

A review of the distance education research has been a key part of the rubric development since the inception of Quality Matters. The first QM rubric was supported by a broad compilation of distance education literature and research. Later research was identified to support the updated 2005 rubric.

In preparation for the 2008 update of the rubric, the recent distance education research literature was reviewed with particular focus on hybrid course design. At the same time the literature was surveyed for emerging themes that might relate to online and hybrid course design.

- The following peer reviewed journals were reviewed for years 2006 and 2007:
  - 1) *The American Journal of Distance Education*
  - 2) *Distance Education*
  - 3) *Open Learning*
  - 4) *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*
  - 5) *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*
- Educational databases were searched and led to selected articles in *Educational Technology*, *International Journal on ELearning*, *Educom Review*.
- The Dissertation Abstracts were searched for years 2006 and 2007.

Two new themes emerged from the review. The first theme - implications of Web 2.0 technologies on online course design - was not surprising. The topic seems to dominate discussions in and around the current practice of distance education. Surely, course technology is recognized as one of the eight Quality Matters' standards of quality and a component in the alignment of learning objectives, course materials and resources, learner engagement, and assessment and measurement. But, as Michael G. Moore (2007) reminded recently in his Web 2.0: Does It Really Matter? editorial in *The American Journal of Distance Education*:

The overall effect of the new technology will be negative and counterproductive, if interest in the technology draws attention further from need for reform in the way we design our courses...For example, if a course is taught on an 'island' in Second Life with per-unit learning objectives no better than those found generally in courses offered through web 1.0 technology, we still have an inferior course (p. 182).

A second, related theme - learning preferences of digital natives – was also evident. This is an intriguing issue for future research in course design, but for now, alerts us of the importance of taking a student perspective and challenges us to know the audience for which we are designing our courses.

As noted in the introduction to the previous literature review, this compilation of research is part of a work in progress. It will hopefully serve as a departure point for other interested researchers and practitioners to share with us additional literature which might have been missed.

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