

**- COMPILATION OF ABSTRACTS -**  
**Volume 5, Number 1, June 2003**

**Quality of Learner Support System in Distance Education**

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This article looks at the quality of learner support system at the School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). The framework of this study is based on the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory. A total of 16 dimensions of the learner system are identified in this study. The results show that 67.6% of the respondents are satisfied with the quality of learner support provided by the school. There are eight dimensions of learner support system, i.e. pre-registration, registration as a student, academic planner, academic guide book, orientation, intensive course, main library USM and examinations recorded positive disconfirmations. Grid Analysis is used to identify dimensions for continuous quality improvement. Teletutorial is identified as the most important dimension for continuous quality improvement.

**User Perception of Internet Technology in Distance Education**

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The transition from traditional to virtual learning environments is a new endeavor for the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) as it expands its geographic reach and offers online tutoring as an alternative mode of learning and student support service. This study examined user perception of application of Internet technology as a learning tool in distance education, drawing on the experiences of one of its learning centres. Shared opinions of students and tutors on factors they considered important about the application of Internet technology to distance education were identified using the Q-methodology. The results of the study identified time, learning attitudes, and knowledge of technology as factors affecting use of the Internet technology as a learning tool in distance education. It is proposed that initial hands-on training on the use of the technology and online aids and facilities be provided to eliminate technological hurdles. Also, a Web-mail server for UPOU faculty, students and tutors must be set up to promote real-time interaction. Tasks that allow students legitimate reasons to use the technology should be integrated in the curriculum. An evaluation of its virtual learning system must be conducted to pinpoint specific problems in instructional/technological design and function.

**Learner-Instructor Online Interaction in an E-Learning Course**

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The research was designed to investigate the dynamics of a web based e-learning forum and characteristics of the online interactions in a finance course offered by MARA University of Technology (UiTM). The focus was the learner-instructor interaction. This paper reports the findings on the characteristics of online interactions, participation according to the gender and the instructor's role in the forum. The sample comprised of an instructor and 77 learners enrolled in the course. Data on different measures of interaction were collected and subjected to content and statistical analysis. The result showed a notable rate of interaction with no particular dependence on gender as far as purpose of interaction is concerned. The role of the instructor in the online forum was identified as that of a tutor and a validator.

**A Review of the Educational Television Broadcasting from the Point of View of Learner Support and Interaction in Turkey**

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The aim of this case study is to review the educational television broadcasting of Turkish distance education system, Open Education Faculty (OEF) from the point of view of learner support and interaction. The study introduces the learner support and interaction and the advantages and disadvantages of television in distance education, examines the applications of television broadcasting, learner support services and, discusses and evaluates the current status of the Turkish educational television broadcasting.

**An Experiment on Course Design, Delivery and Effective  
Interaction in Distance Technical Education**

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This paper analyses on the successful running of distance technical education vis-à-vis role of instructors in subject delivery; student-student interaction; and emerging computer technologies that can be applied in distance education programmes in the areas of IT, science, and engineering education. The paper focuses on the relative advantages and disadvantages of distance technical education over the traditional classroom oriented education. The critical role of teacher, technology, environment and other related factors have been analysed. Findings presents that appropriate designing of courses, interaction between students, and occasional meetings with instructors can lead to technical education through distance mode having considerable advantage over the traditional mode.

**Challenging Educational Institutions in the Face of Developments Through  
Open and Distance Learning: A South African Picture**

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**Abstract**

The article discusses the current and historical systems of education with most attention directed towards distance and open learning in South Africa. An association is made with the broad educational system. To offset problems that are due because of the past educational system, the author proposes a new approach to development for (mostly) adults, and other learners who cannot attend full-time classes. The proposed new educational system is expected to address problems of high illiteracy and the emerging global and national developments. Implications and recommendations are made for open and distance learning.

**Understanding the Culturally Diverse Malaysian Distance Learners: Does Culture has a Role and An Effect on Learning and Practice in Distance Education**

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Distance Learners (DLs) have diverse needs when undertaking distance courses in Malaysian Distance Education (DE) institutions. It is the interest of both the learners and distance teachers (DTs) and educators, and the host institution to ensure that the learners achieve success in their studies. It is therefore important to understand how DLs learn and the factors that influence the learning process when designing distance education programmes. If learning is the goal of distance education (DE), then knowledge about how the DLs learn is important, and this can benefit the design and planning of distance courses. We believe that removing the learning barriers to effective learning and improving the quality of learning outcomes should begin with the question, "What and how are the students learning and what affects that process?" This paper focuses on culturally diverse Malaysian DLs at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and examines ways in which the needs of these learners can be taken into considerations in the design of distance instruction and learner support. Three factors that have a major impact on learning of the culturally diverse groups are described: (a) The different learning strategies employed by the learners, (b) Activities for planning and self-regulation, and (c) The student's goals and motivation. A learning style profile of the Chinese and Malay distance learners will then be discussed as a case example showing how the understanding of the Malaysian distance learners as described can be applied to the design of distance instruction and learner support system.