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**Creating New Pedagogies at the Millennium:  
The Common Experiences of  
University of Wisconsin-Madison Teachers  
Using Distance Education Technologies**

September 1, 1998

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The Principal Investigators acknowledge the participation and contributions of the research team members: Cathy Andrews, PhD, RN; Pamela Magnussen Ironside, PhD, RN; Patricia Young, PhD(c), RN; Laura Stewart, MS, RN; Nancy Ranum, MS, RN; Ann Woodward, MS, RN; and Kara Groen, MS, RN. It would not have been possible to complete this study without the distance teachers, students, and technology specialists who generously created a place in their lives to reflect on their experiences and participate in the on-going interpretations and final research report. We are particularly appreciative of the expertise and counsel throughout this study of Kathleen Christoph, Academic Computing Services/DoIT, Learning Technology. The principal investigators acknowledge the timely and insightful reviews of the final research report by Stephen Ackerman, Atmospheric Sciences; Patricia Lasky, School of Nursing; Margaret Geisler, Director, Continuing Education; Chere Gibson, Schools of Education and Human Ecology; and Michael Streibel, School of Education.

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## THE STUDY

It is a tenet of the University of Wisconsin, dating back to the turn of our century and our origins as a land grant college, that the walls of the University are the borders of the state. Perhaps our best opportunity to realize that ideal may be the development of technology-based distance education, arriving at the end of the century.<sup>1</sup> Through the use of emerging communications technologies, contemporary distance education teachers and students do not need a common place, or even a common time, to teach and to learn with a high degree of interactivity. In Wisconsin, as elsewhere, this concept of instruction is being evaluated as a model for education in the 21st Century.

Early studies of technology-based instruction have focused on the merits of the technologies themselves in terms of cognitive gain and learning outcomes. As distance education courses have become more commonplace, however, more recent studies have also begun to focus on the pedagogies of distance teaching, as suggested by recent publications on the instructional interaction of students and teachers (Thomerson and Smith, 1996; Wagner, 1997), student attrition in distance education (Gibson, 1996), and student expressions of academic confidence and doubt associated with their participation in distance education offerings (Egan & Gibb, 1997; Gibson, 1996; Wagner, 1997). It is timely, therefore, to explore how distance education, largely undertheorized, differs pedagogically from the more customary classroom instruction.

This study was jointly commissioned by the University of Wisconsin-System and the Madison campus to (1) describe the common experiences of University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty and academic staff who use distance technologies, (2) discuss the issues and implications of these common experiences across a variety of disciplinary contexts and educational offerings, and (3) increase the understanding of the ways in which instructional technologies and technology-based education currently are succeeding and not succeeding. Using interpretive phenomenology as the philosophical background, this study analyzed hermeneutically interviews of distance faculty from the Madison campus describing their experiences in distance teaching between 1994 and 1997.

In the broadest sense, pedagogy refers to the nature of knowledge and learning, specifically how knowledge is produced and reproduced, transformed and experienced, in situations created by students and teachers. It includes what is taught, how it is taught, and how it is learned and reflected in the experiences of distance teachers.

Common experiences embody the practical knowledge (wisdom) gained by reflecting on experiences. In interpretive phenomenological studies, the common is identified as a recurring theme or concern. It is familiar to the group being studied. Commonness is not a statistical frequency or occurrence, but rather a common voice judged by members of

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper, more convenient terms such as "distance education" will be substituted for a more precise one, "technology-based distance education." Their use should not be read as a reference to earlier, non-technological concepts of "distance education" that at the University of Wisconsin actually predate the current century.

the group being studied to be familiar and representative. The uncommon or unique is preserved as counterpoint or illustrative of what is common.

The common experiences of teachers reveal an awareness of the pedagogical issues or problems as they are best understood in a particular context and discipline as well as an anticipation of the ways students comprehend the discipline, including their preconceptions and misconceptions about it. Only by combining a knowledge of the subject matter with pedagogical knowledge do teachers arrive at the most *teachable* content (Shulman, 1986). With distance education, use of technology becomes a part of pedagogical knowledge.

### **ASSUMPTIONS**

The premise in conducting an interpretive phenomenological study utilizing teacher narratives is that experienced teachers have invaluable, practical pedagogical insights to share with their peers. The work of Benner, Tanner, and Chesla (1996) supports that notion:

As Diekelmann (1992) is finding in her study of teaching practices, narratives reveal human meanings and concerns, moral issues, and the practical know-how embedded in concrete teaching episodes. Edgerton (1993), Hutchings (1993a; 1993b), and others suggest that dialogue about particular teaching incidents may contribute a richer understanding of teaching and is, in fact a kind of scholarship of teaching (Boyer, 1990). Teachers know much more than they can ever say about teaching. The precepts offered by a pedagogical theory inevitably fall short in prescribing teaching practices, since the theory must be filled out, or challenged by the particular teacher, with particular students and particular subject matter. This kind of practical pedagogical knowledge development can occur through discussion and interpretation of narrative accounts of particular teaching incidents (p. 322).

Teaching is a practice, and as such it is learned through experience, or rather by *reflecting on experiences* (Schon, 1983). Documenting the practices of distance teachers and describing the practical knowledge that they develop contribute to the recognition of *how* distance teachers teach and add to the understanding of how to prepare teachers for distance education.

Implicit in this study are several fundamental assumptions about the scholarship of teaching and learning that open up a pedagogical way of thinking about using technology in distance education:

- Our understanding of the nature of distance teaching using technology is increased when we listen to the narratives of teachers, and this contributes to a scholarship of teaching.

- There are limits to the applicability of educational learning theory to distance education. It is desirable, therefore, not to strive solely for theoretical knowledge, which can be used predictably only in particular situations, but to contribute as well to increased understanding by describing the practical knowledge embedded within the situation.
- Integrating technology into distance teaching creates a specialty discipline with different shared practices and common experiences. To date, little attention has been given to *how* distance teachers transform the practices of teaching such as preserving, reading, writing, thinking, and dialogue when using technology (Diekelmann & Ironside, In Press). As teachers learn to teach technologically, however, disciplinary content knowledge and technical content knowledge merge. This connecting creates the possibility of transforming and extending teaching in ways that reach students across distance, and therefore characterizes distance education as a specialty discipline.

## METHODOLOGY

Interpretive phenomenology, specifically Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology, was the background for this study. Hermeneutics as an approach to scholarship acknowledges the temporal situatedness of both the researcher and the participants. Hermeneutic scholarship works to uncover how humans are “always already” given as time. Hermeneutics has no beginning or end that can be concretely defined, but is a continuing experience for all who participate. The work of the interpretive phenomenologist moves beyond traditional logical structures in order to reveal and explicate otherwise hidden relationships and meanings. Calling attention to human practices and experiences, hermeneutics is closely related to critical social theory, feminisms, and postmodernism. Unlike them, however, philosophical hermeneutics does not posit a political or psychological framework, nor does the interpretive phenomenologist attempt to posit, explain, or reconcile an underlying cause of a particular experience. Rather, the description of the common experiences is intended to reveal, enhance, or extend understanding of the human situation as it is lived. The intent is to evoke thinking in the reader concerning the matter at hand.

### **Study Participants and Data Collection**

Participants for this study were recruited widely from the Madison campus through letters to departments and schools, a call for participants in Wisconsin Week and announcements distributed at campus committee meetings such as the Teaching Academy. Thirty-one faculty and academic staff who had participated in distance learning using technology were interviewed from twenty-seven departments or schools. Informed consent was given to assure each participant of confidentiality. Non-structured, audiotaped interviews were completed in person or by telephone. A transcriptionist, experienced in interpretive research, transcribed each audiotaped interview. All identifying information (such as names and places) was deleted from the transcribed text and replaced with pseudonyms that were utilized throughout the data analysis and in this research report.

Participants were asked the following:

As you reflect on your experiences of teaching at a distance using instructional technologies, within the last three years, please tell me about a time, one that stands out for you either because it reminds you of what it means to be a distance teacher – or it reflects an experience that is noteworthy because of its commonness. Include as much detail as possible and stay in the telling of your story, rather than stepping back and analyzing it or describing it from afar. After you have given the details of your story, please describe why this experience is important and what it means to you. It can be a story of breakdown when nothing went right or one of making a difference. If possible, please eliminate names and references to specific places.

### **Hermeneutical Analyses**

While the thinking that accompanies hermeneutical scholarship is reflective, reflexive, and circular in nature, describing the process of hermeneutical analyses may suggest a linearity and structure that belies the seamless, fluid nature of this approach to inquiry. Although a brief summary of the hermeneutical analyses conducted in this study is described here, adapted from Diekelmann & Ironside (1998), the reader is referred to several authors--Benner (1994), Gadamer (1989), Grondin (1995), Heidegger (1993, 1996), and Palmer (1969)--who discuss hermeneutical approaches in more detail.

Each interview was read by team members to obtain a general understanding of the text. The team consisted of two experienced interpretive phenomenologists, seven masters or doctoral students, and two experienced teachers, one with and one without experience in distance teaching. Common themes were identified within each interview and each member of the team shared his or her written interpretations with the team. Dialogue among team members clarified the analyses. As the team analyzed subsequent interviews, each text was read against those that preceded it while comparing and contrasting themes. Thus, new themes were allowed to emerge, and previous themes were continuously refined, expanded, or overcome. Team members clarified any discrepancies in interpretations by referring back to the interview text or by reinterviewing participants for clarification. Phenomena were not reduced to differences or similarities, but rather, team members explicated the practices of identifying the seemingly simple and overlooked.

Team members identify and explore themes that cut across interview texts. They reread and studied interpretations generated previously to see if similar or contradictory interpretations were present in various interviews. Although it is an underlying assumption of hermeneutical analysis that no single correct interpretation exists, the team's continuous examination of the whole and the parts of the texts with constant reference back to the participants ensured that interpretations were focused and reflected in the text. Whenever conflicts arose among interpretations of the interviews, team members provided extensive documentation to support their interpretations.



Reading across post-positivist, feminist, critical, and postmodern texts, team members held open and problematic the identification and interpretation of common practices of teachers. Team members read across all texts and wrote critiques of the interpretations. The purpose was to conduct critical scholarship using other interpretive approaches to extend, support, or overcome the themes identified using hermeneutics. In this way, analysis proceeded in cycles in which understanding, interpretation and critique are in the center of the dialogues and discourses pursued. Like the hermeneutic circle, interpretations are complete but never-ending.

The hermeneutical approach provided the opportunity for team members, and for researchers not on the team, to review the entire analysis for plausibility, coherence, and comprehensiveness. In addition, some participants in the study were asked to read interpretations of their interviews as well as the interviews of other participants to confirm, extend, or challenge the analyses. Others, not included in the analyses but likely to be readers of this study, reviewed the written interpretations as well as the final research report. This review process exposed unsubstantiated and unwarranted interpretations. In the final research report sufficient excerpts from the interviews were used to allow the reader to participate in the analyses. The purpose of the research report is to provide a wide range of explicated text so that the reader can recognize common practices and shared experiences.

## **FINDINGS**

The analyses of the narratives of experienced teachers from the Madison campus identified the following themes related to their common experiences in teaching at a distance:

- 1) Losing Familiar Landmarks and Touchstones: Rethinking Schooling, Learning and Teaching
- 2) Challenging Conventional Pedagogies: Questioning Reliance on the Visual and Physical Presence
- 3) Reawakening New Roles: Creating New Partnerships
- 4) Learning from Experience: Developing Expertise and Practical Knowledge
- 5) Creating New Pedagogies: Re-visioning Schooling, Learning and Teaching

Each of these themes is identified and described in the discussions that follow.

# 1

## *Losing Familiar Landmarks and Touchstones: Rethinking Schooling, Learning and Teaching*

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The common assumption that distance classes, utilizing instructional technology to reach a new population of students, are essentially extensions of on-campus classes was challenged by teachers in this study. With distance education, experienced teachers become beginners again.

### ***A. Making the Common Practices of Teaching Visible: “Everything changes!”***

Teaching at a distance is a new specialty that precludes teachers from teaching as they have always taught. What has worked in the past may no longer be helpful or reliable. Teachers described losing the familiar landmarks of schooling, such as semester breaks and summer sessions:

The whole rhythm of how you do things is changed with asynchronous learning...so how you plan your semester is suddenly a mess. And then things like grant deadlines suddenly loom at exactly the same time as [asynchronous] students send in a lot of their work for feedback. I used to be able to plan my course assignments around my research, now I can't....There is no summer anymore because you have to work so very far ahead with technicians. Right now I am...revising two of my web courses and doing an audiographics new course and all these activities will go on solidly now for the next 12 to 15 months....I have had to change almost entirely how I collect data for my research during the summer...I never realized how important the kind of invisible rhythm we have as researchers was...where it's semester, break, semester, summer.... Everything changes!

Many of the practices taken for granted in teaching suddenly were made visible in the distance setting. Small changes, such as a more prolonged course development schedule, could have profound, unanticipated implications for research and grant writing.

Many teachers acknowledged that they initially used familiar teaching skills but quickly discovered that they had to rethink their familiar ways as the landmarks and touchstones of teaching were changed or missing. One teacher described how teaching at a distance challenged as fundamental an activity as preparing course materials and teaching a class:

Well, reformatting all of your materials, scanning them into the computer, having to get graphic consultants and things that, you know, you can't just have a piece of paper that you use as a hand out. You have to...incorporate it into a syllabus that you give students at the beginning of the semester, which means that every handout you want to give them has to be ready the day class starts. The communication with students over faxes...mailing papers back to students...you're doing more of, more work in that way. You can't just bump into somebody. You have to make a deliberate contact, a telephone call or write them a letter.... When I

teach an audiographics class, there are 3 people that have to be there, myself as the teacher, the technical assistant at radio hall, the technical assistant here in our building.

Common and familiar teaching practices became problematic and many teachers described their experiences as different.

***B. Un-at-homeness: “I found it’s a whole different world for teachers.”***

Distance teaching was described as more than just doing familiar activities in new ways or with modified timeframes. Teachers described how the spontaneity and the familiar ways of teaching were lost, creating a profound sense of being un-at-home. One teacher described how preparing for class each week was changed:

I’m really big on bringing articles into class. This is a newspaper article, this is a conference...circulate the stuff. You can’t do that. [With audiographics I can’t be] as spontaneous with some things....You learn that you can’t bring an article into class...everything has to be planned way in advance. How do you share a newspaper article? Well, you could say you could scan it in, but the scanner, it’s unreadable if it’s a regular print, so you first have to get an enlarged Xerox copy and then scan it in piece by piece, and depending on how many sites you have, it takes forever to get the image up.... Anybody who teaches [using distance technologies] does double effort in teaching. And I hear that. I thought it was like my problem at first, but then I hear it all over, when anybody ever talks about it. It’s more, much more work to teach.

All teaching is time-consuming, but the time-consuming nature of distance teaching was extraordinary, a common experience described by all teachers. Although teachers expected to spend more time in preparing their courses for distance formats and expected that it would take time to learn the new technologies, most did not anticipate the amount of time it would take. Many described the first time they offered their courses as “stiff,” “full of breakdowns,” “using trial and error” and “much more work” than anticipated. As a consequence, one teacher stressed the need to “start small.” Another described being given release time to develop new distance courses:

For the course I’m teaching now, I’m given a half-time leave for one semester... to get it all together, essentially, and to start teaching it. You know, I have 16 weeks to do that. But essentially you have a shorter period of time because one thing I learned in distance education is that it all has to be done way ahead of time, because it requires a lot of other people to do their job. And so it’s a snowball thing; somebody isn’t done, so somebody doesn’t get done.... I was given some time, but not enough time.

Making time for teaching reflects contemporary concerns in higher education (Adelman, Walking, Eagle, & Hargreaves, 1997). Issues surrounding creating a space and place for distance teaching resonated throughout the interviews.

Creating new partnerships with technical staff and media specialists was a common experience for distance teachers, as will be described in more detail later. The more complex the course was, the greater the requirement that teachers work with a variety of technical staff. These new partnerships bring with them a time component as well. For the distance teacher, the familiar touchstone of "walking in the door" with slides to give a lecture becomes an activity that now requires anticipating the need to collaborate with others. The following story is from a technician who relates the example of one teacher who did not know when to seek help in reformatting slides and consequently did not allow enough time:

Essentially the problem I have is...when people want to use slides, they have already been produced and translated onto the screen...because, typically, when you're doing slides, they're doing it either for a huge screen in front of the room where it blows it up extremely big, or they're just trying to get as much information onto the slides, because each slide costs money, so...you do have to evaluate the slides that they have and sometimes you have to talk them into redoing it or letting you redo it so that it's going to be an acceptable visual for the television format.... Essentially all professors are always very busy, so they don't want to spend, or can't spend, as much time with you as a producer looking at visuals and trying to recreate them. One problem I did have was that this teacher, who had probably 50 slides, brought them to me an hour before the program, and I had to recreate them because they were all much too small, the font size. And then up until the very last minute when we should be looking at settling into the set and practicing a few things on the set, getting used to that kind of thing, I'm stuck back at the computer creating the slides!

The implications for new partnerships influenced the familiar activity of revising a course. A teacher described the substantive difference in teaching when updating a distance course:

It's just different than if I do a regular course.... I think with regular courses on campus, we change them in our office, and we change texts there, we change readings, or we change slides or overheads, but it doesn't affect anybody else. Now when you do any of those things, it affects everybody down the line.

As familiar landmarks and touchstones are lost, practices that have been done alone, routinely and unreflectively are made visible. This is a disconcerting experience, and an un-at-homeness sets in. Distance teachers described how these background practices, such as relying on the rhythms of the school year in their research programs emerged.

Simultaneously, distance teachers told of how this experience caused them to rethink some of these assumptions about schooling, learning and teaching. One teacher said:

I probably ought to think a lot more about my teaching and exactly what do I think learning is...but there's never any time.... But when I got involved in this

distance course, I HAD to rethink just what is schooling here...so overall [it's] good because I can never again not think about what learning is...and do I have to do this this way.... Because [learning is] always changing...and maybe that's the way it should have been in the first place, spending more time always thinking about what I do as a teacher.

As teachers were forced to reflect, they often challenged the common practices of conventional pedagogy. Distance teachers worried, for example, that they would not physically see their students or be able to get to know them in their usual ways. What was notable as familiar landmarks and touchstones were lost were the new possibilities distance teachers explored. These often led to new pedagogies. The issue of challenging conventional pedagogies as a way of creating new ones resonated in the narratives of distance teachers throughout the study.

## 2

### ***Challenging Conventional Pedagogies: Questioning Reliance on the Visual and Physical Presence***

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In conventional pedagogies, teachers rely on visual and verbal cues in practicing teaching. They learn to read situations and faces to assess their ability to connect with students. Knowing and connecting is a common practice of teachers (Diekelmann, Douglas, Diekelmann, In Preparation). As the familiar landmarks and touchstones of conventional pedagogy were challenged, distance teachers talked about exploring new ways to reclaim familiar practices. Often this entailed rethinking their familiar and embodied relational skills.

#### ***A. Deconstructing the Visual and Embodied in Conventional Teaching: “You can’t see their faces.”***

Teachers pace course content and alter course activities based on verbal and visual cues from students. Teachers can often tell from body language in the classroom and their own intuitive embodied grasp whether students are understanding the material being presented (Atwell-Vasey, 1998). However, distance teachers must rely on other less obvious signs. As one teacher explained, gaining experience in distance teaching taught him how to pace himself in the classroom, as well as how to engage the distance student by reading the invisible signs:

Working with people who[m] I could not see, I had to develop some sort of way...to pace myself in class to figure out how to draw out questions. Because the people who were off-campus could write using the tablet, I asked them [that] if they had a question, rather than breaking in, to just pick up the pen and make a question mark in the lower right hand corner of the screen.... It didn't disrupt anything, but obviously I could see that, and then at the first convenient opportunity I would stop and say, “I see we have a question...go ahead.” Something like that. Also, initially, I didn't stop as often for questions, and I gained more experience and realized the kinds of things that they didn't

understand...just gained more experience as a teacher, I stopped more often for questions...a simple thing like that instead of droning on for 30 minutes, or every couple of subtopics. “And how are we doing at this point? Are there any questions so far?” Very simple.

Embedded in this story there is a challenge to the conventional pedagogical notion that visual and verbal cues are central to teaching and learning. The culture of pedagogy turns on language as an embodied, cultural experience of schooling (Kelly, 1997). Many narratives described how teachers, often with “simple,” but significant acts, were able to recall ways to know and connect with students. That is not to say, that the deconstruction of the embodied experiences of teachers in some distance technologies was not, at the same time, a continuing concern. This teacher describes her continuing concerns about connecting with students:

If you paid me for feeling good about what I do, I would far rather be paid by doing it in front of a class than I would on distance technology. My feel-good factor when I walk out of that room of a live lecture is, I feel pretty good, because I can get a sense I’ve connected. I don’t have a clue if I’ve connected with the distance course.

One dilemma in distance education is anticipating how the technologies transform the embodied experiences of the visual and auditory. With some technologies, teachers can no longer see students and can only hear their voices. Reading students’ faces becomes difficult as teachers develop new ways to gauge how they are connecting with students whom they cannot see. Distance education teachers developed different ways, dependent on the particular technology, to know and connect with students. One teacher described the struggle and irony of losing the visual sense of reading students’ faces. In this audiographics situation the class is a stranger to the teacher but not the teacher to the class:

I don’t know the people in a remote site, and I may never see them. I’m curious more than anything. And one woman [one of the site’s preceptors] I remember ... it was funny because one day we met each other after teaching for three semesters, and she sat in on 3 versions of our course, and she said, “You know, you’re getting better. It’s really getting better...” It was funny, because she was kind of appearing to be a stranger, but this woman had been hearing me teach for three semesters.

A teacher summarized the “worst thing” about distance teaching as the fact that “you can’t see their faces.” Some teachers attended to losing one embodied sense, the visual, by emphasizing the verbal. In asynchronous learning, on-line dialogues were used as visual. This distance education teacher describes reclaiming a new embodied sense to guide her teaching by emphasizing the verbal:

I have found that what’s interesting when you don’t see the students at all is...I could bump into you, and had you in my class last semester, [and] I have no idea

what you look like, but maybe I'd recognize your voice. Even if I can't see [students], we talk quite a bit in class, and generally...after awhile, I can tell from their voices, whether they're interested or not, and whether they're participating or not. Now that takes time certainly. I get to know their voices, and sometimes I can tell whether they're having a good day or a bad day....

One teacher described the advantages of this anonymity--a reawakened knowing and connecting through hearing and listening--and its influence on the lived experiences of thinking:

With the techniques that I use, I don't rely on the visual, on seeing me, on interactive video.... To me, it's less distracting...it's what people say. It gets down to the core of dialogue...verbal dialogue. And forget what somebody looks like, how they present themselves...and to me [that's] one of the best things about it. You forget all the other fluff. But we have a course that lends itself to that. That's what we want to do is kind of get people talking to each other and thinking about things...

Teachers described the ways that different technologies influenced their embodied experiences of distance teaching. For example, there is a different sense of embodied presence in teleconferencing than in interactive video. All of these shape and are shaped by the embodied practice of dialogue. One teacher described a familiarity with telephones that assists in dialogue and connecting because using the phone is a common practice for students and teachers:

To me distance technology is kind of a meaningless term, if you don't know what technology you're talking about, because I don't see interactive video, two-way video, being a whole lot different than being there.... You have a visual and you have sound. What you don't have [is] you can pan out or pan in people--even though they're in the room--you don't get the real time exchange, or there's kind of a gap in response or questions. That's all real different than audiographics. Audiographics has limitations to it. Teleconferencing, again, a lot of us are real comfortable with telephones, so telephones are easy.

In distance teaching, the conventional ways of seeing and hearing that teachers use to connect with students are often no longer possible. But as new pedagogies emerge, teachers do develop alternative ways to stay connected to students in distance education courses. How these alternative ways influence schooling, learning and teaching need to be more fully explored.

***B. The Absence of Physical Presence in Distance Teaching: "No chance to interact face-to-face."***

Distance teachers often told narratives of ways they taught to create dialogues between themselves and students and among students. They defended the centrality of dialogue in teaching and learning. Dialogue and the power of address in the teacher's participation in

schooling reflects contemporary educational scholarship (Chavez & O'Donnell, 1998; Cohee et al., 1998; Ellsworth, 1997). Some teachers did not feel on-line dialogues were adequate, and they defended synchronous learning. A central concern for all distance teachers was the loss of classroom “dialogue” or “face-to-face” interactions.

One teacher valued the “interactive component” of physical presence in teaching and learning and understood its essential quality in distance teaching. For this teacher, sensitized to the learning needs of students enrolled in this beginning course and the need for a “live and interactive” (physically present) teaching format, the teacher defended synchronous learning:

I tell all of the students this when they first inquire about courses, my preference as an instructor for this particular kind of material is that the students live and interactive. I encourage that strongly because I believe that they will benefit in both and ultimately, I mean, that's the whole point here (laughter). The point is not to make me happy. The point is for them to learn the material. So I have, generally speaking, stayed away from the Internet for our basic courses because without the interaction, the students will fail.

The interactions here between students and teacher, altered by distance is one of presence both visual and verbal (Bleich, 1998). This study revealed how in varying ways, distance teachers challenged the role of physical presence in conventional pedagogies. Some teachers described how relationships between students and faculty had changed. Student accessibility to faculty was limited in distance teaching because casual conversations with students via offices with “open doors” were no longer feasible (Diekelmann, 1993). One teacher commented, when using audiographics, “head nodding” and all the “face-to-face, verbal and non-verbal cues” that are important in conventional teaching were missed. Cognizant of this challenge and concerned about how to overcome the absence of presence, distance teachers learned new possibilities for distance education. One teacher explained:

I encourage people to log on early so that we can, in some cases, chat before class. Sometimes people are embarrassed to ask certain kinds of questions when they feel that everybody is participating, and they may ask questions during the 10 minutes before the normal class begins, or in many cases, people stay after...people will continue with discussion for 10 to 15 minutes after the class.

Some teachers used humor: “I'll say okay, we don't leave early. I know you're walking out the door!” Others use an “e-mail connection.” One distance education teacher reminded us, “You can't just bump into somebody. You have to make a deliberate contact, a telephone call or write them a letter.” One teacher described dictating a lot of letters. Another described using a letter that answered common questions as a way of interacting with students:

The first semester students asked me a question about something or other and I'd say, I don't know, but that's a good point.... Every single week, I'd send out



evaluations and have them answer some questions for me and [get] their ideas.... Then second semester I had answers to those questions and I could do a lot of front-end loading.... I sent them all a letter before the semester started and I said, these are some of the questions the students the previous semester had asked and these are the answers. And that was very helpful. My phone rate went down, I bet by 70%--just simply [because of] that letter. I sent the syllabus out a week early with the letter, so that students could look at it, get answers to their questions, whatever. The down part of that was a couple students dropped the course before they started...but maybe that's good.... But then again it's paper shuffling. They had to send the syllabus back.... It's not like a classroom course where you pass them out, and if students don't like it, they hand them in and walk out the door.... You're mailing everything, everything is a paper shuffle. It's not yet on-line!

Some of the struggles distance education teachers experienced will in time disappear, if resources are available. For example, Web sites with on-line course readings will lessen the time that teachers spend managing connections with students through a letter and narrative course syllabus.

getting a cup of coffee, which we've discovered that sometimes students are taking the class, and then you call on them and the room's empty and like, where are you people?--is thinking how do they know it's me? We check off after someone's spoken so that we make sure that people are engaged. If not every person, every site. And not just saying, "Would someone comment?" but say to a particular site, "What's your reaction?" It's actually like radio, and that's been my model for it. When I don't know what to do, I think, okay, now what did they do on the radio last week.

The issue of the absence of physical presence in distance education is a complex one. It influences the practices of teachers, the interactions between and among students and teachers, and learning community activities. For example, the absence of physical presence made having a gathering at the end of the course an impossibility. One distance education teacher described this as a great disadvantage:

One of the biggest disadvantages is when, like at the end of a class, you want to have a gathering for students, and you say, "Come to my house...." you can't do it. We haven't done it, because we exclude part of the class, and that doesn't seem right. And we've even asked some of the students when we've had remote students, "Last class we're thinking about getting together. Can you come down to the main campus?" They say, "If I could come down to the main campus, I would have taken the course there. We can come down, but it will take us 3 hours to get there and then 3 hours to get back." And I think okay, so it's the socializing.... I miss that.

These interviews are rich with stories relating the struggle to come to terms with the loss of embodiment in teaching. Many describe strategies for using email, faxes, the telephone, in establishing connections with students despite the loss of direct contact with them. A few describe a developing perception that out of the technology of distance education they are finding new opportunities for teaching and learning that are not available in the traditional classroom.

And in fact, I found, in teaching when there were no students [physically present], I really liked it. I felt it created a whole different atmosphere. It created like a talk radio situation where I felt really free to share my thoughts, and even the students say that they're stifled by [the conventional classroom]. I think they share more freely too. They don't see me, and they can say, I disagree with you.

Teaching and learning are lived experiences and, as such, embodied. However, embodied experience is an area that is not fully explored in higher education. Currently, the experiences of students and teachers are studied from a variety of perspectives, but few attend to the nature of the knowledge and expertise that develops from teaching and learning experiences as lived--or embodied. The issue then becomes how are the embodied and lived experiences of students and teachers best studied? Would the narratives of distance education teachers and learners be a paradigm study to explore the absence of physical presence and the lived experiences of embodied teaching and

learning in creating new pedagogies? MacLeod (1996) explores the nature of becoming experienced:

Even in [education], a field devoted to the consideration of experience and the learning which accompanies it, the nature of experience is usually taken-for-granted or considered simplistically. Even though a few qualitative studies have focused more directly on experience, most have looked through experience to learning and have not addressed the potentially problematic nature of experience.

Perhaps because the nature of embodiment is recast in teaching at a distance, a hermeneutical study such as this of the lived experiences of teachers and students reveals the “problematic” nature of experiences in teaching and learning that would be invisible in conventional approaches. What emerges all the more pressingly in the narratives of distance teachers is how learning and teaching are more than just internal processes, but simultaneously are also social, situational, relational and embodied.

It is somewhat surprising that, given the claim that experiential learning involves the whole person, the body is almost completely overlooked by the experiential learning theorists and only minimally addressed by researchers studying learning experiences. Although Griffin (1987) and Denis and Richter (1987) address intuitive experiences, and Griffin (1987), Gray-Snelgrove (1982), and Jarvis (1987) allude to the body, in general references to bodily experience and the development of bodily knowing are noticeably absent. Just as the body is separated from the mind in most of the studies, other notions are also unduly separated. Many of these studies, particularly those underpinning the experiential learning models, separate learning and reflection, learning and experience, and action and reflection. It is notable that these demarcations are not made as sharply concerning learning in the midst of everyday experience (MacLeod, 1996).

Teachers and students in the new pedagogies of distance education experience a different embodied sense of teaching and learning in the absence of physical presence, when they are removed physically from one another. Technology recasts their relationships, and everyday experiences of assignments, questions and answers, and dialogues. Exploring the changing nature of these embodied experiences will document the new pedagogies emerging in distance education on this campus.

### 3

#### *Reawakening Roles: Creating New Partnerships*

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Learning to use the technical equipment of distance teaching often spurred or necessitated new partnerships. Distance teachers reported that students are frequently fearful of technology. One teacher consequently described a practice of nurturing new partnerships by filling a “cheerleader” role:

[For] the first class I do a compressed video, so that they see me, see what we’re doing, and we’re all kind of in this together, and they’re not to worry, they’re going to do fine. You know, sort of the cheerleader kind of thing. And then the

second week we do audiographics. We take a couple minutes at the beginning and kind of talk them through it. You know, tell them if that should go down, this is what you do. Sort of be a big cheerleader, and surprisingly enough, they do fine.

At issue in developing partnerships is whether the teacher will be decentered or remain, to a large extent, in power and control.

***A. Decentering Teachers/New Student Partnerships: “It’s different for students and us.”***

In their interviews, many teachers focused on how their relationships with students were influenced in distance teaching. One teacher described how the loss of physical presence in his distance course caused him to rethink his partnership with students:

As a teacher I am always working hard to get to know the students and have them involved in my courses...but you don’t usually need students to teach your classroom course. I mean not really NEED them.... Distance teaching...depends on the technology...you can literally need them to run the equipment at the off site.... The first time I taught [a distance course] a colleague said ‘Work extra hard to make the students partners,’ so I did.... I’m a student advocate but it’s different in distance with students.... I would say three years later I’ve learned a lot about new ways to relate to students, and it’s carried over into my campus classroom.... I’ve been thinking about this a lot. Like this week, I could tell from the questions being asked and the looks on the students’ faces that they weren’t getting this content...so I added a question to...the next week’s assignment to help them sort through this content. But the point is, I talked to them about my concerns. I made this...I made it a point to just not make the assignment but talk to them first. I asked for what they thought of the idea. I still worry though here I am...up there in the front, standing out with all the power.... I’ve learned with...distance [students] all you can do is invite them to show you if they are getting it. You can’t see them and though you get better at seeing what they know in what they write and in on-line discussions, it really doesn’t work. You have to relate to them differently and say, like in inviting, as a partner, it’s hard for me...to know what sense you are making of this content.... You work with them as an equal because you truly don’t know, so you are as much a learner as they.... What I’ve learned is maybe I’m too comfortable now in the classroom and sometimes, because I’m so experienced, I think I know what students know but maybe I don’t.... I’ve talked to other distance teachers and they agree...you learn a lot to go over your beliefs. One of my friends said he realized his “being so sure” of what was going on in class was actually arrogance. It’s different for the students and us. Though the students are struggling, too. The distance students are more partners and equal.

Comparing and contrasting classroom and distance teaching often enhanced the reflective thinking of distance teachers. Knowing and connecting with students is a common practice of students and teachers (Diekelmann, Douglas, & Diekelmann, In Preparation;

Diekelmann & Ironside, In Press). How teachers shape experiences that leave students free to disclose or not disclose, participate or remain silent, is a concern that remains problematic for distance as well as campus teachers. Writing experiences in distance education often were initiated by teachers to foster connections with students. The issues of power and disclosure in writing activities deserves more investigation (Bleich, 1998).

***B. Creating New Partnerships with Specialists and Peers: “Teachers can’t do it alone.”***

It is not just among students or between students and teachers that new roles and partnerships are developing. The roles of media specialists and technical staff take on new meanings as well, as one teacher described:

I’ve learned a lot about working with technicians. First, one size does not fit all. One is good in teleconferencing and another on the internet. Yet our department tries to hire this one person who is suppose to know all and be able to do everything. So you have to look around and before you start anything find a technician who has done a course like yours at least once before. I mean I tell people to interview them. Don’t just say, you’ll do your course on distance. I tell teachers find out what that means. Which instructional technology should you use, can you use? And don’t start until you have the technical people you need. Then I tell faculty, you work hard to develop a partnership with them. And that means listening to what they say and doing it.... But we also have to share what we are thinking as teachers with them too. It really is a partnership. Teachers can’t do it alone! Neither of us can get the work done without the other.

While distance teachers often receive a formal orientation to the use of distance learning technologies, there is a remarkable uneasiness on the part of many teachers with their first encounters. One teacher described a combination of a lack of proper practical knowledge and a lack of conceptual understanding of the technology, which resulted in a “hated” experience for the faculty:

That first semester, everyone [all the faculty] hated it. It felt awkward.... This belief that you need to have face-to-face contact with people. We were kind of stiff, and even though we worked on doing our presentations, I think we kind of left out our audience. And the second time we did it, we weren’t so concerned about what button to press and how to work the electric pen and everything.

The awkwardness and uneasiness that accompanies instructional technology was a recurring theme in the narratives of distance teachers. Most, however, related that through experience they gained practical knowledge about technical equipment. They learned how important it is to have students become familiar and comfortable, and they developed practical knowledge about how to teach students the use of instructional technology. One teacher explained:

None of our students have ever used it before.... One of the objectives of our course is to provide skills for people who are going to be working in rural areas,

to be comfortable with technology.... The prospects are that you're going to use distance learning methods, and none of them have ever experienced it. And then as we've gotten better, and more comfortable with technology, then we concentrate on teaching. We make the students interact with the technology more rather [than] us being the [only] person in front of the screen. Like we've assigned students every week to the electronic tablet, and when students now start the course, they have to sign in, like on "What's my Line," and everybody sees them signing and realizing why writing looks so awkward on it because it's very hard to use an electronic pen.

As students became more comfortable with the technology, teachers reported they had to spend less time "getting the students going." Likewise, when the equipment was simple the teachers and students learned to use the equipment and to "troubleshoot" on their own. But when the assistance of a technician was involved, the issue became more complex. Learning to work with technical staff requires a certain level of expertise and knowledge of the distance teacher. A common concern was using technical staff to select the right equipment and being involved in the purchase of future equipment. Teachers described how important it was to share their experiences in developing new partnerships with technicians. They described and identified the kinds and nature of problems they encountered. One teacher explained:

I was told by a woman who had taught the course using interactive video...never count on the technician there knowing what is required. You just assume when you start, that the studio technicians all know what they are doing, until you encounter a new one who doesn't. Then suddenly, there you are with 60 people all over the state waiting for you to come on line. If it happens early on, you're sunk and it is a real disaster.... You just have to always be prepared for Plan B.... When it happened to me, it didn't take too long before I knew the person did not know what you were doing.

[I remember the time less-experienced technicians] were running around between the control panel and the studio too much, and I guess I could just see it in their faces. So I quickly said, have you called so and so for help? See, I had asked one of the experienced technicians what to do if some night some less experienced technicians were on. He said get them to call across the street. The library often has someone who has good interactive technical skills [who] can come over in an emergency. Mostly, he said, get them to ask for help also by calling the official technical back-up by phone early. Seems like if they fool around with things too much it becomes impossible to give good advice. All the time the clock is ticking, of course, for the students who have gathered. That's why I always spend a lot of time with [developing a] Plan B.

Cohorts in departments or schools who shared assignments in distance or outreach education and who were experienced helped those less-experienced teachers ensure excellence in their courses. Many teachers described meeting, often at "brown bag" sessions, to share their experiential wisdom and the importance of back-up when

teaching. This knowledge was passed on through dialogue, which often evoked recollections of pertinent situations. One teacher expressed her view:

I never thought about a Plan B, as they all called what they do when the network goes down. I should have thought of it right away, but you go to such hard work, and I guess you are maybe too worried about something going wrong to seriously ask yourself what will I do if it does!

Some teachers told of how, in times of diminishing resources in their departments, technical support often consisted of student hourlies. And for simple monitoring skills and situations where two people are required to run equipment, this was satisfactory. But in situations where tasks were complex and the potential for mistakes was great, experienced support staff with significant troubleshooting skills were needed. This kind of skill is only learned over time. The ability of a school or a department to know when one kind of assistance is required versus another affected both student and teacher satisfaction and learning.

In describing highly successful distance education programs, teachers commonly attributed the success to a climate of trust and shared dialogues within their schools or departments. One teacher said, “We were forced to start meeting, because there were so many problems about where we put the money for new technology. But the best part evolved when we realized how much we had to learn from sharing our experiences teaching. It’s a meeting I never miss now.”

Resources were often described as “seriously threatened” because of competing demands. Guidelines were frequently created to set limits on the distribution of resources. Teachers revealed that departments that were open to frequent dialogue about these guidelines encouraged and challenged teachers to be innovative. In contrast, one teacher described problems within her department: “My distance course problems fall between the budget committee, the curriculum committee and the technology committee and no one wants another committee.”

Some teachers recognized that they had to be careful not to become mired in learning the technical expertise rather than learning about the nature of distance education. One teacher described trying to keep current in an ever-changing field: “It’s hard to start backwards at nothing and not know where to go from there.” Another teacher described the importance of sharing practical technical knowledge in order to keep pace in distance teaching:

In technology, a lot of this isn’t written anywhere. It’s like, did you try this and that worked. I mean that kind of stuff. It’s a different feel about it. Or I downloaded this from the Web, and this is what worked for me. That’s the kind of stuff that very incidental, and it’s not incidental... It’s not a straight line. It’s real, it’s not the thing you could find in a book anywhere.

Distance teachers described many occasions where they decried not having enough time to keep current, not only in their content area, but also in the learning of new technology. One teacher expressed ambivalence about the subject:

The issue about learning new technology, I guess, I feel like that's part of my job is to keep up. So I'm not worried about learning new stuff. I want to learn new stuff...

Knowing how to stay current in the new technologies, but not to let the technology dominate was a common experience. Teachers often reflected on the dangers of becoming consumed by technology. They averted this danger by focusing on learning and on reflecting on their experiences with other teachers, technicians and students.

As explained by Benner, Tanner, and Chesla (1996), the learning experience solicits the teacher as well:

Where possible, exactitude and certainty are good. But where certainty is not possible, it is dangerous and damaging to offer illusions about the possibility for certainty. This is an academic formula for creating closed minds. Even our teaching strategies designed for objective grading create a false sense of certainty that makes us focus on areas of learning where we can be objective, and de-emphasize the risky, the uncertain areas of judgment and discernment. We unwittingly teach our students to avoid risk rather than learn from failure... We need to learn and teach that skillful ethic...comportment is learned by getting it better and worse and learning as we go. We need to reconnect means and ends, and stop devaluing the "mere means." [As teachers] we can become wiser, and we can embrace the adventure of learning. As educators, this is the invitation to learning that we must give our students. With the invitation we must courageously confront the limits to knowledge and certainty. We must give up our penchant for judging and evaluating and becoming more open to learning from our students...an invitation to dialogue and learning can never flow only in one direction (pp. 329-330).

As distance education teachers reflected on the common experiences (themes) of teaching, they became aware that their familiar landmarks and touchstones change. They also understood that their relationships with students, technicians, and other teachers is transformed, suggesting that distance teaching may be a new educational specialty.

## 4

### ***Learning from Experience: Developing Expertise and Practical Knowledge***

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A recurrent concern in the narratives generated by this study was that teachers in general have little preparation in teaching and learning and "very little in the way of technology education." Teacher preparation and graduate education is an issue in contemporary higher education (Tom, 1997; Zeichner & Gore, 1990; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1991). At issue in preparing teachers for distance education as a specialty is to what extent is



distance teaching a specialty of education or a discipline-specific specialty. Answers to the following questions must be sought: Would general coursework in technology education prepare teachers for distance teaching within a particular discipline? Is expertise in how disciplinary knowledge shapes and is shaped by distance teaching necessary for this specialty? For example, does the emergence of tele-health and tele-nursing require future teachers in nursing to have particular preparation in distance teaching? Is knowing how to teach tele-health and tele-nursing through distance education best taught in a school of nursing, in a school of education, in a technology department, or in all of them? The implications for redesigning curricula are significant (Beane, 1997).

The process of “learning what it takes” for successful distance teaching was a common experience of teachers. Sometimes this involved selecting and purchasing the right technology for the course. At other times it meant developing the course. Activities in distance teaching that previously had been individual activities suddenly involved new partnerships with media specialists and technicians. When one course developer was asked for a “list of essential ingredients to get this all to work,” he described the following:

You have to have willing, knowledgeable content experts...and by knowledgeable, I don't only mean in their content area. I mean [the teacher] has to be knowledgeable about what it's going to take to create this program. They ... have to have a willingness to work with you.... You also have to elicit their willingness to create as good a program as you intend for it to be. So come to some agreement ahead of time about quality, and you have to have again enough time to do it. You have to have their willingness to give you the information to create new graphics, if that's what they need. You have to get their visual input in plenty of time. Those are probably the main ingredients. It does take an understanding on the part of other people who are watching, or participating in a program as well. They have to realize that they're working with technology and that there are limitations of technology too. In my case, you have to have some good technicians available. That's very important. I am much more a developer person, developer and producer person. I am not a technical person. I have learned how to handle some technical problems, but I also have to have, at hand, a phone number to another technical person who knows how the system fits together and what might be a problem. So the technical person is extremely important, not ... only on one end...where the class is originating from, but also at each of the sites that are participating. You have to have a good technical person available there too, because if their audio doesn't work, if you can't hear the questions that they're asking, you lose the interactivity and the learning opportunity.

The definition of knowledgeable referred to is not related to content expertise, but rather to knowing what it takes to specialize in distance teaching. For example, knowledge must embrace the limitations of technology, the need to work with teams of technicians, and the importance of helping students, as co-participants in distance courses to understand the limits of technology.

Some described developing new attitudes toward building new partnerships and support communities with faculty and staff with whom they had previously not had contact. As one teacher related:

I always thought, I thought, oh I don't want to ask this really dumb question because there's this hierarchy and techies, you know, that unfortunately I think is still there: but you don't know what you're talking about, so I'm not going to talk to you, kind of stuff. Sort of this secret you know. And now I think, oh that's baloney. I'm going to ask, and I don't care if they think I'm a dummy. You know. And they answer my question, and I'm that much smarter. So I think a lot of people have had some patience with me, asking questions, but I do think that that's very intimidating in technology, hugely intimidating, and a lot of the students, younger kids, my son, your son, they're way ahead of us, way ahead, and it's very intimidating for people who are very smart in their field, and somebody comes and says and this is how you do it. [I] know that's a big problem for people, and they've got to get over that. That's why I think the single issue brown bags, they've gone to those, because the others have been too, way too intimidating. I mean, you need to have the groups.... This is a novice. I've never turned this machine on before, blah, blah, blah. This is, you know, intermediate novice, I can turn the machine on, I can load this, that's it. You know. And then you kind of go up from there. That's very helpful.

It was a common understanding of distance education teachers that distance teaching is not for every teacher. As a specialty, it is best suited to particular teachers, and quite possibly to particular subjects. Curricula must be developed that will allow teachers to specialize and take account of this specialization in teaching assignments and workloads. One teacher explained:

It's not for everyone...no, no, no. Because people teach different ways...we don't study how to teach. We as teachers just learn the material and then we try to convey the material, and I think buying into [distance teaching], there's always an initial investment, but once you get a system set up and it's running okay, it's very gratifying if you're getting better results than with the previous system. So what you have to get them to buy into is being willing to put the time into changing the system, and I think that that is very, very, very hard. And I am still trying to think of ways, in my department at least, to establish the credibility of trying some of these experiments.... But it's certainly not for everyone, and it's not for every subject.

Distance teaching challenges the assumption of conventional pedagogy that teaching strategies are neutral, that is, that they are just tools to be used by individual teachers in specific contexts. For example, showing a videotape to students is a teaching strategy, that is, a tool that any teacher can use. However, showing students a series of lectures via videotapes in a distance education course is more than just using a familiar teaching tool. How technology is used is a specialty practice of distance teachers.

***A. Teacher Preparation: “I knew NOTHING about distance teaching!”***

Many faculty discussed the importance of their first experiences in distance teaching. Common experiences were shaped by the level of expertise, whether the teacher was an experienced or beginning teacher. In some situations, adding distance teaching to an experienced teacher’s practice was often seen as adding complexity. In other situations, where distance teaching was included in a beginning teacher’s schedule, the result was sometimes more positive than expected. A beginning teacher described his experience:

When I was interviewed, they asked me would I be willing to set up an outreach program. So at first I said yes. I mean, what else could I do? But that was not my original plan. It certainly wasn’t my idea. I was brand new and I didn’t know anything about anything, so I would not have initiated, especially as a new assistant professor, I would not have jumped into that. But they asked me to do it, and as it turned out, that was an important part of my entire program. So it worked out very well. But it certainly was not in my initiative, and I don’t want people to think that I’m the one who thought all this stuff up, because that’s really not the way it was. I was skeptical, I must say, when I started, as to whether this was going to work. I had no experience with distance education. I had never taught in a classroom, *period*, not face-to-face anyway. So I certainly was not particularly enthusiastic about getting into this kind of a program when I had basically no teaching experience.

In some experiences, teachers discussed providing support for beginning teachers as the latter developed both their expertise in teaching and in distance teaching. One experienced teacher explained:

For a novice instructor, not myself, [but] a novice instructor...who isn’t comfortable lecturing anyway, but then he’s put in front of an audiographics system, he’s even more uncomfortable. And then to realize they’ve lost sites and not know what they need to do, and that’s why you need to have another faculty member in the room, or somebody who’s familiar. I think that’s overwhelming.

How beginning teachers should be taught distance teaching was another issue:

You can’t have somebody very knowledgeable who knows a lot of technology teaching it. You can’t have those really expert, expert teachers. It’s not helpful, because they know too much. They don’t have the patience or time. Got to come down a couple steps to somebody in the muck of it.

Teaching another teacher is in itself a valued common experience in distance teaching. It created community and overcame the isolation that can accompany distance teaching, as one teacher commented:

There's a lot of people that know a lot more than I know, which is really fun. And I sort of suck it out of them. And it's been...very helpful on this campus, everyone is incredibly helpful when you have questions or concerns. Or if you don't even know enough to ask a question, that's helpful. The manuals are unwieldy, I mean, just absolutely unwieldy. Can't do it. Can't read them. Can't have the time to read them and can't understand it. I don't know who writes them, but it's...isolating. You don't really have a lot of colleagues, and yet you don't have time for colleagues.... I think working with technology is a singular kind of thing, unless you're teaching somebody, and then you say, "Come sit down, and I'll show you." That's how, that's why those brown bags are good...because there are a group of people there, and they're all interested in doing this stuff and sort of have this peer group of, you know, did that really work?

Most experienced teachers, when confronted with any new teaching challenge, will seek out their more experienced colleagues. Experienced teachers often described collegial learning. One teacher explained:

There was administrative support. I mean, I didn't know what to ask for... I think that's one of the issues that people in distance education really have to remember is that you should talk to people who have done it before, or if nobody's done it before, that's the problem. Because you don't know what people would say...well tell me what you need, but you don't know what you need because you haven't done this before. It's sort of the chicken and the egg kind of thing.

In distance teaching, there often is no one to assist or consult with specific teaching problems and decisions. While links among faculty are helpful, perhaps distance teaching as a specialty requires teachers learn to be at-home in doing things that have never been done before, becoming simultaneously an expert and a novice.

### ***B. Navigating the Demands in Distance Teaching: "Keeping up and keeping current."***

Changes in the familiar ways of teaching that accompany distance education, and the "relentless" new roles and partnerships that attend the use of technology, mean that experienced teachers find themselves becoming beginners again. One teacher described this as being "perpetually behind in everything" and "totally consumed in keeping up and keeping current." Another teacher eloquently described that experience as follows:

You sort of lose your identity about what it is [to be a teacher, and] every once in awhile you go back and you think, I'm going to give this all up and just go back and do what I'm really comfortable with. You know. I can do the other stuff really well.... Life's too short. I'm just going to go back and do what [I was] doing, because when you're doing this other stuff, you're a little on edge all the time. And you're kind of like, is this working, or is this not working. And everybody's looking at you. I mean, I've had people in my classroom constantly, in and out, because they heard of this program. They want to see how it works, and I don't have a clue who they

are, you know. They're in and out, in and out. And so I think you sometimes are a little on edge thinking, oh somebody's going to think I'm a real fraud at this; you know, I don't know what I'm doing. And fifty percent of the time I think I know what I'm doing, but maybe I don't.

Every teacher described the need to rethink and relearn the fundamental skills of engaging and connecting with students, preparing and presenting materials, and evaluating student performance in the distance education setting. For many, however, there was also a sense of being a beginner in relation to the technologies themselves. One teacher described familiarity with the technology as a critical new element in distance teaching:

You've got to play with it, so that you're really comfortable with it, because if you're not comfortable with it, if the instructor isn't comfortable with the software, the students will have no tolerance for it at all.

For still another teacher, the literature and scholarship of distance technologies is a new academic specialty, but one that needs to be mastered:

You need to keep up on your own profession. You need to read your own journals. You need to practice a little bit. You need to do what you do to keep you current. But you also now have to learn something new, a new technology, a new learning, and an entirely different field where I don't know the language. I don't know how the stuff works, so I find myself looking in journals that I've never looked in before; reading articles like I did when I was an undergraduate student in X, not understanding what I'm reading, but reading them just to learn the language and to understand what people are talking about.... You're learning this whole new area. In the meantime you are continuing your own learning in your own area. So it isn't like one or the other; you end up doing both, and that is very, very time consuming. Very hard. And I have to tell you sometimes, when I have a stack of journals to look at [I] don't even know, I can't be selective yet on what I read, because I don't know that yet. In X, I know selective; but other, you know, many things, journals, which ones I need to read, I don't know that yet, so I'm reading a lot of junk. I'm reading stuff that I don't know is helpful, but I need to learn it. Does that make sense?

Having experienced the loss of what is familiar and comfortable in teaching, and faced with the unfamiliar, even experienced distance teachers often identify themselves as beginners despite the expertise they have demonstrated in their customary roles. As a part of rethinking the touchstones of teaching, this sense of beginning over argues for an understanding of distance education as a new specialty. And with this new specialty is a new commitment of time to “keeping up and keeping current” quite apart from the more visible time needed to adapt materials and the changes in the timeliness of teaching.

## 5

### *Creating New Pedagogies: Re-visioning Schooling, Learning and Teaching*

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Teachers also talked about fundamental ways in which as a result of their experiences with distance education they changed their thinking and views of what constitutes schooling, teaching and learning. In this way, distance teaching is a nursery for creating new pedagogies.

The new pedagogies that are emerging in distance education are similar, but not identical, to conventional pedagogies. Heidegger (1957/1969) describes sameness and makes a distinction between identical and the same:

The same is not the merely identical. In the merely identical, the difference disappears. In the same, the difference appears, and appears all the more pressingly....

As distance education teachers taught the same content in a similar way, the differences in their pedagogies emerged all the more pressingly.

The new pedagogies challenge the assumption that, in extending the campus to the edge of the state teaching is simply extending what exists in the classroom. Distance teaching has summoned the distance education teacher to pursue innovative ways of building academic communities and learning partnerships. Implicit in this challenge is an acceptance on the part of the distance teacher to surrender the comfort of the familiar and to experience the discomfort of the unfamiliar.

To understand what is being asked, it is useful to revisit a passage from what may be the paradigmatic exemplar, Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland:

“Who are you?” said the Caterpillar.

Alice replied, rather shyly, “I--I hardly know, Sir, just at present--at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.”

“What do you mean by that?” said the Caterpillar, sternly. “Explain yourself!”

“I can’t explain myself, I’m afraid, Sir,” said Alice, “because I’m not myself, you see.”

“I don’t see,” said the Caterpillar.

“I’m afraid I can’t put it more clearly,” Alice replied.

Being un-at-home in the unfamiliar as conveyed by Alice is not unlike schooling, learning and teaching as experienced by distance education teachers. In a sense, distance teaching is creating a generation of Alices. The following reflection, already cited, of a distance education teacher underscores the contemporary Wonderland flavor of technological teaching at the turn of the Twenty-First Century:

You sort of lose your identify about what it is [to be a teacher, and] every once in a while you go back and you think, I’m going to give this all up and just go back and do what I’m really comfortable with. You know. *I can do the other stuff*

*really well...* Life's too short. I'm just going to go back and do what I'm doing, because when you're doing this other stuff, you're a little on edge all the time. And you're kind of like, is this working, or is this not working. *And everybody's looking at you.* I mean, I've had people in my classroom, constantly, in and out, because they heard of this program. They want to see how it works, and I don't have a clue who they are, you know. They're in and out, in and out. And so I think you sometimes are a little on edge thinking, oh somebody's going to think I'm a real fraud at this; you know, I don't know what I'm doing. And fifty percent of the time I think I know what I'm doing, but maybe I don't.

Through her dialogue, this teacher reveals that she is still learning what it is she has to learn, that she is self-reflective about it, that she is struggling to judge how well she's doing, and that she is experiencing significant self-doubt. Although she is experienced enough to be able to know teaching, to reflect on good teaching, and to step back and ask if it is working, she considers herself a beginner in teaching coupled with technology.

Scholarship on developing expertise has shown that through reflecting on experience comes expertise (Ayers & Miller, 1998; McEwan & Egan, 1995; Schon, 1983). Over time a comfort level, an at-homeness, develops as a person assumes a level of assurance that he or she did not have in the beginning. Based on this scholarship, however, a teacher would be expected in conventional pedagogy to be more comfortable than she is after an initial period of learning the new context (Benner, 1994; Benner, Tanner, & Chesla, 1996).

The experienced teachers that were interviewed for this study used the word "different" to describe distance education. For example, one commented: "You get all these tips, but nobody ever gives it all to you like this is really a different experience." For distance teachers it is different in a substantive way that challenges their understanding of schooling, learning and teaching, because it removes and transgresses what is familiar. The rhythms of teaching change and nurture the possibility of new pedagogies.

Distance education at the end of our century is dependent on technologies that are new and so rapidly changing that they permit little familiarity. It seems probable that even the

sit next to our guest speakers and help them. And they don't feel comfortable being alone.

Another teacher spoke of a similar concern, and addressed the pervasive sensation of feeling unknowledgeable about the new pedagogies:

I'm very frustrated that I don't know enough. That is incredibly frustrating to me. I just sometimes think [that] there's some person [that] knows it all, and I, when am I ever going to know enough? That's where I'm at, and boy, I'll tell you it's very unsettling, real unsettling.

Perhaps distance teaching is at the heart of this discomfort, but interpretive analyses of these stories show that the "help me!" cry of teachers goes beyond mere unfamiliarity with the technology. Narratives relating the far-reaching, often unanticipated effects associated with distance teaching establish a pattern of unfamiliarity that reflects new emerging pedagogies. This pattern challenges the concept of the teacher-as-expert prevalent in conventional pedagogy.

That distance education may foster isolation, a familiar touchstone concern, is confronted. Teacher and student isolation has been identified as a broader issue for concern in contemporary higher education. Although the potential exists for distance education to foster disconnection, that is not what teachers described as happening. Instead, presencing is happening in distance classes despite, or perhaps because of, the new dynamics (i.e., the presence of absence) that are encountered when a different pedagogy emerges. The notion of distance education as community arises and challenges isolation. It may be that teachers and students reach out and make a different effort to connect when they cannot rely on the familiarity of face-to-face classrooms. Although it is an assumption widely held that distance education is constitutively impersonal, anonymous, and disconnecting (Rose, 1995), one distance student challenged the concern about isolation in distance education:

By the middle of the course, I found myself saying, this program is exactly right, the best ever. What happened was this teacher had all these ways of getting the group of us to know each other and work together. She would send all the papers to one person and then we had a telephone tree to alert everyone they had arrived and to pick them up. She got to know us so well that she would joke with you and say things like, "I bet Ednah is rolling her eyes right now," and she would be! We would come early to class and go over our notes together and try to be better prepared than any of the other sites. Mostly, we got to know each other, and I suddenly realized how isolated I had been in the university campus program. I worked so I drove in just in time for class, sat down, and often never got to know anyone in my classes. When we did group projects, it was a one-time thing.... Isn't it weird? I am now more connected to my peers than I have ever been...and I really know this teacher.... The teachers [in distance classes] don't seem to have so much power, and it's more a cooperative thing. They can't teach without us working the equipment on our end and really helping them out.... School is



supposed to prepare you for life, to live better, and when I was in the campus program, I thought that meant learning all the knowledge. Here in the distance program, we work together, like a human community.... We are held together by those few university distance teachers and their program.

In distance teaching as a pedagogical specialty, perhaps, there are less hierarchical processes in the teaching-learning experience. Both teachers and students facilitate schooling and teaching as learning. While the educational landscape with its familiar landmarks and touchstones has changed; new pedagogies continue to promote learning.

### ***A. The Teacher-as-Learner/The Learner-as-Teacher***

In conventional pedagogy, the teacher-as-learner is a familiar role that is often present. In distance education, as well, the role of teacher-as-learner is underscored in the narratives of teachers describing their struggle to reclaim familiarity and become more at-home in distance teaching. However, a new role, that of the learner-as-teacher, also appears to be emerging in distance education. Teachers are relating that because of feeling un-at-home in teaching at a distance--constantly not knowing what or how to teach, as constitutive of the experience--they are attending to students to an uncustomary degree, as the students describe what they want and need to learn:

When you use technologies in distance ed, and I've used a lot, none of the rules of learning apply.... You can't count on anything. You never meet your students personally. You know them as a name, a site, a certain kind of email response. It totally changes teaching because...you can control hardly anything. What you do is become a learner with the students.... You find yourself, of course, setting limits, you give a lot of feedback, but the control is so different. That's one of the things I'm always learning.... What happens [is] you sort of, not exactly leave students alone--because that would be irresponsible--but just let them take the helm. They'll tell you what they know, want to learn and listen to you if you think they should learn something else too.... As I listen to me talking to you, I know I try and do this in my campus classroom course, too. But I'm not really a learner there. It's different is all I can say. In distance [teaching], you are always a learner first and then comes teaching. I always am learning more than I'm teaching.

In this experience of learner-as-teacher, teachers allowed themselves to become learners, to engage in dialogue with and alongside students, to participate in the experience of learning with students. One teacher previously cited suggested that the new dialogues that arise in the midst of teaching with technology may reflect emerging pedagogies:

I found in teaching when there were no students [in front of me] I really liked it. I felt it created a whole different atmosphere. [I] felt really free to share my thoughts, and even the students [who] say that they're stifled by [the regular classroom], I think they share more freely [here]. They don't see me, and they can say, I disagree with you... It gets down to a core of dialogue. Verbal dialogue. And forget what somebody looks like, how they present themselves. [You] forget

all the other fluff. [And] that's what we want to do, get people talking to each other and thinking about things.

Another teacher described being sensitized by listening to the new voices in distance teaching, that she had begun to think differently about the pedagogy that she used in her campus classroom:

There's a lot of classes on this campus where you don't get a lot of interaction, and when you get interaction in a class of 200 students, it's kind of rewarding from the instructor's point of view, because at least you know they're listening. But from the other students' perspective, it is not very interesting sometimes. To listen to what this student in the front row says day after day after day after day after day, students aren't getting any more. I mean, it looks like interaction, but they're not getting any more out of that than they are listening to me.

This teacher challenges what Shor describes as “faux learning,” in which students posture in ways they think will help them get by (Shor, 1996, p. 51). With the advent of new pedagogies in teaching at a distance, the instructor's role is recast. There is a challenge to freedom, knowledge as expertise, and power when the curriculum is no longer centralized on campus. The teacher and the school are, in a curious way, decentered. Students have more power and control over their learning, although they struggle, too. Teachers struggle to connect and to evaluate learning that is very “uncontrollable” in comparison with traditional pedagogies. The reshuffling of freedom, power, and knowledge in distance education creates possibilities for new pedagogies and partnerships by challenging conventional roles, assumptions and practices.

### ***B. New Pedagogies at the Millennium***

Distance teachers live in discomfoting times. Their stories describe a pattern of un-at-homeness as they find themselves thrown into the midst of the changes that are beginning to reshape the society as a whole. This is not necessarily to be interpreted as a bad thing. As one teacher observed, being comfortable can get “a little stale.” Their narratives suggest the possibility that, as distance teachers venture into unfamiliar pedagogies guided by their commitment to making learning happen, they may bring back something important to those of us who remain at-home in the classroom. In the following narrative, one teacher suggested the possibilities for new pedagogies that may challenge conventional assumptions and practices.

[Many of our students] enjoy the contact and the ability to talk, ask questions, make jokes, things like that. Most of them, I think, would still prefer to have an instructor in front of them, although occasionally we do have people write down on their evaluation forms that they like the fact that the instructor couldn't see them.... And maybe they've got their feet on the desk and they're drinking coffee, two thirds of the class, and they only speak up when I call on them. And of course, I don't know.... And also there's another factor for the off-campus students who cannot be seen. That is, I'm pretty sure that there's a lot of

discussion among the students at the off-campus sites when their microphones are off. Now, of course there's no way that I can say this for sure, and occasionally I hear people coaching someone or my asking so and so to respond and so and so's having trouble. Well, maybe the person next to him is giving him a hint as to how to proceed, and so some of that happens. But one time we had some of our people go out and visit some of these sites and do some videotaping of the students, and the fellow who did the videotaping came back and told me he was amazed how much of this off-mic chatter there was. Students talking, did you get this, did you get that, why is this, why is that, so there could be a lot of this separate current here of conversation going on among people at the site.

Now, see, this is the part that I can't say for sure. [There's] the issue of well, if they're communicating like that, are they paying attention to the class? So this is where we get into something that's not totally clear to me, and I'm not sure how much of this goes on from site to site or even from class to class at a given site. I'm not sure how much of it is beneficial and how much of it is negative. Now in general, I would say that the people, after they get to know me, find out that I'm pretty receptive to answering questions, and that they generally will ask questions if there's something that they don't understand, or they'll clarify. Sometimes somebody will make a comment [or] ask a question, and then I will respond, and a few minutes later somebody from the same site will come back with a follow-up question, which leads me to think that maybe they've been discussing it further at their site, so that they get further on and they ask the follow-up question. So this is conjecture on my part, but I think that's something that should be noted. I mean, people should realize that if you have half a dozen people at an off-campus site, there's probably going to be some kind of discussion, and certainly you wouldn't have that in the on-campus class. Most of the time, you wouldn't tolerate it, or the people would be afraid to do it in front of the instructor, but if people think, well, nobody can see me, nobody can hear me, we can discuss it all we want. [They] can only focus on one thing at a time, and how much of it do they discuss among themselves? How much would they discuss with me? Or with the instructor, in the general case, is something I'm not sure of.

The new setting of distance education allows students to seize a moment of questioning, often a teachable moment, and ask a question of a peer while not disrupting the class, and the teacher continues teaching. The students in this situation appeared to "get further on" by participating in this kind of spontaneous dialogue. On the other hand, talking at the site could be disruptive to other students. The pedagogical possibilities evoke thinking about familiar, often invisible assumptions like when and how do teachers and students speak when they come together.

From teachers' attempts to describe their experiences in distance teaching and to compare and contrast the differences between conventional pedagogy and distance education, there emerge new pedagogies. Through new partnerships these teachers are learning what matters about distance teaching. As they try to extend conventional classroom

practices in distance education, they learn new pedagogical possibilities by attending to what works and what doesn't. One teacher described such reflective thinking:

What I'm trying to think aloud about is that, with distance education, you ask yourself, what is there, is it the face-to-face contact? Is it the variety of things I'm putting into the tape? What is it that's making it click this time, and better than it did another time. And I think part of it is that, in a lecture that's done on the blackboard...it goes slowly enough--maybe it still goes too fast, but it goes slowly enough--that you could pick up all the thinking that goes into it, and with TV, with the videotape at least, you can stop it, rewind and replay. And you can pause and take notes from it if you are having a hard time keeping up with note taking.... That's why I think a talking lecture is probably better than just a book.... I think a videotape may have some advantages over just reading a book. And then you say, well, is it because, I mean, will you do better if you see me live saying all these things than you will if you see me on a videotape, and the only way that you can think of that you would do better, is you'd have a chance to ask questions. So one of the disadvantages of the videotape is you can't ask questions right in the middle, but I did have students in the lecture hall asking questions, and so some questions were asked and answered. Then you go to the live discussion section, and you wonder is it the fact that there's a live teacher there to interact with, or is it that there are other students around to interact with? And that's when you try the Web. Because the people who've done interactive learning on the Web, who've done, like virtual classroom, discussion group, say that the individual attention that you get from posing the question and having the professor answer it or your peers answer it is that it may be the essence of what you're getting in a discussion group or face-to-face contact.... Then two-way video commits both the professor and the students to be there at a particular time, and if you want to be disjoint[ed] in time as well as space, then I think something like the Web...will kind of guarantee that you will read it every day and try to answer the questions, means that there is a pretty good turn around time on asking questions, getting answers, and you know, getting discussion going. But I'm still sorting that out.

Although distance education teachers often expressed deep personal uncertainty, it is certain that, like Lewis Carroll's Alice, distance teachers are not who they were "this morning." For that reason, distance education may be the place to push the edges of what constitutes schooling, learning, and teaching and to create new pedagogies for the changing instructional landscape as education enters the new millennium.

### **THE CONVERGING CONVERSATIONS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION: "WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T"**

The purpose of this study was to explore the common experiences of distance education teachers on the Madison campus. The goal was not to make specific generalizations or recommendations as has been done by the Teaching Academy Task Force on Instructional Technology in its paper on "Perspective on Instructional Technology." Nor

was it to prove or disprove particular questions regarding distance education. Rather, the objective of this descriptive study was to increase our understanding of distance teaching and to evoke thinking and encourage conversations across the campus that arise out of the actual experiences of distance education teachers. This study also documents the expertise of distance teachers as a specialty, providing an example of the scholarship of teaching.

Perhaps it will be the conversations generated by this study that will be its unique contribution. This study has shown that in distance education questioning emerges as a central activity. As familiar instructional landmarks and touchstones are challenged, and as relationships among students, teachers, and staff are transformed, the basic understandings of what it means to teach and to learn are questioned. This questioning is a new path to thinking, a way of thinking that reveals a new kind of learning. Typically, questions seek answers. For distance teachers this questioning, rather than serving as a means to an end, puts this academic community underway, always holding open and problematic their teaching. The ever changing nature of the technology, always prone to breakdown, further encourages this questioning. In their rush to solve problems, perhaps teachers have not spent enough time questioning their teaching. There hardly seems time enough to answer the pressing questions, let alone participate in a questioning for its own sake. It is a contribution of distance education that this practice is made more visible. Distance education utilizing instructional technologies requires continuous questioning, and this questioning in itself points towards the development of new pedagogies at the millennium.

Teachers often described “what worked” for them. Sometimes they described the advantages of distance education in terms of using instructional technologies:

I guess the best aspect in my mind is that...distance education technology allows people to participate more fully, or to participate who couldn't otherwise participate at all. So, it's access I guess. It's access to education, the access to learning. I don't think that distance education technology is necessarily better than face-to-face technology. And we've talked about this in a number of meetings that I've attended around the country over the years, and some people tend to think, well, distance education is going to solve all our problems; we're going to fire all these people and we're going to have a few people do all the teaching. First of all, this is much more expensive. It's expensive to create the material. It's expensive to update the material. The technical support behind this is amazing. I mean, the instructional communications.... So anyone who thinks that distance education is going to save money is, well wrong.... It's not going to happen. For political and other reasons, it's sometimes sold that way, but that's just plain wrong. It's not going to be. You inspire one lecturer and then you hire 5 technical support.... The benefits lie in access and improved quality of that access.

Appreciating that distance education worked when attempting to increase student and community access was a common experience of distance education teachers. Many teachers described how various life situations that kept students from returning or

participating in school could be overcome through distance teaching. This teacher described providing access to graduate education for working students.

We expect that the off-campus student will uphold the academic integrity of the program. They are required to keep up and perform and be an active participant in the class, just like the on-campus students. They apply to graduate school just like on-campus students, jump through the same hoops, pay the same fees. Actually they pay a little more for the service of the distance education. The tape mailing, and there's also an administrative fee tacked on to their tuition. And the assignments are faxed into the office, and exams are proctored at their local place of employment, so they don't have to come to Madison to take exams. So they do, they keep up with the on-campus students. We are a little flexible. We give them a couple extra weeks--actually 4 weeks. We give them one month at the end of the semester to complete the course because we understand their time commitments. They travel, which is the beauty of videotape, because they can take the videotape with them when they're on travel. Everybody's talking about putting all these bells and whistles on our courses, Internet courses, and all this stuff, and the reality is [that] the student, overall, wants the videotape. They want to be able to rewind it and take it with them, and Internet is wonderful. It is portable, but you have to have a high speed modem, and you have to have the e-mail connections, or the Internet connections wherever you're going to be. Videotape is just easier right now.

Another teacher described teaching an evening course for working students.

They're all working full time. They all have families. They all have life crises. The traveling...most of them are traveling still some distances to do this, and bad weather.... Last week we had that blizzard, and they had 28 inches of snow, and actually, one of the sites did not close down.... They had about 18 inches and all the students were there. And I wouldn't predict around here that people would be that tolerant and everything. So I think they're very motivated. They're anxious to get the information. They're fun to have.

Being able to provide access and accommodate students' lives was a common experience for distance teachers of what works. Providing increased access also meant honoring the social and educational commitment of the university to every citizen of the state. One distance teacher described this as the "outreach part:"

I just had been teaching this course in the same way to a large group of students kind of year after year, and my sense is...how can I push this forward. How can I keep just doing this same thing over and over. There are other ways that I could do this, so that was trying to find some new ways to do this. That was one of the pushes. And one of the things that I think is sad is really just wanting people to know this stuff about my content area, and so now you can be sitting in your living room, anywhere in Madison, at 10:00 in the morning, be flipping through the dial, and you will come to information from my course three days a week, and

so people can just watch it. And it's amazing! One of the things that's been rewarding for me is how many people tell me, "Oh I saw you on TV," because they just happen to come across this information, and a good handful of those people, not just say, "I saw it on TV," but they say, "And I watched it and it was interesting." So I, the outreach part of it changes the teaching so that I'm not just teaching the students who are enrolled in this course. But there's an outreach teaching of teaching people in general out there, who don't know that they need this course. I think everybody should take this course. Not everybody knows that!

Providing increased access for students and members of the community was an aspect of distance education that worked. But there were other aspects that did not. Some teachers indicated that distance education, like other specialties, is not good for every teacher. As an approach to learning, it is not good for every student or every subject.

A common experience of breakdown, that is, where distance education did not work, involved inadequate resources. Some teachers described the difficulties that arose when teaching distance courses added considerably to the secretaries' workloads. Others described inadequate support from technical people. One common query of distance education teachers was whether, and to what extent, resources are centralized. Library resources presented difficulties for some teachers. One teacher explained her frustration:

The libraries on campus have tried desperately to be very accommodating but when you have multiple sites, and I'm not talking to the same resource people every time. [To put things on reserve] I go through the whole thing, everybody has different forms to fill out. Everybody has their own places to send things. Everybody has different ways to put things on reserve. It's a tremendous amount of time and the sites are constantly changing. Think about doing that in 9 different sites and 9 different places...and the copyright issue is just terrible. It's got to be settled some place in one line. Right now few students have direct links to the library, and they won't let me copy articles...because of copyright laws, so, individually, students can't buy a packet. They won't let me put my personal copies on reserve [in the off-site libraries], because the librarians feel that in some cases--not all librarians--that it is copyright infringement, even though the student would then copy my copy of the article. So it's a problem. And some of the Xerox machines in some of these sites are less desirable than others. I think it's a problem.

The DoIT brown bag presentations and the expertise available to help distance teachers was often described as "exquisitely" helpful. Another teacher advocated for a "technology camp." The issue of keeping current is not the same responsibility it is to every teacher in conventional pedagogy. Constantly questioning and seeking to keep current in an unsettled way is distance teaching at its most expert level. Thus, the provision of continuing education for this specialty takes on new meanings. It assumes the new pedagogy of the learner-as-teacher in which the teacher is always a co-learner in the course.

Many times the cost of distance education caused difficulties. Several teachers discussed needing better systems to “calculate cost expenditures,” while recognizing that some courses, because they need constant updating, would always be expensive. One teacher described the complexities:

The disadvantages are cost, certainly. facilities, staff, the amount of time required to set up and maintain good quality education programs is significant. We’re changing over our computer systems this year for audiographics. We’re going to a new system. And we’re spending a lot of time and money redoing slides and retraining people, and new equipment, just a tremendous amount of money, but we hope that in the long run it will be good for the system and good for the students that use it.... So still the easiest thing and the cheapest thing is to have somebody come in and write on a blackboard with a piece of chalk. There’s no doubt about it.... It’s the most, easiest, to update (laughter). And you may or may not have an update. I mean, people still have the inertia for other reasons, and cost is not one of them. So I think cost is the big problem, and so support, and being able to sustain these kinds of programs, is a major concern if you have low tuition or you have a population that can only pay so much money for taking these types of courses. Depends on who your audience is.

Clearly, the assumption of distance education being more economical over time is challenged. One teacher commented:

Because with rural areas and remote sites [technology] limits access. You have to have a fiberoptic line [with some technologies]. You have to, and we’re getting it to people for access. [With other technologies] if you have two telephone lines and a computer, you can get the course. The other thing is two-way video is wonderful. But, do you know how much it costs? It costs a lot. You can’t afford to do it, unless you have grants or money to pay for that. Even audiographics is 36 cents a minute per line per site, for two hours every 15 weeks, it costs money for the electronic time. You have to pay for technical support, because it’s not user friendly, and you can’t do it yourself. And you also have to pay for graphics consultants to transfer your materials. There is still not a quick and dirty way to like make, that I could make a slide on my computer and just insert it into class.

Technology is evolving and rapidly changing, but the issue of costs at the present time, given limited resources, is a significant concern voiced by distance teachers. The danger is that courses will not be revised or updated as they should be because of time constraints or inadequate resources.

Another area where distance teachers voiced common concerns was the time-consuming nature of distance teaching. Despite the difficulty of creating a workload statement, distance education teachers felt it important. One teacher echoed this sentiment:

There should be some rules and some guidelines that people think about...there’s a workload issue here. There’s a resource issue and I think people need to stop



and really think this thing through rather than just jump on these bandwagons and start to deliver it.

Workload was an issue both in developing courses and in offering them. One teacher described the difference in office hours and giving access to students:

The additional time comes in giving access, I think, to the students, because you have to change your way of thinking.... It's not appropriate, I don't think, to lock these people who are working full-time into, you know, like a couple office hours a week. So that's the big change. Now, there is another issue. It is an extra load teaching these students.... If I have 6 on-campus students and 6 off-campus students, that's more work than just 12 on-campus...because of these telephone calls you get, and because you have to mail homework back and forth, and if you do give exams, you have to coordinate with someone at their company to, ...proctor the exam, so it's definitely more work. So there's an issue with how that effort gets recognized you know. We sort of count the number of courses around here, and we have a standard workload, and so the question is how does that fit into workload. You get credit for, you know, for an extra credit of effort for having a section off campus or, you know, how does all that work, and no one has a real good policy for that so, so you're sort of up for the whim of your chairman or chairperson, you know, as to...how much benefit they want to give you for doing this stuff.... The truth is, no one gives you a lot of credit.

Many teachers indicated that they were aware of ways, technically, that they could reduce their time in distance teaching. One teacher said, "New equipment would save me hours, but my department can't afford it. So for me, it's teach this time-consuming way or don't teach distance at all."

Being rewarded was a common concern of distance teachers. One described the situation of not rewarding distance teaching as "embarrassing:"

Go ahead do it and then fight like heck to get yourself promoted later on, and assume that you've done scholarly work and you've evaluated it, and yet we haven't done anything with that. And so here are these poor faculty, pouring their hearts and their souls into all the stuff. They realize when they're all done, well, it didn't meet the level of scholarship that the campus wanted. I mean, how embarrassing. I think there's a lot of different levels of need, and I don't think we have a very good handle on that.

It is anticipated that more tenure teaching cases will include the scholarship of teaching in the context of distance education. This study is an example of the scholarship of teaching that Boyer (1990) suggests is central to providing a "richer understanding of teaching." As a model, this study begins to document the practical knowledge of distance teaching as a specialty practice towards the recognition this specialty deserves. By understanding with greater clarity the common experiences, practices, and practical knowledge of distance teaching, teacher preparation and continuing education in this specialty will be

enhanced. It is fitting that a major research university with a commitment to bringing education to the borders of the state would simultaneously encourage distance education and a scholarship of teaching to document and develop new pedagogies.

### **CONTINUING THE CONVERSATIONS: LISTENING TO STUDENTS, MEDIA SPECIALISTS AND TECHNICIANS**

Absent from this study are the voices of students, media specialists and technicians. How they shape and are shaped by distance education is a study that is needed with some urgency. Without their practical knowledge and expertise, the insights generated in this study of teachers remains incomplete.

In addition, continuing the interviews with teachers would allow for more in depth exploration of the specialty of distance teaching and provide an important update of this study to reflect new concerns arising from rapidly changing technologies.

Whether distance education proves to be a model for instruction or represents an important specialty, it probes what is comfortable and familiar in teaching, stimulates reflection on practice, and invites the emergence of new pedagogies. Adding these new voices will extend the exegesis of distance education as the ground for the emergence of new pedagogies at the millennium.

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