

RESEARCH ABSTRACTS

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ED 448 875

***The Use of Open and Distance Learning
in Pre-School Teacher Education. Lea,
Martha.***

This research evaluated the use of open and distance learning in preschool teacher training in Norway, Scotland, and Iceland. A model of preschool teacher education was developed in which students received a 3-year educational program over 4 years while working as kindergarten assistants. The program operated through the collaboration of university and local authorities. Local study groups met once weekly in a regional study room. Four regional groups met six times yearly. The entire student group met six to seven times yearly for direct teaching at the college. Teaching methods used were written communication (computer, study letter, telefax), sound-picture communication (videos, sound tapes), and oral communication (telephone, central meetings). Evaluations were based on interviews with 27

teachers at 2 colleges in Norway, 10 teachers from 1 college in Scotland, and 12 teachers from 1 college in Iceland. Results were categorized in the following areas: (1) challenge of using different teaching methods in different subjects; (2) professional aspects of using distance learning, including the development of responsibility, reflection, problem-solving, and cooperation; (3) the teacher and student role; and (4) flexible teaching in ordinarily organized teacher education. The results indicated that the most important challenge was for teachers and students to bridge the distance between them. It was important for students and teachers to be confident in equipment use and for technical expertise to be readily available. Resulting recommendations for the program related to planning preservice preschool teacher education, the teacher's role or obligations, the cooperation between teachers and students, and professional development. 2000. 33pp.

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ED 444 407***Quality on the Line: Benchmarks for Success in Internet-Based Distance Education. Phipps, Ronald; Merisotis, Jamie.***

This study identifies 24 benchmarks considered essential to ensuring excellence in Internet-based distance learning, as used by the following six institutions which are leaders in distance education: Brevard Community College (Florida); Regents College (New York); University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; University of Maryland University College; Utah State University; and Weber State University (Utah). The benchmarks are divided into seven categories: (1) institutional support; (2) course development; (3) teaching/learning; (4) course structure; (5) student support; (6) faculty support; and (7) evaluation and assessment. The study seeks to ascertain the degree to which the benchmarks are actually incorporated in the policies and practices of the institutions, and how important the benchmarks are to faculty, administrators, and students. Quantitative information for the study was derived from a Likert-scale survey, and qualitative information was derived from in-depth interviews. The report concludes that, for the most part, the benchmarks are considered important and that the institutions strive to incorporate them into their policies, practices, and procedures. Appendixes contain institutional profiles and detailed survey results. (Contains 26 references.) 2000. 37pp.

ED 444 362***Online Teacher Training. Rogers, Paul; Coles, Trish.***

Developments in information technology have made online teacher training and development a practical proposition, but raise questions about the relationship between trainer and novice teacher at a distance. This case study of a pilot 10-week online course explores aspects of that relationship and considers future implications of this form of teacher training. This paper

describes in detail an online teacher training certificate program offered at a British university for native and non-native English speakers anywhere in the world. Issues of course validity, assessment, suitability, and cultural sensitivity are examined. Wider issues concerning online teacher education are also considered. It is concluded that the technical and practical difficulties of face-to-face distance education are receding at a rapid rate. (Contains 17 references.) 2000. 11pp.

ED 447 793***Utilizing the Internet To Supplement Classroom Instruction: An Analysis of Longitudinal Data. Thompson, Jay C., Jr.; Nay, Frederick W.; Malone, Bobby G.***

This study utilized an Internet "Class Page" to evaluate interaction strategies in both traditional classroom settings and distance education settings where instruction was delivered via television and the Internet. Participants were primarily elementary school teachers who were enrolled in one of 11 graduate classes in Elementary School Curriculum taught during a 4-year period from 1997-2000. The participants completed survey instruments to ascertain: their participation on the "Class Page," their interactions with other students, and their attitudes toward the use of technology in the university setting. Data analyses indicate interesting responses spanning the 4 years. For example, examination of the data points to increased classroom teacher familiarity with computer usage over a 4-year time span, increased familiarity with the Internet, and higher skill levels of instructional technology applications in the classroom setting. Also, a higher degree of personal satisfaction in using classroom technology was consistent among the students. However, participant perceptions in distance education settings were consistently less positive than on-site face-to-face class perceptions regarding the value of the interactive instructional technologies utilized during this time. (Contains 11 references.) 2000. 24pp.

ED 445 640***CAD/CAM at a Distance: Assessing the Effectiveness of Web-Based Instruction To Meet Workforce Development Needs.***
Wilkerson, Joyce A.; Elkins, Susan A.

This qualitative case study assessed Web-based instruction in a computer-aided design/computer-assisted manufacturing (CAD/CAM) course designed for workforce development. The study examined students' and instructors' experience in a CAD/CAM course delivered exclusively on the Internet, evaluating course content and delivery, clarity of presentation of complex technical concepts, and student receptivity to the Internet delivery mode. Components of student experience examined were motivation, nature of interactions, advantages and disadvantages, issues associated with Internet delivery, and student outcomes. Narrative data from telephone interviews ($n = 20$) with students in the United States and Canada was the principal source of data. The course packet, provided electronically, included a syllabus, faculty, calendar, assignments, notes, e-mail link, and index, as well as links to industrial and educational sites and the university home page. Findings indicated that the Internet delivery met the expectations of the students by offering a course not available through traditional delivery; participants were satisfied with all components of the course except for selected technical problems and they felt that this distance learning course was as effective as a traditional course. (Contains 40 references.) 2000. 27pp.

ED 444 482***New Horizons in Distance Education: Re-Mapping the Pedagogical Terrain.***
Hirtle, Jeannine St. Pierre;
McGrew-Zoubi, Robin.

This paper presents a case study of an online block of four courses leading to certifi-

cation of secondary teachers who are presently teaching in middle and secondary schools on emergency certificates. The courses were taken by 16 post-baccalaureate students during fall semester 1998 and spring semester 1999. The primary goal of the project was to determine whether distance education courses can be aligned to pedagogical practices that serve the needs of a rapidly-evolving, technology-assisted, information-driven society. Data were gathered from students and professors, as well as from ExCET test (state licensure exam) results. This paper reports findings regarding student interactions with World Wide Web-based lessons, including learning community discussion via a threaded message board, posting primary data, posting lesson plans and textbook evaluations, book club discussions, analysis of current issues, and simulation. The outcomes of the case study supported the belief that online courses could be interactive and problem-solving in nature, making use of the student's teaching placement. Consideration of current issues in teacher preparation and access to a laboratory for real-time assignments supported the success of the students in their work environment and on their required exam for certification. 2000. 7pp.

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