

New Horizons in Adult Education

Volume 19, Number 3, Summer 2005

ISSN. 1062-3183

EDITORS

Tonette S. Rocco..... Florida International University

Mary V. Alfred..... Florida International University

COORDINATOR, *NEW HORIZONS* WEBSITE & AEHRDNET LISTSERV

Douglas H. Smith..... Florida International University

BOOK & MEDIA REVIEW EDITOR

Silvana Ianinska..... Florida International University [issues 20(1)-23(4)]

MANAGING EDITOR

Maria S. Plakhotnik..... Florida International University

EDITORIAL BOARD

Nancy Gadbow.....SUNY Empire State College, USA

Karen Garver..... University of Nebraska, Omaha, USA

Jan Jackson..... California State University, San Marcos, USA

Joanne Kilgore-Dowdy..... Kent State University, USA

Kathleen King..... Fordham University, USA

Mary Klinger..... SUNY Empire State College, USA

Patricia Lawler..... Widener University, USA

Larry Martin..... University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, USA

AAhad M. Osman-Gani..... Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Karen Overfield..... Education Management Corporation, USA

Michael Ponton..... Regent University, USA

Robert Preziosi..... Nova Southeastern University, USA

Jasper van Loo..... Maastricht University, The Netherlands

New Horizons in Adult Education, founded in 1987, is an electronic refereed journal, published quarterly. The journal provides faculty, researchers, graduate students, and practitioners with a venue for publishing their current thinking and research within adult education, human resource development, and related fields. *New Horizons in Adult Education* publishes peer-reviewed articles, Point-Counterpoint essays, Perspectives (on people, practice, research, and teaching) essays, Book and Media Reviews, and News and Notes. The journal retains copyright of individual articles. Any item that appears in *New Horizons in Adult Education* may be retrieved without permission. However, when this material is quoted or reproduced, the author, title of the item, and issues must be cited. The journal is available electronically at: <http://education.fiu.edu/newhorizons> and transmitted to subscribers around the world at no fee through the electronic network, aehrdnet@fiu.edu. To correspond with *New Horizons in Adult Education* send email to: newhorizons@fiu.edu.

New Horizons in Adult Education
Volume 19, Number 3, Summer 2005

CONTENTS

EDITORS' NOTES	3
-----------------------------	---

ARTICLES

Enhancing and Facilitating Self-Efficacious Behaviors in Distance Learning Environments

M. Gail Derrick, Michael K. Ponton, and Paul B. Carr.....	4
---	---

Tutorials at a Distance: Reflection on the Process

David Starr-Glass.....	12
------------------------	----

BOOK REVIEWS

Review of GED: Black Women and their Struggle for Social Equity, by Joanne Kilgour-Dowdy

Valerie Youssef.....	21
----------------------	----

Learning Together Online: Research on Asynchronous Learning Networks, edited by Starr R. Hiltz and Ricki Goldman

Jennifer Calvin.....	25
----------------------	----

NEWS AND NOTES	27
-----------------------------	----

FOR YOUR INFORMATION	29
-----------------------------------	----

New Horizons in Adult Education
Volume 19, Number 3, Summer 2005

EDITORS' NOTES

Our hope, as new editors, is to guide *New Horizons in Adult Education* to become a prominent online journal in the field of adult education. To do this we have created new sections for the journal such as Point-Counterpoint Essays, Perspectives on People, Practice, Research, and Teaching, and News and Notes. Point-Counterpoint essays are solicited and unsolicited reactions to articles published in the *New Horizons in Adult Education*. Perspectives on People includes interviews with thinkers, scholars, and practitioners in adult education, human resource development, and related fields. Perspectives on Practice are reflections on the past, present, and future challenges and innovations in the practice of adult education, human resource development, and related fields.

Perspectives on Research - discussions of issues raised by empirical studies and reports on new developments in qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches.

Perspectives on Teaching – reflections, insights, and new approaches to teaching in all contexts where adults learn.

Manuscripts submitted for these departments along with Book and Media Reviews are short non-refereed scholarly essays. The guidelines can be found on the web page. We welcome submissions by practitioners, students, and scholars.

At the present, we continue to publish manuscripts that were accepted by the prior editorship, and this will be reflected in this and the next two issues.

We are also pleased to announce that Florida International University is now the home of the Adult Education and Human Resource Development Network (AEHRDNET) listserv, the companion to *New Horizons in Adult Education*. We invite you to test the new site and join the conversations as we dialogue on issues of relevance to the field.

We send a heartfelt “Thank You” to Nancy Gadbow, who served as editor of *New Horizons* from 1992 – 2005 when it was housed at Nova Southeastern University in Florida. Our gratitude also goes to Cheri Harris who managed the listserv and kept the conversations alive. Their dedication and service to the profession will long be remembered.

Tonette Rocco and Mary Alfred, Editors
Doug Smith, Coordinator, *New Horizons* website & AEHRDNET listserv
Adult Education and Human Resource Development Program
Florida International University

New Horizons in Adult Education

Volume 19, Number 3, Summer 2005

**ENHANCING AND FACILITATING SELF-EFFICACIOUS BEHAVIORS IN
DISTANCE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

M. Gail Derrick, Michael K. Ponton, and Paul B. Carr
Regent University

Abstract

The need to understand contemporary adult learners and the methods that promote continual, sustained learning is of paramount importance particularly for doctoral programs, but more specifically for online doctoral programs. The online format is viewed as an alternative way to learn in a technologically driven society that focuses on time, opportunity, and convenience as critical considerations for learning endeavors. An examination of the factors associated with attrition in doctoral programs includes understanding and confronting personal and institutional barriers to successful matriculation.

Researchers have identified general characteristics of effective graduate students such as motivation, attitude, collegiality, writing/communication skills, values and integrity (Walpole, Burton, Kanyi, & Jackenthal, 2002) but have not established a clear understanding of the specific characteristics that facilitate or obstruct enduring and sustained learning.

This paper proposes a conceptual model that includes attributes of learner autonomy (desire, resourcefulness, initiative, and persistence in learning) as influential mediators of self-efficacy and motivation for learning and may improve retention and completion rates in higher education.

The attrition rate of education doctoral students' in American graduate schools, that is the percentage of those who enter a doctoral program and fail to complete the program for whatever reason, consistently range from 40 to 50% (Berelson, 1960; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Cesari, 1990; Lovitts, 1996). Within that 50%, because of the dimensions of the task and other pressures involved in writing a dissertation, Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) estimate that 20% of graduate students fail to obtain the doctoral degree because of failure to complete the dissertation.

According to the Council of Graduate Schools (1991), the acquisition of a doctoral degree fulfills two major purposes for the candidate: an intensive, highly professional training experience that demonstrates the ability to address a significant intellectual problem and an original contribution to knowledge in the chosen field. There is a concern over the efficiency and effectiveness of graduate programs that lose so many potential scholars and researchers and serves as a harsh reminder to institutions of their own failure to effectively address the selection and retention of students.

Traditional approaches for examining attrition rates have focused on the selection approach including the identification of personal variables that can be identified and quantified, including preadmission variables, such as age, gender, financial resources, and scholastic aptitude (e.g., undergraduate and graduate Grade Point Average, Graduate Record Exam scores, writing samples (Walpole et al., 2002). The second approach has focused on personal and institutional variables, including motivation, financial support, faculty-student interaction, and research preparation (Benkin, 1984; Berelson, 1960).

While these aspects for personal and program evaluation are valuable, an essential understanding of the psychological and cognitive aspects associated with sustained and enduring learning would greatly improve retention and successful completion of students engaged in rigorous and demanding doctoral programs. Theories of student attrition has been primarily descriptive and atheoretical (Andres & Carpenter, 1997) until the early 1970s when the emergence of psychological theories began to appear in the literature (Attinasi, 1986; Ethington, 1990; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). It is asserted that essential attributes for successful completion of the doctoral degree are behaviors that are self-directed, independent, and autonomous; that is, those behaviors and attitudes that reside in the cognitive and psychological realm of the individual. The self-directed learning literature lacks unity in definition and understanding as shown by the plethora of terms and the range of meanings associated with the research.

According to Oddi (1987) and Merriam and Caffarella (1999), self-directed learning research can be dichotomized into two broad categories: a process perspective or a personality characteristic perspective. The process perspective generally focuses on the activities that the learner engages in such as goal setting, planning a learning strategy, acquiring resources, and monitoring progress (Knowles 1975; Oddi 1987).

Autonomous learning has focused on the psychological and cognitive conditions necessary for understanding the learner who continues to engage in learning throughout life (Carr, 1999; Confessore, 1992; Derrick, 2001; Ponton, 1999). Long (1998) asserts that only “the psychological conceptualization is both necessary and sufficient to explain SDL [self-directed learning]” (p. 10). He states:

The psychological conceptualization implies that fundamentally learning is a self-initiated, self-directed, and self-regulated cognitive process whereby the learner can choose to ignore instruction, to merely absorb it by casual attention, to carefully memorize without critical reflection, or to seek to change or create an understanding of information. (p. 9)

Autonomous Learning

Confessore (1992) states, “Self-directed learning as with any other human endeavor becomes a matter of drive, initiative, resourcefulness and persistence [in order for learners] to see [themselves] through to some level of learning that is personally satisfying” (p. 3). This groundwork research has become the foundation for models and theories associated with autonomous learning and learner autonomy. Confessore’s (1992) work provides the foundation for the theoretical and conceptual models associated with understanding the constructs of initiative (Ponton, 1999), resourcefulness (Carr, 1999), and persistence (Derrick, 2001) that clearly identify the specific intentional behaviors necessary for learner autonomy; learner

autonomy being one of the personality characteristics associated with autonomous learning (i.e., desire, resourcefulness, initiative, and persistence) as identified by Confessore (1992).

Initiative in Autonomous Learning

Ponton (1999) defines personal initiative as a behavioral syndrome of five co-occurring behaviors: goal-directedness, action-orientation, active-approach to problem solving, persistence in overcoming obstacles, and self-startedness. Ponton's research describes the importance of establishing goals and working towards the accomplishment of those goals; how quickly an individual transfers the intention to engage in some learning activity into action; the role of self-motivation; assuming the responsibility for finding solutions to barriers or obstacles that may occur in learning; and sustained action despite the presence of obstacles.

Resourcefulness in Autonomous Learning

Carr (1999) identified the behaviors of learner resourcefulness as anticipating future rewards of learning, prioritizing learning over other activities, choosing learning over other activities, and solving one's problems in learning. The resourceful learner is able to recognize the anticipated future value of the learning, keep the learning a priority despite other goals or obstacles, postpone activities that may be exciting or fun for the future value of the learning, and solve problems related to the learning endeavor.

Persistence in Autonomous Learning

Derrick (2001) asserts that persistence in a learning endeavor is the volitional behavior that enables the individual to sustain the effort and perseverance necessary to remain focused on the achievement of a goal, despite obstacles, distractions, and competing goals. Derrick (2001) posits that the factors associated with persistence in autonomous learning are volition, self-regulation, and goal-maintenance.

Volition is the mediating force between intentions to learn and the behaviors (the strength of the desire or reason for and against acting upon that desire) to learn. Volitional control is the commitment to a goal and is attained by the regulation of self. Self-regulation of those enduring behaviors necessary for goal attainment is contingent upon volition. The strength of the desire for acting in a particular way influences the level of volition required to self-regulate the behavior.

Autonomous learning is the process in which the learner makes an intentional decision to assume the responsibility for a learning situation. The understanding of learner autonomy coupled with the concept of self-efficacy will enhance and facilitate the understanding of enduring learners, those individuals who learn independently in any environment, online or face-to-face. While understanding the behaviors associated with autonomous learning are a critical factor for learning, do these behaviors adequately explain the composite picture of enduring learners in a satisfactory manner? How does self-efficacy relate with models of autonomous learning and could a new model be proposed that would sufficiently explain both?

Self-efficacy

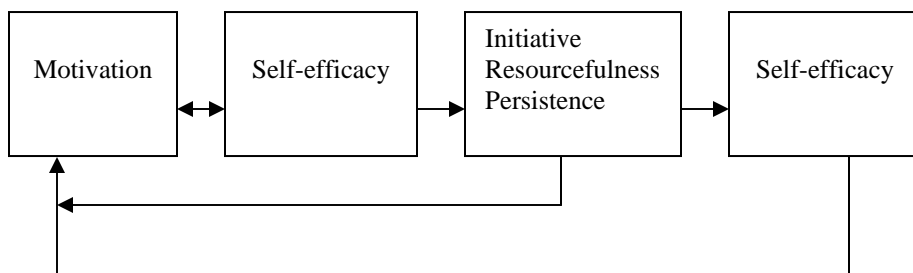
Self-efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the sources of action required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1986). Beliefs of one's personal efficacy constitute the key factor of human agency and as such determine the choices that are made in hopes of achieving a desired outcome. The construct of self-efficacy coupled with the factors associated with autonomous learning (i.e., resourcefulness, initiative, persistence) should be considerations in the design of online programs that enhance and facilitate enduring learners.

Self-efficacy is mediated by one's beliefs or expectation about their capacity to accomplish a task or demonstrate a specific behavior. Bandura (1997) asserts that these expectations determine whether or not a certain behavior or performance will be attempted, the amount of effort the individual will contribute to the behavior, and how long the behavior will be sustained when obstacles are encountered.

The behaviors necessary for successful performance in doctoral programs must consider self-efficacy along with the behaviors of autonomous learning. Motivation to engage in any learning event is predicated upon possible outcomes that one believes to be possible. Motivation to engage in a certain behavior (i.e., learning) is based upon what one believes about his/her ability to be successful with regards to the outcomes of that behavior. One is unlikely to have a strong entering motivation and be able to sustain that motivation if one believes he/she is not likely to be successful. As an individual experiences success in learning, his/her sense of efficacy is enhanced to engage in additional learning of a more difficult nature provided success is attributed to personal capability. For doctoral students, rigorous coursework and independent learning are conjoined experiences. As one becomes better equipped through positive learning experiences that move him/her towards a fully autonomous learner, efficacy beliefs are reinforced and enhanced also. The goal for college professors is to find ways to enhance efficacy beliefs through autonomous learning events. The relationship is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Relationship of Motivation, Self-efficacy, and Autonomous Learning



Bandura (1997) identifies four sources of efficacy information: performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, and physical/affective status. Performance accomplishments in an online doctoral program would allow for student success

through goal or task accomplishment of more difficult tasks and assignments. Students are not successful in every assignment or task; however, temporary obstacles should not become permanent barriers to success but should be viewed as opportunities to learn. Beliefs about abilities are acquired through observation and interpretation. The learner is able to reflect on past experiences and make meaning for relevance in new situations. Observational experiences allow for learner self-reflection and anticipation of new experiences. Beliefs about oneself are influenced by the messages conveyed by others. Verbal persuasion can be used to encourage student's self-efficacy and career aspirations through acquisition of the terminal degree. Stress and anxiety have a negative impact upon self-efficacy as well as learning. A supportive and encouraging environment will enhance and facilitate learning.

Enduring Learners

While the theoretical construct of autonomous learning explains the factors associated with and necessary for success for autonomous learning endeavors, it is not a sufficient explanation for ok learners who sustain and maintain lifelong learning endeavors either in formal situations, such as an academic setting, or in informal settings.

The authors have speculated over the characteristics of learners who were successful in structured academic settings but may not be successful in learning situations in which they freely were able to engage in autonomous learning that was interesting and necessary such as the activity of successfully completing the dissertation phase of their doctoral program. The writing of the dissertation should represent the best of the academic world coupled with the ideas of initiative, resourcefulness, and persistence in learning; but how do learners make the cognitive leap into becoming an autonomous learner with a strong sense of personal efficacy with regards to their abilities and capacities to learn in an enduring manner? What models would represent these ideas?

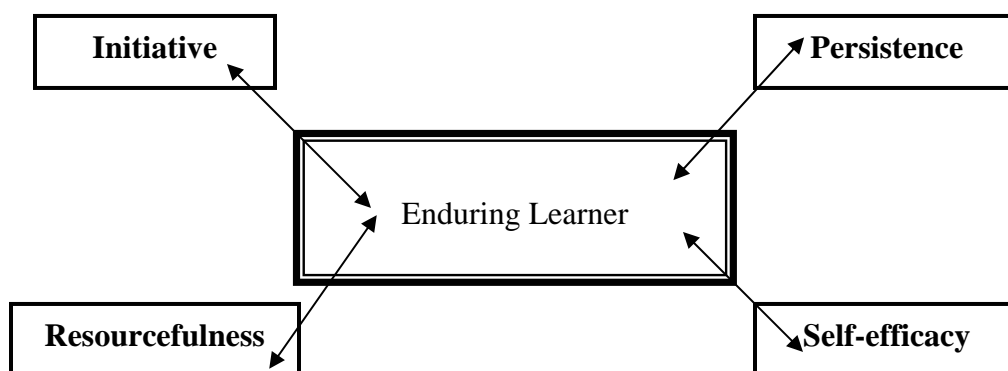
The exercise of human agency through an individual's personal beliefs of his or her ok capacity and ability to produce a desired change by his/her actions through quadratic reciprocity of learner autonomy and self-efficacy beliefs will produce learners who are successful in doctoral programs and in 'other' learning endeavors. It is presently proposed that these four factors (i.e., self-efficacy, initiative, resourcefulness, and persistence) are reciprocal processes that ultimately determine the state of the learner. A proposed model (i.e., Quadratic Reciprocity) will be used to explain how these factors are connected to produce a unified model that adequately explains the concept of the enduring learner. The development of the attributes associated with learner autonomy coupled with self-efficacy beliefs produce learners who view any learning endeavor with certainty and affirmation.

There are four factors that determine the state of the learner: initiative, resourcefulness, and persistence coupled with self-efficacy. These four factors are co-occurring and bidirectional in nature—that is, reciprocal processes. The model (see Figure 2) of Quadratic Reciprocity explains the authors' conceptual model of how and what forces are necessary for the enduring learner.

Enduring learners continue to learn throughout life and view learning as the never-ending journey of self-fulfillment and self-satisfaction. These learners have a strong sense of efficacy with regards to their individual capacity to learn brought about through prior experiences and events in learning in any setting or condition.

Figure 2

Model of Quadratic Reciprocity



The bidirectional influence of the four factors can be interpreted as follows. By having a motivation to learn coupled with a belief in personal efficacy to engage in autonomous learning, learners show initiative, resourcefulness, and persistence in their learning. When learning successes are attributed to personal capability, these learning accomplishments provide the cognitive feedback that enhances a learner's self-efficacy in autonomous learning (i.e., the learner believes that he or she has an increased capability of exhibiting initiative, resourcefulness, and persistence in learning activities that will lead to personal levels of satisfaction). As this cycle continues, self-efficacy beliefs are strengthened and learners transform into enduring learners who choose to engage in autonomous learning activities throughout their lives thereby enabling themselves to accomplish a never-ending stream of personal goals.

Conclusion

Self-efficacy is a contextual construct, which means that an assessment of personal capability is dependent upon the activity of analysis. It is presently asserted that increasing self-efficacy in autonomous learning involves educational systems to develop requisite cognitive skills that enable learners to initially engage in self-initiated learning activities. Through quadratic reciprocity, successful learning activities will lead to a strengthening of efficacy beliefs thereby increasing the likelihood of future demonstrations of initiative, resourcefulness, and persistence in learning activities. The motivation to engage in such learning is enhanced due to

feelings of capability thereby creating an enduring learner—the ultimate aim of formal education.

Distance learning environments should not be viewed as a less-desirable method of learning but as an opportunity to become fully autonomous. The very nature of a doctoral program requires the individual to work independently and produce scholarly work as evidence of successful matriculation. The skills and attributes needed for any form of successful doctoral scholarship, whether in a face-to-face or distance learning environment, require autonomous thinking and a strong sense of personal efficacy to become the enduring learner. Understanding the role of self-efficacy and the factors of autonomous learning and their reciprocity of influence in creating enduring learners will allow students the opportunity for maximum achievement in their doctoral matriculation and beyond.

References

- Andres, L., & Carpenter, S. (1997). *Today's higher education students: Issues of admission, retention, transfer, and attrition in relation to changing student demographics*. Vancouver: Center for Policy Studies in Education, University of British Columbia.
- Attinasi, L. (1986). *Getting in: Mexican American students; perceptions of their college-going behavior with implications for their freshman year persistence in the university*. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education, San Antonio.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W. H. Freeman.
- Benkin, E. M. (1984). Where have all the doctoral students gone? A study of doctoral student attrition at UCLA. (Doctoral dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1984). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 45A, 2770.
- Berelson, B. (1960). *Graduate education in the United States*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Bowen, W. G., & Rudenstine, N. L. (1992). *In pursuit of the Ph.D.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Carr, P. B. (1999). The measurement of resourcefulness intentions in the adult autonomous learner (Doctoral dissertation, The George Washington University, 1999). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60, 3849.
- Cesari, J. P. (1990). Thesis and dissertation support groups: A unique service for graduate students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 31, 375-376.

- Confessore, G. J. (1992). An introduction to the study of self-directed learning. In G. J. Confessore & S. J. Confessore (Eds.), *Guideposts to self-directed learning: Expert commentary on essential concepts* (pp. 1-6). King of Prussia, PA: Organization Design and Development.
- Council of Graduate Schools in the U.S. (1991). *The role and nature of the doctoral dissertation*. Washington, DC: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED331422)
- Derrick, M. G. (2001). The measurement of an adult's intention to exhibit persistence in autonomous learning (Doctoral dissertation, The George Washington University, 2001). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 62/05, 2533.
- Ethington, C. (1990). A psychological model of student persistence. *Research in Higher Education*, 31(3). 279-293.
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Knowles, M. S. (1975). *Self-directed learning: A guide for learners and teachers*. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company.
- Long, H. B. (1998). Theoretical and practical implications of selected paradigms of self-directed learning. In H. B. Long and Associates (Eds.), *Developing paradigms for self-directed learning* (pp. 1-14). Norman, OK: Public Managers Center, University of Oklahoma.
- Lovitts, B. (1996). *Leaving the ivory tower: A sociological analysis of the causes of departure from doctoral study*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland.
- Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. (1999). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Oddi, L. F. (1987). Perspectives on self-directed learning. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 38, 21-31.
- Ponton, M. K. (1999). The measurement of an adult's intention to exhibit personal initiative in autonomous learning. (Doctoral dissertation, The George Washington University, 1999). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60, 3933.
- Walpole, M.B., Burton, N.W., Kanyi, K., & Jackenthal, A. (2002). *Selecting successful graduate students: In-depth interview with GRE users* (GRE Board Research Rep. No. 99-11R; ETS RR-02-06). Princeton, NJ: ETS.

New Horizons in Adult Education
Volume 19, Number 3, Summer 2005

TUTORIALS AT A DISTANCE: REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS

David Starr-Glass
State University of New York

Abstract

This paper is a reflection on 18 months of online mentoring. More accurately, it is about my experience of online tutorials because the process and the dynamics of the tutorial that have been, for me at least, the core of mentoring. Three related facets of tutorial are considered: deep learning, transformational learning, and ways in which reflections of the dynamics of the tutorial encounter can be strengthened and incorporated into student assessment.

Empire State College (ESC) was founded in 1971 and in many respects it was a product of its age. The college looked for ways of providing an inclusive, flexible, and accessible educational experience to those who had not considered such an opportunity. Central to the early operational focus of the new college was an emphasis on placing the student at the center of the educational experiences. This was reflected in validating prior learning experiences, individualized degree program planning, and a one-on-one tutorial mode of educational interaction. Shortly after its inception, ESC initiated an International Program that sought to provide a degree of educational opportunity and flexibility for students living outside the United States. However, such an expansion was not without challenges, including the difficulty of preserving the traditional tutorial style of instruction.

This paper reflects on my exploration of adapting an essential tutorial style in at-distance educational contexts. Specifically, it examines my first year's experience in dealing with at-distant adult learners who were registered as undergraduate business students at ESC's program in Prague, Czech Republic. In this program students study for two years in a private college in Prague and then complete a further two years with ESC. During those two years, they are taught by local adjunct faculty. The educational delivery system employed is the standard lecture.

During these final two years, students are assigned an ESC mentor who works with them in degree planning and academic advisement. In the senior year, the mentor also engages with students in two courses: the senior project proposal and the senior project thesis. As part of the articulation agreement with the Czech Ministry of Education, students complete a short final dissertation and this is planned and executed by the student with the active participation of his, or her, mentor. Students and mentors work at a distance throughout the year; generally the mentor is based in New York. Contact is maintained by e-mail with the mentor meeting his, or her, students three times a year in Prague.

When appointed to mentor with the Prague unit, one of my interests was in exploring possibilities of reintroducing a tutorial teaching approach into what had been considered a distanced, very loosely structured and predominantly administrative, student-mentor relationship. The experiences related here are mostly derived from my work with students in producing a research question for their dissertation. This was a distance-learning course lasting for one semester, which examined research methodologies, selection and development of research questions within a business or economic context, and implementation of the research project.

For clarification three general observations should be made. Firstly, I work with my students through e-mail rather than via an online web site. I sent my students a series of learning modules and asked for responses. I then worked individually with each respondent commenting, eliciting further responses, and sustaining an asynchronous dialogue. In my work, communication was between individual students and myself – a one-on-one relationship. This is unlike standard online courses where communication is posted within an interactive community of linked learners who can engage in discussions amongst themselves.

Secondly, tutorials conducted face-to-face and at a distance are not the same. This might seem obvious, certainly in terms of diminution of spontaneity, lack of informational richness in the interaction, and reduced interaction time with each student. My primary concern was to optimize in an altered educational format, not to preserve or replace.

Thirdly, I am wary about making any claim as to the generalizeability of my observations because of the unique nature of my students. I have a great sense of privilege in working with these men and women, predominately from the Czech Republic. As a group they are exceptionally intelligent, motivated, and responsive. I am sensitive of our cultural, linguistic, and educational differences – just as I am of our different histories, societies, and experiences – and yet we seem able to bring those differences to the enterprise of learning in a manner that creates a rich and synergistic diversity. Perhaps with such students, it is inevitable that I have a positive sense about our tutorials. I certainly thank these students for having taught me something about the possibility of sustaining a mentoring relationship at a distance.

Deep Learning

When confronted with a new learning situation, we opt for the learning strategy that makes most sense. There are two general strategies: deep learning and surface learning (Bigg, 1999). In the latter, we quickly skim the surface of the material presented, acquiring only a minimal, unconnected understanding of the topic. The goal is to complete the task rather than to engage with it; to earn a passing grade and move on to more valued learning experiences. We use low-level cognitive skills. The main issue is acquiring declarative knowledge – knowledge of content.

In deep learning, however, we use a higher-level set of cognitive skills to develop relationships and connections between pieces and parts. We focus on procedural knowledge – of how things are done and how they fit together – and we invest personal involvement and commitment in the learning experience; there is enjoyment, satisfaction, and critical reflection. Deep learning results in functional knowledge, in which “the learner ... can put declarative

knowledge to work by solving problems” (Bigg, 1999, p. 40). It is important to remember that surface and deep learning are not attributes of the learner but strategies selected. There is no suggestion that one form of learning is inherently better.

In attempting to foster functional knowledge, we tend to encourage learners to engage in deep learning. The extent to which this is successful depends on the perceived relevance of the material and the educator’s skill of presentation. Within the tutorial setting, the tutor is constantly challenging and encouraging the learner to actively engage in the process and move from surface to depth. This requires an appreciation of the inherent richness of the material being presented and an ability to communicate this to the novice. Often this richness is demonstrated through dialectical methodologies: comparing, contrasting, and challenging (Rosie, 2000).

In the face-to-face tutorial, it is possible to initiate and sustain a process that presented learning as a deeper activity and invited the learner to reconsider surface skimming. My experience has been that many students resisted this not, I suspect, because of difficulties, or unpleasantness, but because it was not the strategy that they had selected for dealing with the educational encounter. Often, students expressed a desire to accumulate academic credits to reach selected goals; they had forgotten that academic credits were symbolic of learned bodies of knowledge. Education can easily become a numbers game – not a content game, and certainly not a transformational opportunity.

But sitting across from each other, engaged in a tutorial session, there was always the invitation to compare, contrast, and challenge. There was the invitation to enter into a learning relationship where neither of us owned the learning but both of us were willing to share it, to construct meaning, and leave the session altered in some way. Of course, often it did not work that way. And when it did not work, there was an awareness of lost opportunity.

We now ‘sit’ separated by 1,600 miles and in different time zones. The richness of clues and signs that characterize face-to-face interactions is absent (Daft & Lengel, 1986). We read each other’s e-mails and respond. The porosity of the communication medium is obvious; technology has not replicated, or even approximated, the dynamics and the process of face-to-face communication. Yet, it seems to me that in the disjointedness and displacement I am forced into myself, forced to examine and to claim ownership of my contributions to the exchanges with students.

In a sense, there is no longer the active *pas de deux* in which we can take turns to lead, cover the other’s mistake, and provide mutual encouragement. There is only, in a metaphoric sense, the video recording of the dance where I focus on the isolated, unmasked, and unsupported movements. In distance learning, learning is not located in a metaphysical cyberspace; rather – as with all learning – it takes place within ourselves. In an unexpected way, the separation of the metaphoric dancers provided each of us with the opportunity to focus on our individual contribution to the learning interaction.

Moving from face-to-face to at-distance tutorials allowed me to see my contribution to the learning process in a cooler, more critical, manner. It allowed me to re-focus on the dynamics of the learning situation. The separation and isolation of online instruction slows down the

educational process to one that operates at the level of individual frames; changes it to one of more closely observed individual movements. And, from this perspective, it seems that online interaction makes the underlying dynamics of the learning process more accessible and more visible, for all participants. The technology preserves traces of what has developed; evolving structures are captured in the history of e-mails. Within this history – within this captured frame-by-frame evolution of our knowledge creation and our relationships – there is the opportunity for the participants to examine not just what has been learned but the manner in which that learning has taken place.

In the fluidity, responsiveness, and spontaneity of the face-to-face tutorial we sometimes focus more on outcomes (where we have come to) than on process (the journey). Paradoxically – or at least so it seems to me – by isolating those involved in the learning experience we are each made more responsible for the process; more aware of, and accountable for, the dynamics of learning. I have found that online tutorials present more of an opportunity to move the learning process away from surface learning to deep learning. And perhaps, there is also an opportunity to demonstrate the process by which learning has taken place, not just what has been learned.

Transformational Learning

Transformational learning occurs when learners (generally adult; always mature) engage in a critical self-reflection that allows them to revise old assumptions, develop new ones, and generate changed ways of seeing the world (Cranton, 1994). As one student at San Jose State University, California noted:

For the technocrat, curriculum is the ‘stuff’, the outcome, the predetermined content objectives, the ‘knowledge’ to be poured into empty vessels. I’m beginning to understand how this mindset, so dominant in the educational system, is fraught with difficulties and contradictions. (quoted in Nelson & Harper, 2000, p. 5)

Perhaps one of the most powerful aspects of the tutorial is the ability to direct learners not simply towards deep learning but to transformational learning. Because of assumptions that most learners have about the educational system – assumptions that may have been tested and confirmed many times within traditional settings – there is often surprise that learning can be transformational; skepticism that it should be seen as such.

It is within the active engagement of the tutorial that learners can be encouraged, supported, and empowered to consider the transformational dimension of learning. Tutorial engagement becomes a dialogue, a directed conversation where the objective is not simply transactional but relational. Participants can find themselves changed if dialogue is not simply a reflexive pin-pong game, but as an intentional, reflective engagement (Gadamer, 1976). In the language of Harper, Nelson and Mayfield (1997), “we are able to confront the “otherness” of the text [and of the other learning participant] and hear its challenge” (p. 30).

Nelson and Harper (2000) divided their class, blindfolding one group and asking them to discuss a topic. The second group observed the discussion. After 15 minutes, it became clear to the observers that the discussion had really been a series of monologues, with individuals stating

what they knew: this they call dialogue as debate. Dialogue as debate can occur in any situation but it is made more likely to result when we are isolated from one another – in the experiment, by being blindfolded.

Nelson and Harper (2000) then explicitly taught their students to recognize dialogue as a learning conversation, in which participants attempt to arrive at a shared, mutual understanding. When dialogue is engaged in with the purpose of sharing, supporting, empowering learning there is an enhanced opportunity for participants to recognize the transformational potential in the learning experience. Nelson and Harper (2000) suggest four strategies to encourage dialogue as a learning conversation:

- (a) open-ended questions;
- (b) building statements, which make connections and encourage continued discussion;
- (c) redirecting statements, which suggest new topics or issues; and
- (d) regulatory statements, which help clarify the message that the receiver is hearing. (p. 10)

Within the tutorial, there is the opportunity to engage in dialogues that are not debates but learning conversations. Such a strategy is not intuitive and has to be developed within the learning engagement. However, once the learner is aware of the quite specific purpose of tutorial dialogue, the process can be monitored and sustained. The learner is now aware of two levels, or strands, in the tutorial session: one that is close to the surface and is mainly about content and debate; the other which is deeper, about process and possible personal transformation.

When tutor and student are distanced spatially and temporally a new complexity is added to the process: we are blindfolded. But if dialogue as learning conversation is introduced and sustained – and this I had not anticipated – then distancing no longer operates as a blindfold directing us inward. Perhaps it might help to sustain the metaphor. When I began at distance work with students, I felt blindfolded. In that realization there was a sense of panic, of not being aware of the other, of debating with myself and hoping that others might hear. But as I learned and encouraged others to enter into a learning conversation, the blindfold no longer separated or excluded. Indeed, physical separation seemed to enhance the dialogue – just as, in a sense, closing the eyes helps us concentrate on music.

Dialogue as learning conversations is neither universally encouraged by traditional education nor is it necessarily intuitive to students. In particular, this modality is neither encouraged nor expected in Central European education, particularly in the traditional institutions that have a residual dowdiness of authoritarianism (the Velvet Revolution only occurred in 1989). Of course, the ESC students in Prague have voted with their feet (and pocket books) to reject traditional, local educational patterns and assumptions, although their choices have as much to do with the perceived utilities of an American degree as they have with a critique of Central European education.

Initially, I was reticent about instigating a change in the form of dialogue between my students and myself. However, by the end of my first year, I had already introduced learning conversations with most of them. Currently (fall 2003), I have launched a distant learning course which, while designed as a framework to plan final projects, encourages and promotes explicit

reconsiderations of what we mean by knowing; the process of reflection and the nature of deep and transformational learning.

It has proved very exciting and deeply satisfying to challenge students in this capstone study. The quality of the exchanges and the sustained learning conversations that have immersed from this semester (fall 2003) has been remarkable. Although I have perhaps too many students (not an uncommon complaint, I think), I have tried to create a new learning engagement through one-on-one e-mail discussion. I have not tried to recreate face-to-face tutorial but have become sensitive to the quality of the video, rather than the pas de deux of prior times.

Students have responded very warmly and enthusiastically to my incursion into their language and their culture. Some may recognize my commitment to communication; others might appreciate the risk I take in assuming a new vulnerability. There is a deeper and enhanced level of communication when we take the time to understand the cross-cultural context and make the effort to bridge it, to negotiate it. There is always an emotional charge when a student answers me in Czech, or helps me with some aspect of the language: a strong sense of identification, or bonding. It should be pointed out that the level of spoken and written English among this group is exceptional: many having spent a senior high school year in the United States as exchange students.

Anchored Reflections

One of my interests in the tutorial dialogue is in encouraging students to identify the ways in which learning takes place. We might be looking at the operations of central banks, or at the function of planning within management, but I will suggest that the student reflect not so much on what has been learned but on how it has been learned.

Reflection is generally recognized as a powerful tool for claiming personal ownership of the learning process and for developing transformational learning and that is why I encourage my students to cultivate sustained reflective practice. However, in the context of face-to-face tutorials, I have generally acknowledged that reflection is rarely spontaneous and that it will normally take place outside the actual tutorial meeting. Perhaps, given the immediacy of the tutorial, I always imagined that I could ask directly about the nature and extent of the reflection that I assumed was taking place.

When I made the transition to at-distance tutoring, I became aware of two things. The first was that I really did consider reflection a key element of the successful tutorial: it was important. The second was that I had no way of directly ensuring my students were actually engaging in reflective practice: it was hidden. Rather than simply encourage reflection within the learning process, I realized that it would be better to specify reflection as an explicit learning objective. This, in turn, led me to consider using reflection as a dimension of the assessment of student performance.

Others had also considered this approach. Mary Thorpe (2000), for example, advocates that reflection should be embedded into the assessment process of educational outcomes of distance-learning situations. She sees reflection as a significant element of all experiential

learning, especially in the context of David Kolb's (1984) cyclical learning model. The assessment of reflection is also helpful in encouraging, achieving, and monitoring transformational learning (Thorpe, 2000) and in providing the student with a vehicle for ongoing metalearning – what Flavel (1979) succinctly defines as “the learners’ capacity to think about their own thinking” (p. 908).

While reflection has been widely used as part of the assessment process, there are two potential difficulties. First, reflection is an illusive concept to define. Attempts to encourage reflection often result in assessment products that are overly personalized, exclusively self-referent, and not obviously connected to the process that it is supposed to highlight. Second, reflective exercises are often not sufficiently explained or made explicit to the learner and remain a peripheral and unconnected part of the assessment. My initial attempt, at highlighting reflective practice and incorporating it as an element of assessment, suffered from both of these problems.

I asked students to center the reflection on incidents, perhaps critical incidents, when the student observed that he/she was thinking about his/her thinking. This incident might have been when an initial line of thought was challenged, or reframed by the mentor; when a particular difficulty was seen differently and resolved; when disparate bits and pieces of the study came together in a satisfactory manner. These represent critical incidents in the learning process and can serve as anchors for subsequent reflective thought.

In my first year of working with my distanced students, I asked them as part of their final project to write a short summary of two anchored reflections that they had encountered in their final semester. These incidents represented points at which there was a change of thinking, a change that was recognized by the student. The focus was on the process and the dynamics of the learning experience and I wanted to encourage learners to take specific, identifiable experiences and use them to consider their antecedents and repercussions. In this way, I hoped they could anchor reflections in specific events and occurrences rather than being vaguely descriptive of the whole project: analogous to the way in which behaviorally anchored rating scales are used in industrial psychology (Smith & Kendall, 1963).

Feedback from students demonstrated that while there was an understanding of the purpose of reflection, reflection had been perceived as an additional element of the learning that we engaged in, not a core issue. In a metaphoric sense, the anchored reflections were not anchored in the depths of the experience but had come adrift.

The distancing of the tutorial process has moved me towards being much more explicit about encouraging and supporting reflection and in incorporating it as part of the student assessment. Within many tutorial contexts, assessment is formative – shaping the subsequent dynamics and emphases of the interaction. In active learning conversation, questions are used to change direction, to open new possibilities, and to present alternatives. Face-to-face tutorial represents little separation between the processes of learning and of assessment. However, there is a danger that in distanced tutorials learning may become divorced from assessment. In examining at-distance tutorials, I began to clarify my understanding of reflection as a significant issue and, as such, moved to formalize its inclusion in assessment.

Where to from here?

This short paper is a reflection on the challenges encountered in moving from face-to-face tutorials to working at a distance with students. It is an in-process piece, rather than a summation of experience. Contained in these reflections is the surprising observation – surprising to me at least – that while altered by distancing, the tutorial methodology is resilient enough to support a constructive learning dialogue aimed at deep learning, transformational learning, and reflective practice. At-distance work slows down the process of communication and yet in the slowing down the process of communicative learning is accentuated and shown frame by frame. At-distance tutorials are impoverished so far as the density and richness of communication is concerned, but here again the challenge is to understand more of what richness and communication density was in the face-to-face encounters.

This article began with a caution about the generalizeability of personal, anecdotal experience. More focused research is required to explore the following questions:

- In which specific ways are the process dynamics of learning in the face-to-face and online tutorials different?
- How can we more clearly understand ‘social presence’ (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976) and to what extent is it related to successful learning outcomes in face-to-face and at-distance tutorials?
- Does the physical and temporal distancing of participants allow them to more clearly identify and explore the cognitive and metacognitive issues connected with learning?
- To what extent are the dynamics of one-on-one e-mail tutorials similar to online asynchronous teaching with twenty or more participants in a learning community?
- What are the reactions of students and faculty to the focus on the process of learning as well as to the content of learning?
- To what extent is online mentoring possible, desirable, or even inevitable?

References

- Bigg, J. (1999). *Teaching for quality learning at university*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Cranton, P. (1994). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators and adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media richness and structural design. *Management Science*, 32(5), 554-571.

- Flavel, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cogitative monitoring: A new area of cognitive-development inquiry. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 906-11.
- Gadamer, H. (1976). *Philosophical hermeneutics*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Harper, V., Nelson, C., & Mayfield, M. (1997). Transforming parent-teacher conferences. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 34(4), 28-33.
- Nelson, C., & Harper, V. (2000). Transformational learning: A pedagogy of critical conversation. *Electronic Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 11(1), 3-17.
- Rosie, A. (2000). 'Deep learning': A dialectical approach drawing on tutor-led web resources. *Active Learning in Education*, 1(1), 45-59.
- Short, J., Williams, E., & Christie, B. (1976). *The social psychology of telecommunications*. London: John Wiley.
- Smith, P. C., & Kendall, L. M. (1963). Retranslation of expectations: An approach to the construction of unambiguous anchors for rating scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 47,149- 155.
- Thorpe, M. (2000). Encouraging students to reflect as part of the assignment process. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 1(1), 79-92.

New Horizons in Adult Education

Volume 19, Number 3, Summer 2005

***Review of GED: Black Women and their Struggle for Social Equity*, by Joanne Kilgour-Dowdy. Peter Lang Publishing, 2003, 102 pp., \$19.95 (paperback).**

Joanne Kilgour-Dowdy's text provides a lively, personal, and dynamic account of four African American women's struggles for adult attainment of the General Education Diploma (GED) qualification in the U.S. The book acts primarily as a powerful motivational force for women of color who need to attain the GED and who may have felt there was no way they could accomplish their goal. The book is useful to both educators and lay persons because it provides a powerful glimpse into the world of women aiming at attaining a GED and because gender, race, and class issues are profoundly and sensitively addressed.

The General Educational Diploma (GED) is a series of five tests that individuals who have not completed high school may take through their state education system to qualify for a high school equivalency certificate. The tests cover correctness and effectiveness of expression, interpretation of reading materials in the natural sciences and the social sciences, interpretation of literary materials, and general mathematics ability. They are taken at a post-high school stage as a qualification to satisfy the potential U.S. employer. It is particularly difficult for persons taking the test to access educational environments which are satisfactory to prepare them for the test and in many cases, literacy has to be acquired as a precursor to study. The women who are the focus of the book won through against the odds and the author anchors the source of the women's success in order to encourage and inspire others.

The stories are told through detailed reference to transcripts of the women's own words, documenting their backgrounds, the rationale behind their actions, how their achievement was actualised, where their support and motivation lay, and the end results of their attainment. The book presents a powerful exercise in discourse analysis because it brings the reality of the narrator to the reader's consciousness. The author does not analyze the texts linguistically, but her analysis of content is telling and effective. The personalization of each account and the author's own reasons for interest in the project strengthen the work's appeal and motivational force by the stark but bright realism they bring to it.

For purposes of the study, nine women who had won through were interviewed on three separate occasions for periods of approximately one hour each. From the nine women interviewed, four were selected for this book based on their capacity to "symbolize the courage and commitment" (p. 14) shared by the entire group. They became the subject of detailed case studies which were cross-analyzed according to theme in the sixth chapter.

In her introductory chapter, Kilgour-Dowdy contextualizes the struggle for achievement of the women she studied in the context of the broader racist, sexist, and classist world which they inhabit (p.10). She notes that upon attainment of GED Black women's access to better employment is not guaranteed since the reality of Black women's employment in today's U.S. is far below that of white women of an equivalent educational level. Kilgour-Dowdy aims to document the Black woman's struggle for equality and survival which goes on in the country which claims to be the greatest democracy of all "against the will of a nation that constantly struggles to undo her [the Black woman's] best efforts, or ignore them" (p.11).

The fact that Kilgour-Dowdy is a Trinidadian with twenty-one years of experience in the U.S. education system to draw on enhances the clarity of her speaking. She recognizes a contextual struggle that was not part of her twentieth century Caribbean experience and so demands change from a world that pays lip-service to democratic values but continues to fall short of them. Following her consideration of each woman's struggle in separate chapters of the book, Kilgour-Dowdy concludes the book by measuring the women's achievement again in a socio-historical and political framework, showing their struggle as part of a broader battle for educational and employment emancipation which has hardly yet begun.

The work has significance at three levels: the personal testimonial level, the wider U.S. socio-political contextual level, and the global context of the emancipation of womanhood. In today's world, literacy and education are the keys to freedom and empowerment (Malcolm X, 1964). Yet, as Kilgour-Dowdy (1997) documents, the disempowered most often opt out of the system that might empower them at an early age because of their alienation from the political ideology the system represents and because of horrendous circumstances of living within which education becomes either unattainable or irrelevant. As the four women selected for detailed study discover, it is necessary to re-enter the system in order to attain the job opportunities that cannot be achieved by any other means. The women represented in the book speak to other women in similar conditions and encourage them towards empowerment. There is empowerment in the simultaneous personalization and generalization of the women's experiences which the writer brings out through a careful balance of her own description and analysis and the women's own speaking.

Each woman separately documents her own recognition of her need for self-realization. For some women the need for self-realization entailed the need to help others more, whereas for others the need for self-realization was more personally bound. For all the women there was less dependence on others entailed in their achievement, and more capacity to control their own destinies. Then there was the very practical need to be able to get a better job and thereby provide better for their families in numerous ways. Each woman's struggle was supported to a greater or lesser extent by family members, teachers, and friends, including fellow class members. The documented benefits of their achievements include better self-esteem, better relationships with family and associates and an increased capacity to support them, better job performance, and enhanced expectations and goals. These personal accounts, partly told in each woman's own words, are of tremendous value in speaking to other women in like circumstances. The fact that each woman's experience and value system is a little different from the rest allows each one separately to find an identificational stance alongside other women needing the motivation to embark on and sustain the same path.

The relatively brief, straightforward, and focused descriptive accounts make the women's stories easily readable and translatable to others. In Chapter Six, the author summarizes for the group the rationale, process, and results of the women's individual achievements and again brings out the solidarity which the process produced and the "mentoring" quality that the women developed.

At the broader socio-political level, Kilgour-Dowdy looks critically at the world her protagonists inhabit and concludes that they were forced back into a system they had earlier rejected. The author confesses to have started out regarding the women as 'down and out' when they were really 'up and in' (Kilgour-Dowdy, 1997). She commends their agency in the process they took on.

As the author comments on declining levels of health care and capacity for self support among Black women and on the continuing challenge of entrenched racism as it exists in the United States down to the present day, she forces her audience to examine the society that claims so much for itself and yet “has never allowed itself to enjoy the reality of a truly integrated workforce” (p. 100). Kilgour-Dowdy lauds the women she has given voices to for their courage against the overwhelming odds ranged against them through the triple burden of race, class, and gender oppression. The provision of a voice has been something that womanhood has continued to fight for throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first; this book is a significant voice-giver and a salient reminder of the realities of the U.S. experience.

In one area, I see a potential gap in the text, and that is in the lack of global, as opposed to local contextualization of the women’s overcoming achievement. I have recently completed a description of the resilience and resistance of Haitian women against the violent realities of their every-day experience as documented also through their personal narratives (Bell, 2001; Morgan & Youssef, 2005) and cannot help but feel that a comment on the global struggle of womanhood would have been useful, with even a consideration of the similarities and differences within that struggle world-wide. Perhaps this was simply outside the writer’s scope and purpose, since she is dealing with an encounter with the U.S. educational examination system, but it behoves us all to look at the circumstances of extreme deprivation that characterize women, like those of Haiti, so close to the U.S. shores, and to consider how further solidarity among women could enrich their struggle.

There is a sense in which we may query one statement the writer makes: “Things change according to the time and place. What is important in the United States now was not important in 1865, and it will not be important in the year 2100” (p.100). There was no GED in 1865 and there is no GED in Haiti but the struggle for basic human rights is one and the same, the struggle for a voice as profound, and the struggle for empowerment as necessary. By relating to womanhood world-wide we can bring strength and balance to our own sense of victimization.

In drawing to a close, however, I would commend the approach to the text overall, its subject matter, and both the style and organization of it. The book brings the struggle to vibrant life through its personalization and through the words of the individuals who are its source. The book eloquently contextualizes the struggle in the framework of the reality of living as a Black woman in the United States today. It is written in a direct and clear style. It is brief but explicit, with sufficient clarity and appropriacy of analysis for all of us to digest. The book is scholarly without being pedantic, academic without being dry, forceful without ranting, and cogent without dryness.

Review of GED is important reading for scholars of gender studies, but also for a wider public, concerned with issues of equalization and justice in the twenty-first century world. It enables an international audience to examine the U.S. experience in relation to their own and to get a more balanced assessment of the pros and cons of their own realities. The latest form of exploitation and devaluation of both women and families exists in the massive drain of women from the so-called Third World territories to the First World. Through forceful media indoctrination we are convinced of a false reality within which countries like the U.S. and the UK are lands of opportunity and prosperity, and we abandon our own lands for theirs, becoming disenfranchised immigrant labor in exploitative capitalist systems far more corrupt than our own. To bring through the harsh realities of circumstances in that

foreign world, even for its own people, is a significant responsibility and one which is well fulfilled by *Review of GED: Black Women and their Struggle for Social Equity*. We will overcome, as the text so clearly signifies, but we will do it quicker with the kind of clear sight this work provides.

VALERIE YOUSSEF
University of West Indies

References

- Bell, B. (2001). *Walking on fire: Haitian women's stories of survival and resistance*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Haley, A., & Malcolm, X. (1964). *The autobiography of Malcolm X with the assistance of Alex Haley*. New York: Ballantine Books, Random House.
- Morgan, P., & Youssef, V. (in press). *Writing rage: Unmasking violence in Caribbean discourse*. Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press.

New Horizons in Adult Education
Volume 19, Number 3, Summer 2005

***Learning Together Online: Research on Asynchronous Learning Networks*, edited by Starr R. Hiltz and Ricki Goldman. Mahway, NJ: Erlbaum, 2005, 296 pp., \$.29.95 (paperback).**

Learning Together Online is a serious and thoughtful examination of the existing research on asynchronous learning networks. Written and edited by active researchers in the field, their extensive experience with teaching online and developing these learning networks is evident in the analyses they provide on the body of research that exists on asynchronous learning. Essentially, the book is a series of literature reviews on the various research topics associated with interactive learning in Web-based environments.

The book is not for those with a passing interest – the reviews are thorough and detailed. As with all good literature reviews, each chapter explains the concepts and problems, then analyzes and critiques the research done to date. Suggestions for further reading and future research are presented for each topic. Because there are few pedagogical theories of learning in Web-based courses and few models of learning in Web courses, the authors develop and provide an Online Interaction Learning Model, which is then utilized as a framework for many of the discussions on various aspects of research regarding online learning and teaching.

The book is divided into two sections. Section one of the book provides researchers who are new to the field of distance learning with a review of the foundations of the field; a comparison of definitions for the types of distance education and distance learning utilized in the field as well as a detailed review of the studies conducted that compare traditional face to face teaching and learning with Web-based teaching and learning. That there is no significant difference between the two will come as no surprise to many educators, however the benefits found with learning online may. Two important chapters in this section address the lack of rigor and objective measurements in quantitative studies and the deficit of good qualitative research in the field.

The second section of the book addresses what we have learned so far about these interactive distance learning networks and what remains to be investigated with regard to the learners, our roles as teachers and the contextual factors that influence both. Although technology and the media utilized to present interactive courses has come a long way in the past decade, chapters in this section point out the continuing issues learners and teachers must contend with when working on the Web.

Of particular interest to those faculty new to teaching online are the Arbaugh and Benbauman-Fich chapter on contextual factors and their influence on the effectiveness of learning in asynchronous environments, the Hiltz and Shea chapter on students in asynchronous learning, and the Dziuban, Shea and Arbaugh chapter on faculty roles and how they differ in online asynchronous classrooms. What the book does not adequately address is how to approach developing online instructors who have the skills to help students learn in this distant environment. The continued dearth of research to address this issue is not resolved with this text.

If you are searching for a “how to” book on how to teach online, this book will not answer your questions.

For those readers who might dismiss the importance of this text as immaterial to the work of educating adults, it should be noted that adults are enrolling in Web-based learning opportunities at a greater rate than any other type of adult education in the U.S. Learning Together Online provides those adult educators who want to begin studying the collaborative and interactive learning that takes place in Web courses with a concise source to begin their work.

JENNIFER CALVIN
Southern Illinois University

New Horizons in Adult Education
Volume 19, Number 3, Summer 2005

NEWS AND NOTES

The 19th Annual QUIG Conference on Interdisciplinary Qualitative Studies

Athens, Georgia, January 6-8, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.coe.uga.edu/quig/>

The 4th International Conference on Civic Education: Research and Practice

Orlando/Altamonte, Florida, January 19-21, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.civicedconf.org/civiced.html>

2005-2006 Conference: Disability, Narrative and the Law

The Ohio State University, Columbus, February 16-17

Conference website: <http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/cilps/events.html>

Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) 2006 International Conference

Columbus, Ohio, February 22-26, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.ahrd.org>

The 44th Annual International Performance Improvement Conference (ISPI)

Dallas, Texas, April 6-11, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.ispi.org/AC2006/>

American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2006 Annual Meeting

San Francisco, California, April 8-12, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.aera.net/annualmeeting>

Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion & Disability 2006 Conference

The Ohio State University, Columbus, April 17-18, 2006

Conference website: <http://ada.osu.edu/conferences.htm>

The 2nd International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, May 3-6, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.qi2006.org/>

The 23rd Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research Conference

Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, May 16-18, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.qualitative.ca/>

The 6th Annual Second City National Disability Studies in Education Conference

Michigan State University, East Lansing, May 18-21, 2006

The deadline for manuscript submission – February 15, 2006

Conference website: <http://edr1.educ.msu.edu/DSEConf>

Annual Adult Education Research Conference (AERC)

Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 19-21, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca/aerc/about.htm>

The 7th International Conference on HRD Research and Practice across Europe Conference

Tilburg, Netherlands, May 22-24, 2006

The deadline for manuscript submission – December 12

Conference website:

<http://www.tilburguniversity.nl/faculties/fsw/departments/HRS/hrdconf/>

The 25th Midwest Research to Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, Extension, and Community Education

St. Louis, Missouri, October 4-6, 2006

The deadline for manuscript submission – March 1, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.umsl.edu/~conted/education/mwr2p06/>

The 6th International Conference on Knowledge, Culture and Change in Organizations

Monash University Centre, Prato (Near Florence), Italy, July 11-14, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.ManagementConference.com>

New Horizons in Adult Education
Volume 19, Number 3, Summer 2005

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO AEHRDDNET

Send an electronic mail message addressed to: majordomo@fiu.edu. Type in the body of the message 'subscribe aehrdnet'. The listserv will respond to your subscription request with a welcome message including detailed information on AEHRDNET.

To respond to the articles in this issue, please send your comments to AEHRDNET identifying the subject as the title of the article (or first part of title).

**HOW TO OBTAIN BACK ISSUES AND CUMULATIVE
INDEX OF NEW HORIZONS**

All the archived issues of *New Horizons in Adult Education* can be located at <http://education.fiu.edu/newhorizons>

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The mission of *New Horizons in Adult Education* is to promote all aspects of practice and research that explore issues of individual, group, and organizational learning, wherever they may be located and focuses on current research and ideas in adult education, human resource development, and related fields. We are interested in honoring work done in urban, suburban, rural, and international contexts.

New Horizons in Adult Education, founded in 1987, is an electronic refereed journal, published quarterly. The journal provides faculty, researchers, graduate students, and practitioners with a venue for publishing their current thinking and research within adult education, human resource development, and related fields. *New Horizons in Adult Education* publishes peer-reviewed articles, Point-Counterpoint essays, Perspectives (on people, practice, research, and teaching) essays, Book and Media Reviews, and News and Notes.

Guidelines for manuscript submission are available on the AEHRDNET and *New Horizons in Adult Education* web page at <http://education.fiu.edu/newhorizons/guidelines.htm>