

PART 1

The Rise of Distance Education

THE WAY TO DISTANCE EDUCATION

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REVELATIONS

Distance education in social work is not driven by technology. It is driven by the profession's obligation to educate social workers in a way that will insure their ability to fulfill needed services to persons and communities effectively. It is driven by a recognition of the lack of educational opportunities in more rural areas; and by an ethical imperative to provide opportunities for persons to become social workers who otherwise might be excluded by diversity, economic, or geographic restraints.

I strongly opposed the addition of an interactive distance education (DE) component to our graduate social-work program when faculty was introduced to the idea. Although not quite certain, I believe I was the only objector, or at least the only vocal objector. The presentation explaining the need to offer a social work education to students in locations as far away as 400 miles, during a time of severe shortage of professionally educated social workers in California, was well done. I believed, however, it was not the best way to educate for the profession. I had been involved in the study of computers since the early 70's and (Abels, 1972) and taught in graduate and undergraduate social work programs for about 25 years. I believed that the face-to-face interaction and relationships developed with the teacher and students and among the students would be lost in DE, even in an in-

teractive program. I know these relationships were important steps in the transition from student to professional. Of course, one has to have an educational theory that incorporates these ideas as sound educational principles. I assume most educators do (Perlman, 1967; Reynolds, 1965; Schwartz, 1961).

As the faculty decision-making process evolved, I felt like a character in a melodrama: protecting the students against the foes of good education; I went down in flames. The path that led to my changing my mind, turning me into a supporter of DE, is not the subject of this book, although some reasons reveal themselves in my chapter on teaching in the DE program. Suffice it to say, it began with my contact with the DE students. My conflict is noted here so readers understand that similar to others, including perhaps some of the readers, I questioned the use of this teaching approach in a profession committed to service, connections with persons, and as someone whose own teachers had emphasized the importance of personal relationships and connections in practice and in teaching. All things being equal, I still carry a lingering bias for the traditional classroom's face-to-face-education approach, but unfortunately we live in a society and time when all things are not equal. This is particularly true of students' educational opportunities. The struggle surrounding affirmative action, admission requirements at the college level, and rising tuition costs are three examples of this. The unevenness of education at elementary and high-school levels, which depress some young persons' visions to further their education, is still another.

DISTANCE EDUCATION AS SOCIAL ACCESS AND EQUALITY

As I taught, becoming entwined and engaged in the DE program, talking to the students and some of their families, I came to see how distance education could put into action the profession's mission. DE in social work is not only a medium for the teaching of social work; it also could be a significant force in fulfilling social work's commitment to equality and social justice. By providing a medium for access to persons otherwise unable to further their education, we come closer to meeting our obligation to those left out or marginalized in our society for whatever the reason. In discussing the history of DE, Peters (as cited in Buchanan, 2000) suggests that persons participated in early distance education programs for several reasons:

1. They were denied the opportunity to attend regular schools to acquire the desired qualification;
2. They were poor and socially disadvantaged;
3. They were in ill health [due to the effects of industrialized labor];
4. They were incarcerated;
5. They lived in sparsely settled areas, too far from the university or other educational institution. (p.1)

While these reasons are historically embedded they are relevant to current efforts in the educational milieu. There are two other reasons significant for DE: First, a shortage of professionally trained social workers in many areas, particularly in distant rural areas; and second, because there is a professional obligation to work for the integration of disenfranchised persons. Many groups have been left out of the opportunity structure for geographic and more devious reasons. The lack of options in education extends their disenfranchisement. Almost all of the considerations that Peters (1994) identifies are now, to more or less degree, addressed by some form of DE program.

Social work's historic vision and understanding of the importance of social connections in both social work practice and education make the task more complex than might be required by other professional programs. A general overview of the definition of DE reveals some of the ambiguities DE presents to the social work worldview. Distance education has been defined as the teaching of content in situations where the teacher and the learner are separated by distance, and at times by time. Although there are a number ways DE is implemented, the most advanced programs provide real-time, interactive distance education for the most part by television augmented by e-mail between students and teacher. Though the delivery systems may differ, we face the same questions in teaching through DE as we do in more traditional classroom contexts. How are the connections to be nurtured? How are concepts of relationships enhanced? These questions are made more complex by the lack of face-to-face communication.

What is it we are trying to learn and teach in the profession of social work? How is it to be accomplished? These questions have stirred our thinking since the early days when the idea first emerged that our profession had something unique to offer. To suggest an easy answer to these questions, or to say that we have arrived at the best way to accomplish our goals is not the purpose of this book. Our purpose is to bring to the reader what one approach to learning, DE, has to offer the profession's efforts at quality education, and to examine both its

strengths and limitations. To do so we decided to look from the inside, to listen to the voices of those who helped create distance-learning programs. Some are administrators, some the cadre of persons employed to keep the programs on course. How did the site coordinators deal with the teaching, guiding, and political situations faced by their role as distance “guide.” How did the faculty deal with the power that television provided? In essence, how does one approach a role that never existed before and for which there are no guidelines? DE is a very new way of learning that presents new challenges along with unexpected opportunities. We hear the voices of students with their own hopes, and doubts, about their own futures.

The authors in this collection share their vision, struggles, and hopes as they work to help students transform themselves into professional social workers. The authors present the workings of distance education as seen by the major actors in this still new and transforming social development. Faculty and students alike are all impacted by the external forces of history, educational theory, technology, myths, research, evaluations, and the politics of community and funding that set some parameters for structure and hopeful success of distance education programs.

ROOTS AND BRANCHES

The education of social workers illustrates that the profession’s experience is forever changing, reflecting the context of the times and the difficulties in keeping up with the speed of the change. How different from our early beginnings, when the demands of immigration, poverty, and child neglect called forth volunteers to serve with no more preparation than a belief in people and service. While the problems are similar, increasing calls for training led to sporadic courses; increased knowledge about human behavior and mental health concerns led to the development of courses on the college level and eventually to professional training. Social problems such as immigration, war, the Depression; climatic catastrophes such as the dust bowls; and prejudice and injustice led to actions that called for persons who could deal with such concerns with responses grounded in current knowledge and technology. The foundation of the first social work school supported by the Charity Organizations Society of New York was the culmination of Mary Richmond’s efforts to develop a scientific social work. We are now at a point where universities are offering

courses on how to teach in distance education (Carnevale, 2003c).

Technology altered many of our views of the possible. And the demands of the possible are that we use current technology on behalf of the people we are committed to serve. If we are to be able to offer needed services by increasing the number of social workers through DE, we are obliged to make use of it—not for the sake of its newness, but for the sake of our clients. This holds true, however, only if it provides professionals with the education they must have to function at the highest levels, an education comparable with traditionally developed accredited programs. The *number* of social workers is not our major concern, although it is an important one. Rather, the concern for quality is vital and the major reason leading to the concerns about comparable professional education addressed by a number of authors in this volume. It is difficult to address in a scientific manner because of the variety of students, educational techniques, and technology used, fieldwork situations and community supports, and the nature of the educational services available to the students. Although possible to establish that the class content and delivery is comparable, the long-term impact of the experience on the students and their ability to practice comparably is more difficult to confirm. All of this is further complicated by the lack of evidence-based practice that may become a major concern for the study of DE in time.

It is not only the pace of change, but the technological and pedagogical differences that raise concern about committing to DE. Psychological factors operate as well, for example, the concept of primacy. The way we first learned to do something is usually the way we continue to do it, unless we learn a better way. These psychological factors act as blocks to innovation, particularly innovation that carries the possible consequences of massive change in professional education. Visualize in your mind's eye the process of DE and then bring forth a picture of your own educational experience. DE is different from the way most of us obtained our social work education. We were schooled to understand the importance of relationship and connections. The personal, face-to-face, intimate interest of an honored, receptive teacher or mentor is a vestigial memory for us in the profession, and not only in social work. A "Mr. Chips" is in the collective memories of most students fortunate enough to have had a mentor-friend relationship. The idea of losing that valuable teaching and learning experience requires openness to the ideas of distance learning when the closest we come to that historical meaningful experience is a conversation on the Web, or viewing that teacher on the TV

screen. Certainly that is a loss, which those who are developing distance-learning programs must appreciate and try to mediate. I recall the excitement of the faculty at one of the graduate programs when we found out that our new building had a lounge where students and faculty could have coffee together and chat. Many mutual learnings came out of that experience.

Another concern is economic. It's possible that DE programs are packaged so the instructor might be completely out of the picture in future efforts. A session or entire course can be recorded over the interactive TV and then morphed into presenting the televised session, perhaps followed by discussion in the classroom by a proctor. Thus a change from synchronous learning, where the learner and instructor can interact in real time, will change into asynchronous learning where there is no real-time communication; the student becomes a passive viewer of a presenter (Belanger & Jordan, 2000). The concern is not only with the quality of such education, or that classes only get a particular professor's view locally and perhaps nationally, but could also lead to elimination of faculty positions. There is an increasing pressure on the universities to lower costs; one way is to reduce the number of faculty.

In the DE programs discussed in this book, only interactive television (ITV) programs are highlighted, but it is important to know that other models are possible, and in times of acute financial concerns will be advocated. Prior to ITV there was one way broadcasting of a live program, with responses made by e-mail to the instructor. In some cases the interaction is through e-mail only. A number of classes are offered at universities in this manner. The consequences of all DE programs, the ethics, and the future are discussed in the last chapter.

Educators long advocated that class content is influenced by the nature of the culture and by the group dynamics taking place in the classroom. Some even have advocated that the classroom is a group and work with that in mind. Human-services educators in professions like mental health long understood the special importance of classroom dynamics, or the culture of the class in impacting and being impacted by the content being taught. Two things are vital to the learning experience in a social work class: the content and the teacher's ability to help the student by exemplifying concern for the student and a willingness to accept certain interactions (Northern, 1988; Perlman, 1967; Reynolds, 1965). Many educators maintain that the teacher-student relationship is a paramount factor in the teacher-learner context, and this factor has strong bearing on learning in DE.

Can learning in such a situation be equal or rather comparable to the more traditional teaching situation? These questions are of major concern to many social work educators (Regan chapter) and accrediting agencies such as the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which is seeking to gather the information to shape its decisions on distance education. "The Council on Social Work Education has around fourteen master's programs that deliver a majority of their courses using distance education methodologies, with a few that have been in existence for almost 10 years" (CSWE, personal communication, 2003).

One cannot underestimate the magnitude of the change that distance education can bring to the profession and to education in general. Some maintain we became more scientific with the publication of Mary Richmond's *Social Diagnosis* in 1917. Bertha Reynolds pointed out that it took time for the profession to move from a belief that "the main orientation of social work is not authoritative and moralistic but scientific and related to the modern world" (Reynolds, 1965, p. 20). Similarly it will take time for some in the educational profession to accept that distance education and the technology involved are increasingly part of the modern world and that degrees awarded to social workers through distance reflect sound education programs.

Just as the worker asks what is to be "understood" and "done" to help a client, similar questions must be asked of traditional education and the distance learning experience: What is to be understood if we are to help the student learn? What do we need to understand about distance education if we are to make it most useful? What role can distance education play in fulfilling our mission as reflected by the American creed of equality of opportunity, and by Nathan Cohen's idea that social work is humanism in action (Cohen, 1958). Both imply the importance of freedom and equality in our society, proclaiming that all persons should have access to the opportunity to fulfill themselves completely as human beings. Education has always been a major force in realizing this dream of equal opportunity. Not only is one's education level related to economics and status but also to a person's advances in many social contexts and to personal visions. To what degree does TV permit the class opportunities to question the instructor, to discuss common concerns or idiosyncratic positions, and to influence their own education? I believe DE places more power and control in the hands of the teacher but can be used for the benefit of students if the teacher structures material in ways to permit student exploration.

THE OPEN SOCIETY

College education is still out of reach for many in this country, particularly those with the least economic and social capital, as well as for most persons in developing nations. Yet the prospects of higher education have brightened. The evolution of educational technology provides an opportunity for many people to continue their education at home, in areas where televisions and computers are scarce or only provided in centralized sites (Carnevale, 2003a; 2003b)

The terms and definitions *distance education* and *distance learning* are used interchangeably. It emphasizes the idea that the learner and the teacher are separated usually by an extended distance that prohibits live face-to-face contact. Belanger and Jordan (2000) state, "Distance learning can be thought of as education or training delivered to individuals who are geographically dispersed or separated by physical distance from the instructor using computer and telecommunication facilities" (p. 6). In many social work programs where the telecommunication is interactive television, we would use the word *learning* rather than *training*.

Distance education has changed from correspondence courses to advanced degrees often offered by prestigious institutions. Historically, distance education opened up college and technical training for countless numbers of persons. But only in the past decade has it become available worldwide and in a multitude of forms, stimulated by video technology, computer capabilities, and the creativeness of Internet users.

Some early efforts at distance education were meant to broaden one's thinking, or train for specific occupations such as stenography or mechanics, fields that generally did not require higher education. These were home-study courses, offered by private companies. The first university-level correspondence course was given by the University of Chicago in 1892, but it was not until the 1950s that universities started to broadcast college credit courses via television. "Western Reserve University was the first to offer a continuous series of such courses beginning in 1951" (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, and Zvacek, 2000). It was evident that persons wanted and needed to learn, and ways could be found to serve that need outside the traditional teacher-student-in-classroom format. Economics was not always the reason for not attending college—disability, the need to care for someone at home, or isolation may account for some not attending—it was the lack of funds, and for poor persons and for women,

closed doors limited the advantages and fulfillment that college might provide.

Some who saw this as a shortcoming and dangerous to a democratic society recognized the unjustness and consequences of lack of access to education, but little was done to remedy the situation. Change in the education system was slow, in part because of discrimination, economic inequality, and the availability of low-skilled jobs. It was not until the end of World War II that the education system became more open. The GI Bill provided the opportunity for many who could not attend college prior to their service to obtain the funds for college. The next change occurred with the Supreme Court's *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision on separate but equal education which made colleges open their doors. Additional pressures came in the late 1960s and 1970s with the War on Poverty, when the demands were taken to the streets for equal treatment, equal access to jobs, and equal access to education. Where certain fields such as teaching, nursing, and social work had historically been slightly more open to minorities, more lucrative careers such as law, medicine, and business administration soon drew an increasing number of women and minorities.

University education became the doorway to increased earning and prestige. Demand taxed the institutions that tried to meet the crush as best they could. Realizing that the number wanting education far outpaced classroom seats and that many people needed to work full time, Great Britain initiated a wondrous nationwide distance education program.

In part, the innovators were able to do this because of technology and because of their creative ability to overcome the political obstacles that such a mammoth undertaking must have created. In a sense they were the pacesetters for a massive but quality effort to open up advanced education to all who wanted it.

Verduin and Clark (1991) note, "A decade after its initial operations in 1971, the Open University of the United Kingdom enrolled 60,000 to 70,000 undergraduates a year" (p. 18). It became a model for distance education around the world.

THE CHANGED WORLD OF EDUCATION

The landscape of education has always changed, but never as quickly as in the past decade. The ecliptic change has been brought on by the

ubiquitousness of television, the computer, and the synergistic conviviality they provide for the distribution of technology when combined with World Wide Web access. At this moment you are, in fact, participating in distance education. Certainly one of the great technologies (discovered by a number of nations) was the creation of language and writing, and then the technology of the printing press that permitted writing to be duplicated en masse. We might assume that before written language, all teaching and learning took place in person with a teacher and a learner.

Writing created distance education, and books were the “computer” displays by which the learner was able to use the knowledge of a person who was not in direct contact. Today, the TV, computer screen, or audio recording is the display, and radio and cassette tapes were (and still are) distance learning for many of us.

One might just visualize Socrates sitting before a group of students and teaching in order to appreciate the leap we are about to take: to teach worldwide and interact with and be observed by as many students as care to listen and view us.

Distance education, as we will discuss it, relates to the ability of a person in one part of the world to transmit the material to be learned to the expected learners in a distant part of the world by oral, visual, and written means. Distance isn't the most vital factor, since that, as we discussed earlier, is not necessarily new. What is important is that the learning is in real time—instantaneous—and the interaction and response is also instantaneous. For those accustomed to in-class learning with instructors present, absence from the actual face-to-face situation is a crucial differential factor. That the lack of face-to-face, personal connections between teacher and student might retard the learning experience has often been seen as a deterrent to distance education, particularly in fields in which person-to-person connections have been a historical and vital part of the learning-teaching experience. In this chapter we will discuss some of the general perspectives and conundrums that distance education entails, but at one point we will start down the road of social work education. Though we cannot claim to be impartial in our exposition, we will endeavor to let the data speak for itself. In this case the data will be the planners, the teachers, the students, and those charged with carrying out the programs in some way. The major emphasis in this book is on programs that permit the degree to be given to the student based on a total access to distance education and a fieldwork experience. Although there will be incursions into mixed programs of faculty teaching at

distant sites, and some limited courses available to students in “traditional” programs, the major effort will be in examining distance education as the total source for the graduate social-work degree. We will also be dealing with the teaching of specific material related to the profession of social work, the special teaching concerns, and explore the technologies that provide the utmost potential for insuring that the course work is not only equivalent to what students would achieve in a classroom with the instructor, but that also leads to similar learning results and consequences.

THE MYSTIQUE OF TECHNOLOGICALLY MEDIATED INSTRUCTION

Don't let the word *technology* get in the way of your reading on. Most people involved in DE are not experts in the technical aspects of the equipment or in the science of computer and television transmission. They have little to do with the hardware of distance learning. This aspect of distance education is usually taken care of by technicians who are well trained in the technology, although you may develop this expertise in time if so desired. The technology that social work needs to pay attention to is the science and art of teaching, the connections they make with the students, the way the course is structured, the organizing principles of the course, and the ability to adapt teaching styles to the distance education milieu. Being on TV does make a difference, to the students and to the faculty. Both planners and faculty are faced with the questions of how best to involve the students, how best to present the material, how best to help them help each other learn, and how best to help them use you, the teacher. Most educators have learned how to deal with these concerns through their experience and exploring the research and available material.

Although much of the research in distance education is related to technology, Palloff and Pratt suggest that the research is really related to pedagogy (p. 18). They cite Phipps and Merisotis (1999) whose statement holds just as strongly for social work education:

Although the ostensible purpose of much of the research is to ascertain how technology affects student learning and student satisfaction, many of the results seem to indicate that technology is not nearly as important as other factors, such as learning tasks, learner characteristics, student motivation, and the instructor. The irony is

that the bulk of the research on technology ends up addressing an action that is fundamental to the academy, namely pedagogy—the art of teaching. . . . Any discussion about enhancing the teaching-learning process through technology also has the beneficial effect of improving how students are taught on campus. . . . The key question that needs to be asked is: What is the best way to teach students? (p.18)

There are two matters related to technology, however, that are important. The first is that the equipment needs to be both teacher- and student-friendly; the second, usually in the hands of the planners, is that the technology needs to be close to state of the art, which at this point means the use of interactive video technology. Such technology enables the students and the teacher to see and speak to each other and permits all of the students in different locations to hear the interactions and to interact with each other and with the teacher. The nature of the technology in use becomes a factor of importance to the teacher because it makes certain demands on how they perform in the classroom. For example, in certain classroom installations, the camera may turn to the person(s) speaking the loudest. If the broadcast is to two classes simultaneously, the noisier class may get more interaction time with the teacher. In another class setup, there may not be enough microphones in the class and the students might have to share, limiting the amount of time a student might have or reflect how aggressive a student might be in wanting to respond or question. The teacher has to take this into consideration and turn to his/her attention to the other class, or ask if others have something to say and so forth. The skills of the teacher in such situations may not differ from the approaches used in any classes where such problems are not unusual.

The second technology that the faculty needs to consider is the need to be familiar with the computer and its use in the Web and e-mails. In almost all distance education programs, the e-mail becomes a major source of communication with the students related to questions, follow up, suggestions, support, and clarification. In addition it is also used to communicate with the liaison or faculty at the distant site. Such use is mostly ubiquitous and easily learned by an instructor and student who are not yet familiar with its use. The computer has become what Ivan Illich calls a convivial tool, like the telephone and the cell phone, able to be used by everyone who has access to it (Illich, 1973). Ask your children. Some excellent examples of the uses of computers in our social welfare systems are provided by Harlow and

Webb (2003). There are a number of chapters on information technology, the organization of record material, and the use of the Internet for evidence-based practice. (They deal as well with the dark side of the computer, for example the chapter on Internet child abuse.) Clearly there are many forms of distance education as this volume would suggest, but we have limited our work to interactive television in the classroom, not the vast amount of education one can gather from use of the Internet.

Yes, there are sections in various chapters on technology that discusses some of the technology available and what seems to work best for your specific objectives and the limits of the context. The body of the book, however, focuses on the inside of the experience, the actual experiences of teachers, guides, and planners—the bricks and mortar of teaching in a new context. And, yes, the context is a dynamic that both controls and liberates the degree of freedom available to the teacher and to the students. The question of student-centered versus instructor-centered learning arises again, because the students become very dependent on the instructor whose use of control needs careful consideration. The students are in unknown territory and this gives the instructor a great deal of influence. Yet there is a paradox; although many more of the students in DE are older and have had more practice experience, they see themselves as learners yet also experienced enough to raise issues that may take the focus off the course and the plans the instructor seeks to fulfill.

THE BIG CONCERN: THE DISTANCE EDUCATION CONTRIBUTION

A statement by the Regional Accreditation Commissions related to electronically offered degree programs notes that “technologically mediated instruction rapidly becomes an important component of higher education” (North Central Association of Higher Learning, 2000). Their efforts are to work toward a balance between accountability and innovation. We suggest that there is another factor for the social work profession that must be considered in balance: the mission of the profession to work for social justice and the ability of the profession to offer the training that provides for that accomplishment.

When distance education was first proposed the question of “comparability” was of major concern. Petracchi (in press) notes the following:

Since 1995, when the Commission on Accreditation first began discussions about the accrediting criteria for distance education, the word "comparability" has been lauded as the ultimate criterion for distance education; comparability of teaching and classroom experience for student at remote sites, and comparability of resources for students at remote sites. (p. 344)

One of the vital resources is the availability of adequate field experiences for the distance education student, particularly in rural areas. It is fair to say that the question of comparability still is a vital one. Despite research that suggests there is no difference in students' satisfaction with their fieldwork experiences (McFall & Freddolino, 2000; Petrucchi & Patchner, 2000) a number of students have their field placements for 1 year in the same agencies in which they work, although the assignment may be different. This may impact their responses to questions related to their evaluative responses. In their Michigan University study of field instruction comparing their distance education students with on-campus students, they found that many of the differences reflected a more positive perception among the off campus students. In looking at possible explanations for this, McFall & Freddolino note,

One feasible explanations is that for both of the distance sites this was the first MSW program available to residents close to home. There was a considerable demand for admission to the program; high motivation among the students, agencies, and communities to make the program work; and excitement about being pioneers in a new interactive television approach. Thus there may have been an inclination to see things more positively. *It is also possible that some respondents were afraid to rate these aspects of field instruction more negatively because of a fear that the program might be terminated* [italics added]. By contrast, for the students on campus this was basically the traditional MSW program, dealing with the same instructors and agencies as MSU and other students had before." (p. 302)

Although they were dealing with reactions to field experiences, the implications might also hold true for many fairly new social work distance education programs. In fact, in an earlier article that compared the same reactions to individual courses in the same program as above Freddolino and Sutherland (2000) state,

Unlike Thyer and colleagues (1997), students in distance sites did not report major differences in the classroom environments from

students on campus. *One possible explanation is that the students at the distance sites may have feared that the program would be discontinued if courses did not receive positive ratings* [italics added] (p. 126)

Obviously there is a need for a great deal of further research on the area of comparability. Most of the research has been of a general nature not reflecting the social work profession's special concerns, and there is little replication of even the limited studies, certainly a statement that is true for the profession as a whole.

It is important to note that the first comprehensive distance education program in social work did not begin until the 1980s. This means that there have been only a handful of programs that have completed their programs and graduated students (in MSW programs). Though research has been done on most of these programs, the sample is still too small, too limited in geographic inputs, too often researched by the providers of the service, and not able as yet to be systematically replicated. We are beholden to limited results, but results that all seem to be directed at showing the success and comparability of the learning experience of traditional classroom and distance education. A more comprehensive view of the research on distance education is presented in chapter 8 by Dr. Potts. Perhaps the only real proof of the success of DE will come when we compare the results of practice with clients by DE and by traditionally educated students following their graduation when their practice skills can be assessed.

DISTANCE EDUCATION MODELS

A number of organizations are trying to develop appropriate models for distance education, which some of these are not educational bodies like universities, they see as their responsibility helping peoples, country's rise from poverty, and are influential in the development of social capital (the World Bank). They offer an important service and some of their approaches have value for social work education. We will concentrate, however, on the models offered for university and professional credit. Though a number of universities have developed their singular idiosyncratic models (Potts and Hagan) there are recommendations to establish a template model that could be incorporated with some modifications by most programs. One such effort is reported by Foster and Washington. Five components are included in

their model: (a) accreditation standards compliance, (b) resource requirement, (c) curriculum adaptation, (d) faculty development, and (e) program valuation (p. 148). They maintain that these factors are essential for any effort in the development of a distance education program. The authors go on to discuss each of these items in detail providing a valuable checklist that planners can use as the development evolves. They also maintain that their model is valuable in managing the distance education programs "especially those relying on interactive video technology" (p. 157).

Although theirs is not an actual a model of field practice, McFall and Freddolino developed "action steps" that would serve to meet the fieldwork requirements for students' educational goals in social work distance education programs. These action steps were: developing adequate local resources; creating sensitivity to agency structure and culture; increasing field office resources; and maintaining individual and organizational confidentiality. Each of these actions steps is explicated in depth and together present an excellent guideline for field practice in distance education (2000). Potts and Hagan (2000) suggest a systems model and illustrate its use in a social-work interactional distance education program.

Some of the institutions that have developed DE programs have established formal processes to train the faculty. The University of Pittsburgh has a five step training process, which includes observing a video of the process, a 2-hour workshop, assistance in designing their ITV courses, rehearsal, and observing classes. (CIDDE, 2003).

RESPECT FOR STUDENTS

Some universities have started to help students prepare for the their future classes in DE by furnishing information in the advance of the course. In a piece prepared for the Center of the Study of Bioethics entitled "Technical Requirements for Web Based Coursework" Buchanan (2000) lists what she believes are some of the requirements students are expected to have. These include a personal computer 486 or higher, a later version of Web browser, Windows 98, CD-ROM drive, a minimum 28k modem, and an optional printer. Buchanan also noted the importance of being able to use the Internet and Web-based e-mail.

Buchanan is particularly concerned that there be appropriate resources for the students involve in DE programs and recommends a series of strategies for meeting the needs of students in DE programs.

The strategies run from preparation of course materials, working closely with the librarians involved, and the promotion of interactivity and socialization among students. (Buchanan, 2000).

WHAT LIES AHEAD

We have divided the book into four parts so as to indicate to the reader a general access to topics that might be of interest.

Part 1. The administrative section includes historical efforts and administrative concerns in having DE accepted in our profession. The actual role and experiences of distance-education program administrators, developers, and coordinator are examined.

Part 2 begins with a chapter by Professor Emeritus Frank Raymond, who pioneered distance education in social work. His program was the first in the United States to offer a social work degree through DE. It is important to credit him not only for his foresight, but also for his initiative and ability to overcome the numerous obstacles he faced.

The chapter by Professor Christine Klienpeter illustrates the ups and downs of administering an interactive DE with classes in a number of sites and different universities. Having to negotiate with university officials representing the site's idiosyncratic demands, often from a distance, adds difficulty to the situation. Everyone wants the program, yet not everyone is always on the same page, and some have skipped important pages in their eagerness to start a program. This chapter also includes important information on the type of technology best used for interactive distance education.

Those two chapters are followed by a contribution from a DE liaison, Kathleen Crew. Though not an administrator by intent; Professor Crew served many purposes, from planning to teaching and community resource development. Responsible for dealing with the students on the distant site, she often had to "put out fires" beyond the classroom.

Part 3 deals with the experiences of three teachers in distance education programs. It includes not only their efforts, but the student reactions as well.

Dr. Glezakos highlights how her own experiences influenced her work with the class, their learning, and the appreciation they felt, which led to her being invited by the class and the site university to be their graduation speaker.

I take a slightly different tack, illustrating not only his efforts to

develop connections with the students in the classes and help them connect with each other, but also trying to comprehend a puzzle that led to some of the disconnections between teacher and students in one of the classes. A number of theoretical reasons are presented, leaving the reader to their own reflections. This section also presents some of the voices of the students as they grapple with thoughts of the future.

In **Part 4**, two authors examine some of the research done on distance education. Research and program evaluation are important aspects of the undertaking, particularly since questions are raised as to its comparability with more traditional efforts. These questions continue from its inception. A comprehensive review of distance education results is discussed by Dr. Marilyn Potts, and some of the resistance to distance education is discussed by Professor Jo Ann Regan. Dr. Potts' work with students around the thesis requirement is discussed in the Appendix.

Part 5. The final section deals with the future of DE, the influences that it will have and the possibilities of advanced technology. It also examines some of the emerging problems and ethical concerns that DE may present to the profession and the multifaceted impact of technological efforts to educate students through e-mail and computer-related education.

The compilation aims to present the ins and outs of DE, the teaching experience, the learning experience, and administrative planning, challenges, and constraints. Although we have not tried to cover all of the attempts to deal with distance education—which could include everything from telephone calls to computer chat groups—we have dealt with the most technologically sophisticated and state-of-the-art attempts to help social work students obtain their degrees by distance education. We hope the views presented by people on the line in online education will give a more complete contextual picture of the uniqueness and continuities of social work education through DE and that it will prove helpful to the reader, whether administrator, teacher, student, or educational dreamer.

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