entertainment
   - teacher training for using the technology
   - school networks

Further details may be obtained from the EDEN Secretariat, Box 92, Milton Keynes MK7 6DX, United Kingdom.

Code of Ethics for Researchers in Distance Education

The Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia is considering the introduction of a voluntary code of ethics for ODLAA members. Terry Evans of Deakin University has prepared a draft for consideration and it is published in the *ODLAA times*, Vol. 3 No. 4, November 1995.

The 18th ICDE World Conference 1997

The 18th ICDE World Conference – The New Learning Environment: A Global Perspective – will be held in the United States of America, hosted by the Pennsylvania State University, from 2-6 June 1997. Four themes have been established: the changing technological environment; the new educational paradigm; technology, education and sustainable development; and opportunities for international cooperation. Within each of these themes, papers will be considered in the following interest areas:

- primary through secondary school applications
- technology applications and emerging technologies
- research and evaluation in distance and open learning
- distance education in developing countries
- organisational issues: faculty, infrastructure, institutional and regulatory policies
- pedagogical issues
- promotion and marketing strategies
- partnerships and alliances
- workplace training and education
- student/learner support

For newcomers to distance education, sessions will be offered on:

- institutional models for open and distance education
- approaches to instructional and programme designs
- open and distance education in primary through secondary education systems
- introducing open and distance learning in conventional institutions
- principles of good practice for faculty, programmes and institutions
- technology applications and pedagogical issues

The Internet and Distance Education

DEOS-L recently carried a discussion of the use of the Internet for the delivery of distance education. A growing number of universities in particular are using the Internet and WWW sites for teaching a growing range of courses, for example, the University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth; University of Tennessee – Chatanooga; Morehead State University, Kentucky; and the University of Sheffield

(Centre for Psychotherapeutic Studies). The Educational Technologies Unit of the University of Geneva (Switzerland) offers a postgraduate diploma in educational technologies, using the Internet for e-mail, meetings and discussion groups, and document delivery: it is accessible at http://tecfa.unige.ch/tecfa.html. The University of Texas lists many courses available on the Internet: it offers links to many courses and WWW pages – the URL is http://www.utexas.edu/world/lecture.

The literature in this area is not yet extensive, but useful introductory texts are:

L.M. HASSIM (editor), 1990: *On line education: perspectives on a new environment.* Praeger, New York.

R. Mason and A. Kay (editors), 1989: *Mindweave: communication, computers and distance education.* Pergamon Press.

ANDREA Volume 3, November 1, 1996

The latest issue of ANDREA (A Network for Distance Education Reporting from European Activities) reports that all the papers presented at the Open Classroom 95 Conference in Oslo are available at http://www.sds.no/nks/openclass95/meny.html.

The papers include the opening speech by the Norwegian Minister of Education, Gudmund Hernes and plenary presentations by Wim Veen, Utrecht University, Sandra H Welch, PBS, Bernard Morva and Anne-Marie Degardin, CNED, and Margaret Gamlin, New Zealand Correspondence School.

You will also find 35 papers from parallel sessions on the five main themes of the conference:

Policy and planning
Opportunities and challenges from
   specific technologies
Distance learning for various audiences
Impacts of distance learning
New partnerships