

# ***REDESIGNING GRADUATE EDUCATION IN INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY Making Room for Distance Education***

**Michael Simonson**

*Co-editor*

Distance Education is becoming a core area in many instructional technology graduate programs. A recent study by Deniz Eseryel, Mary Bludnicki, and Phil Doughty of Syracuse University (2004) examined the evolution of graduate programs in instructional technology and attempted to identify trends and changes in course offerings. Their study was presented at the 2003 Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology held in Anaheim.

Because the authors felt that instructional technology is “constantly expanding, and fast-changing” they conducted a review of a recent edition of *Peterson’s Graduate Programs in Business, Education, Health, Information Studies, Law & Social Work*. Forty-five graduate programs in the United States were identified and had their curricula evaluated. The results of this analysis make interesting reading.

Eight concentration areas were identified. The eight areas each included a number of sub-categories of topics. Seven of the eight major concentrations were:

1. Process

2. Technology
3. Training
4. K-12 Education
5. Learning
6. Library Media
7. Others

These seven are fairly obvious and traditional. What was interesting was the addition of Distance Education as an eighth major area of concentration.

The authors went on to review a list of issues of concern for the leading graduate programs they examined. The list of critical issues included:

- program emphasis
- resources needed to support the program
- structure of the program
- context of program emphasis, such as K-12 Education vs. Government
- Process of instruction, including distance-delivered instruction
- Roles of those involved in programs.

This research study attempted to critically analyze the programs that prepare the field’s

professionals. One question that was not answered was whether the changes in the field were driving changes in programs, or if program changes were influencing the field.

At any rate, it is obvious that distance education, as a field, has passed almost un-noticed another milestone—the milestone of acceptance as a critical concept taught regularly as a part of traditional graduate programs in instructional technology.

Finally, the editors of the *Quarterly Review of Distance Education* would like to thank the guest editors for this issue, Scott Schaffer and Doug Leigh. Their efforts have produced an

outstanding collection of articles for our readers to review.

### **REFERENCE**

- Eseryel, D., Bludnicki, M., & Doughty, P. (2004). Redesigning graduate programs in instructional design and technology: Issues, challenges & trends. In M. Simonson (Ed.), *Proceedings of Selected Papers Presented at the 2003 Annual Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology—Anaheim, CA* (pp. 111-118). North Miami Beach, FL: Nova Southeastern University.