

## PERSPECTIVES FROM GOING THE DISTANCE: GLOBAL GRADUATE E-LEARNING

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*Distance Education, Distance Learning, On-Line Curriculum, and E-learning* are a few of the more recognized terms that consistently represent the delivery of higher education opportunities via the Internet. From e-mail to Web boards to Web sites and chat rooms to instant messaging, faculty continue to struggle to find optimum verbal communication frameworks via a non-verbal medium – the Internet.

In a quest to optimize, Arbaugh and Hornik (2002) extended Chickering and Gamson's *Seven Principles of Good Practice in Education* to Web-based MBA courses. Their intent was to assess perceived learning and satisfaction among students and faculty. They drew upon a preponderance of research that has provoked exhaustive investigations of learning styles among U.S. students. The results suggest that several of the tenants of Chickering and Gamson were not being actualized.

While institutions and faculty have established solid models and technological infrastructures for delivering undergraduate education, they have also added graduate degree programs and *gone global*. As a result, new issues have surfaced for non-verbal e-learning. For example, the following concerns need to be addressed; diversity in culture, language, and learning styles among foreign students. While English is perceived to be the accepted language of international business, English is not necessarily the preferred language of global education via the Internet. In turn, educational outcomes for students and faculty have become more difficult to assess. (Masterson, Christophel, & Zitzman 1994). English speaking faculty now have to consider the modification of their presentation styles to fit their

audiences. Furthermore, students are expected to adjust their learning styles from those learned within their own countries and cultures.

Drawing on their extensive experience in higher education, distance education, and teaching international students in both a traditional institutional environment and via the Internet, the panelists discuss the pitfalls and pitfalls of intercultural, interactive graduate education.

#### References:

Arbaugh, J. B. and Hornik, S. C., 2002. Predictors of Perceived learning and Satisfaction in Web-based MBA Courses: A Test and Extension of Chickering and Gamson's (1987) *Seven Principles of Good Practice in Education*. Paper Presented at 33<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting of the Decision Sciences Institute.

Masterson, J. T., Christophel, D. M., and Zitzman, C. D. 1994. Communication, Culture, and the Classroom. *The Florida Communication Journal* (20), 2, 46-51.