Research & evaluation of online systems for teaching & learning
Anne A'Herran, James Cook University, Australia

Piecemeal adoption of methods of online educational delivery can duplicate effort and waste an institution's resources. Early enthusiasm for online delivery of courses soon fades without strategic initiatives on the institution's part. In August 1999 a Web Educational Development Advisor was appointed at JCU to research and evaluate systems for online teaching and learning, with a view to integrating the selected system university wide. That research and evaluation is the subject of this paper.

The relationship between learners' personality types to their performance in computer-mediated distance education
Justin Ahn, Fairfield University, USA; MiLee Ahn, Hanyang University, South Korea

Many distance education programs tend to be focused on programs rather than on individuals and their characteristics with the goal of improving the learners’ performance. More research into the effects of distance education should be oriented toward the individual learners. Little is known about the personal factors that promote or inhibit success in distance education environments. This study examined the relationship between learners' personality types and their performance in computer-mediated distance education. This study found that Perceiving types posted fewer but longer messages, Judging types posted more but shorter messages, Feeling types perceived that they had gained knowledge more than other types, and Sensing types were less satisfied with the CMC experience. There were no significant relationships between personality types to grades, level of small group collaboration, and level of leadership influence. Students indicated that the leadership changed from topic to topic and learning in CMC can be achieved without a leader. They used others' frequency and quality of postings, writing skills, and feedback to postings as a factor in determining the leadership.

Tutoring Skills for Instructors in Distance Delivery
Mohamed Ally, Athabasca University, Canada

The growth in use of the Internet and other telecommunications technologies in education is changing the role of the instructor from that of a provider of information to that of a tutor. This new role of the instructor requires different skills to work with students in a virtual and distributed environment. This session will present the tutoring skills that are required by tutors to function in a distance delivery mode.

Development of an Introductory Financial Accounting Text in Print-based and Electronic Multimedia Environments
David Annand, School of Business, Athabasca University, Canada

Athabasca University is Canada's largest distance-based, open university. Students presently registering in the University's introductory financial accounting course are provided with a paper-based textbook, solutions manual, study guide, and assignment manual. These materials are all developed and printed in-house. The 800-page textbook was recently converted to on-screen presentation format. The amount of material was significantly reduced by moving discussion cases to an on-line instructors' manual. The material was edited for on-screen use by altering backgrounds, screen breaks, and page size. The files were then converted into Authorware Professional®. Information presentation was streamlined and interactive elements were incorporated. Feedback for selected text problems was inserted at appropriate points. Audio/visual segments, two computer simulations, and navigation and index systems were developed. The final product will be packaged on a CD-ROM, included with each print-based course package sent to students, and incorporated into the University's Virtual Teaching and Learning (ViTAL) electronic environment.

The Biotechnology Project: A Case Study on Integrating the Use of The Internet for Research and On-Line Communication in a Brazilian School
Cristiana Assumpção, Columbia University, USA

This project was developed in a model private school in Brazil, Colégio Bandeirantes, having the reputation for its high academic level and vision for the future. Using an advanced topic in Biology, students were challenged to go beyond normal academic activities, acquiring skills to integrate technology and become lifelong learners. They have had the opportunity to interact with researchers in the field of Biotechnology, as well as with peers in New York. Students have learned to use the Internet as a research tool as well as a place for collaboration and content building. This is a study of the role of technology in empowering students to become active learners and researchers, as well as adaptation to these new methods of communication. Interesting patterns have emerged on how students communicate online versus face to face. The study continues on how to create pedagogically sound best practices for technology integration.