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Editorial

This second issue of 2005 will present the many facet of distance education and goes to show the diversity that exist in this educational strategy. There is still efforts at all levels, from what we term as 'little media' to 'big media'. At the end of the day, it will always be an appropriate blend that will be shaped for the specific need of any particular group of students.

Saraswathi et al. from India gets the issue going by presenting their deployment of a novel satellite-based model of a distance education programme. Other than reaching out to a large number of participants and providing a live two-way interactive classroom environment, the underlying economics that arise out of scaling such a programme was discussed. The authors are confident that the model can be easily adopted by other institutes elsewhere.

Ashok from the Indira Gandhi National Open University tackles the acceptance of online graduate in the job market. This is absolute crucial as the online structure has added another outlet for graduate to the existing mechanisms of conventional teaching (F2F) and conventional distance education (if we call it that now). Although this is a case study from India, I am certain some comparison, say from Canada, would be beneficial. It was found that the majority of the respondents were successful in securing an employment despite early setbacks.

From the University of Botswana, Solomon focused his study on the duration and speed of the presentation in recorded audio productions in a distance education diploma course. I must say I admire the detailed consideration of this study as we tend to take for granted such 'small' issues. It may possibly turn out to be the deciding factor if the audio presentation is too long or too fast; a right put-off to the students. I will let you find out for yourself the result of his study.

Maria Quimbo from Philippines shares with us her study on the causal model of achievement in distance education using the path analysis technique. The two levels of achievement were defined as one that was determined by an achievement test score and the other by the grades of the students. This is new to me. It is important to know the predictors of achievement in distance education in

order to capture a better understanding of the meaning and nature of distance learning achievement.

Hisham et al. from the Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) revealed a number of pertinent research issues in Malaysia. It would take too long for me to review but suffice to say that although I have personally said that distance education can be far superior to conventional teaching when it is pedagogically articulated, it is not without problems. And rightly so, especially when we are dealing human nature. Whatever the case may be, we can only present a favourable, enjoyable and desirable learning environment. The rest is up to the learners.

Soekartawi from SEAMEO SEAMOLEC in Indonesia and faculty from the School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) have jointly conducted a Self-Learning Materials Development workshop in Penang since 2002 with the aim of fostering regional distance learning collaboration through human resource development. The sharing of ideas and experiences between participants would be the quickest way to consolidate the effective and innovative delivery of distance education in the region.

And finally, Nor Aziah et al. from the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) will close with their article entitled 'Matching the learner orientations of Malaysian online learners to their web learning environment'. Need I say more... at the end of the day, it is meeting the learner's modality preferences and learning styles, or as they say, learning orientations that will be the deciding factors in fostering learning.

We have been further enriched by the exciting contributions in this issue. Personally, my view of the concept of transactional distance is continually strengthened by the trend of the contributions where distance is but an incidental consideration and the educational experience is still pedagogy-based.

We meet again in 2006. Take care.

Rozhan Mohammed Idrus
Chief Editor