

Greetings Dear readers of TOJDE,

I am pleased to inform you that in the 7th year of TOJDE is appeared on your screen now as Volume 7, Number: 4. Very much thanks to all of you and TOJDE editorial members once more that we managed to publish TOJDE 25th time, since January 2000.

In this issue we published one notes for Editor, 13 articles, two reviews, news and announcements for our readers. 20 authors from seven different countries are placed in this issue. These published articles are from Bangladesh, Germany, Greece, India, Nigeria, South Korea and Turkey.

In the "Notes for Editor" section, Dr KURT's excutive summary is placed via title "Comparative Analysis f Virtual Education Applications". Dr. Mehmet KURT from Ankara University, Department of Educational Sciences Program of Curriculum and Instruction TURKEY. This summary is his doctorate thesis which is completed on March 2006 at Ankara University. He emphasizes that while in the teaching process they use both synchronous and asynchronous presentation technologies; in order to support course content they use e-mail, web, cd, and course book technologies to provide basic learning environment function; they prefer different environments to cover face to face education needs; they take self learning and collaboration as basis and they take projects and term paper evaluations serious; they mostly prefer multiple choice tests and they usually make virtual courses exams through the internet. Regarding the characteristics of their institutions' applications, the study group have agreed on mostly to connection and being dependent on connection opportunities. A significant difference between their institutions' characteristics and the model for developing computer labs, when they had started to provide virtual lessons and presentation technologies used has been found.

The first article of this issue is coming from Hellenic Open University, GREECE which is written by Paraskevi VASSALA. In his article titled as "The Field Study As an Educational Technique In Open And Distance Learning". His paper examined that no research has been carried out for the possibility of implementation of this technique in Distance Learning nor have any results of such implementation been studied. This paper comprising of three parts contains a general presentation of the field study as a teaching technique in the first part while in the second part the successive stages of development of this technique in Distance Learning are analyzed. Finally, in the third part the students' views of Hellenic Open University on this technique are presented. This Paper has been presented at EDEN 2006 Annual Conference: E-Competences for Life, Employment and Innovation "E" is more! E-learning Enabling Education in Evolving Europe.

Second article is from India and dealt with "Role and Effectiveness of Electronic Media in Higher Education-With Special Reference to Tamilnadu", which is written as a joint article by S. ARULCHELVAN and D. VISWANATHAN from Anna University, INDIA. It is research study which was conducted on the patterns of radio listening among different categories of students such as urban and rural, male and female, distance and regular modes, English and other mediums of various branches of study. Examining notions on the possession, purpose, place, frequency, timing and duration of usage of radio programs in higher education in general and specific educational channel in particular, the study has assessed the outcomes indicated by user-satisfaction on radio. Findings of the study revealed that there is inadequate knowledge among students about the existence of educational radio. Opinions on program quality suggested a number of improvements to be made in order to

enhance the reach of the media. The suggestions include the need to make the programs more interactive, localized and curriculum-based.

In the third article Home-Made learning content management system mentioned by Yavuz AKPINAR and Huseyin SIMSEK, Boğazici University, Faculty of Education, Istanbul, TURKEY. Their paper entitled as "XLearning Object Organization Behaviors in a Home-Made Learning Content Management System". This study designed, implemented and evaluated a learning content management

The 4th articles arrived from Bangladesh Open University on "Developing Course Materials for Open and Distance Learning: BOU Perspective", which is written by Mohammad Habibur RAHMAN, Bangladesh Open University, BANGLADESH. His paper discusses how to design and develop distance learning course materials and how Bangladesh Open University (BOU) adopted a team approach in developing its formal programs.

The fifth article came from Indira Gandhi National Open University, written by Anil K. DIMRI and Anil Kumar MISRA from INDIA, on "Training Programmes for Distance Education Professionals: An Analytical Assessment". This paper seeks to analyze the impact of training programmes on distance education professionals of Indira Gandhi National Open University, (IGNOU). The objective of the paper is to identify the training needs of Distance Education Professionals to manage distance education affairs of IGNOU, to evaluate the effectiveness of existing training programmes, to develop a feasible training and professional development model for distance education Professionals (DEPs) and to suggest initiatives in existing training for the skill development of DEPs for effective career growth and development. And then based on the analysis a workable training model has also been suggested where emphasis on the Common Training Approach (CTA) has been given besides, work specific training. For the overall professional development of DEPs a suitable training strategy has been worked out which ensures training at different strata that includes primary, secondary & tertiary level considering the experience & job requirements of the professionals.

The sixth article which is entitled "A Study of Pre-School Children's School Readiness Related to Scientific Thinking Skills". It is written by Ozgul Polat UNUTKAN, from Marmara University, Istanbul, TURKEY". Her paper is examined that to compare school readiness of children who had pre-school experiences and children without such experiences on the basis of scientific thinking skills. This comparison is held in terms of variables of age, gender, and socio economic status.

The seventh article is came from too far KOREA which is written by Dr. Paum BREEN. He is from Language Center, Kongneung-Do, Nowon Gu, Seoul, REPUBLIC of KOREA. His paper is entitled as "Coming out of the Darkness of the Past". In this paper authors are try to gives one example of an innovative teacher training project where a western university, in Rome, Italy, is selflessly showing their African counterparts, in rural Rwanda, how to become fully autonomous in training their future generations.

The 8th article is arrived to us again from Turkey. The article which is entitled "IDENTIFICATION OF GAS COMPONENTS IN LIGHTER BY GAS CHROMATOGRAPHY: An Experiment for The Undergraduate Instrumental Analysis Laboratory Which Can Be Used With Distance Learning Applications". Written by Soner YAVUZ and Inci MORGIL from Hacettepe University, Faculty of Education, Department of Chemistry Education, Ankara. In their paper indicated that the applications of instrumental analysis lessons, advanced instruments with the needed experiments are needed. During the lessons it is a fact that the more experiments are performed, the more learning will be.

For this reason, experiments that do not last long and should be performed with more simple instruments and that increase students' attention with current events should be developed. It is thought that there is only propane gas in lighters used in daily life. However, in fact, in certain ratios, there are also other gases having similar structure besides propane gas. For these reasons, the identification of gas components in lighter has been thought. To enlighten this situation a simple experiment design has been planned.

Next and the ninth article were sent to TOJDE by Terhemba Nom AMBE-UVA. Title of paper is "Interactivity in distance education: The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) experience". Terhemba Nom AMBE-UVA is from School of Arts and Social Sciences National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The paper represents a study of students' experience of interactivity in distance education programmes at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Through surveys and focus groups with students, facilitators, and administrative support staff, we found out that interactivity is a key determinant of student success rate. Majority of the students are workers in the urban areas who combine "work and learn" which is the motto of NOUN. The survey showed that majority of the students depended on their facilitators as key resource persons and on their peers or study groups both for required and voluntary interactivity to reinforce their learning. This was able to reduce loneliness, boredom and loss of community experienced in distance education. Because NOUN has not completed its Repository, Production, Distribution, and Administration Headquarters (REPRODAHq) and equipped the study centers with up-to-date technological facilities, this frustrated accessibility that is dialectically linked to interactivity.

Next three paper from Turkey. The tenth article is written by Bahar BARAN and Kursat CAGILTAY from Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technology, Faculty of Education Middle East Technical University, Ankara, TURKEY It is titled as "Teachers' Experiences in Online Professional Development Environment ". Their qualitative study aims to explore teachers' opinions on traditional professional development (PD) courses and their experiences from an online course. 10 teachers from a private school participated in an online professional development (PD) course. After completing the course, they evaluated their PD experience. A focus group discussion and individual interviews were performed to collect data. The teachers determined the problems in traditional PD courses and online PD courses. They generally emphasized the lack of practice in both traditional and online PD courses. Further, abundance of theoretical concepts and context independent examples are determined as other problems. They proposed that PD programs should be developed together by both academician and expert teacher.

The eleventh article is written by A. Seda YUCEL from Hacettepe University, Ankara, TURKEY. Her paper topic is on "E-LEARNING APPROACH IN TEACHER TRAINING". Her paper is indicated that a competitive environment is created in education, which leads to sustainable development. With e-learning environments, students could continue the teacher-learner relationship from different places at different times. E-learning terminates the limitation of time and place while providing learning environments with lower expenses. In learning process, the relationship between teacher, learner and peers has great importance. Individual learning is also important, however, the efficiency of learning together could not be avoided. Achievement depends on support and individuals need assistance in learning topics. Therefore, teachers of e-learning programs need to have a serious in-service training; because, many e-learning programs require mutual interaction via technological tools. The word "electronic" as a prefix for e-learning, does not only mean that learning occurs with technological tools but also requires the awareness in developing technologies. So, teachers of e-learning programs need to be trained in information technologies and Internet in order to gather with their students in virtual classrooms.

Additionally, they have to have the ability to administer all applications successfully and to follow the developments in pioneer countries in e-learning and distance learning.

Next article is which numbered 12, from Turkey. Article is entitled as "COMPUTER SIMULATIONS IN SCIENCE EDUCATION: Implications for Distance Education", and written by Dr. Sami SAHIN, Gazi University, Ankara. This paper is a kind of review of the literature about the use of computer simulations in science education. This review examines the types and good examples of computer simulations. Author says that literature review indicated that although computer simulations cannot replace science classroom and laboratory activities completely, they offer various advantages both for classroom and distance education. His paper consists of four parts. The first part describes computer simulations; the second part reviews the benefits in science education; the third part looks for the relation with science process skills; and the last part makes connections with the distance education. The literature suggests that the success of computer simulations use in science education depends on how they incorporated into curriculum and how teacher use it. The most appropriate use of computer simulations seems that use them for a supplementary tools for classroom instruction and laboratory. Multimedia supported, highly interactive, collaborative computer simulations appealing growing interest because of their potentials to supplement constructivist learning. They offer inquiry environments and cognitive tools to scaffold learning and apply problem-solving skills. Computer simulations are good tools to improve students' hypothesis construction, graphic interpretation and prediction skills. The literature review also implied that computer simulations have potential for distance education laboratories. Yet this area is elusive and needs to be researched further.

The thirteenth and last article is from GERMANY which written by Dr. Wolfram LAASER, FernUniversität in Hagen/ZFE. His article is entitled as "Virtual Universities for African and Arab Countries". In his paper, he discusses five of these projects differing in scope, structure and funding namely the Virtual African University, the Avicenna Project, the Virtual Arab University, the Syrian Open University and the proposal for a Virtual University for the Small States. From the analysis of the respective projects some tentative conclusions will be derived.

One of two reviews is conference review which is held by my university titled as 2nd International Open and Distance Learning (IODL) Symposium conducted 13-15 September of 2006, in Eskisehir, Turkey. The paper presentations focusing on the Impact of Contemporary and Emerging Media on Open & Distance Learning shared information about virtual learning. In this context, integration of innovative technologies into classrooms, different levels of interaction in interactive environments, characteristics of online higher education institutions regarding educational technology, and ethical issues in online education were discussed. Throughout the symposium, five workshops, six keynote speeches and 66 papers, which were prepared by more than 150 academicians and practitioners from 23 different countries, reflected remarkable and various views and approaches about open and flexible learning. Besides, all these academic endeavors, 13 educational films were displayed during the symposium. The sessions that addressed the most popular theme: The Evaluation and Research in Open and Distance Learning effectively covered the key issues relating to modern e-learning environments, a variety of agents affecting distance education, measurement and evaluation of effectiveness and efficiency of e-learning systems from a range of perspectives. Majority of our presenters highlighted the importance of the preparation of teachers for technology enriched environments and how vital it is to accomplish an efficient and productive open and distance education.

The reviewed book is entitled as "Advanced Methods in Distance Education: Applications and Practices for Educators, Administrators and Learners". It is designed to be theory to practice, with readers gaining the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in teaching or training using technology-mediated instruction. Major sections include: Foundations of Teaching and Learning at a Distance, Adult Learning, Instructional Design, Technology Knowledge and Skills, Administrative Issues, and Future Directions.

In the other sections are again in the same format as usual as TOJDE's presenting style. News and some announcements are placed in this issue too.

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To receive further information and to send your recommendations and remarks, or to submit articles for consideration, please contact TOJDE Secretariat at the below address or e-mail us to tojde@anadolu.edu.tr

Hope to stay in touch and meeting in our next Issue, in October 2006.

Cordially,
September 30, 2006

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