“As we stand at the edge of this new millennium, gazing out into its uncharted expanse, some of us feel as if we are stepping out onto a launching pad; others feel at the brink of an abyss. Some see the challenges and the marvels to come and are exhilarated; some see only the certainty of change and its uncertain outcomes and are apprehensive. How amazing it is that the influence of technology is a primary force shaping both perspectives. All of us recognize the vital role computers and other electronic tools have played in bringing us to the place where we stand now” (p. v, Roblyer & Edwards, 2000).

As the field of technology continues to develop at an accelerated rate, it brings new opportunities for teacher educators to share skills and information. The importance of instructional design during this growth has not been overlooked as shown by the quality and quantity of papers included in this year’s section. There are three main categories of papers represented: (1) the discussion of theoretical constructs supporting different instructional design models, (2) the application of instructional design models in various learning situations, and (3) the assessment of how these models work.

In the past, instructional design has largely been based on behavioristic premises; however, it is adjusting to new methods and computer design tools which allow for greater flexibility in the creation of learning environments (Wilson, Jonassen, & Cole, 1993). In this section, some authors explore traditional behavioristic designs, while others investigate constructivist and cognitive possibilities as well. Many theoretical foundations of instructional design are represented here.

The application of design ranges from web-based instruction to traditional classroom settings. How should teachers be taught? Which methods of design are appropriate for the content being taught and the delivery system be utilized? Are old methods being used in new situations with a new kind of student? It is questions like these that are addressed in the following papers.

To complete the design process, several papers discuss evaluation techniques used to assess the application of instructional design models employed. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of assessment are represented.

References

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