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WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE EDUCATOR?

Drawn from his years of speaking with instructors, Edward H. Ladon ("'High Touch' in a 'High Tech' World: Strategies for Individualizing Online Learning," *eCollege eNewsletter*, vol. III, issue 4, April 18, 2002) shares what he thinks makes a successful online teacher/mentor:

- -- "They provide a safe climate. They recognize that many anxious new online learners need some reassurance."
- -- "They invite input regarding the goals and agenda of the course."
- -- "They provide much individualized feedback through email, in threaded discussions, as well as various other course communication tools."
- -- "They connect learners with one another."

The complete article is available at http://www.ecollege.com/educator/Resources_edvoice.html

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FACULTY COPYRIGHT OWNERSHIP POLICIES

"Over the past few years, several converging developments have caused institutions to reconsider faculty ownership as the model for all types of faculty-created works. First, faculty are creating new types of works, such as online courses and digital courseware, and universities are questioning whether institutional interests are well served if faculty hold the copyright on these works. Second, since many of the courses may have commercial potential, the institution may want not only to continue using the copyrighted work internally, but also to share in the proceeds from a commercialized course. Third, faculty members often need increased assistance from the university--such as programming help, video production assistance, and computer support-to develop these courses or to produce digital

instructional materials."

In light of these trends, Laura N. Gasaway, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Professor of Law and Director of the Law Library, suggests that colleges and universities consider reviewing their current copyright ownership policies. In her article, "Drafting a Faculty Copyright Ownership Policy" (*The Technology Source*, March/April 2002), Gasaway discusses the content of a policy and the review and implementation processes. The article is available at http://ts.mivu.org/default.asp?show=article&id=982

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DO ONLINE COURSE DROP-OUT RATES MATTER?

In "Do Not Pass Go" by Steve Alexander (*OnlineLearning Magazine*, vol. 6, no. 3, March 2002, pp. 14-16) writes that a "recent study of 4,100 online learners [in corporate universities] showed course completion rates of 30 percent, or a drop-out rate of 70 percent. This rate is far higher than the classroom drop-out rate of 15 percent, according to the study. . . . Why do so many people leave online courses without finishing them? Some learning professionals argue that people drop out because most e-classes are too long and boring. Others, however, say that's the wrong question." In many cases, completion rates don't matter; students may opt to drop out because they learned what they needed to know and don't feel compelled to go beyond that point. The article is available on the Web at http://www.onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearning/magazine/article_display.jsp? http://www.onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearning/magazine/article_display.jsp? http://www.onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearning/magazine/article_display.jsp? http://www.onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearning/magazine/article_display.jsp? http://www.onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearning/magazine/article_display.jsp? http://www.onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearningmag.com/onlinelearning

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In "Improving Student Performance in Distance Learning Courses" (*T.H.E. Journal*, vol. 29, no. 9, April 2002), Judy A. Serwatka, Professor in the Information Systems and Computer Programming Department, Purdue University Calumet, describes some problems and solutions to retaining online students and helping them achieve success. The article is available at http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A4002.cfm

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Subscriptions are free to qualified educators in the U.S. Subscription information is available at http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/subscription/default.cfm

EDUCAUSE REVIEW ANNOUNCES NEW E-CONTENT COLUMN

The March/April issue of *EDUCAUSE Review* premiers a new department, "E-Content," edited by Deanna B. Marcum, President of the Council on Library and Information Resources. "E-Content" will "focus on how higher education institutions can create, organize, sustain, and evaluate electronic content of value to students, faculty, and scholars. . . . The overall goal of the department is to encourage and enhance collaboration in econtent development among librarians, IT staff, teaching faculty, and others with roles in making scholarly resources available to campus communities." The first "E-Content" offering is available in PDF format at http://www.educause.edu/pub/er/erm02/erm022w.asp

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Articles from current and back issues are available on the Web at http://www.educause.edu/pub/er/erm.html

SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY IN EDUCATION

"There is a long-standing debate among scholars, policy makers, and others about the nature and value of scientific research in education and the extent to which it has produced the kind of cumulative knowledge expected of scientific endeavors." The National Research Council's Committee on Scientific Principles for Education Research contributes to this debate through a study to "review and synthesize recent literature on the science and practice of scientific educational research and [to] consider how to support high quality science in a federal education research agency."

The committee sought answers to three main questions:

- (1) "What are the principles of scientific quality in education research?" Finding an answer to this question spawned further questions to be answered: "How much good research has been produced? Why isn't there more good research? How could more good research be generated?"
- (2) "How can a federal research agency promote and protect scientific quality in the education research it supports?"
- (3) "How can research-based knowledge in education accumulate?" "The committee considered the roles of the professional research community, the practitioner communities, and the federal government."

The study's report, *Scientific Inquiry in Education* (Washington: National Academy Press, 2002; ISBN: 0-309-08291-9) is available on the Web at http://www.nap.edu/books/0309082919/html/

2001 U.S. EDUCATION STATISTICS

On March 1, 2002, the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) published the 2001 edition of the *Digest of Education Statistics*. The Digest "provides a compilation of statistical information covering the broad field of education from prekindergarten through graduate school. Topics in

the Digest include: the number of schools and colleges; teachers; enrollments; graduates; educational attainment; finances; federal funds for education; employment and income of graduates; libraries; technology; and international comparisons." The Digest is available, at no cost, in PDF format, at http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2002130

NCES is the primary U.S. agency for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the United States and other countries. For more information about NCES and their other reports, link to http://nces.ed.gov/

LEARNING TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS AND SCORM

The need for, and the development of, standards "indicates that a particular process or technology is maturing and has achieved a degree of commercial success, such that there is a need for standards compliance. Standards provide a measure of quality assurance and build consensus among stakeholders regarding accepted norms for compliance and criteria for certification" (Sonwalkar, *Syllabus*, vol. 15, no. 8, March 2002, p. 26). Standards are still evolving in the field of learning technology through the efforts of several organizations. One of the products of these efforts is SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model). SCORM is not itself a standard, but, rather, is a set of interrelated technical specifications that can be applied to courseware development to "enable the reuse of Web-based learning content across multiple environments and products." SCORM was developed by Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL), which was started by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy in 1997.

For more information about Advanced Distributed Learning, link to http://www.adlnet.org/

To learn more about SCORM and activities to establish learning technology standards, here are some current readings:

The MASIE Center's e-Learning Consortium organized and facilitated a group of learning professionals who worked together for several months to generate a collection of information "to help 'the average person' understand the rationale, development, and implication of learning standards and to accelerate their adoption." The group's report, "Making Sense of Learning Specifications & Standards: A Decision Maker's Guide to their Adoption," is available at no cost on the Web in PDF format at http://www.masie.com/standards/

The MASIE Center is a thinktank dedicated to exploration and research on how new technologies, such as the Internet and wireless communications, can be used by people and organizations to deliver training, learning, collaboration, and better ways of working. For more information link to http://www.masie.com/

In his two-part article "Demystifying Learning Technology Standards," Nishikant Sonwalkar, principal educational architect at MIT's Educational Media Creation Center, discusses the evolution of learning technology standards and identifies key standards-promoting organizations -- Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL), IMS Global Learning Consortium Inc., and Aviation Industry CBT Committee (AICC). Sonwalkar uses the SCORM specifications as an example of a standard that can be applied to courseware development. SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model). Both parts of the article are available on the Web:

"Demystifying Learning Technology Standards Part I: Development and Evolution" *Syllabus*, vol. 15, no. 8, March 2002, pp. 26-29. http://www.syllabus.com/syllabusmagazine/article.asp?id=6134

"Demystifying Learning Technology Standards Part II: Acceptance and Implementation"

Syllabus, vol. 15, no. 9, April 2002, pp. 14-16.

http://www.syllabus.com/syllabusmagazine/article.asp?id=6240

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Recommended Reading

"Recommended Reading" lists items that have been recommended to me or that *Infobits* readers have found particularly interesting and/or useful, including books, articles, and websites published by *Infobits* subscribers. Send your recommendations to kotlas@email.unc.edu for possible inclusion in this column.

Infobits subscriber Arun-Kumar Tripathi recommends this book:

On the Internet: Thinking in Action

By Hubert Dreyfus

New York: Routledge Press, 2001

ISBN: 0415228077

More information: http://www.routledge-ny.com/books.cfm?isbn=0415228077

"Drawing on philosophers such as Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the latest book by Hubert Dreyfus examines in detail the various perspectives of the Net through the eyes of a philosopher. In his criticism, Dreyfus explains that, in spite of its attraction, the more one lives one's life through the Net, the more one loses a sense of what is relevant, and so faces the problem of finding the information one is seeking."

-- from a review by Arun-Kumar Tripathi in *Ubiquity* magazine http://www.acm.org/ubiquity/book reviews/a tripathi 2.html

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