ONLINE JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

In the industrial age, we go to school. In the information age, school can come to us. This is the message implicit in the media and movement of distance education.

[Note- technical difficulties held up delivery of the Journal. Thanks for your patience.]

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ITEM 1.

XTEC ONLINE IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROJECT
by Jordi Vivancos, EAVERGES@EBRUPC51

In 1986 the Department of Education of the "Generalitat de Catalunya" (Autonomous Government of Catalunya, Spain) set-up the "Programa d'Informtica Educativa" (PIE), Information Technology in Education Programme for Primary and Secondary Education.

In 1988 the PIE created XTEC ("Xarxa Telemtica Educativa de Catalunya") - or Catalunya's Telematics Educational Network- which aims to develop a global dimension of education and implement innovative educational activities based on telematics technology.

The facilities offered by the XTEC network are now being used to develop On- line In-service Teacher Training (OITT) courses on Educational Information Technology.

The OITT Project is beginning by redefining and adapting two already existing sets of course materials. The courses initially selected and developed are:

- Using spreadsheets in education.

- On-line information retrieval: the SINERA database.

Besides the existence of written course materials, these courses have been selected because their concepts and methods can be applied in a wide range of curriculum areas: spreadsheets have great potential for simulation, and SINERA is a database developed by the PIE that contains at present about 10,000 references on curricular topics.

In order to develop the training scheme, the PIE will provide the following services to in-service learners by means of the XTEC telematic network:

- A distance delivery system (file transfer facility) to download programs, files and text materials.

- A collaborative learning environment ("AGORA" teleconferencing facility).

- Continued educational support by means of the E-mail facility that allows private on-line tutorial help and guidance.

- Students' improvement assessment (testing service facility).

Additionally, the learners will receive:

- Written course materials of a modular structure.

- Application software specific to each course, and communication programs.

- Certificate of course attendance.

Each course will have a coordinator in charge of tutorial guidance to address student's individual needs, to chair the computer conferencing activities, and to evaluate the trainees achievements.

The above courses are structured in 7 modules or blocks of learning activities that have to be talken sequentially. Each module has to be completed in 2 weeks.

There also will be three face-to-face meetings: at the beginning of the course, after two months and at the end of the course.

The general criteria for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of online versus face-to-face teaching imply analysing learner achievement in both systems. It is intended to set-up an external evaluation program to assess the OITT Project and to compare it with the conventional teacher training scheme.

It is not expected that OITT courses will result in significant savings in the experimental phase: the cost of rewriting existing materials and creating new ones, the human resources needed for program develop and tutoring services, and the phone costs are the main factors for that. Nevertheless, the OITT Project it is not initially intended to save money but rather to pilot and evaluate new distance education practices.

The main aim of the Project is to get acquainted with a range of human, organizational and practical problems: how to set up a scheme of distance learning in teacher training; how to develop attractive and useful course materials; how to evaluate the process and the results; how to receive and use feed-back from the users to improve learning.

Additionally, the OITT Project will fully test our hardware and software facilities for distance learning purposes. In the future, we hope to design and develop an "Integrated Computer Environment for Distance Learning" to enhance and improve the current system.

Finally, an embedded objective in this Project is the appraisal of the telematics culture by the educators. In the future this will provide on- line education for non-traditional learners: physically handicapped students, isolated students, students needing to overcome multicultural and distance barriers, on-line penpals and students involved in collaborative study projects. As expertise is developed in distance training based on self-study methods and computer mediated communications, the scope of the OITT Project will broaden.

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ITEM 2.

Kids-91 Project
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In May, 260 10-15-year-old students from various schools throughout North America and Norway shared their visions of what they would like the world to look like when they grow up and talked about steps they could take to make sure it happens.

Participating teachers used their home or classroom computers to link their classes with those of colleagues in other states and countries. The two-week project culminated on Mother's Day when dozens of North American kids "met and talked" via computer with new Norwegian friends who were celebrating a children's festival in the cities of Arendal and Tromso, Norway.

The success gave birth to a new project, KIDS-91. The ambition this time is to get as many kids as possible in the age group 10 -15 to participate, from as many countries as possible. The global dialog has already started and will continue until May 12 1991. Part of it will be electronic - for those who have access to this technology - part of it will be by mail or in other forms.

We want to collect the childrens' responses to these four questions:

1. Who am I?,
2. What do I want to be when I grow up?
3. How do I want the world to be better when I grow up?
4. What can I do NOW to help this come true?

We also want them to draw themself in their future role/world. The responses will be turned into an exhibition that will be sent back to the kids of the world.

Whether you teach geography, environmental studies, English or another language, computers, or art, there's an opportunity for you to participate. Some schools are also getting involved in KIDS-91 on an interdisciplinary basis, including teachers from a variety of subjects.

The goals of KIDS-91 are three-fold:

1. to help students realize their personal visions through participation in an inter-active international initiative,
2. to empower kids by demonstrating how they can directly effect social change while also developing such marketable skills as keyboarding, wordprocessing, creative writing,telecommunica- tions, video production, etc., and
3. to raise student consciousness in the "global village" in which they live, as well as that of every person who comes in contact with the KIDS-91 project.

For more information, send email to the KIDS-91 project coordinator:

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V.22bis, V.32 up to MNP-5, 24 hours).

ITEM 3.

CAL/CML Project - Nursing Education
by Dr. Amy Zelmer
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Below is a brief description of a new project which is being under- taken at the University College of Central Queensland. We would be interested in hearing from anyone who has materials to share -- we would like to avoid re-inventing wheels!

WHAT IS THE CAL/SML PROJECT?

The CAL/CML Project is a concentrated effort to produce Computer- Assisted Learning

Materials and Computer-Managed Learning tools to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of nursing education. University College of Central Queensland (UCCQ) offers two programs for nurses:

- a part-time external B.Hlth.Sc.(N) for registered nurses
- a full-time Dip.Hlth.Sc.(N) for school-leavers and mature students who are seeking to become registered nurses.

This latter program is taught on a full-time basis and requires students to come to the main campus in Rockhampton, but will incorporate a number of features which call upon distance education technology. Because of this we have sought (and obtained!) a grant of $300,000 from the Australian National Priority Reserve Fund for the development of Computer-Assisted Learning materials and Computer-Managed Systems.

The project will initially develop materials for the pre-registration Diploma of Health Science (Nursing) program. Later materials will be for post-registration degree-completion programs and in-service programs for practicing professional nurses.

Our program serves a very spread-out geographic area with only a few small centres of population and hospitals. Students in the preregistration program are considered to be studying 'on-campus' but will be placed in centres some 300-500 km apart for their clinical practice. During these placements students will need to access instructional material available to students on the main campus and both instructors and students will need to communicate readily with 'home base'. The complexities of arranging the clinical schedules for both staff and students are also considerably greater than in an urban-based program since travel and accommodation arrangements must be considered as well as the nature of the educational experience.

All of these factors have led us to explore the possibilities of putting as much information as possible into independent-study format which can be made available to students on diskette for use in regional centres. We are also in the course of stretching the available communication system to its limits and developing a complex computer-based scheduling and student-grade-reporting system which can be accessed at regional centres.

WHY DO IT?

Student nurses must learn a great deal of factual material, and must be able to apply the information quickly and safely in a wide variety of clinical situations. This project will develop materials to help

- safety; patients won't suffer the consequences of a wrong decision
- repeatability
- experimentation
- individual pacing
- independent learning

WHY IN THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCE, UCCQ?

We have a rare opportunity to develop a new Dip.Hlth.Sc.(N) program "from scratch". We have

made a deliberate choice to put a great deal of our effort into developing new, more effective approaches to learning rather than simply re-developing a standard nursing education program.

The School of Health Science is expected to provide initial professional preparation for nurses in the Central Queensland area (close to 'Crocodile Dundee country'!). While there is a great wealth of potential clinical experience available to students and their large geographic spread of these resources does mean that we are under some pressure to develop imaginative ways of linking students and staff to the main campus.

WHAT WILL THIS PROJECT REALLY INVOLVE?

In 1990 we will:

- establish a 20-station dedicated student learning lab
- develop and test first year Dip.Hlth.Sc.(N) learning materials
- further develop a database of available CAL/CML materials and transfer the database to a publicly-accessible system.
- further develop and trial a student management system for clinical placements
- initiate development of second year materials
- support relevant student projects developing CAL/CML materials
- promote and document the project for use by others.

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ITEM 4.

ICA UPDATE

A report from the International Communications Association, Dallas, Texas
Foundation Paves the Way for Education and Research
by Mary Hill
NETWORKING MANAGEMENT
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Mary Hill, the ICA's Foundation coordinator, researches prospective sources of funding and works with the foundation's board in its development of the foundation's goals and strategies.

Since its inception, the ICA's foundation and scholarship fund has awarded over $300,000 in grants to 24 colleges and universities. Fifteen years ago it wasn't easy for students interested in undergraduate telecom

programs to find a degree program. Today, thanks to the foresight of organizations like the ICA, over 40 institutions of higher education offer undergraduate and/or graduate degree programs for the study of telecom-related disciplines. Among these are the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Mass.; Duke University in Durham, N.C.; Ball State University in Muncie, Ind,; and the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

For more than 10 years, the ICA has been instrumental in establishing innovative telecom degree programs in U.S. colleges and universities through "seed grants." The University of Colorado in Boulder, Colo. and Golden Gate University in San Francisco are two examples of schools in which the ICA has played a vital role.

But in 10 years, the telecom industry has seen phenomenal growth. Industry needs have outstripped the capabilities of institutions to graduate the talent needed in the work force. But enter 1989 and the establishment of the ICA Foundation. The ICA created this public foundation to respond to the escalating demands among its member companies and the industry at large for education and research in information technology and telecommunications.

The foundation seeks to strengthen the business community and serve its telecom needs by sponsoring educational and research programs that advance voice, data, and video technology research and applications. As a public nonprofit organization, the ICA Foundation has been able to broaden its pool of resources with tax-deductive contributions and government grants to support various scientific, technical, and educational advances. It also plans to offer innovative educational programs and sponsor projects that use the current state-of-the-art technology.

The ICA foundation took the first step to achieve these objectives when it took the ICA grant and scholarship fund under its wing last year. The ICA Foundation Grant and Scholarship Fund has since awarded over $300,000 in grants to 24 colleges and universities throughout the U.S. These funds help establish telecommunications as an accepted field of education for degree-seeking students across the nation; help universities and students combat the growing costs of education; and assist the industry in the face of an increasing shortage of well-trained telecom professionals.

For example, foundation funds have been partly responsible for the initiation of an undergraduate degree program in Computer Science with a Telecommunications Specialty at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Mo. Similarly, New York University, New York, was able to provide scholarships toward its Master of Professional Studies in Interactive Telecommunications with money from the foundation. In addition, Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas was able to begin development for an MBA program in telecom management.

Presently, the foundation plans to sponsor a research project to identify specific current industry needs in education and research, and to determine whether these needs can be met adequately with available resources at institutions of higher education. The project, which is still in need of funding, will be a valuable tool both to the industry and to the ICA for discerning future priorities.

If you would like to know more about the ICA Foundation, please contact Mary Hill at the ICA Foundation Office, 12750 Merit Drive, Suite 710, Dallas, TX 75251, or call (800) ICA-INFO.

ITEM 5.

TRAINING RURAL TEACHERS IN COMPUTER EDUCATION: An evaluation of the distance learning methods

by: Diane McGrath, Linda P. Thurston
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During the 1988-89 academic year 20 rural middle school and upper elementary teachers were chosen to participate in a project funded by a WEEA (Women's Educational Equity Act) grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education to Kansas State University's College of Education. The ultimate goal of the project was to assure computer literacy for middle school girls in rural Kansas. The teachers were from rural areas throughout the state.

Two graduate level courses were offered, (1) Microcomputers in Instruction, and (2) Seminar in Computer Equity. What follows is a description of the distance education methods used in that training, a discussion of what worked and what didn't, a summary of the follow-up of the teachers which investigated what they felt they most needed for continuing support, and suggestions for further research.

Computer Education Training, First Semester

Included in the course was an overview of computer uses in education and beginning computer programming, although these were difficult to teach through distance learning methods. The Microcomputers in Instruction course required teachers to complete 12 short projects during the course:

- 4 projects using LogoWriter
- 2 projects using telecommunications
- 3 projects using BASIC
- a project using a database
- a lesson plan using software
- a software evaluation

Each teacher received 2 textbooks and a photocopied book of instructions, explanations, and short relevant articles.

Adults who have not used computers before often have a high degree of anxiety as they begin to work with computers, and it is very difficult for them to learn computing completely or even mostly on their own. Rural teachers, in particular, are typically isolated from other computer-using teachers, and thus find little support nearby. Furthermore, unless their schools already own software, teachers cannot easily preview it.

For these reasons the following methods were employed to teach these widely separated rural teachers:

- Each teacher had a modem on loan for the year, and was given free access to an 800 number to reach the College's electronic bulletin board.
- Each teacher was given the use of a copy of LogoWriter for the year (fully site-licensed for lending to students during the course of a project).
- Teachers were asked to send away for software on 30-day preview.
- All teachers were given copies of shareware (word processor, database,

telecommunications, and utilities).
- Four face-to-face meetings were held in four regional locations to try to minimize the travel for at least one group each time.

Using the BBS turned out to be a major problem for about half of the participants: occasionally an operator would answer the 800 number and cut them off; or there was no way to connect the computer to a school phone after school hours; and for at least five students the telephone lines in the rural communities would not support either use of a modem. For the remaining half, some used the BBS regularly to communicate with the instructor, and the rest were reluctant to spend money on telecommunications. However, teachers did not hesitate to call the instructor assistant by voice telephone. At the end of the course, a graduate assistant traveled to two locations to give additional help to those needing to complete the telecommunications assignments.

Teachers appreciated getting to keep LogoWriter for the duration of the project, because they were able to let their students use it immediately. The utility shareware got mixed reviews; many schools already had AppleWorks, so some teachers did not want to learn to use the shareware. Software that had been ordered on preview had been chosen because it was outstanding software for grades 4-8, and many of the schools later bought some of the packages previewed. The face-to-face meetings (from 10-3:00, with a lunch break) were successful, but extremely hectic, even with an instructor and two assistants to help. Teachers felt that they needed at least two more such meetings, but that they were glad they didn't have them because of the travel

Computer Equity Seminar, Second Semester

The Seminar on Computer Equity gave the teachers an opportunity to use what they had learned earlier in a project to promote equity and quality in computer use in their classrooms or schools. Two texts, research articles, and instructor developed materials were sent to each teacher.

Since this course met from January through May, difficult travel times in Kansas, the first two sessions were held by TELENET (an interactive telephone communication which goes out to several dozen locations around the state; all students can hear each other and the instructor). In the second of these sessions two guests were "patched in," Kay Gilliland, from Project Equals in California, and Mary McGinnis from Women's Action Alliance in New York. Each guest discussed computer equity needs and strategies with the participants. The teachers were able to ask questions of the guests and the instructors and could talk to each other about their classroom work.

In March there was a series of small group meetings of three or four teachers in a region. Its purpose was to give and get feedback about the class projects they were designing, and to build a local support network among these distant neighbors. A fourth meeting was held in a rural area, and its purpose was to show teachers how to create an educational database on rural subjects, and therefore to involve the students in both computing and rural life. The final meeting was at the KSU campus, where teachers presented the results of their projects and received awards, computer- generated t-shirt decals, and certificates.

Computer Anxiety Scale

Teachers were given the Computer Opinion Survey (Maurer & Simonson, 1984) during the first

class meeting in October and through the mail in January. Only 17 teachers took both parts of the scale. While the scores on this anxiety measure decreased an average of .25 points, the difference was not found to be significant, $t(16)=1.20$, $p=.25$. The mean score (out of a range of 6 possible points) was 2.69 on the pretest and 2.44 on the posttest. The range of actual pretest scores was 1.70-4.80, while the posttest range was 1.30-5.20. In 3 of the cases the posttest anxiety scores actually increased.

Follow-up Questionnaire

During January of 1990, one year after the completion of their first computer education course, a follow-up questionnaire was sent to the 17 teachers who completed both courses. Twelve teachers returned the questionnaire. Information was gathered about the course, the distance methods, what they were doing now with computers in their classroom, and their continuing support needs.

The needs which were cited by at least half of the respondents centered around rural problems of isolation, small schools, and lack of resources. Needs included more graduate credit coursework available to teachers in their area, other teachers to collaborate with, help in integrating software into the curriculum, help in finding and evaluating software, and a hotline or some other means for immediate help with equipment problems.

Conclusions and suggestions

The distance methods that worked well for this group and for this material were the "traveling classroom," borrowed software, preview software, and the ability to call the instructor or project coordinator by telephone. Those that worked satisfactorily were TELENET and small group meetings. Those that were not so successful were the BBS and the shareware.

The fact that three teachers' anxiety scores increased during the first course, combined with numerous personal communications with project staff, suggests strongly that these teachers were so frustrated by the experience of trying to learn telecommunications and at the same time use it for support, that it made the entire experience with computers problematic. Unless the telecommunications apparatus is readily available, already working, and supported by someone on the spot who knows what to do, using it to teach beginners may be a detriment rather than a support.

The fact that half of them wanted more coursework also suggests that their frustration or anxiety had decreased by the following year, perhaps because they were no longer using modems and because they had had a year to use what they had learned. It should be noted that two of the 17 teachers in the project are currently enrolled in a masters degree program in computer education.

If another project were to be attempted to teach educational computing at a distance, particularly the initial learning, it should be done by a system which allows the maximum possibility for seeing and for asking and answering questions. Fiber optics will soon join satellite technology in Kansas, providing 2-way audio and video communication, but there still remains a legal obstacle: the right to show copyrighted software over the satellite.

In any inservice program the training should not be given in a "hit and run" fashion. Teachers

need continuing support to integrate new methods and materials into their curriculum. This need for support is heightened by the use of new technologies and by a teacher's isolation in a rural area. Two ideas are being considered to provide ongoing help: (1) a "buddy system" in which each teacher is matched with a masters or doctoral student in computer education who will keep in touch and answer questions; and (2) meetings to be held at the twice-a-year state computer conference for which many teachers are able to get release time.

In any inservice program the training should not be given in a "hit and run" fashion. Teachers need continuing support to integrate new methods and materials echnologies and by a teacher's isolation in a rural area.

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ITEM 6.

TEACHER TRAINING VIA COMPUTER-BASED DISTANCE EDUCATION

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With its increasing sophistication and feasibility, computer conferencing is perceived as a valuable teletraining tool. However, many questions remain concerning how effective and efficient the use of computer conferencing is in teletraining. This study investigated the effects of computer-based distance learning compared to conventional learning upon subjects' achievement, time-on-task, attitudes, participation, interaction with peers, and access to the instructor. Support for this investigation was provided by a grant from the Indiana Department of Education and by the partners in the Electronic School District project, a joint study of Purdue and Indiana Universities, the Indiana Department of Education, IBM Corporation, and participating Indiana school systems.

The following questions were examined in this research: Was there a difference between on-campus (traditionally taught) and computer conferencing groups

1. on the achievement tests?
2. on time-on-task?
3. in the attitudes of the participants toward the course, class materials, and instructional mode
4. on participation in class activities, interaction with peers, and access to the instructor?
5. in the numbers of students withdrawing from or failing to complete the course?

Fifty-three subjects, including twenty-five on-campus (traditionally taught) students and twenty-eight off-

campus (computer conferencing) students, completed a semester graduate course introducing microcomputer applications for education and training.

On-campus subjects learned the course materials via a conventional instructional method, while off-campus subjects learned the course materials via a computer conferencing instructional method. Because of technical difficulties, one off-campus site was unable to use computer conferencing. Therefore, the off-campus research group was broken into two groups: a computer conferencing group (19 subjects) and a correspondence group (9 subjects).

Subjects' achievement was measured by pre-test, two formative tests, a post-test, and semester weighted scores. Attitudes were measured by responses to five point Likert scale items on a questionnaire. Time-on-task, interaction with peers, and access to the professor were measured by weekly self-report questionnaires.

The results showed no significant differences among groups on the pre- test, two formative examinations, or the final course averages. However, statistically significant differences among groups were found on the post-test (final exam). The correspondence group had the highest mean score followed by the traditionally taught on-campus group followed by the computer conferencing group. Significant time-on-task differences were also detected. The correspondence group averaged about 9 hours per week spent on the course, while the computer conferencing group averaged about 7 hours per week, and the on-campus group averaged about 5 hours per week. However, covariance analysis suggested that the time-on-task differences were related to the age of the participants (older subjects spent more time), and travel time savings were not considered.

All groups showed equally positive attitudes towards computers at the end of the study. However, the correspondence and computer conferencing groups were somewhat less positive than the on-campus group in attitudes toward the course and outcomes of the course.

Finally, more off-campus subjects withdrew from the course or failed to complete the course on time than did subjects in the on-campus group.

Although differences among groups were observed, in general, the differences were small, and instructional method appeared to have relatively little effect on achievement, time-on-task, or computer attitudes. This suggests that computer conferencing can be a viable instructional method.

Other positive findings arose serendipitously during the study. Electronic mail (e-mail) was found to be popular and supportive of a high degree of openness in communication. Subjects were very supportive of the reduced travel and schedule flexibility of the computer conferencing method. Also, subjects at one computer conferencing site spontaneously formed a cooperative learning group. This group showed a course completion rate comparable to that of the on-campus group, while the other on-campus sites had much lower completion rates. Apparently, the cooperative atmosphere at the one site helped to decrease course withdrawals and completion problems.

These research results suggest that the computer conferencing group performed nearly as well as the on-campus group in terms of achievement, time-on-task, and computer attitudes. In addition, the computer conferencing subjects benefitted from saving time on travel and having a flexible schedule. The results suggest that computer conferencing could make a valuable contribution to teletraining for institutions. Dissemination of these results will facilitate adapting computer teletraining in other fields and in other institutional settings.

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ITEM 7.

From:
"Distance Education in Rural Alaska: An Overview of Teaching and Learning Practices in Audioconference Classes."
By Barry Sponder, LFBMS@ALASKA

In recent years postsecondary institutions have increasingly turned to distance education to serve a variety of students previously unable to benefit from conventional on-campus instruction. In an era of declining resources for public education, colleges and universities have been under pressure to produce more for less and still provide educational programs to off-campus students.

The University of Alaska's three major academic units, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the University of Alaska Anchorage, and the University of Alaska Southeast, have the responsibility of providing distance education to sparsely populated regions of the state.

Approximately twelve percent of rural students served by the university are Alaska Natives who want to continue their education but prefer not to give up their traditional lifestyles and move to university campuses situated in large cities (Alaska Federation of Natives, 1989).

For an Alaska Native, attendance at an urban campus often means loneliness and cultural alienation. Traditional thinking in Alaska Native cultures discourages the absence from family and community required by on-campus study. Approximately ninety percent of the Native students who attend urban campuses return home without a degree, and some find themselves deeply in debt (Alaska Federation of Natives, 1989). Recognizing the need to increase Native students' chances for success, the university's three major academic units have responded with off-campus programs for Native students and other rural residents. The Native village environment, however, is not without its own set of problems.

Indeed, in recent years, the pace of economic, social and cultural change in Native villages has been so rapid and the change so profound that many Natives have been overwhelmed by a world not of their making--a world of conflicting values and increasingly limited economic opportunity. For many Natives, the sense of personal, familial and cultural identity that is a prerequisite to healthy and productive life is being lost in a haze of alcohol-induced despair that not infrequently results in violence perpetrated upon self and family. (Alaska Federation of Natives, 1989, p.12).

Organizations such as the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), Tanana Valley Chiefs (TVC), and the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) have called for additional instructional services to help alleviate well-documented problems of violence, chronic alcoholism, and high unemployment that result, in part, from a history of conflict with the dominant culture (Collier, Jr., 1973; Scollon & Scollon, 1980a). Many people see access to educational programs as an opportunity to help break the cycle of devastation that has overtaken the majority of Native villages.

While several off-campus programs and rural education centers were created in response to Native concerns, many non-Native residents have used distance education courses to further their education. An

audioconference class delivered over the telephone can reach across Alaska's vast landscape to include both Native and non-Native students. The effectiveness of audioconference courses is the focus of this monograph.

For a copy of the monograph please contact Barry Sponder via BITNET LFBMS@ALASKA

ITEM 8.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, REQUESTS, REVIEWS

A. ANNOUNCEMENT: FrEdMAIL Reaches Out to K-12 Community
by Al Rogers and Susan Estrada

The FrEdMail (Free Educational Mail) Network is an informal, grass- roots telecommunications network that helps teachers and students exchange information freely and simply. With over 120 nodes, it lets teachers share experiences with student assignments, distribute teaching materials and curriculum ideas, promote the development of effective reading and writing skills, and obtain information about workshops, job opportunities, legislation affecting education, and new nodes on the growing network. It motivates students to become better learners and writers. FrEdMail was initiated by Al Rogers, computer specialist for the San Diego County Schools.

The network consists of a number of electronic bulletin boards, each representing a "node" in the network. The bulletin boards are operated by individuals and institutions. Some boards are operated at universities. Some are operated by district or county offices of education. Some are operated at individual schools, in school offices, classrooms, or even in teachers' homes.

This local ownership brings a number of advantages. Each node is able to tailor content to its local needs. Some districts use the boards for instructional and administrative purposes. Other sites promote use by students at school or at home. Another significant advantage to local control is that each node has a vested interest in promoting the service to its local constituents, and most are proactive in recruiting participants and training teachers. Finally, local ownership usually means a subsidized service, which allows free access to the network.

In an effort to promote student and instructor participation in data telecommunications, CERFnet will serve the K-12 community by creating a prototype gateway between CERFnet and the FrEdMail Network. Initial plans call for the development of file-serving capabilities based on the USENET model of conferences and selected news feeds, allowing a great deal of flexibility in linking FrEdMail users with other networks and educators on other systems all over the world. Fifteen selected FrEdMail sites will dial-up directly to their local CERFnet terminal server, which will act as the regional file server. In the prototype phase, out-of-state FrEdMail hubs would be linked directly to the server in San Diego via 800 service.

CERFnet also wants to promote this prototype gateway to colleges and universities that want to serve their own local K-12 communities in a similar fashion. Our vision is one of a national network of university academic computing labs that act as local file servers to their regional K-12 FrEdMail sites, using existing facilities and transportation networks. CERFnet believes that the time is right to promote this kind of link between the university and local K-12 groups.

Ms. Susan Estrada is the program manager and chairperson of CERFnet.

Mr. Al Rogers is executive director of FrEdMail Foundation.

(A postscript document is available via anonymous ftp to NIC.CERF.NET in subdirectory cerfnet_news and filename fredmail-diagram.ps. This document illustrates how the FrEdMail sites will be connected to CERFnet.

B. ANNOUNCEMENT: Global Dialog Association Founded

The "GLOBAL DIALOG" Association was registered in France on December 28th,1989, under the French Law of July 1st 1901 and the Decree of August 16th 1901 as international, non-profit and non-governmental. Its aim is to further the global pooling of intellectual resources to resolve current problems in the economic, scientific, cultural and social spheres, particularly in the continents of North America, Europe, Asia and the Pacific but not limited to these areas.

The Association will encourage and promote a world-wide dialog and will organize the exchange of information by means of international data networks, television and interactive video, the press and other media.

The REGISTERED OFFICE of Global Dialog is at:

    17, Rue Auguste Chabrieres
    75015, Paris, France

The address for the SECRETARIAT, CORRESPONDENCE & DOCUMENT TRANSFER in Western Europe is:

    GLOBAL DIALOG
    c/o TeleXphone SARL - BP 517, F-13813 Vitrolles cedex (France)
    Phone: (33) 90758927 & (33) 42752434
    Fax: (33) 42750123 - Ref: GLOBAL-FAX
    Telex: 403527 TLXFONE F - BOX:TLXF:GLOBAL-TELEX

Representative Offices are being established in various countries, and the first of these to be set up are listed below:

    USSR: GLOBAL DIALOG ASSOCIATION
    4, Zubovskii Bulvar, ap.6026
    Moscow, 103786. USSR
    Phone: +7-095-201 23 08
    Fax: +7-095-230 26 67
    Telex: 411101 APN SU

    USA: GLOBAL DIALOG ASSOCIATION
    Suite C2420, Business School, University of Michigan
    701 Tappan Street, Ann Arbor

Michigan 48109-1234
FAX: +1 313/936-3168
Tel: +1 313/763-8125

JAPAN: GLOBAL DIALOG ASSOCIATION
1-5-19-801 Shimomeguro, Meguro-Ku
Tokyo 153, JAPAN
TEL:+81-3-494-6301 FAX:+81-3-494-6303

GDA Officers:

President: Dr Sergei ALEXANDROV (USSR)
Vice Presidents:
Dr Harrison STEVENS (USA)
Dr Izumi AIZU (Japan)
Secretary: Mr James BARING (France & UK),
Treasurer: Mr. Bertrand LEBRET (France)

GDA Founding Members

The GLOBAL DIALOG Association was founded, and its initial officers elected by a group of various organizations in communications, publishing, science, education and allied fields. The list of founding members is:

NOVOSTI Press Agency (APN) - (URSS)
CLEVELAND FREE-NET, Case Western Reserve University (CWU) (USA)
CONNECTED EDUCATION INC. - (USA)
DOUBLE HELICE - FRANCE
ELECTRONIC INFORMATION EXCHANGE SYSTEM (EIES) of the Computerised
Conferencing and Communications Centre of the NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY - (USA)
EVENTURES LTD. - (USA)
GEONET MAILBOX SYSTEMS GmbH (GeoNet) - (FRG)
IMA-PRESS Youth Information Agency - (URSS)
INSTITUTE OF SOCIOLOGY OF THE USSR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES (ISAN) - (USSR)
INSTITUTE FOR NETWORKING DESIGN (Japan)
NOTEPAD SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL - (USA)
NETWORKING & WORLD INFORMATION SYSTEM (NWI) - (USA)
TELEXPHONE SARL - (France)
PARTICIPATION SYSTEMS INC. - (USA)
YARDSTREAM LTD. - (GB)

Note: I am only posting this message and cannot act as an intermediary for any people on the net who want to get connected. Please contact the secretariat or one of the constituent organizations/networks for further information.

Edis Bevan
AEB_BEVAN@VAX.ACS.OPEN.AC.UK

C. ANNOUNCEMENT: About International Center for Distance Learning
by Takeshi Utsumi, utsumi@cunixf.cc.columbia.edu

I am taking the liberty of uploading a flyer of The International Center for Distance Learning which I received from Dr. Keith Harry. His address is:

> Dr. Keith Harry
> Director/International Center for Distance Learning
> The United Nations University
> Room 231, Geoffrey Crowther Building
> c/o, The British Open University
> Walton Hall
> Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA
> UNITED KINGDOM
> Tel: +44-908-653-537
> Telex: 825061 OUWALT G
> Fax: +44-908-653-744

<div align="center">The International Center for Distance Learning</div>

The International Center for Distance Learning (ICDL) is a documentation center based on the campus of the Open University, United Kingdom, specializing in collecting and disseminating information on distance education worldwide. ICDL is located in the University's Institute of Educational Technology but has been externally funded during most of its existence, most notably by the United Nations University from 1983 to 1989. A grant of L 1 million for the period April 1989-March 1992 from the British Government's Overseas Development Administration has enabled ICDL to expand to provide an information service to the Commonwealth of Learning, an organization created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to expand opportunities for students in Commonwealth countries through distance education.

The task of supporting the Commonwealth of Learning is particularly challenging for two reasons. Firstly, the headquarters of the new organization is in Vancouver, Canada; extensive transfer of information will be undertaken electronically and through other means. Secondly, the 50 member institutions of the Commonwealth represent a wide spectrum of nations, not only culturally but in terms of available resources and infrastructure; ICDL has to provide information to all Commonwealth countries through the most effective means available to each country. This necessitates a proactive policy, seeking out the needs of individual institutions as well as responding to incoming requests.

ICDL's main information resources are an extensive collection of literature on distance education and an integrated computerized database. The literature collection includes prospectuses of distance teaching institutions, books, journals, research reports, conference papers and a variety of unpublished and semi-published material. The database comprises three areas; the first is a bibliographical area which acts as a catalogue of the collection as well as being a major source of information for users visiting ICDL or accessing the database on-line or on CD-ROM. The second area of the database contains extensive information on distance teaching institutions, including details of subjects taught, media used, entrance requirements, and names of contact persons. The third area of the database includes information on individual distance-taught courses offered by Commonwealth institutions.

It is anticipated that ICDL will receive an increasingly large number of visitors. Around 75 people from 30 countries visited during 1989, many returning one or more times. There is an increasing trend towards long-term visits. The needs and interests of visitors vary very considerably; types of visitors include planners responsible for creating new distance teaching institutions or for introducing distance teaching programmes into existing institutions and organizations, teachers and administrators responsible for implementing plans for new distance teaching institutions and programmers, researchers interested in particular aspects of distance education or areas of the world, and postgraduate students taking a qualification in distance education or an option based on an aspect of distance education. Enquiries are received through mail, telephone, telex, fax and electronic mail, and responses are sent through the most appropriate and effective communication means.

The Overseas Development Administration grant represents a major source of funding for ICDL, but additional sources of funding will continue to be sought in the future as in the past. Organizations with which ICDL has been closely involved in 1989 include Unesco, the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities, and the International Council for Distance Education, in addition to the United Nations University.

ICDL employs seven full-time staff members. These comprise the Director, Keith Harry (UK), supported by two senior management staff, Magnus John (Sierra Leone), Information Services Manager, and Nazira Ismail (Uganda), Data and Communications Officer, together with a senior secretary, Sabine Phillips, and three secretarial/clerical staff, Brenda Barr, Barbara Humphreys and Sylvia Preston. In addition, Sean Doherty, former University Educational Software Manger, Laury Melton, Liaison Librarian (Science) from the University Library, Amdissa Teshome (Ethiopia), a distance education researcher from Wye College, University of London, and Rachael Collins, a pre-university student, are working with ICDL on a part-time basis.

D. ANNOUNCEMENT: Apple Library of Tomorrow for 1991
By Steve Cisler

ALOT is changing! We are announcing our new round of grants for 1991. We will be looking for a wide range of projects which help us learn about how computers are used in libraries and how we can provide improved services to our patrons. Our main question when we evaluate the proposals will be: "What can libraries learn from this project?" Research ideas and innovative, practical uses in all types of libraries in the U.S. and other countries will be considered by the ALOT staff.

The ALOT grants will include computer equipment (Apple II or Mac) and software (Apple or third party). The grants will be for equipment onlyQ no grant money will be awarded. The number of computers will depend on the project.

We are interested in being able to freely distribute the results of your research or project, whether it is paper, an application, HyperCard stack or template. Typically, it might end up on a CD-ROM or in the Apple Library Template Exchange or on a public network or file server.

Please limit your proposal to five pages plus a short cover letter. The proposal should contain the following information:

1. Supply us with some background on your library or organization.

2. What is the project? Explain what you want to do with your project. What do you expect to learn? How do you plan to go about implementing your project? Have you had any experience with Apple or Macintosh or similar projects? How can the results of this project be shared with other libraries?
3. Include a timeline with proposed milestones.
4. List the Apple equipment you need for your project.
5. Name a single contact person for the project (you may also name collaborators and assistants).

Our ALOT grantees will report on the progress and results of their projects at our annual Apple Library of Tomorrow conference to be held in Cupertino in early 1992. In addition, we will ask for brief quarterly progress reports. We will also ask that our grantees stay in contact with us via AppleLink for which Apple will supply the account and you must supply the phone line.

We will begin to accept proposals October 15, 1990, and we will be evaluating projects on a quarterly basis. We will not be evaluating proposals by type of library, so any library may submit their proposal for any of the following dates:

December 1, 1990,
February 15, 1991
May 15, 1991
August 15, 1991

You can expect to hear from us about six to eight weeks after the deadline. Grant recipients will be announced in the Apple Library Users Group Newsletter.

Send one copy of your proposal to:

Apple Library of Tomorrow, MS 8C
10381 Bandley Drive
Cupertino, CA 95014.
Fax 408/725-8502.

Include a self-addressed mailing label if you would like confirmation that your proposal has been received.

E. ANNOUNCEMENT: CERRITOS COLLEGE, A CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, OFFERS ON-LINE COURSES

- Cerritos is an "Accredited" College
- Courses meet requirements for transfer the University of California and California State University Institutions.
- Cost is $312 per 3 Semester Credit course.
- DiskTexts and all other necessary materials are provided.
- More courses are being planned and will be offered soon.

Electronic Addresses:

CompuServe 70721,3557
or

JAEGER@CERRITOS.EDU
or
GJAEGER@CDP.UUCP
The Electronic Classroom (An electronic bulletin board)
Or you may use your computer and modem to call The Electronic Classroom ([213] 860-8655;
Settings: 2400\N\8\1) from any where in the world at any time of the day or night to leave a
message for the sysop (systems operator).

Preliminary enrollment steps:

- Submit a written sample of your writing of approximately five hundred words expressing your opinion on any social, artistic, or political subject you wish; you may write about books, poetry, plays, films, etc.
- Format: double spaced; left margin 10; right margin 75;
- Include at the top left of your electronic paper, your name, your mailing address (can be electronic, such as CompuServe, etc.);
- This sample must be submitted by no later than MIDNIGHT, DECEMBER 1, 199O, for consideration for assessment and placement in freshman composition, for the spring, 1991 semester;
- Send your writing sample by any Email system you wish to any of the addresses shown above;
- You may also request to upload your file to The Electronic Classroom at [213] 860-8655. Logon, leave a brief message to the Sysop saying you wish to upload your file;
- Wait twenty-four hours and your security level will be raised so that you may call back and send in your writing sample to the BBS

Or for further information, you may write to:

Dr. Fran Newman, Vice President of Student Services
Cerritos College
11110 Alondra Blvd.
Norwalk, Ca. 90651
USA
Voice: [213] 860-2451

F. ANNOUNCEMENT: THE MERIT NETWORKING SEMINARS
By Susan Calcari

Merit/NSFNET Information Services is committed to providing current information on national networking to all users of the NSFNET backbone. Toward this end we will sponsor a two-and-a-half-day seminar in Ann Arbor, Michigan, November 12, 13, and 14.
"Making Your NSFNET Connection Count" will be an informative seminar focusing on issues of interest to campus computing leaders, information systems and networking administrators, educational liaisons, librarians, and educators who want to learn more about regional and national networking.

Day 1: Real People Doing Real Things

Monday's agenda will be filled with presentations by people utilizing NSFNET to enhance education (K-12 through college level) and to access research tools and

library resources across the country. The day will begin with a keynote address by Douglas Van Houweling, Vice Provost for Information Technology at the University of Michigan, and will close with an NSFNET overview and update.

Day 2: Networking Perspectives

Tuesday's focus will be on current networking topics, such as Building Powerful and Interoperable LANS, Introduction to Internetworking & TCP/IP, and Networking Futures - OSI, T3, NREN and Beyond. Of particular interest will be an overview of the 25 mile fiber optic backbone which connects 75 buildings on the University of Michigan campus. The day will end with an optional tour of Merit's Network Operations Center (NOC).

Day 3: NOC Day

Merit's state-of-the-art Network Operations Center, which manages multiple networks including the NSFNET backbone, will be featured on Wednesday morning. Included will be a NOC tools overview, the NOC trouble ticket system, escalation procedures and more. The closing speaker will be Tony Villasenor, Program Director for Information Systems at NASA. The seminar will end by noon that day.

The Merit Seminar will be held a the Tenneco Automotive Training and Development Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Microcomputers connected to regional and national networks will be available on-site to demonstrate the network resources discussed in the presentations.

The registration fee is $395. An early-bird fee of $345 will be charged for registrations received before Octover 1, 1990. This fee includes the two-and-a-half-day seminar, a reception on Sunday evening, lunch on Monday and Tuesday, all seminar material, and an optional tour of the Network Operations Center.

For further information in either electronic or hardcopy format, send an electronic message to: seminar@merit.edu or telephone: 1-800-66-MERIT.

G. ANNOUNCEMENT: On-line In-service Teacher Training Project on Educational Information Technology.
from Jordi Vivancos

The Catalunya Educational Telematic Network: XTEC ("Xarxa Telemtica Educativa de Catalunya"), is a computer telecommunications network specifically devoted to the educational sector, that has been providing services and supporting experiences during the last two years. The know-how obtained is now being used to develop On-line In-service Teacher Training (OITT) courses on Educational Information Technology.

There are not other experiences in Catalonia and in Spain of this modality of Distance Education, so we would welcome orientation suggestions and information about other Distance In-service Teacher training courses and experiences.

Jordi Vivancos Marti

OITT Project Manager
PROGRAMA D'INFORMATICA EDUCATIVA
Jonqueres, 2, 3er., 3a.
08003 Barcelona (Spain)
Bitnet(EARN): EAVERGES@EBRUPC51
Tel: (343) 268 05 00
Fax: (343) 268 36 36

ITEM 9

DISTANCE EDitorial: META-MEANINGS IN COMPUTER CONFERENCING
by Jason Ohler, 10/90

"In the absence of information to guide our interpretation of electronic messages, the meaning we bring to them is in many cases a statement about how we feel about ourselves."

Bateson's "message -- meta-message" framework [Bateson, 1972] offers a much needed perspective of the semantic arena of computer conferencing. Simply stated, his framework is based upon his perception that information in any form exists at two levels: what is said (or displayed), and what is meant. A stop sign means "stop" in most cases. If I buy one at a garage sale and put it on my wall, it loses that meaning. If it is in some areas near where I grew up, it means "slow to observe police" among many residents. Meta- messages contain information about how to interpret information that is conveyed. Meta-information is derived from a mixture of the context and culture of the communities in which a communication occurs, as well as the personalities of the community's participants.

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is a flat medium in the sense that meta-messages do not travel well in it. This gives CMC an unusual quality: meaning or meta-information is often imparted by the receiver not the sender. This is not to say that the sender has no meta-message in mind, but rather that it does not survive the translation into electronic communication very well. Thus, the receiver is often forced to infer meaning that can be very difficult discern.

To appreciate this, compare CMC with two other common communication systems: phone, and face-to-face meetings. Meta-messages travel quite well in phone conversations in which tone of voice can convey whether the statement "Sure, that makes sense..." denotes sarcasm vs. resignation vs. matter-of-fact agreement. The visual cues and body language of face-to- face communication increases further the degree to which a receiver can interpret a message the way it was intended, as long as there are not overt crosscultural or intentionally deceptive factors at work. CMC, on the other hand, allows for the transmission of very little 'information about information.' Sarcasm, subtlety, intention are hard to project and infer. Incidentally, this is true for mailed letters as well CMC. However, because the time delay in mailed correspondence makes it impossible to approximate the quasi-conversationalism of computer conferencing, pen pals are less likely to expect that kind of communication from it.

A number of people have told me that when they meet people face-to- face whom they have known only online, they are nearly always surprised at how inaccurate their mental construction of them had been. The difference between what we imagine about them and who they really are suggests that whatever image we construct about them is totally our own creation, which may have very little basis in reality. It also suggests

that the drive for meaning is so great that people will create meta-information when it is not supplied. This is true for reading electronic messages as well. Without meta-messaging there is experiential anarchy. The application of meaning, however misguided or inaccurate, creates order in an environment in which there would otherwise be emotional chaos.

This may explain why CMC participants create meaning, but not how it happens. The mechanics of applied meaning in CMC are similar to those used in speech. Just as it is impossible to speak without expression, it is impossible to read without expression. This is because reading is basically silent speaking. Readers imbue text with voice tones as the words they read are recreated in their minds. This tone indicates how they have interpretted what they have read.

There are different degrees to which this happens. Reading a newspaper, which is supposed to be a dispassionate, objective representation of the truth, produces less dynamic silent voice inflection than a computer conference, which is an attempt to approximate conversation, a communication form heavily dependent upon meta-messages for success. Computer conference participants will imbue conference messages as they read them (as well as while they write them, but this is a topic for another paper) with a tone of voice that fits their perception of the sender.

This may explain the mechanics of how meaning is created, but it leads to yet another, deeper question: how do we choose the inspiration that drives our interpretation of messages in a flat medium? This happens in a number of ways.

Although CMC does not carry meta-information very well, participants can make the job of interpretting electronic messages easier for themselves. Overt statements like, "I am angry..." can certainly help readers understand the words that follow. But it tells us less than we may think. In a face-to-face or phone environment we can sense fine gradations of anger, all of which carry unique kinds of qualitative information. We are left to wonder in a computer conference, is the person slightly miffed? positively irate? just in a bad mood? And so on. Thus, an announcement of anger is helpful but inherently vague.

Meaning can also be conveyed through symbols. The lack of meta- messages in CMC gave rise to the sideways symbol set which includes, for examples:

> :-) to denote "just joking,"
> ;-) to denote a person winking which further denotes a hint of sarcasm,
> 8-0 to denote disbelief, and so on.

The use of this symbol set is an attempt by on-line community members to regain what they miss about earlier communication systems [Levinson, 1990], namely the ability to create clear, shared meta-messages. These too are helpful but often as vague as overt textual statements like, "I am angry."

In the absence of any explicit guide for interpretation, such as the use of symbols or explicit expression, participants will imbue a statement like, "Sure, that makes sense..." with the tone, and thus the meaning, that builds on previous knowledge of the sender. If on-line participants know each other off-line, they will extend that relationship into a computer conference. This allows conversational tones that ordinarily don't translate well among strangers in a computer conference, like subtlety and sarcasm, to be conveyed among people who understand each other within the context of communication systems which are more information-rich. If participants know each other only on-line, meaning can still be inferred if enough computer conference experience has accumulated to allow them to "read" each other in a conference environment. This is

particularly true if participants carry on a meta-discussion, that is, a discussion about how they are discussing things.

Relying on previous experience with a conference participant carries more risk than we might presume. The sender may not use the phrase, "Sure, that makes sense..." the same way each time, or may use it in a way that s/he feels the receiver will understand it. Because participants presume to understand what each other means in these circumstances, they create meta-messages on an unconscious, often unshared basis without feeling a need to check for accuracy. This can often lead to confusion and/or back peddling: "You thought I was mad when I said that (in a computer conference)? No, I was laughing at the time, honest!"

If there is no previous relationship to draw on, readers will imbue messages with some meaning, however unrelated it may be to the intentions of the sender. Perhaps, "Sure, that makes sense..." is a popular colloquialism that generally means "That doesn't make any sense." Perhaps a reader heard it recently in a movie and related to it for some reason. Whatever the inspiration, in supplying the meta-information needed to make a communication whole they create a reflection of themselves. This is important enough that it is worth re-stating: in the absence of information to guide our interpretation of electronic messages, the meaning we bring to them is in many cases a statement about how we feel about ourselves.

Compounding the problems associated with CMC's lack of meta- information is the fact that computer conferencing feels more interactive than it really is. Very rarely does it occur on a real-time, synchronous basis. Instead it blends spontaneous and reflective asynchronous interactivity. Participants will often answer messages immediately after reading them, as though the words were just spoken to them in a real-time conversation. (In the PortaCOM conferencing system these often come in the form of comments, and share the same subject line as the message to which they are reacting.) Thus participants will use their first impressions of what they feel a sender means, as they do in most other communication systems. In so doing, readers often interpret messages in the context of their own understanding, not the author's, and thus outside the realm of a shared meta-understanding. These spontaneous interactions are then often followed by new, more reflective messages, usually related but not directly attached to a previous message. In the PortaCOM conferencing system these are often, but not necessarily, new notices, that use a new subject line.

How do we bring any of this to bear of the quality of a computer conference? In PortaCOM, the correct use of comments vs new notices as described above can be helpful. It can also be helpful to make CMC participants aware of the nature of the medium in which they are involved by encouraging them to develop a meta-perspective of the computer conferencing environment.

One exercise I used to promote this awareness asked students to express in a computer conference the following four emotions: joy, anger, attention-demanding, and disgust. They were not allowed to use the typical symbols, like :-) and 8-0, but were allowed to create their own. The following week they were asked to reflect on their experience and conference about the flatness of the medium as a positive and/or negative attribute.

The assignment was difficult and students were quick to tell me so. Most students commented on how hard it was "push feelings through a computer screen," especially when they weren't actually experiencing them. They also said it was equally hard to pick up the feelings expressed by others, unless the feeling was overtly identified by the sender, which some of them did. This identification became the meta-message.

But at the same time, the students came to understand that the medium's lack of emotional malleability was simultaneously one of its strengths. The flatness of the environment forced participants to express themselves

as clearly as possible in order to minimize misinterpretation, that is, to minimize the dependence on meta-messages. The conferencing environment also encouraged a mind-to-mind connection that might not be so easy face-to-face or on the phone. To some participants it seemed like a relief to be in an emotional void for awhile. The issues, not the people, became the focus. Meta-messages became more abstract, less contextual and in some ways, less necessary.

ITEM 10.

ABOUT THE JOURNAL
from the editor

WHAT IS THE ONLINE JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION ?

[What follows is an excerpt from the first issue of the Journal.]

This first issue will be primarily concerned with the Journal itself. Once we provide an idea of the Journal's identity and direction, we hope you will contribute to this rapidly growing field of education and communication.

THE MEDIUM

We want short contributions, 4 screens maximum. Rather than trying to compete with a paper-based magazine which does a much better job of presenting long articles, we want contributions that present overview information. Based upon information gleaned in contributions, readers can directly contact the author for more details.

THE MESSAGE

The issues that the Journal is concerned with fall into four basic content areas:

1. Content Area #1- Distance Education

    The Journal is interested in distance education as the organized method of reaching geographically disadvantaged learners, whether K-12, post secondary, or general enrichment students. Areas of interest include:

    - delivery technologies,
    - pedagogy,
    - cross cultural issues implicit in wide area education delivery,
    - distance education projects that you are involved with,
    - announcements, workshops, or programs of study,
    - anything else regarding the theory and practice of distance education.

2. Content Area #2- Distance Communications

    The Journal recognizes that education encompasses a broad area of experience and that distance education includes distance communications that fall outside the domain of formal learning.

The Journal welcomes contributions that deal with serving people at a distance who aren't necessarily associated with a learning institution. The Journal welcomes information about, for examples:

- public radio and television efforts to promote cultural awareness,
- governmental efforts to inform a distant public about social issues,
- or the many training programs run by private business to upgrade employee skills.

3. Content Area #3- Telecommunications in Education

Once the distance education infrastructure is solidly in place, local learners will want to tap into it, because they simply prefer learning in a decentralized setting or because they want to expand their learning opportunities and resources beyond those immediately available to them. This phenomenon, which we call 'bringing distance education home,' will grow in the coming years and we look forward to hearing from people about telecommunications in education, as a tool or a content area.

4. Content Area #4- Cross Cultural Communication Efforts
Particularly Between the US and the USSR

The Journal is interested in projects concerned with overcoming cultural barriers through the use of electronic communication. The Journal particularly looks forward to contributions concerning:

- efforts to improve electronic communication between the USSR and the US
- international electronic conferences
- cultural domination through the inappropriate use of media
- the use of telecommunications to promote understanding of the human condition

To subscribe to The Online Journal of Distance Education and Communication, send the following command to LISTSERV@UWAVM :

SUB DISTED your_full_name

All contributions should be sent to JADIST@ALASKA

Any other questions about DISTED can be sent to:

Jason B. Ohler, Editor
JFJBO@ALASKA
or
Paul J. Coffin
JSPJC@ALASKA

Disclaimer: The above were the opinions of the individual contributors and in no way reflect the views of the University of Alaska.

End of the Online Journal of Distance Education & Communication