

... From the Editors

A letter from the editors of the *Sloan-C View*

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary Sloan-C International Conference on Asynchronous Learning Networks, this issue reports some perspectives from Sloan-C members on design, virtual worlds, students, faculty and retention.

David Cillay, Director of Director of Special Projects for Washington State University, considers the promise of Virtual Worlds and invites you to a session at the 10th Sloan-C International Conference on ALN.

Judith Boettcher of [Designing for Learning](#) lists course design tips you can use right away.

Reuven Aviv of the Open University of Israel provides an analysis of student testimonials provided by Sloan-C listserv members .

In *Hot Off the Blog*, **Ray Schroeder** of the University of Illinois Springfield reports on hot topics—from promotion and tenure considerations to reconceptualizing the digital divide in education.

Effective marketing tops the list of member interests, according to a recent Sloan-C survey. Thus, a seminar with time for asynchronous discussion with colleagues, [MARKETING ONLINE PROGRAMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION](#), is now open for registration with activities beginning November 16.

Sloan-C's online workshops and seminars are a natural springboard for networking, communities of inquiry, special interest groups, and greater collaboration across courses, programs, schools and nations. As ALN and Sloan-C grow, there are many interests that, when organized, can leverage our collective brain power.

For these purposes, Sloan-C researcher/practitioners identified hot topics for inter-institutional research. To see the topics and to add your own, please take a 2-minute online Sloan-C survey at <http://www.sloanconsortium.org/sig-survey/survey.htm>.

We look forward to seeing you online, and in person at the 10th Sloan-C International Conference on ALN: The Power of Online Learning—From Innovation to the Mainstream in Orlando, Florida, November 12-14, 2004. Please register early to save your place at a pre-conference workshop, [Building the Sloan-C Communities of Inquiry](#) on Friday, November 12 from 1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. and at the ALN 2004 Interest Roundtables on Saturday, November 13, 4:15 p.m.–5:00 p.m. We will organize topics that include: (1) what special interest groups should do, (2) what funding is needed, (3) types of deliverables: e.g., books, workshops, conference sessions and more. We will create taxonomy of online learning and frame a common language that will help widen access to learning. For more details about the conference, see <http://www.sloan-c.org/info/vconf.asp>.

We hope you will visit Sloan-C soon and often.

... for the Sloan Consortium

Frank Mayadas, John Bourne and Janet Moore

The purpose of the Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C) is to help learning organizations continually improve the quality, scale, and breadth of their online programs according to their own distinctive missions, so that education will become a part of everyday life, accessible and affordable for anyone, anywhere, at any time, in a wide variety of disciplines. You are welcome to join Sloan-C:

<http://www.sloan-c.org>

Your thoughts and opinions

are highly regarded at the Sloan Consortium. Sloan-C requests your feedback to improve this publication (the Sloan-C View). Please take a couple minutes to finish this [short survey](#).

Center for Academic Transformation A New Seminar Series

Increasing Success for Underserved Students: Redesigning Introductory Courses

Increased access to American higher education has made our institutions more diverse. If we do not also increase the success rate for students who have previously been underserved—adult students, students of color and low income students—access can become a revolving door. Successful completion of introductory courses is critical for first-year students, but typical failure rates in them contribute heavily to overall institutional drop-out rates between the first and second year.

The Program in Course Redesign has demonstrated that it is possible to increase student success while reducing instructional costs in first-year courses. These seminars will focus on what specific techniques used in that program led to increased student success and retention among underserved students. Faculty members from four institutions will discuss the varied methods that were used to achieve better learning at reduced costs with an emphasis on the specific approaches that fostered greater learning among underserved students.

These seminars provide a unique opportunity for you to:

- ~ Learn firsthand how to increase student success and retention among underserved students: adults, students of color, and low-income students.
- ~ Talk with experienced faculty from multiple institutions about how their redesign decisions led to greater student learning.
- ~ Find out how to design learning environments using technology that will increase student success by tapping the expertise of those who have done it.

To be held on:

- ~ January 28, 2005 in Orlando, FL
- ~ March 18, 2005 in Phoenix, AZ
- ~ May 20, 2005 in Chicago, IL

For further information and registration materials, please visit <http://www.center.rpi.edu/LForum/LdfWrkSe.html>.

With support from Lumina Foundation for Education.

Opportunities: Virtual Reality Worlds

David Cillay
Director of Special Projects
Washington State University

Part simulation, part game, part animation, part magic, virtual reality worlds are a welcome addition to online collaboration tools.

Virtual reality worlds, computer games, simulations, and animations can be powerful learning tools for active, engaged learning with visually rich hands-on experiences, trial and error activities, and virtual participation in historical events. Online virtual-reality worlds offer educators new opportunities to connect with their students. Via their personal avatars, visitors may enter a museum, a college campus, a chemistry lab, a space-age building, other planets or galaxies. Participants are free to navigate, communicate, access resources, and in some cases manipulate the environment as they choose.



[Georgia Tech University School of Literature, Communication and Culture](#), a virtual world for learners

Like a traditional campus, a virtual world can house courses in many disciplines. Georgia Tech's virtual world, for example, supports learners in their first-year writing courses. Builders (instructors and students) can add and remove resources, construct obstacles, challenges and passageways, and congregate in focused and abstract groups. They can create 3-D representations of instructional design models, the flow of a musical score, a potential chemical reaction, or architectural blueprints and geometrical shapes. The human body, a cell, a nuclear reactor, a volcano, can all become themed based classroom worlds.

In November, at the Sloan-C conference in Orlando, we will explore the potential of virtual reality worlds and their impact on learning. We will examine current practice and explore the wealth of opportunities. The workshop will demonstrate how to access, navigate, and interact in a v-r world, and consider ways to individualize and personalize learning.

Teaching and Learning with 3-D Educational Simulations

**Saturday, November 13, Session 2, Salon 5,
9:45a.m. - 11:00a.m.**

Your thoughts and opinions are highly regarded at the Sloan Consortium. Sloan-C requests your feedback to improve this publication (the Sloan-C View). Please take a couple minutes to finish this [short survey](#).



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Marketing Online Programs in Online Education

brought to you by the Sloan Consortium

Sponsored by: **eLearners.com**

Are you looking for the answer to any of these questions:

- Why has marketing become such an important topic in higher ed?
- Is quality important to the students that you are trying to recruit?
- What marketing tools are most effective?
- What is different in marketing for traditional programs vs online programs?

Join Sloan-C this November to participate in a seminar addressing these important marketing questions and more

Sign up soon!
Registration ends
November 8!

Dates:

Designed to fit your schedule, starting Nov. 16

Pricing:

\$90 - \$180 (depending on Sloan-C membership level)

www.sloan-c.org/info/novseminar.asp

In partnership with: **UMassOnline & Eduventures**

3. Envision how the learner is interacting with the content. What is going on inside the learner's head, while the learner is reading, writing, discussing, listening, presenting?

4. Envision the context and the environment in which the learner is learning. Where is the learner doing the work and experiencing the joy of learning? With what tools, resources, and with whom is the learner doing the learning? Is the learner working individually or with a group, face-to-face or using remote "you are there" technologies?

5. Identify three levels of course knowledge, skills and attitudes: core knowledge, useful knowledge, and customized/advanced knowledge, including challenging unsolved problems.

6. Provide a rich set of resources to accommodate customized and advanced learning. Enlist learners in finding, recommending and assisting in developing a rich database of learning resources.

7. Design the communication flow and pattern for the course that is a network of communications between faculty and students, and so the faculty member is not the hub of the communication flow.

8. Design for a balance of the three dialogues — faculty to student dialogue; student to student dialogue and student to resource dialogue — and a balance of synchronous-asynchronous activities.

9. Design assessment concurrently with the design of learning events.

10. Estimate the amount of time required for students to learn the core knowledge so that students can balance life and learning. However, devise challenging problems, because all things being more or less equal, the more time students are interacting with the content the more useful knowledge they develop.

If you'd like to add your favorite, please send a note to publisher@sloan-c.org.

Judith V. Boettcher, Author and consultant. Designing for Learning, and the University of Florida: judith@designingforlearning.info.

Judith is the coauthor of the second edition of *The Faculty Guide for Moving Teaching and Learning to the Web*, available from the League for Innovation in November, 2004.

Ten Advanced Instructional Design Tips — Is Your Favorite Here?

Most faculty are well-versed in the basics of instructional design. The Instructional Design 101 question — What knowledge, skills and attitudes will your students develop over a three-credit course of approximately 135 hours of effort?— has been widely disseminated.

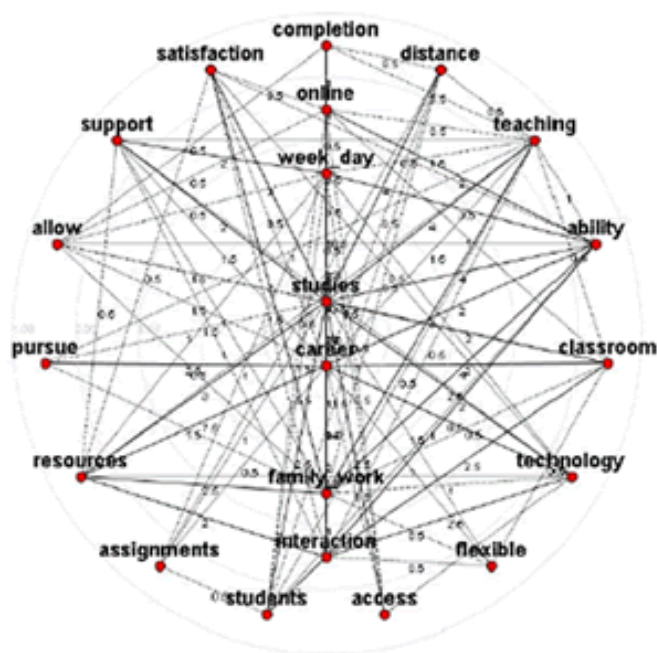
Now is a good time to put a little spark in your instructional design skills with some advanced instructional design tips. These are tips inspired by meditations on the writings of Russian-born philosopher Lev Vygotsky, the timeless writings of John Dewey, and results from recent learning and brain research. One of these tips might be your favorite!

1. Envision your course as a series of instructional events. The success of each of these events depends on the input and interaction of the four basic elements of a teaching and learning experience. These four elements are easily remembered with the acronym, LEMKE — the learner (Le), the faculty member or mentor (M), the knowledge or content to be acquired (K) and the environment (E). Use LEMKE as a checklist to review your teaching and learning plans!

2. Envision the role of the faculty member as the "director" of the learning experience. The director determines the structure and most of the objectives for the event, but may be explicitly present at a small percentage (20%?) of the events.

Why do students take online courses?

Reuven Aviv of the Open University of Israel provides a topographic map of concepts learners cite as reasons they appreciate online education. The most frequent concepts appear in the center of the map.



Click image to enlarge.

Excerpted from "Concept Network Analysis of Students' quotes on Asynchronous Learning Networks," a work in progress, 2004.



**The Tenth Sloan-C
International Conference**
on Asynchronous Learning Networks (ALN)
*The Power of Online Learning:
From Innovation to the Mainstream*

November 12 - 14, 2004
Orlando, Florida - Rosen Centre Hotel

Be sure to sign up soon - the
conference is this month!
Registration Fee: \$420

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trusted source of
information.

www.sloan-c.org/vcorner



by Ray Schroeder

This month we are looking at a range of hot topics from around the world relating to online education, ranging from promotion and tenure considerations to reconceptualizing the digital divide in education.

Faculty & Technology: Rewarding TET - David Starrett, Campus-Technology — This article marks one of the first in the newly-named *Campus Technology* (formerly called *Syllabus*). David Starrett goes into considerable detail in suggesting ways to address what can be done to level the playing field for faculty members who invest heavily in online learning.

Just Released! - The Sloan Consortium's newest publication, *Elements of Quality Online Education: Into the Mainstream, Wisdom from the Sloan Consortium*, is a companion to the Volume 5 book advertised below. For more information and to order this new book, please visit <http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/books/wisdom.asp>. A free PDF summary is also available for download on this page.

Elements of Quality Online Education
Into the Mainstream

Edited by *John Bourne and Janet C. Moore*

Newest Sloan-C Book & CD-ROM
Special Pricing: Buy both and receive a 20% discount!

Sloan-C is now offering the 5th volume of the Sloan-C Book Series. This year the research reports come alive as the researchers themselves present the findings of their research in 14 informative video presentations (on CD-ROM). If you are a member and purchase the book and CD-ROM together, you will receive 20% off the entire package!*

***If you are a member already, this discount is in addition to the discount you would already receive (50% for Premium Members/20% for Trial Members)**

Please visit www.sloan-c.org/info/vol5.asp for book and CD-ROM descriptions

Free PDF Condensed version is also available for download at www.sloan-c.org/info/vnovvol5.asp

Volume 5 in the Sloan-C Series

The Sloan Consortium
A Consortium of Institutions and Organizations
Committed to Quality Online Education

Asynchronous Web Discussions in Teacher Training Courses: Promoting Collaborative Learning—or Not? - Sigrun Biesenbach-Lucas, AACEJ — Over the past few years, asynchronous web-based technologies have been examined for their usefulness in promoting collaborative learning among university students. Variations in implementation of this technology will determine to what extent students' learning is actually collaborative. This article discusses curricular adaptations made in the integration of an asynchronous discussion board assignment in graduate level teacher training courses over a five-semester period. Based on the formats that were found to promote collaborative learning most successfully, conclusions about a recommended asynchronous web discussion assignment are presented.

A View from the Trenches: E-learning Entrepreneur Matthew Pittinsky Talks About the Latest Trends - U.S. News — Matthew Pittinsky, 32, is cofounder and chairman of Blackboard Inc., which went public in June and whose E-learning software is now used by more than 2,000 colleges, schools, and companies worldwide. In his spare time, he's also pursuing a Ph.D. in the sociology of education at Teachers College, Columbia University, with a particular interest in how online and in-class peer relationships influence student achievement. Pittinsky, who eventually hopes to add teaching and research to his Blackboard responsibilities, recently shared his perspectives on the future—and past—of E-learning.

E-learning and Universities: What Roberto Maragliano Thinks - Elearning Europa — Professor of Educational Technologies Roberto Maragliano responds from Rome to many of the very same questions that are posed in this country: why are online course completion rates low, does e-learning really work, and what are the best pedagogical approaches online. His up-front responses are refreshing and hold true even across the Atlantic.

The Digital Divide (DD): A Reconceptualization for Educators - Vernon Harper, ETR — The author discusses the popularized notion of the digital divide (DD), as a lack of access to information technology for specific groups. Yet educators must address greater social digital divide, including motivational barriers, knowledge and skill barriers, content barriers, and social network barriers.

Each month, we will share selected items that have recently been posted at the Online Learning Update blog, which provides daily summaries of news and journal articles in the field with links to the complete articles. You can always see the latest items, and find many more articles posted seven days a week at the [Online Learning Update blog](#). Until next time, I'll see you online!

~ray



THE SLOAN CONSORTIUM
A Consortium of Institutions and
Organizations Committed to Quality Online Education

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If you know of, or are hosting, an event that should be listed on the Sloan-C View Calendar, please send the details of the event and url to publisher@sloan-c.org.

CALENDAR

Sloan-C: Marketing Online Programs in Online Education

Date: Starts November 16
Location: Online
URL: <http://www.sloan-c.org/info/vnovseminar.asp>

This online workshop from the Sloan Consortium will help answer important marketing questions. Please see our ad on [page 4](#).

League for Innovation's 2004 Conference on Information Technology

Date: November 7–10, 2004
Location: Tampa, FL
URL: <http://www.league.org/2004cit/>

A diverse program and cutting edge exposition exploring the intelligent application of information technology in community and technical colleges.

The 10th Sloan-C International Conference on Asynchronous Learning Networks—The Power of Online Learning: From Innovation to the Mainstream

Date: November 12-14, 2004
Location: Orlando, FL
URL: <http://www.sloan-c.org/info/vconf.asp>

Mark your calendars to attend this anniversary event! Don't forget to register for Sloan-C's preconference workshop, [Building the Sloan-C Communities of Inquiry](#).

Beyond the Comfort Zone: Ascilite 21st Annual Conference

Date: December 5-8, 2004
Location: Perth, Western Australia
URL: <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/perth04/>

For more information, contact [Rob Phillips \(conference convenor\)](#)

The 2004 Conference will be the Australasian region's premier event for lecturers, trainers and researchers concerned with all aspects of educational technology and computer mediated learning in tertiary and post school education and training. Call for presentations.

CADE-ACED: 2005 International Conference

Date: May 7-11, 2005
Location: Vancouver, Canada
URL: <http://www.cade-aced.ca>

The Canadian Association for Distance Education (CADE-ACED) & Simon Fraser University are proud to announce the 2005 International Conference.