

### About INFOBITS

*Infobits* is an electronic service of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ITS Teaching and Learning's Center for Instructional Technology. Each month the CIT's Information Resources Consultant monitors and selects from a number of information and instructional technology sources that come to her attention and provides brief notes for electronic dissemination to educators.

[Evaluation Strategies for Distance Education](#)

[Free Online Assessment Tool](#)

[Embarrassment and IT in Higher Education](#)

[Articles on Technologies for Education and Learning](#)

[New Science and Technology Reports for Education Community](#)

[Instructional Design Expertise Sought](#)

[Recommended Reading](#)

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### EVALUATION STRATEGIES FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

"The many factors involved in the success of distance offerings makes the creation of a comprehensive evaluation plan a complex and daunting task. Unfortunately, what may seem the most logical approach to determining effectiveness is often theoretically unsound. For example, comparing student achievement between distance and face-to-face courses may seem a simple solution, yet the design is flawed for a number of reasons. However, theoretically sound approaches do exist for determining the effectiveness of learning systems, along with many different methods for obtaining answers to the relevant questions." In "Measuring Success: Evaluation Strategies for Distance Education" (*EDUCAUSE Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2002, pp. 20-26), Virginia Tech faculty Barbara Lockee, Mike Moore, and John Burton explain the factors to consider when evaluating distance education (DE) programs. Sharing the experience gained from DE evaluations at Virginia Tech, they provide guidance to readers who want to set up evaluation plans at their institutions. The article is available online (in PDF format) at <http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/eqm0213.pdf>

*EDUCAUSE Quarterly* (formerly *CAUSE/EFFECT*), a peer-reviewed journal published by EDUCAUSE, covers planning, developing, managing, using, and evaluating information resources and technology in higher education. For more information, contact EDUCAUSE, 1150 18th Street, NW, Suite 1010, Washington, DC 20036 USA; tel: 202-872-4200; fax: 202-872-4318; email: [info@educause.edu](mailto:info@educause.edu); Web: <http://www.educause.edu/pub/eq/>

EDUCAUSE is a nonprofit association whose mission is to advance higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology. The current membership comprises more than 1,900 colleges, universities, and educational organizations, including 200 corporations, with 15,000 active members. EDUCAUSE has offices in Boulder, CO, and Washington, DC. Learn more about EDUCAUSE at <http://www.educause.edu/>.

For more on DE evaluation, see "Relevant Assessment Strategies for Online Colleges & Universities" (*USDLA Journal*, vol. 16, no. 1, February 2002) by Brent Muirhead who teaches in the Master of Arts in

Education (MAED) program in curriculum and technology for the University of Phoenix Online (UOP). The article is available online at [http://www.usdla.org/html/journal/FEB02\\_Issue/article04.html](http://www.usdla.org/html/journal/FEB02_Issue/article04.html)

*USDLA Journal* [ISSN 1537-5080] (formerly titled *Ed at a Distance*) is a refereed journal of the United States Distance Learning Association. Current and back issues are available on the Web at <http://www.usdla.org/html/resources/usdlaJournal/currentIssues.htm>

USDLA is a non-profit organization, founded in 1987 as the leading organization serving the distance learning community. The USDLA promotes the development and application of distance learning for education and training. USDLA represents nearly 2500 members involved with pre-K through 12 education, higher education, continuing education, home schooling, corporate training, telemedicine and military and government training. For more information contact: USDLA, 140 Gould Street, Suite 200B, Needham, MA 02494 USA; tel: 800-275-5162; fax: 781-453-2389; email: [information@usdla.org](mailto:information@usdla.org); Web: <http://www.usdla.org/>

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## FREE ONLINE ASSESSMENT TOOL

Bruce Ravelli, an instructor of sociology at Mount Royal College, Calgary, Canada, has developed a student assessment tool known as the Free Assessment Summary Tool, or FAST. FAST "allows students to anonymously submit feedback about their course and/or instructor. The data goes directly and only to individual teachers. It allows instructors to open an active, ongoing dialogue with their students about the course, content, instruction and the learning process." Rather than relegating evaluations to the end of the semester, instructors can use the tool to get and apply student feedback throughout the course term. The tool lets instructors build their surveys on the Web; results are returned in Excel format for ease of data manipulation and tabulation. For more information about FAST and to use the tool, see <http://www.getfast.ca/>

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## EMBARRASSMENT AND IT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

"What would those responsible for technology be embarrassed to admit that they couldn't provide for some of their people?" In "Achieving the Embarrassment Level" (*Syllabus*, vol. 15, no. 6, January 2002, pp. 24-25) Steven W. Gilbert provides an interesting checklist of the "Minimum Technology for Faculty at a Mainstream University." The article is available online at <http://www.syllabus.com/syllabusmagazine/article.asp?id=5919>

*Syllabus* [ISSN 1089-5914] is published monthly by 101communications, LLC. Annual subscriptions are free to individuals who work in colleges, universities, and high schools in the U.S. Contact Syllabus Press, 345 Northlake Drive, San Jose, CA 95117-1261 USA; tel: 408-261-7200; fax: 408-261-7280; email: [info@syllabus.com](mailto:info@syllabus.com); Web: <http://www.syllabus.com/>

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## ARTICLES ON TECHNOLOGIES FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

The theme for the January-March 2002 issue of *TechKnowLogia* is "Technologies for Education and Learning." Articles include:

"Solving the Connectivity Problem," by Heather E. Hudson, Professor and Director, Telecommunications Management and Policy Program, University of San Francisco  
Article describes different connectivity options: terrestrial wireless, satellite technologies, wireline technologies, and other technologies.

"Getting a School On-line in a Developing Country: Common Mistakes, Technology Options and Costs," by Mike Trucano and Robert Hawkins, World Links

Article provides a blueprint for school officials and planners to determine the connectivity options and costs associated with getting (and keeping) schools connected.

"ThinkCycle at MIT: Sharing Distributed Design Knowledge for Open Collaborative Design," by Nitin Sawhney, Saul Griffith, Yael Maguire, and Timothy Prester, MIT

ThinkCycle is a student-led initiative at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) that seeks to develop design pedagogy and collaborative tools to address critical design challenges by working closely with universities and organizations worldwide.

"ICTs in African Schools: A Multi-Media Approach for Enhancing Learning & Teaching," by Shafika Issacs, SchoolNet Africa

SchoolNet Africa is a network of organizations that promote education through the use of ICTs (information and communication technologies) in African countries, in partnership with a range of global, regional and local organizations.

"Designed for the Dumpster, Outdated Computers Bring Hope and Progress to Disadvantaged Communities," by John Thomas, Executive Director, The CURE Network, Inc.

Article explains how to start a computer recycling program.

The entire issue is available on the Web at <http://www.techknowlogia.org/>

*TechKnowLogia* is published bimonthly by Knowledge Enterprise, Inc., 9926 Courthouse Woods Court, Vienna, VA 22181-6019 USA; fax: 703-242-2279; email: [techknowlogia@knowledgeenterprise.org](mailto:techknowlogia@knowledgeenterprise.org); Web: <http://www.techknowlogia.org/>

Publication is in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Subscriptions are free, but readers must first register to gain access to articles. Readers will then be notified by email when new issues are published.

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## NEW SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REPORTS FOR EDUCATION COMMUNITY

As part of the NSDL (National Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Digital Library) project, the Internet Scout Project announced the publication of three new, bi-weekly online reports:

-- NSDL Scout Report for Life Sciences: Biology, Zoology, Ecology, Botany, and other Life Science topics;

-- NSDL Scout Report for Physical Sciences: Geology, Chemistry, Astronomy, Physics, and other Physical Science topics;

-- NSDL Report for Math, Engineering, and Technology: Industrial Engineering, Calculus, Algebra, Geometry, Civil Engineering, Applied Mathematics, Environmental Engineering, Computer Sciences, Human Factors, Hardware, and Software, and related topics.

For more details about these reports, see: <http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/nsdl-reports/>

To subscribe to the reports, see: <http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/nsdl-reports/subscribe.html>

The Internet Scout Project is located in the Department of Computer Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and is sponsored by the National Science Foundation to provide timely information to the education community about valuable Internet resources. Daily and weekly updates are offered for K-12 and higher education faculty, staff, and students, as well as interested members of the general public. For more information about all the activities of the Project, link to <http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/>

The National Science, Mathematics, Engineering, and Technology Education Digital Library (NSDL) is currently under construction with funding from the National Science Foundation. The NSDL will offer, via the Internet, high-quality materials for science, mathematics, engineering, and technology education. Its initial release is scheduled for Fall 2002. For more information, link to <http://nsdl.nsf.gov/>

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## INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN EXPERTISE SOUGHT

"Instructional Design Bibliography" (<http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/irg-22.html>) is one of the documents in the UNC-Chapel Hill Center for Instructional Technology's information resource guides publication series. (See <http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/> for the complete list.) This bibliography, last revised in July 1997, is in need of updating. If you have instructional design expertise and have some suggestions for resources (books, articles, etc.) that should be added to the document, contact Carolyn Kotlas at [kotlas@email.unc.edu](mailto:kotlas@email.unc.edu).

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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](mailto:kotlas@email.unc.edu) for possible inclusion in this column.

A new book, published by EDUCAUSE and NACUBO, addresses technology issues related to portals and their implications for the culture, business, organization, and policies of the institution. *Web Portals & Higher Education: Technology to Make IT Personal* is written by Richard N. Katz and a group of top leaders in higher education. To learn more about this publication or to order it online, visit <http://www.educause.edu/pub/pubs.html>