This study investigated sense of community, interaction, and feedback. When these three variables are combined, they equate to what is called the human element. This research analyzed each of the variables independently and combined (the human element) in the traditional classroom environment and the distance learning classroom environment. Sixty six (66) survey participants were used to analyze the results of the study. The investigator utilized non probability sampling to obtain the study participants. The participants were composed mostly of undergraduate students who completed SW 350: Child Welfare at San Francisco State University. A survey instrument was created which was adapted from previous researchers’ tools. The findings of the study indicated that there is no statistically significant difference in the human element in the traditional classroom environment and the distance learning classroom environment. Course format has a statistical significant difference on sense of community. Students’ responses indicate that there is a difference in sense of community in the distance learning
environment and the face-to-face environment. A chi square test was calculated. It concluded that students favored sense of community more in the face-to-face environment rather than the distance learning environment. Course format does not have a statistical significant difference on interaction. Course format does not have a statistical significant difference on feedback.
A COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM AND DISTANCE LEARNING FORMATS IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AMONG STUDENTS AT A STATE UNIVERSITY

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
SEVAUGHN BANKS

WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR., SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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What I take from this process is that I have strength, determination, will, endurance, and perseverance. I understand that the knowledge that I have gained is but a drop in the bucket compared to what I still I have to learn. I am humbled.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The United States and the world at large are currently operating in an era dominated by technology. Millions of people can access unlimited information via the Internet. The limitless availability and accessibility of information via the Internet leads to incredible educational opportunities and potential for social work students, instructors, curricula designers, and universities currently and in the future. Using the Internet to teach and learn is virtually untapped in the field of social work.

The Internet provides consumers, universities, and students with readily available information that can be obtained almost at the speed of light. Technology alters how knowledge is obtained, classified, utilized, and represented; such changes reshape content and delivery of education (Gumport & Chun, 1999). The uses of the Internet for educational purposes have exploded in the United States and throughout the world (see Carneval, 2004; Chang, 2004, Hedberg & Ping, 2004; Mukerji & Tripathi, 2004, and Mangan, 2002).

According to the Office of Technology Assessment (1989), distance-learning is defined as linking the teacher and students in several geographic locations via technology that allows for interaction. A more recent definition of distance-learning from the National Center for Education Statistics is: education or training courses delivered to
remote (off-campus) sites via audio, video (live or prerecorded), or computer
technologies, including both synchronous (i.e. simultaneous) and asynchronous (i.e., not
synchronous) instruction (Tabs, 2003). Porter (2004) describes the difference between
synchronous and asynchronous distance-learning:

Synchronous instruction requires the simultaneous participation of all
students and instructors...Interaction is done in “real time” and has
immediacy. Examples include interactive TV, teleconferencing and
computer conferencing, and Internet chats. Asynchronous instruction
does not require the simultaneous participation of all students and
instructors. Students do not need to be gathered together in the same
location at the same time. Rather, learners may choose their own
instructional time frame and gather learning materials according to their
schedules (p. 137).

Distance-learning education is a great supplement, enhancement, or alternative to the
traditional classroom format because of its flexibility, adaptability, utility, and potential
cost savings.

The educational system in the United States has been criticized for a long time.
Nisbet (1971) concluded:

No one seriously surveying the academic scene today can conclude other
than that the American university is in an exceedingly precarious position.
The luster of even the most historic and distinguished universities is
fading rapidly. For the first time in the history of this country there is
valid reason for wondering whether the university will survive...The blunt
and inescapable fact is, the university in America is in the most critical
condition of its history (p. 197).

Nisbet gives several reasons why he thinks American universities are in such dire
straits. He says that universities do not have the respect of the surrounding community
that they once had. The internal dissolution of university codes and doctrines do not help
with maintaining a respectable reputation in communities. As a result, they do not hold
the same esteem that they once held. Further, he cites loss of respect of the community,
changing social, cultural and political dynamics as having a vital impact on the status of universities. Societal changes cause a more critical analysis of contemporary realities. The changes in the social, cultural, and political landscape influence current student demographics. Student demographics are drastically different in the contemporary educational arena than they were previously. Lastly, he asserts that students (and others) disapprove of the current state of universities and, as a result, do not respect the educational process.

Some universities may be reconsidering their role in educating students. University mission statements may have to be revisited and revised especially as they relate to higher education because of the extreme changes in the way education is delivered. Because universities are experiencing shrinking budgets and resources, they may not be able to provide the best educational experience and outcomes for students. Criticisms from stakeholders, citizens, legislators, governing boards, students, and alumni, feed the dialogue about the relevance of the role and mission of higher education in an era of accountability and decreasing resources (Craig & Laughlin, 2000). Curtailments can also provide powerful incentives for examining new ways of doing things, particularly when those alternatives have been tried elsewhere (Martinez-Brawley, 1995). Distance education serves as an effective alternative to address these problems.

The current educational system is not adequate to prepare students for life before, during, and after college. We are often critical of schools’ processes and values and skeptical about outcomes (Perraton, 2000). According to this author, the system is in need of drastic overhaul and change.
Students graduating from high school are not prepared to face the educational challenges that going to a university likely will bring. Years ago going to college brought with it prestige, privilege, and pride. Nowadays, many Americans aren’t really all that excited about the college experience (Douglas, 1992).

Stein (2003) writes about the impact of preparing teachers separate from the universities in which they work. She says that both society and teachers suffer when teachers are not adequately trained. Consequently, teachers have suffered inferior status, incompetence, loss of dignity and commitment. These features may attribute to their lack of commitment in the classroom and students’ lack of motivation about their educational experiences. The lack of commitment from both teachers and students result in substandard educational experience for students who are focused, determined, and steadfast in obtaining an education.

Some critics espouse that students have not fully realized the educational opportunities available to them. Traditional job opportunities and life style are being questioned by many, an increasing lack of direction among college students has appeared (Levine & Weingart, 1973). The authors surveyed students who were unsure about their professional endeavors after college and questioned their motives for attending college in the first place. They found that students were confused about potential career paths and directionless.

Teachers do always have the same teaching philosophies and principles. In fact, they may be divergently different. Teachers and administrators may not always agree on what constitutes excellence in teaching. Their opinions may be starkly different even when working for the same programs and schools. If the administrators are confused
about what to teach, there is no wonder that students are perplexed about their educational experiences and careers. The differences in teaching practice are even wider (Schaub, 1971).

Students graduate from schools of social work throughout the nation. They take prescribed courses outlined by social work programs and schools. The purpose of social work curricula is to prepare students to become professional social workers, equip them with critical thinking skills and prepare them for working with the disadvantaged, oppressed and the maligned population, and community at large. At the end of their social work student matriculation, they graduate with skills, knowledge, and competencies to work with clients, children and families, groups, and communities. Our job is to ensure that social work students are adequately prepared for social work practice and possess the values necessary to carry out that practice (Cauble & Thurston, 2000).

Stein (2003) offers insight into what social work education provides. He says that:

(social work education) provides an organized approach to the helping process in social casework, and in group work and community organization. We provide well-developed psychological theory, usually with a Freudian orientation. Increasingly...we provide relevant content from the social and biological sciences, background content on history and social welfare programs, exposure to the analysis of social problems, and some fundamentals in administration and research... (p. 80).

"Historically, higher education has been slow to adopt change. The university emerged during medieval times, and because it has not changed dramatically since that time, it in many ways reflects the past" (Gumport & Chum, 1999, p. 389). Social work education is changing. A growing number of higher learning institutions are moving away from traditional classroom settings in exchange for virtual classrooms. One reason
for this phenomenon is an ever-changing worldview that has prompted higher education, business, industry, government, and health care to reengineer the way training and education are delivered (Williams, Paprock & Covington, 1991).

Universities throughout the world understand the importance and utility of the Internet for teaching purposes. The utilization of new technology in the form of video tape, closed circuit T.V. and program instruction have begun to take hold (Stein, 2003) of the educational process. The Internet is a big reason for this change. ‘Distance education’ has become a major form of learning and teaching worldwide (Offir & Lev, 2000).

Computers are a great way to deliver education to students. Computers are great tools that instructors can use to teach course content. Distance education has been primarily concerned with the mechanism for developing and delivering programs to off-campus students (Jamieson, Taylor, Fisher, Trevitt, & Gilding, 2000).

The needs of contemporary students are different from students’ years ago. Current students want the opportunity to attend college and want the college experience to be responsive to their needs. Weedman (1999) purports that for social and economic reasons, students in the 21st century will be increasingly physically separated from both their professors and other students.

The fact that distance-learning is touted as cost beneficial may be very appealing to universities who are suffering financially in times of shrinking resources and budgets. The Internet may be an attractive cost effective tool that universities may depend on more in the future. It costs less to deliver college courses online, on average, than to teach them in a traditional face-to-face environment (Carnevale, 2005).
The Internet allows for radical changes in the way social work classes are taught and received. Wernet, Olliges & Delicath (2000) state that change is attributed to a changing student population, renewed interest in outcomes, and renewed interest in delivery mechanisms.

Correspondence courses, as they were called before the introduction of modern technologies, have been around for a long time. It appears that the integration of technology, particularly distance-learning education into the classroom, is here to stay.

Distance-learning is neither a recent nor a new phenomenon, the development and adoption of sophisticated communication technologies often creates that impression (McGorry, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

Distance-learning is vastly different from the traditional classroom style of teaching where the teacher and students gather in the same physical location. Typically, in the traditional classroom format, the teaching style is didactic. Teachers lecture on and address specific content areas. They give information; communication is characteristically one-way, unless solicited. Distance-learning is one of the most rapidly growing aspects of education and training in the world today (Williams, Paprock & Covington, 1991).

The didactic form of teaching is changing to adapt to contemporary teaching and learning. Thus, the relationships and interactions within the classroom are changing as well. The relationships formed between students and their peers and the relationships formed between students and their instructor are an integral part of the classroom...
dynamics (Chesebro, 2003; Easton, 2003; Mundell, Celene-Martel, Brazunlas, 2003; Visser & Visser, 2000).

Distance-learning can be very interactive, adaptive, and flexible. Learning occurs before the class, during the actual class, and when the student is alone reading, working on assignments, and collaborating with other students. Investigators like Hirumi (2002) recognize other significant interactions that occur between the learner and other human and non-human resources. These interactions result in the acquisition of higher-level cognitive skills and knowledge. Hirumi’s research focuses on the interactivity between students, instructors and non-human elements and will be discussed, in detail, in chapter two.

It is imperative that we look at the dynamics of the relationships and the environments in which relationships are formed between instructors and students and between students and other students. The relationships formed may help future distance-learning course designers develop curriculum that is both technology based and student focused. Most postsecondary schools are moving rapidly toward the use of technology to deliver courses and programs at a distance (Rovai, 2002).

In 1989, the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) was charged by the Committee on Labor and Human Resources to examine distance-learning education. The goal was to see if the technology was a success in improving educational quality for students and enhancement of training for instructors. The government report finds that in some instances, distance-learning has been adopted because it has been shown that students’ educational needs are met. Distance-learning is also a good resource because universities have the ability to share a pool of teachers, thus, potentially decreasing the
cost of bringing in outside experts. The report appeared to have a positive slant in favor of distance-learning education. However, the OTA observed four elements that still pose challenges to distance-learning education. They are: (1) technology barriers, (2) economic barriers, (3) institutional barriers, and (4) policy barriers. They project how the government can address these barriers. The results of which are described in chapter 5, the conclusions and recommendations section of this dissertation.

There are several problems associated with contemporary social work education. Social work is failing to fulfill its professional obligations to people in need, in part because its academic institutions are failing to perform their basic intellectual functions (Epstein, 1995). Social work education does not adequately address the needs of non-traditional students who do not fit the typical traditional student model. It does not address the fact that student demographics are changing, and does not address the changing social, cultural, and political environment. Epstein (2003) gives his concerns about social work education. He strongly feels that there are too many social work programs that do not offer a quality education to students. Further, he believes that the field of social work "ignores scholarship and achievement" (p. 146). According to him, Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programs perpetuate "ignorant" and "unproductive" students. He also feels that curriculum experts perpetrate as such without being challenged to produce scholarly work by the Council on Social Work Education. Therefore, social work education pedagogy should be challenged to ameliorate the problems noted above. Consequently, social work distance-learning should be investigated as a viable alternative to traditional classroom social work education. It is a
practical, flexible, adaptable, and fiscally responsible method that universities use to teach students.

Distance-learning education is growing fast. The traditional classroom education approach is slowly transforming into something that universities and students praise. Technology plays an important role in the transformation process. Universities advertise and promote the computer as an effective way to teach students because of its adaptability for educational purposes.

The method for educating social work students is changing. Major universities in the United States and throughout the world are adapting to change by incorporating an alternative teaching method into their curricula – blended learning (technologies used to supplement the class. A portion of the class is conducted via distance-learning) or fully integrated (80% - 100% of the class is conducted online) distance-learning education (CET, 2005). The computer has emerged as a major force in transforming the educational process.

The human element is an important factor in both the traditional classroom environment and the distance-learning environment. It is a presence, that when present, may contribute to successful matriculation in a course. This study examines how sense of community (care, connectedness, spirit of community, teamwork, isolation, trust, reliance, dependence, and confidence), interaction (student to student, student to instructor, class discussions, instructor encouragement, natural, frequency, and technology), and feedback (response time, constructive feedback, and appropriateness of process) are perceived and interpreted in both learning formats. It is important to understand how students and teachers perceive what impact their presence, interactions,
and feedback have on each other and how that impact influences or detracts from the learning experience.

The investigator defines the human element as an invisible, but very real presence in the classroom, that when combined is exhibited by a series of reciprocal transactions between students and other students and between students and the instructor. Its major components are human contact and interaction. Examples of the human element in the classroom include physical contact, physical proximity, communication, communication style (body language, eye contact, writing style, use of emoticons), communication frequency, interaction, discussion, individual and group dialogue, student feedback (relevancy, clarity, frequency), and instructor feedback (relevancy, clarity, frequency).

The investigator hypothesizes that the human element is more prevalent in distance-learning courses than in the traditional classroom format when a course is carefully planned and executed. Subsequently, courses with a strong human element are more effective than those without.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to compare the traditional classroom environment to the distance-learning environment. It will focus on the relationships formed between and among students, instructors, and learning resources. Specifically, the study will examine students' perceptions of sense of community, interaction, and feedback in the traditional classroom setting and the distance-learning classroom setting. This study will explore and explain whether the human element (sense of community, interaction, feedback) is present in both teaching formats, and whether differences or similarities are significant.
It will attempt to support the hypotheses of the study. Lastly, the study will discuss the implications for social work education and for the field of social work. The findings will be presented to support or refute the hypotheses.

Background of the Study

The lack of central transportation systems spurred the development of the first correspondence courses. The first distance-learning program in the United States began in the 1800s when the postal system delivered teaching texts and lessons to rural learners to acquire skills not taught in public institutions at that time (McGorry, 2003).

Perraton (2000) traces the development of open and distance-learning universities. She cites the British Open University as a pioneer in the development of distance/open learning. The university opened its doors in 1969. The university’s philosophy was that the university should be open to all students no matter the distance they needed to travel to obtain it. During this era, the growth in the number of students outweighed the number of teachers. The Open University was one way to respond to the growing number of students who wanted to attend college and provide flexible, quality education at the same time. The university was effective to students who demanded quality education and beneficial to the university because it could provide education and save money at the same time.

When distance-learning education was first implemented in schools, it was the socially isolated rural schools that benefitted from the technology. Distance-learning education was a helpful tool in bringing together students and teachers separated by
distance. Today, schools in most geographic areas are able and have the capability to take advantage of distance-learning education.

Technology is no longer an elusive term used only in some technical professionals. Contemporary professions use advanced technology to supplement their business processes and educational practices. The technology revolution that has impacted society is now having a dramatic effect on colleges and universities (Havice & Chang, 2002). Technology is in itself a driving force that should be used for the benefit of education (Williams, Paprock & Covington, 1991).

Many may agree that educating students in classrooms is no longer the most effective and efficient way to educate and train students in the twenty first century. Universities across the United States and throughout the world are incorporating distance learning into their curricula.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) recognizes and acknowledges the new challenges that the field of social work education is enduring. The council serves as a model by accepting and supporting technology in the field. According to their 2003 – 2004 annual report, the Council on Social Work Education has started a new process that includes the use of electronic reports and letters by staff in the national office. Additionally, the council attributes the commitment to change to the receptiveness that administrators and staff have for new ideas, change, and growth, key components in accepting advancements in technology. Additionally, the council’s staff shows effort and willingness to try out new procedures in an attempt to obtain more efficient office procedures.
The Council on Social Work Education held its annual program meeting in Anaheim, California, February 27 – March 1, 2004. The theme of the conference was, “Science, Technology, and Social Work in a Global Society.” The conference format included combining several conferences with similar themes at the same location during the same time. The University of South Carolina Technology Conference was held together with the CSWE annual program meeting. CSWE’s Media Tech Center offered hands on training. Academicians were taught about the different teaching methods that involved technology, particularly the computer. Conferees also could attend electronic poster sessions that highlighted the use of technology in the classroom to teach students. These conferences stressed the importance of integrating technology into social work education. The council focuses on technology during their conferences and models the importance of using computers as a tool in the classroom.

CSWE’s philosophy is one which supports creativity and innovation in social work education and research. The Katherine A. Kendall Institute for International Social Work Education is a project which espouses that, “Social work education programs must prepare students to live and work in a world where geographic boundaries are permeable and where access to information is both rapid and almost universal” (2003-2004 annual report, p. 11). Social work educators, administrators, course designers, and advocates should further investigate distance-learning education as an acceptable and feasible way to fulfill the goals of the Council on Social Work Education.

The delivery of social work education is changing. The traditional educational teaching methods were appropriate in years passed. Increasingly, though, traditional students are being supplemented and/or replaced by non-traditional students who demand
an educational system that is responsive to their educational needs and goals. Students are just as diverse as the courses they take. Schools of social work have a responsibility to be responsive to the diverse needs of the students they serve.

Social work is a profession that is needed to help individuals, groups, families, and communities deal with the issues they are burdened with. The continued need for relevant and appropriate social work education and training is growing. In order to respond to social, cultural, and political climate changes, universities must respond to the students and constituents they serve. The distance-learning educational experience should be of the same level of quality, should provide the same course content, and ensure university commitment that their on campus counterparts receive.

Miller (1990) believes that our assumptions about education are changing because our realities related to technology are changing:

The characteristics of our students are changing; part-time adult students are increasing as a percentage of the total student population. They are more mobile, less willing or able to devote full time to study. Education is no longer a one-time preparation for life; it has become a lifelong necessity…Knowledge has exploded and, in the process, become devalued. Knowledge…no longer has the attraction it once did; now the emphasis is on the use of knowledge to make decisions, to solve problems, to develop values needed to survive and thrive in the workplace, the community and the home (p. 214).

The motivation for conducting this research is simple:

1. Explore and explain the social, personal, and interactive environment (the human element) in distance-learning courses and traditional classroom courses.

2. Provide social work students, educators, course designers, administrators, politicians, and advocates with additional information and knowledge about the
social, personal and interactive environment of distance-learning courses and traditional classroom courses.

3. Contribute to scholarly writings related to the topic.

The aim of this study is to affect change in the way social work education is developed, implemented, delivered, and evaluated.

Research Questions

1. Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a significant difference on the human element: sense of community, interaction, and feedback?
2. Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a significant difference on sense of community?
3. Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a significant difference on interaction?
4. Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a significant difference on feedback?)

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for the study are as follows:

1. Course format (traditional or distance-learning) does not have a significant difference on the human element: sense of community, interaction, and feedback.
2. Course format (traditional or distance-learning) does not have a significant difference on sense of community.
3. Course format (traditional or distance-learning) does not have a significant difference on interaction.
4. Course format (traditional or distance-learning) does not have a significant difference on feedback.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it has implications for the development, implementation, delivery, evaluation, and future support of social work distance-learning education. Currently, little theoretical and empirical data is available related to distance-learning and social work education. An edition of the Research on Social Work Practice Journal (2000) was dedicated to empirical studies on technology and social work practice. A major theme in all of the seven articles was whether learning took place. The authors concluded that learning does occur in distance education. However, they do not mention the contributing factors which precipitate learning. This dissertation addresses this gap.

This study will explore and explain the relationship dynamics between social work students and instructors in distance-learning courses and traditional classroom courses. Using the information contained in this dissertation will help to explain how students' sense of community, interaction, feedback, and the human element are affected depending on the classroom format.

Investigators, students, educators, course designers, politicians, and advocates will gain a better understanding of how they can support, develop, implement, deliver and evaluate distance-learning education currently and in the future. The majority of the distance education research before 1990 was dedicated to understanding the differences between traditional and distance education programs (McGorry, 2003). McGorry states
that current research focuses on teaching tools and how they impact learning and quality. However, there is still much work to be done in the area of research (Roblyer & Weincke, 2003; Daniels, 2002; Garrison, 2000; Moore, 1999; and Weedman, 1999).
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature provides a framework for analyzing, conceptualizing, and understanding the approach used in this study. It begins by giving a historical perspective on the evolution of social work education in America. Specific education pedagogy and pedagogical technology is explained to give readers a better understanding of current teaching methodologies. The reason for doing so stresses the importance that current teaching methodologies are in need of change.

Sense of community, interaction, and feedback are defined and clarified by the experts. The review of the variables helps to simplify and defend the hypotheses in this research. The variables are compared in different teaching formats – traditional classroom and distance-learning.

Lastly, this chapter provides a theoretical foundation that helps to provide relevance of need for this research. This chapter describes, in detail, the theories used. They are: (1) Hirumi’s (2002) Planned Elearning Interactions Framework, (2) Holmberg’s (1995) Distance Education Concept and Theory and (3) Moore’s (1993) Theory of Transactional Distance. These theories assist readers’ comprehension of distance-learning theories and help to form and describe the resultant human element. The explanations and descriptions help to explain the significance of the study.
Overview of Social Work Education

Social work education developed in the early 1900s. The community demand for professional and experienced social workers necessitated the need to train and educate social workers. Early twentieth century America saw the burgeoning of human social problems like poverty, hunger, unemployment, and disease that demanded social action. Before the institutionalization of the profession, social work agencies bore the responsibility of teaching and training their workers. Social work education was an outgrowth of the agencies that employed social workers. The first agencies trained their own staffs in the fundamental theory and practice of charity (Farley, Smith, & Boyle, 2002).

The Charity Organization Society of New York offered the first social work summer course in 1898. The thirty enrolled students studied for three months, at which time their formal education was completed. In 1904, the summer program was extended to eight months. The name for the school became the New York School of Philanthropy. Later, the name was changed again to what is now Columbia University School of Social Work. Schools in Boston and Pennsylvania soon followed and developed social work programs.

In the early twentieth century, the Great Depression prompted the need for the expansion of social work education and practice. The United States had not seen such human deprivation as experienced by its citizens. Some of the social conditions that needed immediate attention by social workers included unemployment, starvation, housing issues, medical issues, substance abuse issues and many other social conditions that adversely impacted people, families, and communities.
Undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate social work programs and schools are growing. According to Farley, Smith, & Boyle (2002), currently there are 417 baccalaureate social work programs in the United States. They exclaim that Bachelors level social work students are taught a generalist perspective, while Masters level students engage in more advanced practice studies, especially in a specific concentration area. For a better understanding of universities which offer Bachelors social work degrees and Masters social work degrees, a chart summarizing the total number of accredited programs/schools are listed in appendix A.

The Council on Social Work Education defines the purpose of social work education in their Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) as:

The purposes of social work education are to prepare competent and effective professionals, to develop social work knowledge, and to provide leadership in the development of service delivery systems. Social work education is grounded in the profession’s history, purposes, and philosophy and is based on a body of knowledge, values, and skills. Social work education enables students to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession for competent practice (p. 6).

The definition provides a sturdy foundation for social work education designers to incorporate when designing social work curriculum.

The Council on Social Work Education, EPAS (2001) provides a foundation for curriculum content. All schools of social work are required by the accrediting body to provide minimum content curricula to include the areas of:

Values and Ethics

Social work education programs integrate content about values and principles of ethical decision making as presented in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. The educational experience provides students with the
opportunity to be aware of personal values; develop, demonstrate, and promote the values of the profession; and analyze ethical dilemmas and the ways in which these affect practice, services, and clients.

Diversity

Social work programs integrate content that promotes understanding, affirmation, and respect for people from diverse backgrounds. The content emphasizes the interlocking and complex nature of culture and personal identity. It ensures that social services meet the needs of groups served and are culturally relevant. Programs educate students to recognize diversity within and between groups that may influence assessment, planning, intervention, and research. Students learn how to define, design, and implement strategies for effective practice with persons from diverse backgrounds.

Populations-at-Risk and Social and Economic Justice

Social work education programs integrate content on populations-at-risk, examining the factors that contribute to and constitute being at risk. Programs educate students to identify how group membership influences access to resources, and present content on the dynamics of such risk factors and responsive and productive strategies to redress them. Programs integrate social and economic justice content grounded in an understanding of distributive justice, human and civil rights, and the global interconnections of oppression. Programs provide content related to implementing strategies to combat discrimination, oppression, and economic deprivation and to promote social and economic
justice. Programs prepare students to advocate for nondiscriminatory social and economic systems.

Human Behavior and the Social Environment

Social work education programs provide content on the reciprocal relationships between human behavior and social environments. Content includes empirically based theories and knowledge that focus on the interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems. It includes theories and knowledge of biological, sociological, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development across the life span; the range of social systems in which people live (individual, family, group, organizational, and community); and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being.

Social Welfare Policy and Services

Programs provide content about the history of social work, the history and current structures of social welfare services, and the role of policy in service delivery, social work practice, and attainment of individual and social well-being. Course content provides students with knowledge and skills to understand major policies that form the foundation of social welfare; analyze organizational, local, state, national, and international issues in social welfare policy and social service delivery; analyze and apply the results of policy research relevant to social service delivery; understand and demonstrate policy practice skills in regard to economic, political, and organizational systems, and use them to influence, formulate, and advocate for policy consistent with social work values; and
identify financial, organizational, administrative, and planning processes required to deliver social services.

Social Work Practice

Social work practice content is anchored in the purposes of the social work profession and focuses on strengths, capacities, and resources of client systems in relation to their broader environments. Students learn practice content that encompasses knowledge and skills to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. This content includes engaging clients in an appropriate working relationship, identifying issues, problems, needs, resources, and assets; collecting and assessing information; and planning for service delivery. It includes using communication skills, supervision, and consultation. Practice content also includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing empirically based interventions designed to achieve client goals; applying empirical knowledge and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

Research

Qualitative and quantitative research content provides understanding of a scientific, analytic, and ethical approach to building knowledge for practice. The content prepares students to develop, use, and effectively communicate empirically based knowledge, including evidence-based interventions. Research knowledge is used by students to provide high-quality services; to initiate change;
to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery; and to evaluate their own practice.

Field Education

Field education is an integral component of social work education anchored in the mission, goals, and educational level of the program. It occurs in settings that reinforce students' identification with the purposes, values, and ethics of the profession; fosters the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge; and promotes the development of professional competence. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated on the basis of criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program objectives (p. 7-11).

Higher education is in a period of transition that portends major changes to the process of professional education in general and social work education in particular (Wernet, Olliges & Delicath, 2000). The explosion of technological advances in distance education and computer-based curricula poses exciting possibilities for social work education in the 21st century (Cauble & Thurston, 2000). The past decade has seen a marked increase in the use of technology for social work education (Menon & Coe, 2000).

Social Work Education Pedagogy

Even though dramatic progress has been made in the development and implementation of distance education modalities in recent years, social work education initially was slow to take advantage of this option for teaching students in remote
locations (Raymond, 2005, p. 24). Social workers have been slow in adopting the computer as a major contribution in social work education. Raymond lists some reasons why he feels that social workers have been reluctant to adopt a culture of distance education. First, he says that social workers have supported teaching their students technology rather than using technology as a supplement to the classroom. Instructors have been supportive in giving assignments in which students have a certain level of technological skill. However, when it comes to a paradigm shift in the way teachers deliver classroom instruction, they have been reluctant. The paradigm shift, of course, is moving instruction online that requires a new and different skill set than traditional teachers are used to.

In the 1980’s, the cost of technology was expensive so universities did not support distance education. However, with the introduction and evolution of microcomputers and computer networks at universities, they began to see the cost effectiveness and feasibility of providing education remotely.

Distance education was viewed with skepticism in its initial stages. According to Raymond (2005) universities did not support instructor proposals that included distance-learning as an alternative to the traditional classroom. The Council on Social Work Education was cautious in approving the utilization of technologies to deliver education that differed from the traditional classroom format (Raymond, 2005).

Today the council has changed its beliefs about distance education and encourages schools of social work to focus on fulfilling its goals and objectives as outlined by the schools and as determined by the school deans, directors, and faculty. The Council on Social Work Education has given some latitude in how schools of social
work construct and deliver their curriculums that is in stark contrast to their previous attitudes about distance-learning. According to the 1999 – 2000 CSWE annual report (CSWE, 2000), the 46th annual program meeting was the first time the council created a media technology center which focused was on training faculty and staff how to incorporate technology, specifically education software, in their classrooms. In addition, this was the first year that electronic poster sessions were included into the conference program.

Social work programs and schools use many teaching methods. Proven teaching methods include: lectures, discussion, required reading, handouts, role play, demonstration, quizzes and tests, testimonies, use of experts/consultants, guest speakers, computer experience, field trips, practicum experience, volunteer experience, individual and/or group activities, individual and/or group presentations, instructional video, multimedia learning experiences, and distance-learning. The preceding list of teaching methods was compiled by researching social work syllabi from San Francisco State University, Clark Atlanta University, and Kennesaw State University.

Pedagogical Technology

Broadcasting and the Internet have...been heralded as forces that can transform education (Perraton, 2000). The newest step is the introduction of a management tool that faculty can use to deliver education at a distance and on-campus instructors can use to enhance their classroom activities; one such tool is called WebCT (Web Course Tools) (Wernet, Olliges & Delicath, 2000). WebCT is touted as easy and friendly software that faculty and students can use. Its utility and ease of use helps to maintain the same
classroom presence as the traditional classroom via the Internet. According to Wernet, et al., the primary goal WebCT is to allow faculty to easily develop instructional materials.

Blackboard software is another alternative to online instruction. Both software packages are able to provide tools that duplicate the traditional classroom environment. The following list includes some of the innovations of WebCT and Blackboard: discussions, chat, tests, forums, quizzes, feedback, email, assignments, group assignment, post syllabi, get directions, lectures.

ILearn, also called Moodle, is a new development in teaching and learning software. Technical experts express its utility and preference over WebCT and Blackboard. San Francisco State University, Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, is an example of a university that is in the process of converting from Blackboard to iLearn. However, according to Feenberg & Xin (2003) textweaver software is the latest innovation in online education.

Burgess (1997, p. ix-xi) gives examples of distance-learning technology delivery methods. He studied universities in the United States that incorporated distance-learning courses (see Appendix B for a detailed list of universities which offer social work "type" courses). The list is not inclusive because it does not include courses which the program or school has not reported. Also, the report is not updated annually, so it neglects to include universities that offer distance-learning courses in non-report years. In 1997, only ten schools offered social work specific courses. The schools were the University of Iowa, University of Maine, Western Michigan University, University of Minnesota, Empire State College (SUNY), New York Institute of Technology On-Line campus,
North Dakota University System, Ohio University, University of Houston, and the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board. Specific delivery systems include:

Audio conferencing – Teacher and students are connected by telephone.

Audiocassette – This technology has been used extensively in foreign language and music courses. Students listen to audiocassette tapes.

Audiographic conferencing – Students who are geographically separated draw and view graphic images. They exchange the images via the computer. Universities provide graphic support. Students use the audio component to discuss images and graphics.

Broadcast television – Academic courses are now delivered over a multitude of television stations. Students must be disciplined because telecourses force students into independent study.

CD-ROM – Course material is supplied on a CD-ROM disk. Students must have access to a personal computer with a CD-ROM drive.

Computer-assisted – Instructors distribute computer diskettes along with course materials. Students must have access to a personal computer with a diskette drive. Courses may require additional software available from the school book store.

Computer conferencing – Students can interact with each other and with instructors. Students can be located almost anywhere in the world which has the capabilities to support this method.

Computer tutorials – Students are given self-directed guides on diskettes. This is similar to computer-assisted courses.
Electronic mail – Students must have access to a computer with a modem. Students can submit assignments to the electronic mailbox of the instructor. Instructors can provide feedback to students via email.

Interactive audio/video – A form of closed circuit television that transmits video and audio, it is usually limited to a single building on a campus or to specific off-campus sites. Students and instructors at various sites can communicate with each other.

Internet – Students must have access to a computer either through the school or personal access. If gaining access through the school, students may be required to have an email account, access code, and/or password.

Labs without walls – Students must have access to a computer and course software anywhere he/she is geographically located. This method is usually self-paced.

Mixed media – Combination of many technologies.

Online services – Online services are usually the entrance key to the resources of the academic library.

Satellite network – Communications satellites orbiting the earth receive electronic signals beamed from the earth. This communication method is used extensively at distance-learning universities.

Satellite television – Courses are taught using a digitally compressed signal via KU-band satellite. To receive the signal, sites must have a receive dish. Courses can be broadcast to receive sites in a real-time or tape-delayed format.

Teleclasses – Students participate in a course by watching a lecture given by an instructor. The course can be broadcast over the university cable system or a replay of a video series.
Telephone contact – Students receive their instructor’s telephone number so they can contact him/her directly.

Videocassette – There are several ways that students can participate in this type of course. The university may purchase licensing fees and lease arrangements to be able to show the videos on campus. Teachers at the university may be filmed and recorded. Their presentations are put on videocassettes for viewing by the students. Students may be required to rent or purchase videocassettes and view them at his/her convenience. As a university service, the audio-visual department at universities may allow students to view videocassettes.

Videoconferencing – This method uses a two-way video communications hook up. Students and instructors can see each other and communicate accordingly.

Voice mail – Students and instructors can communicate with and among each other via the standard telephone. Voice mail conferencing allows students to listen to, respond to, and save message from the instructor as well as exchange messages with other course members.

The Traditional Social Work Classroom

Mainstream collegiate campuses saw their development in medieval Europe. Some of the first college campuses were located in Paris, France, Bologna, Spain, Oxford, England and Cambridge, England. The classroom format was dominated by the social, cultural and environmental issues at the time. Poor transportation was an obstacle for students who wanted to attend college. As a result, colleges were centrally located so that students were physically able to attend school. Universities’ communication systems
were not nearly as sophisticated as they are today. Consequently, students were forced into the classrooms so that they could learn. Books were not readily available; students relied on the knowledge and expertise of their professors to impart information to them. Students were taught by experts or masters of their trade. During this era, universities responded the best way they could. The environment necessitated the need to bring students together in classrooms because there was no other way to respond to the unique needs of students other than to provide education which forced students to come to class on university campuses.

Miller (1990) gives more insight into the education classroom model. The following numbered list illustrates administrative thinking related to classroom structure, teaching style, knowledge acquisition, and information dissemination. The education classroom model adhered to the following principles:

1. If you are teaching groups of people with relatively small numbers of faculty, you have to pace the group so that its members progress at more or less the same speed. Knowledge should be broken into bits that can be learned in specific periods of time. Lectures became the standard presentation medium.

2. Learning became an authority-centered process. The student came to learn from the master, not to discover knowledge through his/her own experience or interests. Learning was not community-centered, student-centered or problem-centered.

3. Student memorization was a way for students to process knowledge. Instructors evaluated their instruction by testing student memorization. Classes were considered successful if students memorized content.
4. Curriculum was centered on knowledge (facts/theories) rather than processes (the application of facts to solve problems or make judgment to improve a situation). Because of this gap, students increasingly felt alienated by the learning experience (p. 213-214).

In 1974, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education found that there were certain features that impact the structure of American higher education. Among them are:

1. More young people attend college
2. Education takes place before, outside of college and after college
3. Jobs have changed
4. Young people have changed (p. 43)

The commission felt that universities had become rigid and restrictive, not allowing for flexibility and individualization. Therefore, they recommended improvements in postsecondary education structure. The improvements were:

1. Shorten the length of time in formal education
2. To provide more options
3. To make educational opportunities more appropriate to lifetime interests
4. To make certain degrees more appropriate to the positions to which they lead
5. To make educational opportunities more available to more people, including women, employed people, older people, and persons from lower income levels (p.43-44).

The physical environment is bound to play a significant role in how teachers approach their teaching or how they view what is possible within a particular place
Traditionally, on-campus university teaching has taken place in lecture theatres, tutorial rooms and laboratories (Jamieson et al., 2000). Schooling is education that takes place in buildings that are mostly isolated from the rest of society and in which most of the learning activities consist of exercises (Levin, 2002).

The diversity of student populations and diverging student needs lead to the question of whether or not the traditional classroom is the most effective. Stiles (2002) questions whether institutions should respond to their learners’ changing needs? He states the following pressures that burden students: financial pressures, time pressures, child-care pressures, disabilities, and increased work load. He deduces that the traditional classroom approach to learning will need to be challenged in the future. However, he lists reasons why technology has failed in the past. The reasons are (1) failure to engage the learner, (2) mistaking “interactivity” for engagement, (3) focusing on content rather than outcomes, (4) mirroring traditional approaches on the technology, (5) failure to recognize the social nature of learning and (6) seeing discourse as the prime collaborative form.

The traditional classroom approach to learning may still be the most popular approach, but increasingly technology is infusing its way into the classroom. The increasing on-campus use of Communication Information Technologies is changing the way universities conduct one of their core activities: teaching (Jamieson, Taylor, Fisher, Trevitt & Gilding, 2000).

New campus developments present architecturally challenging building types, they continue to reinforce teacher-centered pedagogical practices (Jamieson, Taylor,
Fisher, Trevitt & Gilding, 2000). The authority-structure model supports the separation of teacher from students. Teacher offices are removed from student populated areas which makes it complicated for students to communicate with their instructors, further placing distance between the two. Jamieson et al. (2000) criticize the current structure of facilities that they have observed:

Too often, existing facilities which do not meet user needs in terms of comfort or basic use have become repositories for these new technologies. In many instances, technologies (usually personal computers) are installed in classrooms or other spaces in a manner which maximizes the presence of the technology, and results in the creation of the “battery hen” computer laboratory. Typically, such laboratories are fitted with cheap, often inappropriate furniture and fittings which defy ergonomic principles, fail to accommodate the use of non-IT resources, and offer little scope for student-student interaction without impeding other users... This practice has produced teaching and learning environments which are both inadequate and outdated on architectural and pedagogical grounds (pp. 223-224).

It is essential for students to participate in conversations in order for learning to occur. Exploration by students occurs both in the traditional classroom setting and it may also be possible via distance-learning education. The residential experience is central to the developmental ways of thinking, problem solution, exposure to a breadth of ideas and traditions, and an intellectual (and perhaps personal) maturation (Weedman, 1999). She speaks to the importance of the physical classroom as a major factor in the transformation of learning. Informal, exploratory, nonbinding conversation is essential to intellectual work (Weedman, 1999).

Daniels (2002) describes how traditional classrooms can support the distance-learning experience without fully going online. Students and teachers who lack technology skills should be slowly acclimated to the distance-learning experience. He
believes that this will allow both to gain familiarity and skills to use in future courses. He suggests transitional classroom technology tools which can be helpful to others who may be transitioning from the traditional classroom format to the online format. They include:

1. Students are expected and encouraged to use email. They are given a university email account to support this expectation.

2. Students are required to surf the Internet for class assignments. They are given an assignment to visit five websites where the content is of interest to them. In the end, students had to submit assignment to their teacher via email attachment.

3. Students are instructed to evaluate websites for validity and bias. They are given an evaluation form that included researching whether reference lists were included on the website. They are to search and find out if specific websites referenced other authors and whether they had citations.

4. Students are given an assignment which included them traveling to a different state. They were expected to surf the Internet to find directions and maps. When they submitted their assignment, it was to include hotels and recommended places to eat. This Inquiry-Based Learning assignment helps students find information based on specific query specifications and helps them build competence in working with graphics.

Technology circulates so pervasively through modern society that traditional higher education is unlikely to be insulated; as new educational providers that rely on technology enter the market, they will reshape the landscape of higher education.
Daniels (2002) suggests that teachers should embrace technology and accept the computer as a part of modern education.

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1974) offers two suggestions on when technology should be implemented. They say it should be adopted when:

1. The teaching-learning task to be performed by technology should be essential to the course of instruction to which it is applied.

2. The task to be performed could not be performed as well without it (p. 99).

They warn against implementing technology just because technology exists.

**Sense of community**

This section defines the concept of sense of community by experts in the field. It describes the similarities and some differences in the way authorities view and have studied sense of community. Sense of community in the classroom and in the distance-learning environment has not been distinctly differentiated in the literature but an attempt has been made here. This portion describes sense of community in the classroom.

Rovai (2002), Havice and Chang (2002), Weedman (1999), and Robbins (1994) offer very similar views on sense of community. Proper attention must be given to community building in distance education programs because it is a "sense of community" that attracts and retains learners (Rovai, 2002). The importance of creating a sense of community in the learning environment is as significant as ever (Havice & Chang, 2002). Havice & Chang and Rovai believe that community is what gives students a sense of belonging and connectedness to their schools; therefore it is these two elements which
are strong contributors to sense of community. Members of a strong classroom community have feelings of connectedness; they have duties and obligations to each other and to the school, and they possess a shared faith that members' educational needs will be met through their commitment to shared learning goals (Rovai, 2002). Weedman (1999) agrees that the computer is a vehicle by which connections can be made.

Rovai furthers the definition of sense of community to include feelings of connectedness, cohesion, spirit, trust, and interdependence among members. This definition offers several other variables which contribute to sense of community in addition to belonging and connectedness. He believes that learner-learner and learner-instructor ties have historically provided students with social, emotional, and academic support (in the classroom), however, with the advent and growing popularity of e-learning system, it is important to consider sense of community experienced by students in online learning environments.

Rovai (2002), Havice and Chang (2002), and Weedman (1999) do not mention the role of groups in promoting sense of community. However, Robbins (1994) emphasizes the use of groups to foster sense of community. Accordingly, groups foster greater productivity and commitment by group members. Group members are likely to experience meaningfulness when they work together. Group interdependence allows them to work together and count on each other which promote a strong sense of community.
Interaction

This section defines the concept of interaction by experts in the field. It describes the similarities and some differences in the way authorities view and have studied interaction. Interaction in the classroom and in the distance-learning environment has not been distinctly differentiated in the literature but an attempt has been made here. This portion describes interaction in the classroom.

The instructor apparently has a very strong role to play when it comes to managing interaction in the classroom. It has been found that the ‘interaction’ between teachers and learners is an important factor affecting the efficiency of the learning process (Offir & Lev, 2000).

Pratt (2000) speaks extensively on the process of faculty engagement in the process of learning. Her comments are particularly related to faculty-student engagement in policy courses. She says:

The scholarship of teaching about policy requires engagement. Engagement requires that faculty invest their time and intellectual resources. Engagement requires thinking about critical social issues, pursuing relevant research, and developing relationships with policy makers and advocates. Without some engagement in policy issues, it is unlikely that faculty can effectively teach about policy and its many dimensions (p. 102).

One may surmise from her beliefs that distance-learning education may not be the best method, especially when teaching policy courses because, according to her, teachers must know how to engage their students.

In their study, Havice and Chang (2002) found that students expressed themselves openly and honestly more than they did in the classroom. Interaction is a reciprocal
relationship which exists between the instructor and his or her students. Unlike Pratt, they do not mention what role the instructor has in facilitating dialogue.

Feedback

This section defines the concept of feedback by experts in the field. It describes the similarities and some differences in the way authorities view and have studied feedback. Feedback in the classroom and in the distance-learning environment has not been distinctly differentiated in the literature but an attempt has been made here. This portion describes feedback in the classroom.

It appears that assessment and feedback have been used interchangeably in some of the literature. Levis (2004) defines feedback as the communication of information about performance to the learner (p. 215). According to Levis, feedback has been shown to be effective in motivating and facilitating change. However, he states that (student) learning is not improved as a result of frequent, immediate, and positive feedback. In his review of literature, Levis noted the following conclusions about feedback:

1. The provision of immediate accurate feedback regarding a particular teaching behaviour enhances the subsequent performance of that behaviour.

2. Unless accompanied by appropriate highlighting, focusing or cueing, feedback will not change behaviour significantly.

3. When accompanied by powerful modeling procedures, the effects of feedback tend to be less significant.

4. Studies have produced inconclusive results. (pp. 217-8).
Cowburn, Nelson, & Williams (2000) say that assessment is the process of making a judgment of a student’s knowledge, skills, and values. Further, they say that it is a dynamic process. Students and teachers are engaged such that the instructor can evaluate the student and provide adequate feedback. Rushton (2005) describes it as a method that instructors and students use to modify teaching and learning activities. Huba and Freed (2000) define assessment as:

The process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning (p. 8).

Regarding feedback, they say that collecting and analyzing feedback from others is critical because it helps teachers to better understand their jobs. Feedback is also necessary because it helps teachers improve their effectiveness so that students are better able to learn. Feedback is a process which helps teachers to know that they are conducting their class appropriately, that their students are learning, and it provides a mechanism to assess and suggest ways to improve upon the class.

Huba and Freed (2000) suggests various techniques which teachers can use in their classroom. According to them, classrooms which engage in one or more of the following feedback activities are learner-centered and promote student learning. There are four categories of feedback techniques. They are:

1. Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) - Data is collected from the teacher and the information is shared with students.
   a. The Minute Paper
   b. E-mail Minute
2. Continuous Quality Improvement Techniques - Data is collected from the teacher and the information is shared with students. Data is collected with the stated goal to improve learning for both the instructor and students.
   a. Two-Way Fast Feedback
   b. Instantaneous Feedback
   c. Plus/Delta Feedback Tool
   d. The LEARN Model
   e. Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ)

3. Feedback from Teambuilding Techniques – Students provide feedback from working collaboratively in teams.
   a. Brainstorming
   b. Nominal Group Technique

4. Other Feedback Activities
   a. Turn to your Partner
   b. Tools for Teaching
   c. Redesigned Course Evaluation Forms (pp. 124-140).

In addition to the feedback strategies, they write that rubrics can be used in the classroom because they are also a good way that students can provide feedback about the course.
Kelly and Bronstein (2003) contribute to the discussion about feedback because they provide an innovative way instructors can engage their students in the feedback process. The investigators conducted an experiment in which they used students as study participants. The students were enrolled in a social work research class. There were two of the same sections of the research class. One class was used as the experimental group and the other research class was used as the comparison group. At the first class session, students in the experimental group were given a folder with their name on it. The teacher placed what he called a feedback sheet in the folder. A new feedback sheet would be placed in the folder each session. The folder included an outline of the day's topics and activities. The instructor also fused some humor into the class by placing a cartoon into each folder each session. Students were encouraged to use the feedback sheets as an additional method to provide input into the class and to ask questions about the class.

The folders were returned to the teacher after each class session. The instructor read the students' comments during class sessions and returned them with comments and replies each class session. Students' comments were typically group into four general themes: (1) assignments, (2) personal issues, (3) class content, and (4) class process and interaction. The investigators made two hypotheses: (1) Class organization, student feedback and input, and individualized learning are related to increased adult learning and (2) The experimental group (group with the feedback folders) would score higher on all measures (class organization, student feedback and input, and individualized learning).

The results of Kelly and Bronstein's (2003) study were mixed. The experimental group did receive higher course grades than did the control group. However, the higher
grades can not be attributed to the feedback folders. Both groups increased their knowledge in research. However, the increase in research knowledge can not be attributed to the feedback folders. The authors did not prove that feedback folders improved the classroom environment. Nevertheless, students did find the feedback folders helpful. Kelly and Bronstein hope that the feedback folders have provided a tool which will help people learn more about reducing anxiety in the classroom. Also, feedback folders can be used to include student expectations. The folders can provide encouragement and influence student participation in the class.

Tornow and London (1998) elaborate on what they call 360-degree feedback. According to them, it should include setting goals, creating development experiences, improving performance, and enhancing organizational development. Primarily used in business organizations, its utility may also be helpful in social work education. The 360-degree feedback system calls for a person to be evaluated from more than one person, typically the supervisor. Using their method, Tornow and London suggest that the employees and employers are evaluated by each other; when translated to the classroom, teachers and students would evaluate each other.

Medina (2004), an instructor at the California University, Dominguez Hills, demonstrated with what she called “Class Communicator.” This was a feedback form which she devised so that she could read comments from students. She believes that the traditional classroom format does not allow students to make many comments in the classroom. The “Classroom Communicator” is a paper form divided into four sections (see adaptation below, Figure 1). Section I and Section II are completed at home and students bring them to class with their comments/remarks. Section III asks four
questions, but students are only required to answer one of them. Section IV is entitled “other” and it allows students to make additional comments. Students use the forms throughout the duration of the course. The instructor allows students to take five minutes at the end of each class session to complete sections III and IV. The instructor collects the forms and reads the comments after class. She responds directly to students’ comments by sending them an individual email or she may wait until the next class session and respond to student questions/comments that way. She reports feeling better connected to her students as a result of using the “Classroom Communicator.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section I: BASIC INFORMATION</th>
<th>Section II: Weekly Readings (Reflections)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name, Email address, Date</td>
<td>Section IV: Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Section III:                                                            |
| 1. What new information did you gain from today’s class, and how did it help you? |
| 2. What did you find particularly interesting?                          |
| 3. Did you “test out” any of the methods, techniques, or approaches learned in this class on your own students? |
| 4. What did the instructor do particularly well in class today? (p.1) |

Figure 1. Classroom Communicator
Kulhavy and Raymond (1993) define feedback as “any information that follows a response and allows a student to evaluate the adequacy of the response itself” (p. 3). They talk about the difficulty in finding and understanding the role of feedback in historical and contemporary classrooms. According to them, feedback has been viewed and continues to be viewed from their perspectives: (1) Feedback is a motivator or incentive for increasing the rate or accuracy of performance, (2) Feedback connects responses to comments/questions which precede the feedback, and (3) Feedback is used as information which learners could use to validate or change a previous response (p. 4).

Social Work Distance-learning Formats

Social work distance education is relatively new. This section summarizes the history of distance education in general. Moore (1990) describes the origin of the term distance education:

The term “distance education” is a translation of several European terms, German “Fernunterricht,” French “TéléEnseignement” and Spanish “Educación adistancia.” Though “distance education” is not a very elegant terms when translated into English it is important for American practitioners and scholars to know its origin and appreciate that distance education is a very international concept (p. x).

Distance education has a long history in the United States. Watkins and Wright (1991) trace this history in their book, The Foundations of American Distance Education: A Century of Collegiate Correspondence Study. According to them, formal education was a luxury afforded by only the privileged. Different professional and charitable organizations trained workers and professionals by delivering courses in their homes. Watkins and Wright cite prominent universities as some of the pioneers in the distance-learning education revolution. Universities included Yale, John Hopkins and Wesleyan.
The person most responsible for initiating collegiate correspondence study was William Rainey Harper (Watkins & Wright, 1991). In 1890, the first major program of correspondence instruction at the university level was established at the University of Chicago (Moore, 1990). Harper experimented years earlier at other universities. Harper felt that correspondence courses should be linked to a university because they would support such endeavors. Universities potentially had the financial stability, instructors, and students. With help from John D. Rockefeller, the University of Chicago opened and secured its first correspondence students in 1892.

Instructional radio courses began to rise in popularity. Two hundred colleges and universities were issued government sponsored licenses to provide this new education technology. Between the decade, 1910 – 1920, several institutions provided formal instructional courses. Throughout the years, the practice of correspondence study took advantage of current technologies, incorporating into the teaching and learning environment the telecommunications technologies of radio and television broadcasting as well as audio and video recording (Williams, Paprock, Covington, 1999).

Correspondence educators from America and Canada met in Vancouver in 1938. They formed the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE). Correspondence educators planned to meet approximately every four years to confer about correspondence issues. The conference in 1972, held in Warrenton, Virginia proved to be one in which major progress was made. It was here that the term “distance education” was used by the English. The term distance education was created and referred to more than correspondence only courses. The 1960’s saw the emergence of many different types of educational tools and methods. The major similarities were
(1) separation of teacher and student, (2) difference in time and place, and (3) use of media in the learning process. These media came to include not only radio and television broadcasting, but audio and video recording, and teleconferencing through computer modems, telephone, satellite and microwave systems (Moore, 1990). The ICCE formally changed its name to the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE) in 1982, incorporating a more inclusive perspective on distance education.

Delivery of distance education via the Internet is accelerating rapidly (McGorry, 2003). Judging from the flood of recent publicity, the computer age appears to have arrived on our campuses (Lynton & Elman, 1987). The terms distance education, remote learning, and distance-learning all refer to learning environments whereby place and/or time separate the student and instructor; thus, the student learns independent of contact with the instructor and, often, other students (Havice & Chang, 2002). Distance education is defined as education or training courses delivered to remote (off-campus) sites via audio, video (live or prerecorded), or computer technologies, including both synchronous (i.e. simultaneous) and asynchronous (i.e., not simultaneous) instruction (Tabs, Waits, Lewis & Greene, 2003). Distance education has been primarily concerned with the mechanism for developing and delivering programs to off-campus students (Jamieson, Taylor, Fisher, Trevitt, & Gilding, 2000). The authors (Havice & Chang, 2002; Tabs et al 2003; Jamieson et al, 2000; Williams, Paprock, & Covington, 1999) define distance education as the separation of student and instructor from place, space and time.

"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” (Abels, 2005, p. 3).
The author describes his dilemma in moving from a classroom based curriculum to one
which progressed to teaching courses online. Social work is a profession where one
expects to have the face-to-face interaction with others. In the classroom, the same is
expected. Students remark that face-to-face connection with others is a contributing
factor to success in the classroom. Inevitably, however, the process of educating students
in the classroom solely has evolved into educating students online.

Abels (2005) describes his thoughts about the impact of distance education on the
social work profession’s mission. According to the National Association of Social
Workers Code of Ethics, social justice and equality are two principles which social
workers should aspire. Distance education provides education through a medium by
which some social work students may otherwise not be able to access. It is these students
whose educational opportunities are realized through distance education, thus, allowing
them equal access to education.

For many students, the opportunity for distance-learning is a must on their desired
university quality checklist (Webb, 2000). New CITs (Communication and Information
Technologies) require institutions, teachers, and investigators to reconsider the
relationship of the physical setting to the student learning experience (Jamieson, Taylor,
Fisher, Trevitt, & Gilding, 2000). With its lower costs and greater reliability, Web-based
instructional technology appears to be the preferred technology-based instructional
approach (Wernet, Olliges & Delicath, 2000). According to the Office of Technology
Assessment (1989), distance-learning appears to be as effective as on-site, face-to-face
instruction in the classroom. This fundamental change (from traditional to online) to
the fabric of the university teaching represents a conundrum for institutions which have traditionally conducted all or most of their teaching in on-campus, face-to-face mode (Jamieson, et al., 2000).

Mark (1990) details the four categories which distance-learning education falls under. According to him, all institutions belong to one of the four categories.

1. **Distance-learning institution**: the educational activities are exclusively directed to distance education and distance learners. The institution may be considered an organization.

2. **Consortium**: the educational activities are directed exclusively to distance education and distance learners. Members or subunits may be distance-learning institutions, units or programs.

3. **Distance-learning academic unit**: a subunit of a college or university. This unit usually has faculty and administrative staff dedicated to educational activities of the distance learner, while the larger institution educational activities encompass traditional classroom teaching/learning.

4. **Distance-learning program**: a subunit of a college or university often found within an academic or administrative unit whose educational activities usually include traditional classroom teaching/learning. The distance-learning program usually does not have its own faculty (p. 16).

Tabs, Wait, Lewis, & Greene (2003) report findings in their study which provide national estimates of colleges and universities offering distance education for the academic school year 2000 – 2001. The report compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics details the growth of distance education learning at universities
throughout the nation. Specifically, they report the results of schools which offer
distance education classes and programs. They report statistics on enrollment and course
offerings and degree and certificate programs. Further, they discuss the technologies
used in distance education programs. Lastly, the study identifies factors that universities
disclose that keep them from starting or expanding similar programs.

This section is included so that readers may get a better understanding of the
prevalence and impact of distance-learning education on the future of education in the
United States. In summary, reported statistics for the 2000-2001 academic school year
(Tabs, Wait, Lewis, & Greene, 2003) are as follows:

1. Institutions Offering Distance Education Courses
   a. 56% (2,320) of all 2-year and 4-year Title IV eligible, degree granting
      institutions offered distance education courses for any level or audience
      (elementary, secondary, college, adult education, continuing and
      professional education).
   b. 12% of all institutions planned to start offering distance education courses
      in the next 3 years.
   c. 31% of all institutions did not offer

2. Public institutions were more likely to offer distance education course than were
   private institutions
   a. 90% of public 2-year and 89% of public 4-year institutions offered
      distance education courses
   b. 15% of private 2-year and 40% of private 4-year institutions
3. Enrollment stats
   a. 3,077,000 students enrolled in all distance education courses offered by 2-year and 4-year institutions.
   b. 2,876,000 students enrolled in college-level, credit-granting distance education courses
      1) 82% of students enrolled at the undergraduate level
   c. Public 2-year institutions had the greatest number of enrollments (48%) in distance education courses
   d. Public 4-year institutions had 31% of total enrollments in distance education courses
   e. Private 4-year institutions had 19% of total enrollments in distance education courses

4. Factors which inhibit universities from starting or expanding Distance Education:
   a. Program development costs
   b. Lack of fit with university mission
   c. Concerns about course quality
   d. Limited technological infrastructure to support distance education
   e. Lack of perceive need

5. Technologies used
   a. Internet
   b. Two-way video
   c. Two-way audio
   d. One-way prerecorded video (pp. iii-vii)
There are many advantages to using distance education to support the traditional classroom format. Some lecturers commented that they have got to know their students better in the computer-mediated medium than in the traditional lecture setting (Harris, 2003). The flexibility of a computer-mediated, distance-learning course can be a means for continuing professional development and lifelong learning (Harris, 2003). In addition to its flexibility, the new technology is becoming omnipresent throughout the educational system (Gumport & Chun, 1999).

Lynton & Elman (1987) hypothesize that the development of educational technology affects instruction positively. First, they say that using telecommunication can substantially increase their ability to provide instruction at off-campus locations and augment their potential to deliver certain informational and professional services (p. 113). Next, they believe that computers have great flexibility and individualization which help meet the needs of a growing diverse population.

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1974) found that using technology in higher education has several advantages. First, it increases opportunities for independent study (p. 99). Next, it provides learners with variety in choosing courses and methods of instruction. Lastly, it is extremely patient with learners challenged by speed.

Eddy, Burnett, Spaulding, & Murphy (1998) give examples of the advantages of what they term “Technology Assisted Education.” They suggest that TAE can be used as a supplement to or in substitute of traditional classroom education. According to them, the advantages include:
1. Costs may be reduced through the use of TAE. These cost reductions can range from overhead (classroom heating, air conditioning, and so forth) to reduced faculty salaries.

2. This type of instruction may be more convenient for many students. Learning can take place in homes for example.

3. A particular professor’s topic can be taught to many more students as the instruction can be proliferated through the use of TAE (p. 72).

The Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) (1989) reports that students’ educational needs can be met by taking distance-learning courses. These types of courses are particularly relevant when outside instructors or consultants can be used as content experts. Another functional use is to provide staff development for teachers who are located in geographically challenged areas. The use of distance-learning education serves these two purposes well. According to the OTA, the rapid increase, use and cost reduction of technology have made the use of it for education feasible. Universities are now able to purchase large orders of equipment. They have the ability to link their systems to other systems both inside and outside the university. Students, now more than ever before, can purchase personal computers for use in their homes. They can also use computer labs at their universities or local libraries.

Distance-learning and instructional technology programs provide students greater cognitive development; critical thinking skills to challenge assumptions; exploration to further professional practice; empowerment of professionals to heighten personal responsibility toward creating social change; and discovering new knowledge (Mumuney
Tilghman, 2003). The author hypothesizes that students, particularly African American students, may fare well by enrolling and completing distance-learning courses.

Distance-learning is one of the most rapidly growing vehicles for the delivery of education and training in the world today (Mumuney Tilghman, 2003). The benefits of IM instruction for social work education are many (Cauble & Thurston, 2000). They believe distance education is appropriate for students at all levels of technical proficiency and content expertise. Further, they believe distance education provides a private, nonjudgmental learning environment.

There are disadvantages to distance education. Lynton & Elman (1987) believe that the development of educational technology affects instruction negatively. They surmise that computers tend to be factual and, therefore, do not help students with speculation and inductive thinking and reasoning. The same problems which impact learning on-campus can be of concern to students taking courses remotely. Lynton and Elman further believe these problems can impact instructional activities.

Gumport & Chun (1999) describe some of the technological difficulties encountered. They remind us that technology still poses problems. They cite problems converting files to other software, inability to access e-mail, and network servers going “down” (p. 370) as typical challenges when dealing with technology. They further criticize distance-learning education because they believe:

1. It will undermine teaching and learning
2. Email will replace faculty office hours
3. Videos will replace active participation in class
4. Students will miss out on hands-on, in-class experiences
5. Affect the learning environment by excluding the teacher in the classroom
6. The value of credential programs will be questioned
7. Distance-learning students will be perceived to be less competitive in the job market (p. 388).

Eddy, et al. (1998) give reasons why students may not fare well when it comes to technology assisted education. They say:

1. Students have expressed a lack of personal emotion in their education. Learning occurs best when there is a whole body experience of interaction between a teacher and a student.
2. Students are usually not able to have direct contact with their professor.
3. Students have expressed a problem of being motivated in situations where there is not substantial direct contact with their professor (pp. 73-74).

Geographically separated students can still not yet be said to experience the same intensity of shared life experiences and growing together that students who live and work in proximity to each other are essentially ‘force’ to have by being ‘thrown together’ at fixed times and places (Harris, 2003). The flexibility of a computer-mediated, distance-learning course can be used to adopt a rather isolationist approach to learning which lacks the interpersonal and shared experiences that can come with conventional, face-to-face teaching (Harris, 2003). Participating in an online community is not necessarily a ‘natural’ inclination for many participants on the course (Harris, 2003).

Havice and Chang (2002) point out the fact that students must have a computer or access to a computer and the World Wide Web to access courses via the Internet. Access can sometimes cause a problem for students who don’t own a computer and have to look
elsewhere for access. Havice and Chang point out that technical difficulty can pose challenges to both instructors and students. They may not have the skill and/or ability to deal with technical problems. They cite fear of technology as another challenge. Technological advancement can be intimidating to those who are not familiar with it. Lastly, anxiety and frustration can cause instructors and students challenges through mental exhaustion, aggravation and can cause dissatisfaction with the technology.

The Office of Technology Assessment (1989) highlights some areas where distance-learning is lacking. In order for distance-learning to be successful, the OTA believes that competent teachers need to be sought out and hired. Currently, there is a lack of best practice models. The OTA believes that standardized instructional models need to be developed and implemented. Lastly, they believe that institutions should fully support learning through distance education.

The Office of Technology cites some disadvantages for students. They believe that a greater burden of responsibility lies with students when they take distance-learning courses. They are more responsible for their own learning. Students have reported that distance-learning courses are harder than classroom courses. They have expressed the difficulty in posing questions and getting help and feedback that they would normally get in a classroom.

Designers should be cautious and aware of the advantages and disadvantages of distance education. Willis & Lockee (2004) offer a proposed instruction design model for those constructing distance-learning courses. They say, "The creation of effective distance courses should be based on a theoretical model that takes into account considerations specific to distributed learning environments" (p. 9). According to them,
their pragmatic approach to distance-learning course design is superior to traditional classroom design because it assesses for gaps in student performance before the course is actually designed, unlike the former format. In addition, their model attempts to address the gaps in student performance by accounting and planning for them.

The model contains thirteen steps that distance-learning course designers should take to design effective courses. A detailed description of each stage is explained for further clarification.

**Determine Instructional Need(s)**

Distance education should address gaps in student performance. Instruction should be designed to remedy the gaps. Distance education outcomes can possibly be predicted and/or supported by good instructional design.

**Assessment of Technological Context, Learners, and Content**

The technological context should be assessed. The technology infrastructure should be supportive to the institution and to learners. Students must have access to technology to participate in distance-learning courses. The communication system should be identified both to the learner and the university.

Learners should be assessed for technology skills and technology needs. Instructors should assess students to determine if they are able to succeed in distance-learning courses.
Course designers would benefit from analyzing course content. Designers might ask themselves questions to help in their analysis. What are my student’s capabilities? What does distance-learning environment encompass? What do students already know? What can I teach them? Is the content old, current or new information?

**Statement of Goals**

Course goals should be related to the learning strategies of the course. The course should have learner and instructor goals.

**Instructional Objectives**

After the goals have been identified, course objectives shall be written recognizing the importance of including instructor and student input. Objectives that include collaboration are more likely to be adopted and accepted. Students feel more vested in the course, more willing to learn, participate, and more motivated.

**Performance Strategies**

This phase puts the goals and objectives into action. This is the phase where the teaching occurs. Instructors assign tasks based on the stated goals and objectives.

**Task Orientation**

This phase is fluid, flexible and allows for modification and/or change. Instructors would be wise to have back up plans to anticipate unintended consequences of the course. This would be wise especially because of the nature
of the course and its delivery method. Before any change is made, an assessment of student tasks, the media, and the materials should be made.

**Media and Materials**

This phase assesses whether the delivery system meets quality specifications. Depending on the media used, instructors will be wise to confirm that it can support text, audio, and video. The best communication options should be chosen so that course delivery will be the most effective. Instructors might find that they need to modify a particular type of media depending on the dynamics of the classroom environment. Designers will benefit from assessing course materials. For example, they may decide that the course is too informational and needs more actual instruction.

**Instructional Delivery**

Course designers will consider what to include in delivering courses. Will the course include video conference? Are there videotapes that can be used that would emphasize a particular learning point? Will the course include group tasks or are students expected to learn individually? How will instruction be synchronized to include more than one type of medium or platform? For example, an audio clip can be played while the class is in session. Willis & Lockee (2004) call this synchronicity of methods.
Practice and Feedback

Course designers should incorporate practice skills and feedback to assess student comprehension. Feedback activities can include peer review, individual and/or group presentations, quizzes and tests, and illustration of knowledge comprehension through a project assignment.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a two way process. Willis & Lockee (2004) suggests two ways that course designers can assess students. They can have discussions with them and interact with them. They can also use an assessment tool such as assigning a paper, have student describe and analyze a concept, give quizzes and test which test for knowledge acquisition.

Final Feedback

This cycle completes the model and is probably the most important because it is at this stage that course designers and instructors can change their instructional models. It is at this point that changes can be made without touching the integrity of the goals and objectives (pp. 12-16).
Determine Instructional Needs

Assessment of Technological

Assessment of

Assessment of

Statement of Goals

Statement of Objectives

Performance Strategies

Task Orientation

Media & Materials

Instructional Delivery

Practice/Feedback

Evaluation

Final Feedback

Figure 2. Pragmatic Instructional Design Model for Distance-learning (Willis & Lockee, 2004).
Notar, Wilson, & Ross (2002) believe that higher-level skills are obtainable in distance-learning education courses. However, they understand the importance of curriculum design. They offer thirteen suggestions that distance-learning designers should incorporate when planning and designing courses. According to them, the factors are helpful for two reasons; they serve as a framework for distance-learning course design and they help students gain higher-level cognitive skills. The factors are:

1. **Embed learning activities in an overarching scenario** – Course designers might find using a particular story, theme, or case scenario throughout the course as a way to tie in learning activities.

2. **Employ rich learning activities** – Course designers might find using ample examples of higher-level cognitive activities. The learning activities should be relevant and meaningful allowing for student interpretations.

3. **Use pictures, not text, to the extent possible** – Pictures and other graphics are an alternative which allows students to learn higher-level cognitive skills.

4. **Embed the data needed to solve problems in the learning context** – Course designers might find that by giving students the tools and opportunities to solve problems, students are more equipped with what they need to gain higher-level cognitive skills. They are able to analyze and interpret according to how well the instructor guides them through the process.

5. **Have students provide “story” resolutions before they are exposed to “expert” solutions** – Students will benefit from being able to provide resolutions to problems before they are exposed to resolutions from experts. Students come
with their own judgments, expertise, experience, skill, perceptions, and thus, are valuable resources.

6. Support multiple links among concepts – Students should be encouraged to use their knowledge to gain more knowledge about concepts. Students should be focused on knowledge acquisition and retention of knowledge. The additional knowledge is used and stored as supplemental knowledge. Overall, students are exposed to and will retain higher-level cognitive skills.

7. Present knowledge from multiple perspectives – Course designers should encourage students to obtain information and knowledge from a multitude of sources. Students are empowered to make decisions based on what they know and what they have gained from other resources.

8. Use active learning techniques – Course instructors are encouraged to use the computer to ask questions and solicit information from students during synchronous communication. Students are actively involved in the learning process and are able to participate in the course by responding to teacher requests.

9. Stimulate the collaborative process by presenting problems so complex that students must work together to solve them – Course designers might benefit by including complex problems and situations that students can work on together. Group work is a rich learning experience that students are able to gain higher-level cognitive skills.

10. Support continual self-assessment – Instructors are encouraged to assess student progression in the distance-learning course and learning acquisition. Instructors should provide feedback, both verbal and non-verbal. Instructors should also
support their supports by reiterating the importance of self-assessment and self-evaluation.

11. Provide support at critical junctures to push students past current limitations – Instructors should help students see concepts, ideas, situations, and other potential learning opportunities from a different perspective.

12. Expose students to expert performance – Experts can be used in distance education to supplement current curriculum. Content experts are extremely important in teaching higher-level cognitive skills.

13. Provide pairs of related stores (vignettes) to learning to establish transfer outside the macrocontext – Stories and vignettes are helpful in transfer of learning process. They expose students to real life examples. They are able to analyze and solve problems. These exercises help when students experience similar situations in their practice (pp. 642-647).

**Sense of Community**

This section describes the similarities and some differences in the way authorities view have studied sense of community. Sense of community in the classroom and in the distance-learning environment has not been distinctly differentiated in the literature but an attempt has been made here. This portion describes sense of community in the distance-learning classroom.

Instructors are an important conduit of sense of community (Havice & Chang, 2002; Notar, Wilson; Ross, 2002). For example, Havice & Chang (2002) suggest that it is instructors who foster sense of community in their classrooms and, thus, in their
students. They believe that instructors should encourage their students to actively express themselves by asking engaging questions and showing concern for students. Further, they believe that the instructor should create an environment where both the instructor and student work together to create the best learning environment possible. According to them, students' flexibility in terms and time and space allow them ample time to communicate and build community, especially when preparing for group projects, like a class presentation.

Collaboration between and among instructors and students is an important factor in establishing sense of community (Woods & Ebersole, 2003; and Havice & Chang, 2002). Woods and Ebersole conducted courses where they developed non specific subject matter discussion folders. Students posted comments specific to the content of the folders online. They found that students appeared to develop a sense of community by participating in discussions.

Havice and Chang (2002) emphasize the role of the instructor in the online teaching environment. According to them, it is the instructor who fosters sense of community in students. Instructors have a pivotal role in asking questions which students can respond to which elicit a sense of community. Further, it is important for instructors to show concern and empathy toward students. Instructors and students work together to build community.

Notar, Wilson, & Ross (2002) declare that teachers should have multiple roles in the distance-learning classroom: facilitator, collaborator, and guide. The result of the combination of these roles is a teacher who makes his/her instruction learner centered.
The classroom becomes one in which students are able to learn higher-lever cognitive skills.

Classroom retention is a good indicator that may predict a certain level of satisfaction and learning (Brown, 2001). Brown believes that forming sense of community impacts retention and satisfaction. According to him, when students exhibited an increased level of community, they also displayed an increased level of class participation and engagement.

Hill, Haven, & Han (2002) discuss the negative consequences for students who do not form community. Students experience high drop out rates and are less prone to complete a course because they lack prior experience with the distance-learning environment, may experience external demands and life issues, may lack motivation, may lack the concept of what sense of community means, and may experience isolation. He cautions distance-learning designers and instructors to incorporate activities where learners have the opportunity to participate in classroom activities that foster community.

Building community is a process (Hill, Haven, & Han, 2002). Hill, Haven, & Han studied two universities to examine sense of community. The purpose of their study was to find best practice models for developing sense of the community in Web-based courses. They found several strategies that help to build community: infrastructure strategies, interaction strategies, instructor strategies and learner strategies. Table 1 represents the best techniques to develop and/or enhance sense of community (Hill, Raven, & Han, 2002). Table 2 below represents the most relevant strategies that students and instructors can employ to develop and/or enhance their sense of community.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure Strategies</th>
<th>Interaction Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Access to multiple communication technologies</td>
<td>• Read for content not for detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Posting of announcements and &quot;what’s new” updates</td>
<td>• Encourage and support fellow learners in their efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal Web pages for each learner</td>
<td>• Use CSM messages to indicate to learners what they Could be doing, what they Should be doing and what they must be doing in terms of the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners have sufficient opportunities to interact with each other as well as with the instructor</td>
<td>• Use of teams for completing work in the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A daily visit to the Web site to check for new messages on the bulletin boards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Strategies and Techniques for Community Building in On-Line Environments
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor Strategies</th>
<th>Learner Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide multiple opportunities for interaction</td>
<td>• Visit the course Web site daily (or every other day at a minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide encouragement and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Send out management messages (e.g., CSMs) on a regular</td>
<td>• Scan material posted on the Web site – do not read for detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish teams so that learners work together to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complete tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Keep the Web site up-to-date and ad in new information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on a regular basis to keep things “fresh”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Instructor and Learner Strategies and Techniques for Community Building in On-Line Environments

The result of Hill, Raven, and Han’s (2002) study was a preliminary model that can be used to explain how sense of community can lead to learning. The theorists caution that the model is evolutionary in nature and warrants further study.

LaPadula reviewed (2003) literature that surveyed universities to find which ones offered online student support systems. The services offered were categorized into three categories: (1) academic advising/career counseling, (2) personal/mental health counseling, and (3) services that promote a sense of community. Services that promote a sense of community reduce isolations that students experience. They also help the students to feel that they belong to a particular group or community. Some of the
services offered were online student governments, electronic peer networks and chat forums that enabled students to collaborate on homework assignments.

LaPadula recommended that universities should provide some of the same student support services that campuses offer. She suggested an online orientation program, weekend college where students come together with their instructors on campus for one weekend to meet and greet them. She has seen other universities post newsletters on their websites. Washington State University has a CD-ROM yearbook that brings distance-learning students closer to their campus counterparts.

Some students participate in courses not always looking to find sense of community (Brown, 2001; and Weedman, 1999). Brown emphasizes that community does not happen unless students want it to happen. Similarly, sense of community is not present in every student. Some students experience it while others do not. In fact, he believes that veteran students can either help or hinder novel students’ development of community because they may be more able to relate to their fellow students or may be more advanced and, thus, are not supportive of students needing extra attention. He also found that students took a longer time to develop friendships in distance-learning courses than in face-to-face courses.

Student desire for community is not always present, or it may be being met adequately in ways of which faculty are unaware (Weedman, 1999). Research in distance education has not definitively stated whether students think a sense of community is important. Weedman expresses concern that some students do not place sense of community as a top priority when it comes to learning.
Interaction

This section describes the similarities and some differences in the way authorities view and studied interaction. Interaction in the classroom and in the distance-learning environment has not been distinctly differentiated in the literature but an attempt has been made here. This portion describes interaction in the distance-learning classroom.

Roblyer and Weincke (2003) give their definition of interaction. According to them, interaction is defined as "a created environment in which both social and instructional messages are exchanged among the entities in the course, and in which messages are both carried and influenced by the activities and the technology resources being employed" (p. 81). They note the difficulty in applying theory to distance-learning course design because of the uncertainty in defining exactly what interaction is.

Some experts feel that the instructor plays an important role when it comes to interaction in the distance-learning classroom (Roblyer & Weincke, 2003 and Offir & Lev, 2000). Roblyer and Weincke feel that when instructors enhance their ability to incorporate rapport building exercises, students are able to participate at a level which makes them feel comfortable, and thus, they become more motivated to participate in classroom activities.

Interaction is a dominant and important factor in teaching (Offir & Lev, 2000). Our educational aims cannot be achieved without the teacher's help, since human contact is important in the teaching process (Offir & Lev, 2000). They posit that learners become more involved in the learning process by participating in interaction activities. Further, they believe that interaction encourages students to make decisions and are better analysts of knowledge transferred.
Roblyer and Weincke (2003) provide a rubric as a tool to assess and encourage interaction in distance-learning courses. They hope that the rubric will be used by students and instructors to evaluate courses for their interactive nature. Their goal is to help the educational community examine interaction in distance-learning courses as a way to enhance achievement and satisfaction. Their research attempts to accomplish four things: (1) provide an in depth analysis of theories and research, (2) reveal the rubric drawn from their conclusions of the research, (3) sample interaction-building techniques, and (4) present feedback from students and teachers whom have used the rubric.

Roblyer and Weincke (2003) concluded that the following elements contributed to designing their rubric which assesses interaction:

1. Interaction is achieved through social, instructional and technological variables.
2. The interaction which is most meaningful to instructors and course designers is student engagement.
3. Student engagement is increased when learning is based on collaboration (p. 86).

From the research they gathered, Roblyer and Weincke (2003) made the following observations related to interaction in distance-learning courses. When instructors increase their ability to build rapport with students, students, in turn, decrease their feelings of proximal distance. As a result, students experience increased motivation. In addition, their interactive qualities are more observable. The investigators concluded that the rubric they developed can be used as a tool to enhance student achievement and satisfaction.

Roblyer and Weincke (2003) offer suggestions for increasing rapport and interaction of students. They recommend that instructors incorporate introductions in
distance-learning courses, particularly at the beginning. Ice breakers can be an effective tool to get people to open up. Students and instructors can also post their biographies on the class website so that others can view them and get a feel for them. Photos can add a nice touch in the introduction phase. Small group discussions and chats are particularly crucial for increasing rapport and interaction.

Tu and McIsaac (2002) surveyed fifty one graduate students. They explored the relationship between the participants’ social presence and interaction. According to them, social presence is defined as “the degree of feeling, perception, and reaction of being connected by computer mediated communication to another intellectual entity through a text-based encounter” (p. 140). Their definition of social presence is similar to sense of community. The degree to which one experiences social presence depends on the characteristics of the medium (the vehicle by which interaction takes place) and how the user perceives that interaction.

Tu and McIsaac (2002) note that response time is a critical element in computer mediated communication. They concluded that if a sender of a message perceives the lag time between the initial message and the response as slow, the sender experiences a decreased level of social presence. Also, they noticed that the more formal messages existed, the more likely students would experience increased psychological distance and isolation. They observed that real time discussion tended to be more informal, relaxed, and shorter. Email was perceived as casual. Students felt that bulletin board discussions were formal and required planning, thought, and deliberation. Tu and McIsaac give their opinion about the familiarity of topics. They feel that as students become more knowledgeable about topics, the more comfortable they will feel in participating in the
class. They recommend that instructors should allow for flexibility in choosing topics. Students should be consulted in choosing appropriate topics for discussion.

Interaction in distance-learning courses is viewed with a cautious eye by some. Harris (2003) reports that some students miss day-to-day group interactions, sharing and encouragement that they receive in face-to-face classrooms.

Weedman (1999) endorses Harris' comments and asserts her own. Although she acknowledges that interaction is a major factor in distance-learning courses. Informal social interaction is an important component of intellectual work (Weedman, 1999). She also feels that the interaction in distance-learning courses can have a negative impact on student relationships. According to her, distance-independent technologies increase the flexibility with which students may participate in higher education, they may decrease the opportunities for peer interactions (Weedman, 1999).

Interaction in distance-learning courses must promote student learning. In high-technology distance education environments, the key to creating highly interactive and participative learning environments is not getting so wrapped up in the technology that the technology drives the method (Williams, Paprock & Covington, 1991).

Williams, Paprock and Covington offer suggestions for designing a good instructional course that emphasizes instructor-student interaction:

1. Participation and interaction enhance learning.
2. The extent of participation is dictated by the content.
3. The content determines the learning objectives.
4. The objectives determine the teaching methods and techniques.
5. Most important, the attributes of the learners determine the appropriateness of the above choices (page 108).

Feedback

This section describes the similarities and some differences in the way authorities view and studied feedback. Feedback in the classroom and in the distance-learning environment has not been distinctly differentiated in the literature but an attempt has been made here. This portion describes feedback in the distance-learning classroom.

McKenzie, Mims, & Bennett (2003) provide assessment/feedback tools which may be helpful to instructors and students. According to them, universities must be accountable to a variety of constituencies. As a result, university curriculum must be well designed, well implemented, and provide good evaluation measures for evaluation purposes. McKenzie, Mims, & Bennett express that the techniques listed below help to evaluate distance-learning courses so that they provide the same content and substance and are of the same quality as their traditional counterparts. The following list is not inclusive. The activities are:

1. Students can complete an online questionnaire that asks them about their learning preferences. Instructors are then able to tailor their course based on the feedback from students.

2. Instructors can devise a questionnaire that asks students about their background, course expectations, and concerns. Instructors may also ask students to share something unique about themselves.
3. Instructors can design an online technology needs assessment to determine students' level of proficiency with technology.

4. Instructors can create quizzes and post them online.

5. Students can create projects based on a topic or concepts discussed in class. They can post their understanding of the topic/concept online.

6. Instructors can divide the class into groups and assign a task or project for the group to complete together (for more information, see p. 427).

Williams, Paprock & Covington (1991) believe that the ability to give and receive feedback is an important component of open and distance education. In order to keep students motivated and interested in distance-learning, the authors believe that feedback is an important function of the course. In fact, they offer a checklist that can be used for giving and receiving feedback (See table 4 below).
Your feedback checklist should include the following:

1. Pause between key points to allow time.
   i. For thinking
   ii. For limitation of the technology
2. Address participants by name.
3. Have a seating chart ready to “evoke” feedback, when needed.
4. Require student participation outside of class.
   i. BBS (bulletin board systems) activities
   ii. Fax assignments
5. Design, collect, and respond to weekly student “exit survey.”
6. Intersperse presentation with frequent use of Q & A.
7. Practice sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal signals.
8. Make a “private viewing” videocassette recording of yourself.
   Are you encouraging learners’ involvement?
   Are you maximizing learners’ understanding (p. 119)

Figure 5: Feedback Skills Checklist

The feedback tips described may correspond better to the traditional classroom setting. However, most of them may apply in distance-learning education.

Ramirez, Walther, Burgoon & Sunnafrank (2002) define interactive strategies as direct interaction between a communicator and a target. They highlight different tactics that can be used as a way to get desired feedback. According to them, the instructor can ask questions through interrogation, in doing so, the instructor gets the information he or she wants. Next, instructors and students can disclose information about themselves or some other aspect about the class, in doing so they hope to elicit the same response from
their counterparts. Lastly, instructors and students can attempt to relax the target so that the target will feel comfortable in divulging needed information.

In their research, Tidwee and Walther (2002) found that students in computer mediated courses asked more questions than students in face-to-face classes. Similarly, they found that students disclosed more information about themselves in computer mediated courses than students in face-to-face courses. They also found that students probed each other; this probing led to more intimacy that led to more confidence. The investigators found that CMC interactants were more effective during interaction than they had been in face-to-face classrooms. Lastly, interactants perceived affectionate relationships with each other as a result of the increased intimacy.

So that students do not experience difficulty in their matriculation, Grahame Moore (2003) advises that course objectives should be clear, course objectives should be aligned with required assignments, and students should be fully aware how they will be assessed for grades. He also believes that the university should make tuition requirements and deadline dates clear and understandable. In doing these things, difficulties will be anticipated as much as possible and provisions made. The feedback loop will decrease and students will feel more comfortable and exhibit motivational attributes.

Clear expectations and guidelines help students understand what is expected of them, but sometimes they are still not enough. According to Grahame Moore, it is statistically probable that there will be some individuals who will encounter problems with even the best designed courses and best administered systems. It is these students for which a learner support system/feedback is particularly applicable.
Distance Education at Historically Black Universities

Historically black universities and colleges face several challenges when it comes to distance education. The three areas they grapple with as described by Roach (2002) and Arnone (2002) include: 1) building and maintaining an infrastructure, 2) faculty and staff training, and 3) financial constraints. Arnone asserts that additional challenges for black institutions is that they are not motivated and do not receive financial endowments like other institutions. A major concern regarding distance education is how does it fit with the original goal of a supportive and unique learning environment that black institutions pride themselves on? Distance-learning courses have been criticized for not duplicating the same type of environment that face-to-face classrooms in black institutions are famous for. However, Earl S. Robinson, (2002) states, “Black institutions must provide distance-learning courses if they hope to stay competitive (p.A.27)”

Six historically black universities have formed a consortium named V-HBCU (Virtually-Historically Black Colleges’ University) whose main purpose is to provide a foundation for black colleges and universities to become invested in distance-learning without losing significance program changes. The consortium diversifies the responsibilities for developing and maintaining a distance-learning program at any one of the lone universities and spreads tasks equally. The six universities involved in the program include: Alabama A & M, Bethune-Cookman University, Florida A & M University, Grambling State University, Morgan State University, and North Carolina Central University.
Savannah State University shows a commitment to distance education by stressing its importance in the mission statement on its official university website. Specifically, it states:

Savannah State University shares with the University of Georgia the following characteristics: technology to enhance educational purposes, including instructional technology, student support services, and distance education; collaboration relations with other System institutions, state agencies, local schools, and technical institutes, and businesses and industries, sharing physical, human, information, and other resources to enhance and expand programs and services available to the citizens of Georgia (p. 1).

Savannah State uses E-packs templates that help teachers in their construction of distance-learning courses. According to Roach (2004), Savannah State offers one fully developed and integrated online course and thirty integrated/hybrid courses.

Distance Education across the African Diaspora

Dr. Pearl T. Robinson, a pioneer in collaborating with U.S. universities and African universities, undoubtedly is one of the first Professors to investigate the feasibility of and delivering distance education to both American students and students taking courses in African universities, specifically the Makerere University in Uganda and the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. According to Dr. Robinson’s curriculum vitae on the University of Tufts, political science department website, she has served as a visiting professor at both universities. Dr. Robinson develops the curriculum with counterparts in Uganda and Tanzania who are experts on content.
Theoretical Framework

Theories help to explain observations, behaviors, and phenomenon. A theory is a unified explanation for discrete observations that might otherwise be viewed as unrelated or contradictory (Patton, 2002). Patton explains that one of the functions of investigation is to test hypotheses that are driven from theory. Another function of research is to produce or provide theory through observation and conclusions.

Garrison (2000) provides more insight into theory:

The theoretical foundations of a field describe and inform the practice and provide the primary means to guide future developments. The power of ideas, as represented in our theories, influences practice directly by focusing perspective, revealing knowledge and suggesting alternatives…Theory is not limited to describing what is, but good theory should also help predict what will or could be…Frameworks, models and concepts are important elements of theory, and, in some cases, synonymous with theory (p. 3).

He believes that although distance-learning teachers may have knowledge and are able to make educational decisions related to the distance-learning classroom, this knowledge is not helpful to others in the field.

For the purpose of this investigative study, the investigator has chosen to focus on the following theories and/or conceptual frameworks: Hirumi’s (2002) Planned Elearning Interactions Framework, Holmberg’s (1995) Distance Education Concept and Theory, and Moore’s (1993) Theory of Transactional Distance. The theories were chosen because they represent a good foundation for understanding concepts, processes, and conclusions presented in this research project.
Hirumi (2002) offers a framework for analyzing, designing, and sequencing elearning interactions. He believes that interactions must be deliberate, planned, and placed in logical order as part of the elearning process.

He proposes a three level model that he feels interactions should be planned as part of the elearning process. Learning can take place depending on the context and can occur between human and non-human elements. According to Hirumi, Level I interactions are those which happen within the learner. Level II interactions are those that happen between the learner and human and non-human resources. Level III interactions consist of strategies to reach objectives. These interactions deliberately promote learning and act as a catalyst for fulfilling educational goals.

Hirumi (2002) describes the three levels in detail:

Level I Interactions occur within the individual learner. Learners are self-regulating, self-directed, motivated, and participate in the learning process. A person who is self-regulating may have more success in a distance-learning course because he or she will take initiative and may not need as much prodding from the teacher.

Level II Interactions occur between the learner and human and non-human resources. These interactions are intended to fuel Level I interactions.

1. **Learner-Instructor Interactions** – This type of interaction occurs between the student and instructor. Either may initiate communications before, during, and immediately after instruction. An important factor is that feedback is essential. Feedback helps the student and instructor complete the communication feedback
loop. Feedback allows for further clarification of terms, concepts and other misunderstood items.

2. **Learner-Learner Interactions** – This type of interaction occurs between and among learners. The interactions can be when the learner is alone or in groups. The instructor may be present or not. Frequently learners are required to work together on some assignment or project as part of the learning process.

3. **Learner - Non Human Interactions** – These types of interactions occur between the learner and the technology. Learners are able to access a plethora of needed information from external resources. The classroom is no longer the only medium for where learning takes place. Resources should be available to students who may need technical assistance and expertise to be able to take advantage of the technology use for online learning.

4. **Learner-Content Interactions** – These interactions occur between the learner and the content. The content can be in the form of audio, video, text and/or graphics. A combination of the media may be the most successful. Hirumi points out that the way a course is designed is more impactful than is the media used.

5. **Learner-Interface Interactions** – These interactions occur between the learner and the (computer) interface. The crossing point between the learner and the content is the interface. Users may be more likely to have success in a distance-learning course if they are familiar with and are able to use computers. It also helps if the technology is user-friendly.

6. **Learner-Environment Interactions** – These interactions occurs between the student and the community at large. They do not involve the physical classroom
or the computer per se. Students are expected to participate in the learning process independent of the online experience (p. 144-8).

Level III Interactions which consists of strategies and teaching methods to accomplish specific objectives. These interactions promote learning and goal achievement.

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**Figure 6: Three levels of Planned Elearning Interactions**
Hirumi’s framework provides a model by which universities, administrators and instructors can use as a guideline in strategically planning for, managing, and sequencing interactions in eLearning courses. He emphasizes that learning does not only take place in the traditional classroom but is omnipresent. Students are thrust into the learning environment called life. They experience things around them everyday that can be explicit and very important learning points.

Holmberg (1995) developed the Distance Education Concept and Theory after extensively studying previous theorists. His orientation is focused on the personal and conversational aspects of distance education that he believes characterizes learning and teaching in the distance education format. The Distance-Education Concept and Theory says:

Distance education is based on deep learning as in individual activity. Learning is guided and supported by non-contiguous means which activate students, i.e. by mediated communication, usually based on pre-produced courses. This constitutes the teaching component of distance education for which a supporting organization is responsible.

As individual study requires a certain amount of maturity, self-discipline, and independence, distance education can be an application of independent learning at the same time as it is apt further to develop study autonomy. Central to the learning and teaching in distance education are personal relations, study pleasure, and empathy between students and those representing the supporting organization.

Feelings of empathy and belonging promote students’ motivation to learn and influence the learning favorably. Such feelings can be developed in the learning process independently of any face-to-face contact with tutors. They are conveyed by students’ being engaged in decision making; by lucid, problem-oriented, conversation-like presentations of learning matter that may be anchored in existing knowledge; by friendly, non-contiguous interaction between students and tutors, counselors, and other staff in the supporting organization; and by liberal organizational-administrative structures and processes (p. 175).
The theory is a bit confusing and extensive. The investigator interprets her understanding and perception of theory and provides a summary of the theory based on three subsections: theory of teaching, theory of learning, and theory of organization and administration.

The theory of teaching states that teaching is possible. A personal approach is best. Personal contact promotes personal involvement. Empathy promotes and influences students' motivation to learn.

The theory of learning states that learning is an individual endeavor. Personal relations are central to learning. Students gain pleasure when they study. This pleasure leads to learning. Feelings can be developed in other venues besides the traditional classroom.

The theory of organization and administration states that there are several variables that influence learning: organizational goals, target groups, social and cultural experiences influence learning and teaching. The educational process should be one in which curricula can be tailored to individual student needs. Curricula should not be prescribed. Students should be supported in their autonomy. Curricula designers should be cognizant of industry standards. Planning courses should be strategic and deliberate. Distance-learning can be an effective cost saving method when used with large numbers of students.

The theory generates the following hypotheses which, according to Holmberg (1995) can be empirically tested.

1. Organized learning can occur without the presence of a teacher or tutor.
2. Intrinsic motivation is a crucial condition for learning.
3. Students fitting subject matter into existing cognitive structures promote learning.

4. Warmth in human relations, bearing on the study situation, is conducive to emotional involvement.

5. Emotional involvement in the study promotes deep learning and goal attainment.

6. Feelings of rapport with tutors, counselors, and the supporting organization generally strengthen and support study motivation as well as promote study pleasure.

7. Intellectual pleasure favours deep learning, the use of problem-oriented study processes, and the attainment of study goals.

8. Participation in goal considerations and study planning encourages personal commitment to the learning and feelings of responsibility for the attainment of study goals.

9. Learning is encouraged by frequent, helpful communication with others interested in the study.

10. Maturity makes for motivational stability and the capacity to master difficulties and is more likely than not to be combined with inclinations and ability for independence.

Other testable hypotheses, derived from Holmberg’s (1995) theory facilitate learning. They are:

1. Teaching and counseling can be effectively carried out by non-contiguous means; real mediated communication and simulated communication, incorporated in distance-education courses by conversational style and other personal approaches, make dialogue possible.
2. Personal (not necessarily or primarily contiguous) contacts with tutors and other representatives of the supporting organization promote emotional involvement.

3. A presentation of course goals or objectives that engages the student in the evaluation of their relevance and, if at all possible, in their selection.

4. A course structure carefully based on required earlier learning.

5. Pre-produced courses characterized by a conversational style with invitations to an exchange of views and with attempts to involve the student emotionally.

6. A style of presentation that is easily accessible; a high degree of readability of printed course materials.

7. Graphical and typographical presentations facilitating access to printed courses and selections of relevant subject matter.

8. Sequencing, a choice of media and other principles for course presentation adapted to student needs and to the requirements of subject areas studied.

9. Communication facilities (in writing, by computer, on the telephone, and/or by audio tape) constantly open to students for questions and exchanges of opinions with tutors and counselors.

10. Frequent submission of assignments requiring students to solve problems, evaluate texts or recordings; research findings indicate that this is valid if combined with 11.

11. Friendly, helpful, and extensive tutor comments on assignments submitted, with suggestions expressed in a way to promote personal rapport between student and tutor.
12. Quick handling of assignments so that students need not wait for more than a week to have their work returned with corrections and comments.

13. Self-checking exercises in pre-produced courses, through which students are encouraged to practice skills (in, for instance, foreign languages, mathematics, statistics); not only model answers should be provided but also extensive comments based on course writers’ experience of probable errors and misunderstandings.

Michael Moore (1993) offers his explanation of the transactional distance theory. He believes that the separation of teachers and students offers special patterns of behaviors exhibited by both. According to him, the disconnection experienced by teachers and students produce psychological and communication space. This space could potentially cause misunderstandings and confusion. Moore identifies this psychological and communication space as transactional distance.

Teaching and learning are different in the distance-learning format. The separation of teacher and learner is sufficiently significant that the special teaching-learning strategies and techniques they use can be identified as distinguishing characteristics of this family of educational practice (Moore, 1993). Moore’s theory attempts to provide a framework for understanding the special nature of teaching and learning in the distance education format.

Moore (1993) highlights three variables that determine transactional distance. They are: (1) dialogue, (2) structure, and (3) learner autonomy. The goal for students and teachers in distance education is to decrease the transactional distance and increase communication that leads to effective learning.
Dialogue occurs when teachers give instruction and students respond and give feedback.

The term ‘dialogue’ is used to describe an interaction or series of interactions having positive qualities that other interactions might not have. A dialogue is purposeful, constructive and valued by each party. Each party in a dialogue is a respectful and active listener; each is a contributor, and builds on the contributions of the other party or parties...The term ‘dialogue’ is reserved for positive interactions, with value placed on the synergistic nature of the relationship of the parties involved (Moore, 1993, p. 24).

Course designer(s), students and instructors, the subject matter, and environmental factors establish dialogue. Moore describes the environmental factors that influence dialogue.

The communication medium influences transactional distance. Courses that are taught mainly via television, audiovisual or some other one-way method don’t allow for two-way correspondence and feedback. Students may have opinions but because of the nature of the course are not allowed to express them. Distance-learning courses can increase interaction and, thus, dialogue by planning for such interaction. In doing so, the transactional distance is reduced. Moore (1993) lists others factors that have an effect on the dialogue which impacts or influences transactional distance. They include:

1. Teacher-student ratio
2. Frequency of communication
3. Physical environment of instructors and students
4. Emotional environment of instructors and students
5. Teacher/learner personality
6. Content
The media discussed above give ample opportunity for students and instructors to have a highly dialogic environment. However, because of its qualitative nature, instructors and students who do not take advantage of the opportunities of the interactive environment are at risk of losing a rich educational experience. Teaching courses at graduate level in social sciences and education offer opportunity for highly inductive teaching approaches, with much small-group work or individual case study and project work (Moore, 1993).

The communication medium, teachers, learners, and institutional regulations establish the structure of distance-learning courses. When courses are highly structured there is little opportunity for student input. The dialogue between instructors and students is low. As a result, the transactional distance is expected to be high. In courses where transactional distance is high, teachers are less supportive and give more directives. When courses have little structure or allow for flexibility there is more opportunity for student input. The dialogue between instructors and students is higher. Consequently, the transactional distance is expected to be low. In courses where transactional distance is low teachers are more supportive. There appears to be a relationship between dialogue, structure and learner autonomy, the greater the structure and the lower the dialogue, the more autonomy the learner has to exercise (Moore, 1993).

Moore (1993) believes that teaching is a collaborative process; there should be input from other (content, media, and course designer) experts. However, the following methods require structure: (1) presentations, (2) teacher influence of learner motivation, (3) stimulate analysis and criticism, (4) advice, counseling, and feedback, (5) arrange
practice, application, testing and evaluation, and (6) inspire students to acquire knowledge.

Learner autonomy is the extent to which in the teaching/learning relationship it is the learner rather than the teacher who determines the goals, the learning experiences, and the evaluation decisions of the learning programme (Moore, 1993). Autonomous learners are naturally inclined to be emotionally independent students who can approach subject matter without having much instructor input and feedback. They tend to be self-directed. Moore believes that teachers bear some responsibility in helping their students to become more autonomous.

The Human Element

The investigator defines the human element as an invisible, but very real presence in the classroom, that when combined is exhibited by a series of reciprocal transactions between students and other students and between students and the instructor. Its major components are human contact and interaction. Examples of the human element in the classroom include physical contact, physical proximity, communication, communication style (body language, eye contact, writing style, use of emoticons), communication frequency, interaction (type, style, frequency), discussion, individual and group dialogue, student feedback (relevancy, clarity, frequency), and instructor feedback (relevancy, clarity, frequency).

The human element is offered as a conceptual framework. Sense of community, interaction, and feedback are combined. The result is the Human Element. The Human Element is a synergistic, reciprocal, and interdependent relationship among all three
factors (sense of community, interaction, and feedback). The Human Element in the
distance-learning environment precipitates and enhances learning. A strong human
element leads to effective learning. As the intensity of the human element grows, the
course is more effective. The space experienced between the student and teacher
decreases. As the physical and psychological space decreases, interaction increases.
Thus, students and teachers experience immediacy, proximity, clarity, and dialogue. The
Human Element may be considered as a factor in most learning environments. See figure
7 below for a graphical depiction of the human element.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT

LEARNING

Sense of Community

Interaction

Feedback

Figure 7: The Human Element Conceptual Framework
The Human Element was created as an alternative framework to the three theories/conceptual frameworks above because it is seen as a necessary factor which precipitates actual learning, an identified gap in the literature. Although the theories have some similarities, the differences among them are noteworthy.

The most striking similarity is that Holmberg, Hirumi, and Moore acknowledge that the traditional classroom is not the only place where students can learn. Their theories lend support to the fact that students can learn very well independently of the classroom and university campus.

Hirumi and Holmberg talk about the level of maturity or self-motivation or self-direction that distance-learning students must have in order for them to be successful in distance education. Further, they consider the distance-learning experience as a highly individualized activity. However, with the appropriate input from students and teachers they are more likely to convey the positive results of distance education.

Hirumi and Moore point out that interaction is vitally important in the distance-learning classroom. Hirumi offers his framework on how distance education administrators, designers, and educators can plan their interactions. After implementing his suggestions, students and teachers may be more likely to convey positive results of distance education. Moore suggests that the more teachers and students interact, the less they will feel disconnected, and the more they are likely to feel connected to each other, thus, increasing dialogue and ultimately learning.

Hirumi’s Planned Elearning theory makes mention that instructors and students have an impact on each other, but he does not speak to the extremely important reciprocal interdependent relationship that the two develop in distance education.
Similarly, he does not talk about students and instructors feeling connected to the classroom and each other. His theory appears to be process driven based on all of the interactions which students experience. In addition, he does not talk about the learning process as being a collaborative effort. One thing that his theory does acknowledge is the fact that learning occurs within the classroom and outside of the classroom and can occur between human and non-human elements. No one else has made the link between learning and non-human elements.

Holmberg's theory does not appear to be descriptive enough and is confusing. It seems to be lacking information. He talks about personal relationships between instructors and students as being central, but does not elaborate about the particulars (who, where, how, and why?). Holmberg offers many empirical hypotheses that, according to him, are testable but does not test them. This leaves the door open for others to continue to study and further his research. Also, it opens the door for others to elaborate on his ideas and concepts.

Moore's Transactional Distance theory articulated one aspect of what the investigator was attempting to study. The theory effectively talked about decreasing the communication and psychological space experienced between students and instructor in distance education. Once this space is decreased, according to him, teaching and learning can take place more effectively. What he doesn't describe, however, is the very important reciprocal interdependent relationship between students and instructors.

The human element consists of three variables, sense of community, interaction and feedback. The human element is a conceptual framework that can be used, especially by social work distance-learning curriculum designers, administrators,
teachers, and students. Also, other disciplines may find the relevance in using it as a guide in curriculum development and instruction.

The human element is present in both the traditional classroom format and the distance-learning format. However, because of a strong human element in distance-learning education, this format has the potential to be more effective for teaching and learning.

Students must be interactive in distance-learning education. They must communicate with their instructor through email, chat, submission of assignments, and response to discussion forums. If the instructor assigns group work, it is inevitable that the students will develop a connection. Students must communicate to work on assignments together. Students must interact and participate in dialogue to complete tasks. Students must engage themselves in activities. For these reasons, students will predictably connect in the distance-learning environment.

Instructor encouragement is critical to successful completion of distance-learning classes and cognition acquisition for students. The instructor must play a significant role as leader, mediator, negotiator, compromiser, disciplinarian, ruler, task designer, etiquette enforcer, and assignment reviewer. Instructor encouragement is especially important for students who are new to the distance-learning format; for social work students, this may be a significant number. Students need to be reassured that they are doing the right thing, that they are following the correct course of action, and that they are not isolated from the class and the rest of the students.

Distance-learning as a teaching and learning methodology is relatively new in the field of social work. Feedback is a reciprocal process between and among students and
instructors. Constructive feedback from the instructor to students can help students analyze and understand concepts. Feedback from the instructor lets students know that they are progressing through the class at the pace that they need. Another form of feedback from instructors is criticism and praise. Feedback can also be used as an evaluation tool.

Students also provide relevant feedback to each other and the instructor. They provide supportive statements and comments that provide relevant information to their peers about the class. They communicate their feelings to the instructor about the class. This can give the instructor ample opportunity to make necessary changes, revisions, and/or additions to the class.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This investigation is an example that attempts to explain the impact and relevancy of the human element in the traditional classroom and in distance-learning education. Chapter three will present the methods and procedures for this study. This section will describe the research design, description of the site, sample and population, the instrumentation process and tools(s), and the data collection process.

Research Design

A descriptive and exploratory research design was utilized in this study. The study was designed to gather data in order to describe and explore students’ perception of sense of community, interaction, feedback, and the human element in distance-learning classroom environments and in traditional classroom environments. Sense of community includes care, connectedness, spirit of community, teamwork, isolation, trust, reliance, dependence, and confidence. Interaction includes student to student interaction, student to instructor interaction, class discussions, instructor encouragement, natural interaction, frequency, and technology. Feedback includes response time, constructive feedback, and appropriateness of process. The human element is a combination of all three variables, sense of community, interaction, and feedback.
Descriptive statistics describe phenomenon which make interpretation easier to understand. Such phenomenon includes demographic information. Demographic data is presented, described, and explained. In addition, a comparison of the relationship and significance between the dependent and independent variables are described.

Inferential statistics allows people to presume certain conclusions based on of the presentation and explanation of empirically gathered data. The inferential statistics used in this investigation are Paired Samples t tests, and Chi Squares. The t tests will be used to test differences between two means. Further, Chi Squares are used to determine the relationship between variables.

Description of the Site

The investigator collected the data at San Francisco State University in San Francisco, California. The university is geographically located in a large metropolitan city. The university was targeted because of the university philosophy to integrate technology into classroom curriculum. In addition, the School of Social Work at the university encourages faculty to use innovative methods in teaching social work courses. The Center for the Enhancement of Teaching at the university offers technical training and support to faculty and staff who integrate and supplement their traditional courses for online adaptability. The CET has offered intensive training on Blackboard and iLearn, scholastic online software, the previous two summers. Additionally, CET offers hands-on technical assistance to faculty, staff, and students.

The investigator applied for research approval through the institutional review board at Clark Atlanta University. The application was submitted in the fall semester of
2005. The application was approved, after revisions, at the end of the fall semester, 2005.

The investigator applied for research approval through the human subjects protection committee at San Francisco State University. The application was submitted in the fall semester of 2005. The application was approved at the end of the fall semester, 2005, after two revisions were made.

The surveys were collected from students, in person, who participated and completed a social work distance-learning course SW: 350 – Child Welfare. The investigator distributed surveys at the end of the semester during the last week of instruction.

Sample and Population

The target population for the research was comprised of students who enrolled in and completed an introductory Child Welfare course at San Francisco State University in San Francisco, California. The course was a university general education requirement. Therefore, students of all professional disciplines took the course. The course is required for all social work undergraduate students. Students were invited to participate in the study by the investigator who was also the instructor of the course. The investigator asked students to complete a pen and pencil questionnaire during the last week of instruction.

The majority of the respondents were undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory social work course. Both males and females were recruited to participate in
the study. Participants ranged from all ethnic backgrounds. All students were eighteen years or older.

After the completion of the course, seventy six respondents returned surveys. Sixty six questionnaires were analyzed. Ten questionnaires were not analyzed because they were incomplete. The study employed nonprobability convenience sampling. According to Patton (2002), investigators who use the purposive technique select participants who they believe will give them the best information as participants (p. 45). Students completed the surveys after they had completed a distance-learning social work course which is a part of the School of Social Work curriculum.

Instrumentation

This study employed a survey questionnaire (see Appendix C) which was adapted by using the combination of two individual scales: The Classroom Community Scale developed by Alfred Rovai (2002) which includes two subscales measuring connectedness and learning. This study also incorporated the Susan McGorry model (2003).

The Classroom Community Scale is an instrument that can assist educational investigators in studying community in virtual classrooms and help identify course design and instructional delivery that best promote development of community (Rovai, 2002).

According to Rovai (2002), students experience sense of community when they feel connected to each other and to the classroom. In addition, they experience cohesion, spirit, trust, and interdependence.
Learning is the acquisition of new information and knowledge. Rovai (2002) says that it:

Represents the feelings of community members regarding interaction with each other as they pursue the construction of understanding and the degree to which members share values and beliefs concerning the extent to which their educational goals and expectations are being satisfied (p. 206-207).

Rovai’s 20-item Classroom Community scale has face value. The instrument has high content validity and high construct validity. The instrument was used and supported by three professors who taught educational psychology. Rovai’s Classroom Community scale yields a Flesch Reading Ease score of 68.4 points out of a 100- point scale. The standard score is usually between 60 and 70.

A reliability test was used to determine the reliability of the Classroom Community scale, the Cronbach’s (alpha) coefficient. Cronbach’s coefficient yields a score of .93. Cronbach’s coefficient was also used to test the reliability of the connectedness subscale; a score of .92 concluded that the instrument has high validity, indicating that the scale would be stable after each administration.

Susan McGorry’s 60-item scale is an attempt to evaluate quality in distance-learning courses. It measures quality and learning by studying the following variables: flexibility, responsiveness, interaction, student learning, technical support, technology, and student satisfaction. The investigator is mostly concerned with the interaction subscale. It consists of fourteen questions which measure interaction.

McGorry used Arbaugh’s interactive scale to measure interactivity in distance-learning courses. Initially, the instrument was used to test MBA students. There is a limitation on valid and reliable scales which measure interaction. An adaptation of
Arbaugh’s and McGorry’s model was used to measure interaction in this research. Specifically, questions number three, six, eight, thirteen, and fourteen were omitted from this investigator’s survey. Question number three addresses students learning from each other. This research does not focus on students learning from each other. Question six was omitted because it speaks to quality of discussions, which was not a focus of this research. Question eight was deleted because it was unclear; the investigator felt that it might confuse the participants. Lastly, questions thirteen and fourteen were omitted from the interaction section, but included in the investigator’s questionnaire, section IV, because they were more appropriate and focused on feedback.

The investigator created a subscale called feedback. There are seven questions in the feedback subscale that when combined equates to feedback. There is a limit on valid and reliable scales which measure feedback.

The investigator created an instrument which measures the human element. The human element is measured by calculating sense of community, interaction, and feedback. When the three variables are combined they equate to the human element. There is a limit on valid and reliable scales which measure the human element.

A Cronbach’s alpha was used to test internal consistency of the investigator’s instrument. The reliability coefficient is .8416 indicating high reliability for the instrument used in this investigation. Therefore, one might expect to yield the same results after each administration.

The questionnaire includes an implied consent form which all students read before they completed the questionnaire. San Francisco State University suggested that an implied consent form be used instead of an informed consent form. The implied
consent form informs students that their participation in the study is completely voluntary. Students were informed that they did not have to participate in the study. They were informed that they could withdraw their participation at any time. There were no incentives given to the students for completion of the surveys. Students were informed that their overall grade in the course would not be impacted by the completion of the survey.

The questionnaire consists of a paragraph describing the study and inviting participants to complete the survey. The survey is divided into six sections. Section one of the survey asks for demographic information about the participants. Sections two through four includes the three independent variables, sense of community (care, connectedness, spirit of community, teamwork, isolation, trust, reliance, dependence, and confidence), interaction (student to student interaction, student to instructor interaction, class discussions, instructor encouragement, natural interactions, frequency, and technology), and feedback (response time, constructive feedback, and appropriateness of process). Section V lists the course objectives and asks students to rate whether or not the instructor adhered to them. Section VI includes miscellaneous data related to their student status.

Section I of the questionnaire consists of eleven demographic questions, numbered 1 through 11. The demographic data includes: Type of school I attend, My Social Work program, Gender, Ethnicity, Age, Type of Distance-learning Course, Percentage of Course Online, How many Distance-learning courses have you taken?, Are there any required Distance-learning courses, Type of Distance-learning course required, and Type of face-to-face course.
Section II of the questionnaire consists of ten questions associated with the independent variable sense of community. The questions are numbered from 12 through 21. Items on the questionnaire are measured using a five point Likert scale. The scale consisted of the following: 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Section III of the questionnaire consists of ten questions associated with the independent variable interaction. The questions are numbered from 22 through 31. Items on the questionnaire are measured using a five point Likert scale. The scale consisted of the following: 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Section IV of the questionnaire consists of seven questions associated with the independent variable feedback. The questions are numbered from 32 through 38. Items on the questionnaire are measured using a five point Likert scale. The scale consisted of the following: 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Section V of the questionnaire consists of six questions associated with the course objectives. The questions are numbered from 39 through 44. Items on the questionnaire are measured using a five point Likert scale. The scale consisted of the following: 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Section VI of the questionnaire consists of three miscellaneous questions: 1) current educational level, 2) anticipated grade in the course, and 3) overall GPA. Students self reported their responses in this section.
Treatment of Data

The treatment of data consisted of using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics describe and summarize the data collected from the student questionnaires. According to Mertler and Vannatta (2002) most studies begin with a summarization of the data using descriptive techniques and then move on to more advanced techniques in order to address more complex research questions (p. 7). The descriptive statistics employed are measures of central tendency (mean) and frequency distributions.

The main goal of inferential statistics is to draw inferences about populations based on sample data (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002, p. 10). The test statistics used for this study are paired-samples t tests, and chi squares.
CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from the investigation. The findings explain and describe differences in sense of community, interaction, and feedback in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. Next, the findings describe the differences in the human element in the traditional classroom environment and in the distance-learning classroom environment. The findings from the study are organized in three sections: 1) demographic data, 2) variables data (sense of community, interaction, feedback, and the human element), and 3) research questions and hypotheses.

Demographic Data

This section reviews the profile of the investigation’s respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the following factors: gender, ethnicity, age, educational level, school type, number of distance-learning courses taken, distance-learning courses required, type of distance-learning course required, type of face-to-face course, course objectives, anticipated grade in course, and overall grade point average (GPA).

The target population for the research consisted of students who had completed an introductory social work distance-learning course. Students were solicited from two sections of the same social work course – SW 350: Child Welfare. The course is an introductory child welfare practice course. A total of seventy six questionnaires were
collected. Sixty six questionnaires were analyzed because they were complete, representing 12% of the total population. Ten questionnaires were not analyzed because they were incomplete.

Table 1 is a frequency distribution of the demographic profile of the study respondents. It lists demographic information about respondents and about distance-learning and face-to-face courses.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Study Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>(89.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(10.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(15.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Hispanic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(12.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>(56.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(7.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-26</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>(77.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(15.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-53</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(36.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>(53.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distance-learning Courses Taken</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(16.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>(59.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(22.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distance-learning Course Required</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>(28.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>(71.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Distance-learning Course</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(7.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(13.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>(57.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Face-to-face Course</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(10.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(10.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(33.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(12.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>(30.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicates that the typical respondent was an Asian/Pacific Islander (56.1%) female (89.4%), who was a senior (53%) between the ages of 18 – 26 (77.3%), at a public university. The typical respondent had taken one to two distance-learning courses (59.1%). According to the respondents, the majority of the distance-learning courses they had taken were not required courses (71.2%). Students indicated that research courses were the highest number of type of distance-learning courses taken.
(18.2%), however, the majority of the students indicated that the options given on the questionnaire were not applicable (57.6%). Of the face-to-face type courses, students indicated that practice courses were the highest number of the type course taken (33.3%), however, a significant number of students indicated that the options given on the questionnaire were not applicable (30.3%). Students’ responses indicated that they had taken other distance-learning courses not listed on the questionnaire.

Table 2 is frequency distribution for respondents’ perceived agreement of learning acquisition related to the stated objectives of the course.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency Table: Course Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q39 I am able to identify the broad scope of child welfare policies, programs, and services, and their impact on children, families, communities, workers, and agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q40 I am able to demonstrate knowledge of and application of the range of values, assumptions, beliefs and ideologies shaping and influencing the child welfare system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q41: I am able to demonstrate an understanding of issues of diversity in U.S. families and the disproportionate representation of children of color in the child welfare system</td>
<td>63 (95.5)</td>
<td>3 (4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q42: I am able to demonstrate an understanding of the child welfare system from a historical perspective</td>
<td>62 (93.3)</td>
<td>4 (6.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q43: I am able to demonstrate an understanding of the impact of economics on children, youth, and families</td>
<td>63 (95.5)</td>
<td>3 (4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q44: I am able to demonstrate knowledge of the continuum of services to children, youth and family from preventive programs to residential treatment programs</td>
<td>61 (92.4)</td>
<td>5 (7.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates a summary of students’ responses representing a high frequency for those students who agreed with the course objectives. At the end of the course, they agreed that their knowledge acquisition about child welfare issues was in accordance to the stated course objectives. Students’ responses were rated using a 5-point Likert scale. The responses were ranked, 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat Agree, 4 =
Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree. The summary above represents the recoded value for the scale. 1 – 3 were recoded to equal agree. 4 – 5 were recoded to equal disagree.

The objectives were listed on the course syllabus. At the beginning of the course, the instructor explained that the course curricula would attempt to achieve each objective. After having completed the course, sixty three of the sixty six respondents agreed that they were able to identify the broad scope of child welfare policies, programs, and services, and their impact on children, families, communities, workers, and agencies.

Sixty four of the sixty six respondents agreed that they were able to demonstrate knowledge of and application of the range of values, assumptions, beliefs and ideologies shaping and influencing the child welfare system. Sixty three of the sixty six respondents agreed that they were able to demonstrate an understanding of issues of diversity in U.S. families and the disproportionate representation of children of color in the child welfare system. Sixty two of the sixty six respondents agreed that they were about to demonstrate an understanding of the child welfare system from a historical perspective. Sixty three of the sixty six respondents agreed that they were able to demonstrate an understanding of the impact of economics on children, youth, and families. Sixty one of the sixty six respondents agreed that they were able to demonstrate knowledge of the continuum of services to children, youth and family from preventive programs to residential treatment programs, thereby increasing their child welfare knowledge. Course format did not impact the ability of the instructor to meet the course objectives. Despite the course being partially online, students were still able to follow along throughout the duration of the course. Therefore, according to the students’ responses, the course met the proposed curriculum outcomes.
Table 3 is a comparison of the means for respondents’ perceived agreement about learning acquisition related to the stated objectives of the course.

Table 3

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations: Course Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q39 I am able to identify the broad scope of child welfare policies,</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>programs, and services, and their impact on children, families,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communities, workers, and agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q40 I am able to demonstrate knowledge of and application of the range</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of values, assumptions, beliefs and ideologies shaping and influencing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the child welfare system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q41 I am able to demonstrate an understanding of issues of diversity</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>.774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in U.S. families and the disproportionate representation of children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of color in the child welfare system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q42 I am able to demonstrate an understanding of the child welfare</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>system from a historical perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q43 I am able to demonstrate an understanding of the impact of economics</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on children, youth, and families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q44 I am able to demonstrate knowledge of the continuum of services to</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>.900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children, youth and family from preventive programs to residential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>treatment programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the mean scores for students’ responses related to the course objectives. The mean is superior to the frequency information listed in table 2 because it better displays how students’ responses are gathered around a whole number in a Likert scale. The numbers in Table 3 corresponds to the question numbers in the survey. Table 3 indicates that a majority of student responses were clustered very close to the number 2 response on the questionnaire, representing that they agreed with the statements.
The standard deviation is provided to help determine how much students' scores vary from the mean. The results suggest that students were in agreement that they were able to identify and demonstrate knowledge acquisition about child welfare issues related to the course objectives. It appears that course format did not impact the ability of the instructor to meet the course objectives. Despite the course being partially online, students were still able to follow along throughout the duration of the course and felt the course achieved its goals.

Table 4 is a frequency distribution for students' anticipated grade in the course.

Table 4

Frequency Table: Anticipated grade in course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A grade</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>(48.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B grade</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>(34.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C grade</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D grade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(7.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 indicates thirty-two students reported that they anticipated receiving an A grade in the course. Twenty-three students reported that they anticipated receiving a B grade in the course. Six students reported that they anticipated receiving a C grade in the course. Five students reported that they anticipated receiving a D grade in the course. No students anticipated receiving a F grade in the course.
When the class was over, a large majority of students received an A or A- grade. One student received a C grade. No students received a D grade or F grade. Some students (approximately 1/3rd of the class) anticipated receiving a lower grade than they actually received in the course. The students’ anticipation of their grades may be attributed to other things, in addition to the course being online like: their level of knowledge of child welfare, anxiety about the course, anxiety about the computer, anxiety about computer skills, anxiety about their level of participation in the course, and anxiety about their language skills. The investigator can not make the assertion that students anticipated receiving lower grades because the course would be online, especially since they received higher grades than anticipated.

Table 5 is a frequency distribution for students’ reported overall grade point average.

Table 5
Frequency Table: Overall GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A grade</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B grade</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>(72.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C grade</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(16.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D grade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(7.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 indicates two students reported an overall GPA of an A grade. Forty-eight students reported an overall GPA of a B grade. Eleven students reported an overall GPA of a C grade. Five students reported an overall GPA of a D grade. No
students reported an overall GPA of an F grade. Students’ overall grade point averages indicate a large majority, 72.7%, reported having a GPA of a B grade. Only 2% of the students reported having a GPA of an A grade. Most students received an A or A- grade in this course. This fact is in stark contrast to what students thought they were going to receive and what they actually received. Students actually did better in the course than what their overall grade point averages revealed. Several things can be attributed to this fact. The instructor provided lecture notes online. The instructor created several different types of learning opportunity forums online. The instructor provided ample practice vignettes which incorporated course curricula. The instructor created a midterm and a final online and gave students more than enough time to complete them, a practice that is contrary to tests taken in the traditional classroom.

Variables Data

This section summarizes the differences in students’ perceptions of sense of community, interaction, feedback, and the human element. Students reported their perceptions on a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree.

Table 6 is a frequency distribution for the variable sense of community. Table 6 indicates whether or not the respondents agreed or disagreed with each statement, when combined equates to sense of community. The question numbers in Table 6 corresponds to the question numbers in the survey.
Table 6

Frequency Table: Sense of Community – A Comparison Of Students’ Responses In The Distance-learning Environment And Face-To-Face Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Distance-learning</th>
<th></th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th></th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12 Students in this course care about each other</td>
<td>48 (72.7)</td>
<td>18 (27.3)</td>
<td>57 (86.4)</td>
<td>9 (13.6)</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13 I feel connected to students in this course</td>
<td>42 (63.6)</td>
<td>24 (36.4)</td>
<td>52 (78.8)</td>
<td>14 (21.2)</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14 I feel connected to the instructor in this course</td>
<td>53 (80.3)</td>
<td>13 (19.7)</td>
<td>63 (95.5)</td>
<td>3 (4.5)</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15 I do not feel a spirit of community</td>
<td>39 (59.1)</td>
<td>27 (40.9)</td>
<td>36 (54.5)</td>
<td>30 (45.5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16 I feel like I belong to a team</td>
<td>47 (71.2)</td>
<td>19 (28.8)</td>
<td>53 (80.3)</td>
<td>13 (19.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17 I feel isolated in this course</td>
<td>29 (43.9)</td>
<td>37 (56.1)</td>
<td>24 (36.4)</td>
<td>42 (63.6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18 I trust others in this course</td>
<td>54 (81.8)</td>
<td>12 (18.2)</td>
<td>61 (92.4)</td>
<td>5 (7.6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19 I feel that I can rely on others in this course</td>
<td>42 (63.6)</td>
<td>24 (36.4)</td>
<td>48 (72.7)</td>
<td>18 (27.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20 I feel that members of this course depend on me</td>
<td>40 (60.6)</td>
<td>26 (39.4)</td>
<td>46 (69.7)</td>
<td>20 (30.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21 I feel confident that others will support me</td>
<td>46 (69.7)</td>
<td>20 (30.3)</td>
<td>52 (78.8)</td>
<td>14 (21.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Asterisk indicates frequencies of one group is statistically significant from frequencies of another group at p < .05 level*
Table 6 indicates that when comparing formats (face-to-face or distance-learning) more students reported that students in this course care about each other (face-to-face). More students reported feeling connected to other students (face-to-face). More students reported feeling connected to the instructor (face-to-face). More students didn’t feel a spirit of community (distance-learning). More students reported feeling like they belonged to a team (face-to-face). More students reported feeling isolated (distance-learning). More students reported feeling that they trust others in this course (face-to-face). More students reported that they could rely on others (face-to-face). More students reported that they felt members of the course depend on them (face-to-face). More students reported feeling that others would support them (face-to-face).

Student responses were rated using a 5-point likert scale. The responses were ranked, 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat Agree, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree. The summary above represents the recoded value for the scale. 1 – 3 were recoded to equal agree. 4 – 5 were recoded to equal disagree.

A chi square test was calculated to compare frequencies of students’ responses related to sense of community in the distance-learning environment and in the face-to-face environment. A statistically significant difference in frequencies was found ($\chi^2 = 14.392, df = 4, p < .05$) on question 12, Students in this course care about each other. More students agree with this statement in the face-to-face environment (86.4%) as opposed to the distance learning environment (72.7%). An acknowledgment of this perception may be attributed to the fact that students see each other, participate in and observe the interaction, dialogue, facial cues, and body language from other students in
the physical classroom environment. They are able to read signs of distress, joy, indifference, and empathy. Further, students are able to work on group assignments together. Students are able to receive clarity and clarification from each other about group assignments all the while observing how they care for each other. Lastly, students participate in the social aspect of the classroom environment by physically coming to school to go to class.

A statistically significant difference in frequencies was found ($\chi^2 = 11.081$, df = 4, $p < .05$) on question 13, I feel connected to students in this course. More students agree with this statement in the face-to-face environment (78.8%) as opposed to the distance learning environment (63.6%). An acknowledgement of this perception may be attributed to the fact that students see each other, participate in and observe interaction, dialogue, facial cues, and body language. Students are able to receive immediate responses from their colleagues in the classroom, an unending criticism of the distance-learning environment. Students have the opportunity to discuss classroom assignments, homework assignments, and group assignments. They have the ability to communicate their wishes to the instructor while they are physically in the classroom. Students experience immediacy and clarity from other students. Students are able to solicit information from other students and vice versa.

A statistically significant difference in frequencies was found ($\chi^2 = 20.395$, df = 4, $p < .05$) on question 14, I feel connected to the instructor in this course. More students agree with this statement in the face-to-face environment (95.5%) as opposed to the distance learning environment (80.3). An acknowledgement of this perception may be attributed to the fact that students see the instructor, participate in and observe
interaction, dialogue, facial cues, and body language. Students are able to receive immediate responses from their instructors in the classroom, an unending criticism of the distance-learning environment. Instructors disseminate classroom assignments, homework assignments, and group assignments. They have the ability to communicate their wishes to the class while the students are physically in the classroom. Students experience immediacy and clarity from their instructors. Instructors are able to solicit information from their students and vice versa.

Table 7 is a comparison of the computed means of student responses of their perception of sense of community in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. The question numbers in Table 7 corresponds to the question numbers in the survey.
Table 7

Comparison of Means: Sense of Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Distance-learning</th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>Students in this course care about each other</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.890</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>I feel connected to students in this course</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.953</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>I feel connected to the instructor in this course</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>.927</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15</td>
<td>I do not feel a spirit of community</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.932</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16</td>
<td>I feel like I belong to a team</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>.984</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17</td>
<td>I feel isolated in this course</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18</td>
<td>I trust others in this course</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>.927</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19</td>
<td>I feel that I can rely on others in this course</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.991</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20</td>
<td>I feel that members of this course depend on me</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21</td>
<td>I feel confident that others will support me</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.928</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Asterisk indicates that the mean of one group is statistically significant from mean of another group at p < .05 level

Table 7 shows the mean scores for students' responses related to sense of community. The mean is superior to the frequency information listed in table 6 because it displays how students’ responses are clustered around a whole number in a likert scale. As a result, people can visually see where student responses most likely occurred.

Table 7 indicates that on face value student responses appear to be similar in their perception of sense of community in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. Sense of community is a combination of ten different variables, when combined equates to sense of community. The standard deviation is provided to help determine how much students’ scores vary from the mean.
A paired-samples t test was calculated to compare means of students’ responses related to sense of community in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. A statistically significant difference in means was found ($t = -12.361$, df $= 131$, $p < .05$) on question 12, Students in this course care about each other. The mean of the distance-learning group 3.09 (sd = .890) was higher than the mean of the face-to-face group 2.55 (sd $= 1.010$). This means that students’ scores were mostly clustered between agree and somewhat agree in the face-to-face environment. Students’ scores were mostly clustered around somewhat agree in the distance-learning environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that students agreed more with the statement in the face-to-face environment. An acknowledgement of this perception may be attributed to the fact that students know how to show care for each other in the classroom environment but not in the distance-learning environment. Students are used to the culture of the face-to-face classroom. They know what to expect, what is expected of them, and how to relate and react to others in the classroom. All of these dynamics change in the distance-learning environment, thus, inviting anxiety, fear, and trepidation.

A statistically significant difference in means was found ($t = -12.923$, df $= 131$, $p < .05$) on question 13, I feel connected to students in this course. The mean of the distance-learning group 3.21 (sd = .953) was higher than the mean of the face-to-face group 2.67 (sd $= 1.086$). This means that students’ scores were mostly clustered between agree and somewhat agree in the face-to-face environment. Students’ scores were clustered between somewhat agree and disagree in the distance-learning environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that students agreed more with the statement in the face-to-face environment. An acknowledgement of this perception may be attributed to
the fact that the distance between students in the face-to-face classroom is minimal. Students can see each other, touch each other, talk to each other, and interact with each other. They may be used to and feel more comfortable with approaching someone in class. A comment about the distance-learning environment is that this connection and immediacy is lost. This leads to anxiety, fear, and trepidation about the distance-learning environment.

A statistically significant difference in means was found ($t = -8.887$, df = 131, $p < .05$) on question 14, I feel connected to the instructor in this course. The mean of the distance-learning group 2.82 (sd = .927) was higher than the mean of the face-to-face group 2.12 (sd = .920). This means that students' scores were mostly clustered between agree and somewhat agree in the face-to-face environment. Students' scores were clustered close to somewhat agree in the distance-learning environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that students agreed more with the statement in the face-to-face environment. An acknowledgement of this perception may be attributed to the fact that the distance between students and their instructor in the face-to-face classroom is minimal. Students and instructors can see each other, touch each other, talk to each other, and interact with each other. Students may be used to and feel more comfortable with approaching their instructor in the classroom. A comment about the distance-learning environment is that this connection and immediacy is lost. This leads to anxiety, fear, and trepidation about the distance-learning environment.
Table 8 is a frequency distribution for the variable interaction. Table 8 indicates whether or not the respondents agreed or disagreed with each statement, when combined equates to interaction. The question numbers in Table 8 corresponds to the question numbers in the survey.

Table 8

Frequency Table: Interaction – A Comparison Of Students’ Responses In The Distance-learning Environment And Face-to-face Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Distance-learning</th>
<th></th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th></th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22 Student to student interaction was more difficult than in other courses</td>
<td>25 (37.9)</td>
<td>41 (62.1)</td>
<td>34 (51.5)</td>
<td>32 (48.5)</td>
<td>* .003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23 Student to instructor interaction was more difficult than in other courses</td>
<td>37 (56.1)</td>
<td>29 (43.9)</td>
<td>43 (65.2)</td>
<td>23 (34.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24 Class discussions were more difficult to participate in than in other courses</td>
<td>34 (51.5)</td>
<td>32 (48.5)</td>
<td>48 (72.7)</td>
<td>18 (27.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25 It was easy to follow class discussion</td>
<td>52 (78.8)</td>
<td>14 (21.2)</td>
<td>52 (78.8)</td>
<td>14 (21.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Distance-learning</th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The</td>
<td>instructor</td>
<td>attempted</td>
<td>encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28</td>
<td>Once we</td>
<td>became</td>
<td>familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>interaction</td>
<td>with faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>(71.2)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Distance-learning</th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30</td>
<td>59 (89.4)</td>
<td>7 (10.6)</td>
<td>57 (86.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q30: Student interaction with faculty and other students is facilitated through a variety of ways, (voice mail, e-mail, audio/visual, Internet)

Q31: Technology hindered interaction

* Asterisk indicates frequencies of one group is statistically significant from frequencies of another group at p < .05 level

Student responses were rated using a 5-point likert scale. The responses were ranked, 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat Agree, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree. The summary above represents the recoded value for the scale. 1 – 3 were recoded to equal agree. 4 – 5 were recoded to equal disagree. Questions 22, 23, and 24 were reverse coded as indicated in the instrument.

A chi square test was calculated to compare frequencies of students’ responses related to interaction in the distance-learning environment and in the face-to-face environment. A statistically significant difference in frequencies was found ($\chi^2 = 16.171$, df = 4, p < .05) on question 22, Student to student interaction was more difficult than in other courses. More students agree with this statement in the face-to-face environment.
(51.5%) as opposed to the distance learning environment (37.9%). An acknowledgement of this perception may be attributed to the fact that some students feel isolated, alone, and voiceless in the traditional classroom. The distance-learning environment allows them to have a voice. The potential for interaction and dialogue in the distance-learning environment may be greater because of the type of commitment involved, level of activity required, and tasks assigned by the instructor.

Table 9 is a comparison of the computed means of student responses of their perceptions about interaction in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. The question numbers in Table 9 corresponds to the question numbers in the survey.
Table 9

Comparison of Means: Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Distance-learning</th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance-learning Mean</td>
<td>Distance-learning SD</td>
<td>Face-to-face Mean</td>
<td>Face-to-face SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22</td>
<td>Student to student interaction was more difficult than in other courses</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.136</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23</td>
<td>Student to instructor interaction was more difficult than in other courses</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24</td>
<td>Class discussions were more difficult to participate in than in other courses</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.072</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25</td>
<td>It was easy to follow class discussion</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.009</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26</td>
<td>The instructor attempted encouraged student interaction</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>.980</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27</td>
<td>Interaction with students and with the instructor became more natural as the course progressed</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.894</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28</td>
<td>Once we became familiar with the technology (i.e. Blackboard, WebCT, iLearn) it had very little impact on the class</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.021</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29</td>
<td>Student interaction with faculty and other students is frequent</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.892</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30</td>
<td>Student interaction with faculty and other students is facilitated through a variety of ways, (voice mail, e-mail, Audio/Visual, Internet,)</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.985</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q31</td>
<td>Technology hindered interaction</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.045</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Asterisk indicates that the mean of one group is statistically significant from mean of another group at p < .05 level

Table 9 shows the mean scores for students' responses related to interaction. The mean in superior to the frequency information listed in table 8 because it displays how
students' responses are gathered around a whole number in a likert scale. As a result, people can visually see where student responses most likely occurred.

The standard deviation is provided to help determine how much students' scores vary from the mean. On face value students' standard deviation scores appear to be closely clustered around the mean.

Student responses appear to be similar in their perception of interaction in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. Interaction is a combination of ten different variables, when combines equates to interaction.

A paired-samples t test was calculated to compare means of students' responses related to interaction in the distance-learning environment and face-to-face environment. A statistically significant difference in means was found ($t = -19.362$, $df = 131$, $p < .05$) on question 22, Student to student interaction was more difficult than in other courses. The mean of the face-to-face group 3.56 ($sd = .914$) was higher than the mean of the distance-learning group 2.97 ($sd = 1.136$). This means that students' scores were mostly clustered between somewhat agree and disagree in the face-to-face environment. Students' scores were clustered closely around agree in the distance-learning environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that students agreed more with the statement in the distance-learning environment. An acknowledgement of this perception may be attributed to the fact that students reported taking relatively few courses, so they may not have been comfortable with distance-learning. Students may be less comfortable with technology and computers. Students may not know how to navigate the system for interactivity. Students may not know what is expected of them in the distance-learning environment.
A statistically significant difference in means was found \((t = -24.417, \text{df} = 131, p < .05)\) on question 24, Class discussions were more difficult to participate in than in other courses. The mean of the face-to-face group 3.86 \((sd = .8.39)\) was higher than the mean of the distance-learning group 3.33 \((sd = 1.072)\). This suggests that students' scores were mostly clustered near disagree in the face-to-face environment. Students' scores were clustered near somewhat agree and between disagree in the distance-learning environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that students somewhat agreed more with the statement in the distance-learning environment. An acknowledgement of this perception may be attributed to the fact that students didn't know how to participate in class discussion in the distance-learning environment. Students may have been reluctant to participate in class discussions. Students may not have known how to navigate the system to participate in class discussions. Students may not have known what was expected of them related to class discussions. Students may not have had anything to say in the class discussion and did not respond, even when it was expected of them.

Table 10 is a frequency distribution for the variable feedback. Table 10 indicates whether or not the respondents agreed or disagreed with each statement, when combined equates to feedback. The question numbers in Table 10 corresponds to the question numbers in the survey.
Table 10

Frequency Table: Feedback — A Comparison Of Students’ Responses In The Distance-learning Environment And Face-to-face Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Distance-learning</th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q32 The instructor’s response time is appropriate</td>
<td>62 (93.9)</td>
<td>4 (6.1)</td>
<td>66 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q33 The instructor answers questions and comments promptly</td>
<td>66 (100.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>66 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q34 Feedback on student assignments and questions is constructive</td>
<td>63 (95.5)</td>
<td>3 (4.5)</td>
<td>65 (98.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q35 Feedback on student assignments and questions is provided in a timely manner</td>
<td>66 (100.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>65 (98.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q36 Students’ response time is appropriate</td>
<td>60 (90.9)</td>
<td>6 (9.1)</td>
<td>64 (97.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q37 Students answer questions and comments promptly</td>
<td>57 (86.4)</td>
<td>9 (13.6)</td>
<td>64 (97.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q38 The feedback process is appropriate</td>
<td>64 (97.0)</td>
<td>2 (3.0)</td>
<td>64 (97.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student responses were rated using a 5-point likert scale. The responses were ranked, 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat Agree, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree. The summary above represents the recoded value for the scale. 1 – 3 were recoded to equal agree. 4 – 5 were recoded to equal disagree.

A chi square test was calculated to compare frequencies of students’ responses related to feedback in the distance-learning environment and in the face-to-face environment. Overall, there is no recorded statistically significant difference. None of the frequencies related to feedback were found to be statistically significant. Student responses are very similar when comparing class format. The frequencies of students’ responses found both class formats to provide the level of feedback that they desired and expected.

Table 11 is a comparison of the computed means of student responses of their perceptions about feedback in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. The question numbers in Table 11 corresponds to the question numbers in the survey.
### Table 11

Comparison of Means: Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Distance-learning Mean</th>
<th>Distance-learning SD</th>
<th>Face-to-face Mean</th>
<th>Face-to-face SD</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q32 The instructor’s response time is appropriate</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.736</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q33 The instructor answers questions and comments promptly</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q34 Feedback on student assignments and questions is constructive</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>.802</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>.739</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q35 Feedback on student assignments and questions is provided in a timely manner</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.736</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q36 Students’ response time is appropriate</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>.776</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q37 Students answer questions and comments promptly</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.948</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>.834</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q38 The feedback process is appropriate</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.789</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>.803</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student responses appear to be similar in their perception of feedback in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. Feedback is a combination of seven different variables, when combined equates to feedback.

A paired-samples t test was calculated to compare means of students’ responses related to feedback in the distance-learning environment and face-to-face environment. None of the means were found to be statistically significant, except sense of community. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no difference in feedback in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment.
Table 12

Paired-Samples t test: Sense of Community, Interaction, Feedback, and the Human Element

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DL** vs F2F*** (Sense of Community)</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>-.291</td>
<td>* .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL vs F2F (Interaction)</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL vs F2F (Feedback)</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>-.076</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL vs F2F (The Human Element)</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>-.162</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Asterisk indicates that the mean of one group is statistically significant from mean of another group at p < .05 level.
**DL = distance-learning
***F2F = face-to-face

Table 12 illustrates the differences between two means. A paired-samples t test was calculated to compare means of students’ responses. The mean of the course format distance learning was compared to the mean of the course format face-to-face on every independent variable – sense of community, interaction, feedback, and the human element. A statistically significant difference in means was found in sense of community. Table 12 does not provide rationale for the differences found. However, please review tables 6 and 7 which provide more detailed information about the differences found in sense of community.

Table 13, chi square was calculated to test differences in sense of community, interaction, feedback, and the human element.
Table 13

Chi-Square: Sense of Community, Interaction, Feedback, and the Human Element

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi Square</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Community</td>
<td>29.839</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>7.566</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>15.356</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Human Element</td>
<td>39.619</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>.487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 38 cells (82.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected is .50.

b 24 cells (70.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected is .50.

c 22 cells (64.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected is .50.

d 82 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected is .50.

Table 13 illustrates that a chi square test was calculated to establish differences in course format and sense of community, course format and interaction, course format and feedback, and course format and the human element.

A chi-square test was calculated to compare the course format (distance-learning and face-to-face) related to sense of community. No statistically significant difference was found ($\chi^2 = .122$, df = 22, $p > .05$). Course format and sense of community have no relationship. Consequently, student responses indicate no preference for course format related to sense of community.

A chi-square test was calculated to compare the course format (distance-learning and face-to-face) related to interaction. No statistically significant difference was found ($\chi^2 = .961$, df = 16, $p > .05$). Course format and interaction have no relationship. Consequently, student responses indicate no preference for course format related to interaction.
A chi-square test was calculated to compare the course format (distance-learning and face-to-face) related to feedback. No statistically significant difference was found ($\chi^2 = .499, \text{df} = 16, p > .05$). Course format and feedback have no relationship. Consequently, student responses indicate no preference for course format related to feedback.

A chi-square test was calculated to compare the course format (distance-learning and face-to-face) related to the human element. No statistically significant difference was found ($\chi^2 = .487, \text{df} = 40, p > .05$). Course format and the human element have no relationship. Consequently, student responses indicate no preference for course format related to the human element. Therefore, it can be concluded that the human element in the traditional classroom environment and the face-to-face classroom environment are no different.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study consisted of four research questions and four null hypotheses. This section analyzes the four research questions and tests the four null hypotheses.

Research question 1: Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a significant difference on the human element (sense of community, interaction, and feedback)?

Hypothesis 1: Course format (traditional or distance-learning) does not have a significant difference on the human element: sense of community, interaction, and feedback.
A chi-square test was calculated to determine relationships between variables. The results of the study indicate students had no preference for course format related to the human element. Students' responses indicate no statistically significant differences in frequencies in the human element in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. Therefore, this investigation failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Research question 2: Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a significant difference on sense of community?

Hypothesis 2: Course format (traditional or distance-learning) does not have a significant difference on sense of community.

A chi-square statistical test was calculated to determine relationships between variables. The results of the study indicate students had no preference for course format related to sense of community. Students' responses indicate no statistically significant differences in frequencies in sense of community in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. Therefore, this investigation failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Research question 3: Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a significant difference on interaction?

Hypothesis 3: Course format (traditional or distance-learning) does not have a significant difference on interaction.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation was designed to answer four research questions related to students’ perceptions about sense of community, interaction, feedback, and the human element in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face learning environment.

The conclusion and recommendations of this investigation’s research findings are detailed in this chapter. Recommendations for universities, university administrators, education policy advocates, social work educators, curricula designers, instructors, and students are proposed for the future development of social work education. The research questions are presented so that significant findings and conclusions of interest can be offered.

Research question 1: Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a significant difference on the human element (sense of community, interaction, and feedback)?

It was found that course format does not have a statistically significant difference on the human element, a combination of sense of community, interaction, and feedback. Therefore, the human element in the distance-learning environment is no different to the human element in the face-to-face environment.
A chi-square statistical test was calculated to determine relationships between
variables. The results of the study indicate students had no preference for course format
related to interaction. Students’ responses indicate no statistically significant differences
in frequencies in interaction in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face
environment. Therefore, this investigation failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Research question 4: Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a
significant difference on feedback?

Hypothesis 4: Course format (traditional or distance-learning) does not have a significant
difference on feedback.

A chi-square statistical test was calculated to determine relationships between
variables. The results of the study indicate students had no preference for course format
related to feedback. Students’ responses indicate no statistically significant differences
in frequencies in feedback in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face
environment. Therefore, this investigation failed to reject the null hypothesis.
The Human Element is a synergistic, reciprocal, and interdependent dynamic relationship among all three factors (sense of community, interaction, and feedback). It precipitates and enhances learning.

If measures are made to increase the human element (sense of community, interaction, and feedback) in social work education, students might, in turn, report increased levels of the human element. When the human element (sense of community, interaction, and feedback) is increased in distance education courses, distance-learning courses are more effective than face-to-face courses.

Research question 2: Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a significant difference on sense of community?

It was found that course format does not have a statistically significant difference on sense of community. Students' responses indicate that there is not a difference in sense of community in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. However, a chi-square and t test analysis was calculated. The tests concluded that students' responses differed on some aspects related to sense of community. Students' responses indicated a preference for the face-to-face environment related to their care for each other. Students' responses indicated a preference for the face-to-face environment related to their connectedness to other students. Students' responses indicated a preference for the face-to-face environment related to their connectedness to the instructor.
Research question 3: Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a significant difference on interaction?

It was found that course format does not have a statistically significant difference on interaction. Therefore, students’ responses indicate that there is not a difference in interaction in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. However, a chi-square and t test analysis was calculated. The tests concluded that students’ responses differed on some aspects related to interaction. Students’ responses indicated that student to student interaction was more difficult in the face-to-face environment. Class discussions were more difficult in the face to face environment.

If measures are made to increase interaction in social work education, students might, in turn, report increased levels of the interaction in the classroom. When interactivity is increased in distance education courses, distance-learning courses are more effective than face-to-face courses.

Research question 4: Does course format (traditional or distance-learning) have a significant difference on feedback?

It was found that course format does not have a statistically significant difference on feedback. Students’ responses indicated that there is not a difference in feedback in the distance learning environment and the face-to-face environment. If measures are made to increase feedback in social work education, students might, in turn, report increased levels of the feedback in the classroom. When feedback between students and other students and between instructors and students is increased in distance education courses, distance-learning courses are more effective than face-to-face courses.
Discussion and Conclusions

Technology has seemingly infused itself into almost every facet of American personal and professional life. Likewise, technology has slowly infused itself into the education process. Social work education, however, still has some catching up to do when compared to other professions like information technology, business, and the medical field.

The Human Element may bring promise to social work education and other educational disciplines. The Human Element is a combination of sense of community, interaction, and feedback. It is a synergistic, reciprocal, and interdependent dynamic relationship between the three variables.

This research sought to explore differences in the human element in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment. The findings indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the human element in the face-to-face environment and in the distance-learning environment. If efforts are made to increase The Human Element in distance-learning courses, they may become more effective than face-to-face courses.

Student perceptions of their anticipated grades were loosely related to the grades that were given in the course. Approximately half (48.5%) of the students anticipated receiving an A grade in the course. Approximately one-third (34.5%) of the students anticipated receiving a B grade in the course. Some students anticipated receiving a C grade and a D grade. After the completion of the class, most students in the course
received an A grade. Very few students received a B grade. One student received a C grade. No students received a D grade.

The findings suggest that other things may be attributed to students anticipation of grades, like anxiety about the course, anxiety about the computer, anxiety about computer skills, anxiety about their level of participation in the course, and anxiety about language skills.

Students’ reported overall GPA was not related to the grades that were given in the course. Only 3% of students reported having an overall GPA of an A grade. In contrast, the majority of students in the course received an A grade. 72.7% of students reported having an overall GPA of a B grade. In contrast, a majority of students in the course received an A grade. 16.7% of students reported having an overall GPA of a C grade. In contrast, only one student received a C grade in the course. 7.6% of students reported having an overall GPA of a D grade. In contrast, no students received a D grade in the course.

Overall, the distance learning course did not show any differences related to student outcomes – grades. The findings suggest that students’ reported overall GPA is not related to their grade in the course. In fact, they did much better in the distance learning course than they anticipated and much better than their reported grade point averages. This suggests that instruction methodologies and strategies, and students’ grades are actually enhanced in the distance learning environment. Students may have been anxious and unfamiliar with online classes, student expectations, and grading systems which lead to their decrease in anticipated grades.
The research also gave clues as to areas that need improvement in the distance-learning environment. Social work distance-learning courses may need to investigate how courses should be planned and implemented in which students can show each other that they care. Social work distance-learning courses may need to investigate how courses should be planned and implemented so that students feel connected to each other and to the instructor. Social work distance-learning courses may need to investigate how courses should be planned and implemented so that interactivity is vital. When students are interactive with each other, the instructor, and the course material, they may be more self-directed in their education, which leads to effective learning. Social work distance-learning courses may need to investigate how courses should be planned for and implemented so that class discussions are easy to participate in. Class discussions should not be cumbersome and hindered by technology. Effective courses are those in which dialogue, interactivity, and conversation are easy.

This research does not tell us whether or not social work students prefer to come to class to learn. It does tell us, statistically speaking, that students' responses indicated no statistically significant differences in the human element (sense of community, interaction, and feedback). We suspect, because of the nature of the field, social work students may be more inclined to say that they prefer the classroom. However, with well-planned, strategically crafted courses, social work students may find that the human element in the online environment that they say is important in the traditional classroom environment is a good alternative to physically being in the presence of people.
This research consisted of mostly undergraduate students. Some experts believe that graduate students may be more responsive to distance-learning courses because they are more mature, responsible, motivated, and self directed about their education.

Implications for Social Work Education

The process of educating social work students must change in the future if the educational process is to keep up with the changing societal demographics. Within a context of rapid technological change and shifting market conditions, the American higher education system is challenged with providing increased educational opportunities without increased budgets, keeping education activities moving forward, and supplementing research opportunities or expanding customary classroom offerings with distance-learning opportunities (Mumuney Tilghman, 2003, p. 6-7).

Contemporary students represent a population of students that are different from students of the past. Contemporary students are older, are parents, have part time and full time jobs. They will demand that the education system is responsive to their needs. A high proportion of learners will, in the future, be ‘strategic’ in their approach, and for institutions to take this into account in the design of learning experiences (Stiles, 2002).

This investigation references some articles and authors who write about distance education. It was a hard task to find resources that spoke specifically to distance education in the field of social work. Although distance-learning in social work is not a new phenomenon, there is minimal information about it in the social work literature (Wernet, Olliges & Delicath, 2000).
Social work educators and students express the fact that the field of social work is a hands on field. Students expect to come to class to learn instead of participating in the process remotely. Teachers expect their students to participate in the learning process by participating in the traditional classroom. During the course of this investigation several people, both instructors and students expressed preference of face-to-face classrooms over distance-learning education. The new technologies are an enhancement of, not a substitute for, classroom instruction and personal contacts with students (Cauble & Thurston, 2000).

There will have to be a paradigm shift in order to incorporate distance education teaching methodologies in the field of social work. Despite the potential of multimedia as a powerful instructional tool, it has been little used in social work education (Cauble & Thurston, 2000).

The Office of Technology Assessment (1989) counsels that if distance-learning education is to be a major player in providing and improving quality in the classroom, several things need to happen. Their position is that technology should be expanded; collaboration between and among schools and higher education institutions should be established. The private sector, according to them, may have a role to play as well. They believe that more teachers should be trained and able to use technology. Lastly, state and federal policies regarding education should be reexamined to include provisions for education provided at a distance.

The report believes that educational policies which were established decades ago are no longer applicable because they were written for traditional classroom education.
The current educational process has transcended outdated policies and practices. The OTA cautions that definitions of classroom may have to be reevaluated. Policies regarding the location of classes and course credit, likewise, may need reexamining for relevancy.

Traditionally, the federal government has played a small role in distance education. While it has purchased the equipment for universities and other organizations according to the OTA, it has shown little initiative in forging the way for distance-learning education. The OTA sees a major role for the continued development and implementation of distance-learning education for government at all levels and the private sector. The areas that need most consideration are planning, funding and implementation. The OTA projects that the government and the private sector will have to get involved in four areas: (1) telecommunications policy, (2) research, evaluation and dissemination, (3) the teacher's role and (4) the infrastructure for distance-learning.

Teachers are, in most cases, the only person of authority that students experience when it comes to the online environment. Teachers plan courses, assignments, discussions, and tests. Social work instructors must be able to teach a distance education course very much in the same manner as they would teach face-to-face courses. However, the teaching strategies and methods are very different. This paradigm shift is essential to the success of social work education. The distance-learning instructor plays a critical role in the distance-learning classroom. Easton (2003) and Visser and Visser (2000) recognize that the instructor's role in the online classroom is pivotal. Easton sees
the instructor as the instructional designer and subject matter expert whereas Visser and Visser see the role as the most important support person.

The distance education environment provides challenges in its own right. The role of the teacher must change so that students experience the same physical closeness that they experience in the face-to-face environment. Chesebro (2003) describes the impact that clarity and nonverbal immediacy have on students in online classroom. He hypothesizes that students who experience clear teachers who also show immediacy will learn more than students whose teachers are not clear and also show immediacy. Ellis (2004) agrees with Chesebro. In addition, however, she says that instructors should be caring to their students as well.

Chesebro (2003) describes what he calls “The Profile of a Clear Teacher”. A clear teacher is one who exhibits a long list of variables. Some of the variables include the following:

1. Provides outlines of course content and adheres to the outlines throughout the course;
2. Reviews main ideas that have been discussed each day;
3. Frequently stops to summarize ideas after a number of them have been discussed;
4. Explains objectives of each unit;
5. Previews the main ideas of presentations before they are presented;
6. Does not use the terms “uh”, “um,” or “like”;
7. Explains material in a straightforward manner;
8. Does not frequently drift on tangents; and
9. Paces instruction so that students have time to comprehend each point (p. 136).

According to his definition, nonverbal immediacy is, “the degree of perceived physical or psychological closeness between people. We are closer to some people, or more immediate with them, than we are with others” (p. 141). The point to be stressed here is that students expect their instructors to be immediate. They may think that instructors will not be clear and immediate in distance-learning courses. However, distance-learning courses must be clear, easily understandable, and instructors must show signs of immediacy if they are to be successful. Ellis (2004) asserts that instructors should also show confirmation, that is, show their students that they are valued and significant individuals.

Recommendations for Social Work Education

Distance education teaching methodologies are very important and significant changes to the educational process in social work education. The researcher, with support from experts, recommends that schools of social work investigate its utility, feasibility, adaptability, and flexibility to supplement, and in some cases, replace current teaching methodologies.

Based on the findings from this research, the investigator recommends the following:

1. Researchers should further investigate the human element in the distance-learning environment and the face-to-face environment.

2. Social work researchers should investigate whether sense of community is important to students. Research in distance education has not addressed the extent
to which students think a sense of community is important, it does indicate they
find distance-independent delivery modes deficient in community, though not
cripplingly so (Weedman, 1999).

3. Social work administrators and educators should create more theories related to
distance education. The theories will help educators design courses. Roblyer and
Weincke (2003) talk about the difficulty in applying theory to distance-learning
course design, especially when interaction is concerned. The challenge is to
provide theory that will explain and anticipate distance education practices for a
broad range of emerging educational purposes and experiences (Garrison, 2000).

"The emerging practice of distance education is incorporating new and
sophisticated communications technology. The pressing challenge facing
distance-learning theorists is to adapt current theories to these new realities, and,
create new theory" (Garrison, 2000, p. 4).

4. Policy advocates, universities, administrators, and instructors must participate in
more empirical research related to the effectiveness of distance-learning social
work distance education. Currently, most research is descriptive. Studies focus
on the quality of distance education and whether students are satisfied. What we
know about the effectiveness of distance-learning courses is limited. To facilitate
successful learning experiences, institutions must develop distance education
policies that will maintain course integrity and quality and foster innovation in the
"virtual classroom" to enhance student learning (McGorry, 2003). Some social
work educators have expressed concern about the lack of empirical studies done
in the area of distance-learning technologies (Menon & Coe, 2000).
5. Social work schools should conduct more evidence-based evaluations that show non-refutale differences in the traditional classroom and face-to-face environment. McGorry (2003) suggests that an effective evaluative piece to distance-learning education is missing.

6. Social work schools should focus on training competent instructors to teach distance education courses. Instructors must be versed in computer technology. A critical component to the success of the integration of technology into the classroom and online teaching is the training of those who will deliver this instruction (Daniels, 2002). The author believes that there is not enough focus, attention, and support of distance-learning instructors. Distance-learning instructors should be properly trained and supported by the institutions in which they are employed. Instructors should be afforded institutional resources related to the success of their courses.

7. University and social work administrators must verbalize the important paradigm shift with which distance education brings. They must also support the development of the new role of teacher and student because the role is very different in the distance-learning environment. “Students have become active rather than passive learners; faculty have become the ‘guide on the side’ rather than ‘the sage on the stage’” (Gumport & Chun, 1999, p. 381).

8. Distance education course designers should strategically plan for the very different environment with which the Internet brings. Hashim (2000) recommends things that course designers can do to make their courses better: (1) provide pre and post tests so that students can assess their learning;
(2) incorporate multimedia into the course or ask experts for help in adding audio, video, and graphics.

9. The distance-learning environment calls for a new way of teaching and imparting information to students. Teachers will have to be particularly conscious of the paradigm shift from the classroom to the online environment. Hashim (2000) believes that teachers do not do a good job teaching; rather they inform students through instructions and processes. According to Hashim, instructors have done a weak job at incorporating learning activities into their courses. For the future, he suggests that instructors improve by including more activities where students have the opportunity to learn.

10. Universities, schools of social work, and researchers should create best practice models that describe success in online environments. There is limited information available on best practice models. The Office of Technology Assessment (1989) report concludes that standardized valid instructional models should be developed and implemented.

11. Universities, social work administrators, and social work researchers should investigate the unique experiences that instructors have in the online environment. There has been virtually no effort to draw together and describe or analyze the special experiences that distance educators have of educational communications, policy, organization, learning, curriculum and instruction (Moore, 1990, p. xiii)

12. Course designers should create distance-learning courses that duplicate some of the real life experiences that social work students have to do as part of their education. Students are expected to participate in internships in which they
practice direct service skills with clients. Some students practice their therapy skills with clients. Contemporary distance-learning course designers must take this into account in planning courses and curricula.

Levin (2002) offers his vision on what he sees for the future of distance education. According to him, technological change would be 10,000 times as powerful as it is today. Teleapprenticeships are an important way that students can participate in the learning process. Levin defines Teleapprenticeships as, “formal educational frameworks that engage people in learning through their remote participation in ongoing work settings” (p. 106). They are much like the apprenticeships that are used in the medical profession, law, engineering, etc. The student novice is not actually a paid employee but works closely under the supervision of the expert. Novices observe organization or classroom activity from the periphery. In the case of distance education courses, they can be added to email distribution lists, listservs and given authority to participate in classroom functions. Teleapprentices have gained insight and context related to the course and/or function, they may be given small tasks to complete.

Wilson (2002) projects trends that will impact the future of distance education. They are listed in Figure 8 below. He reminds readers that technology is not perfect, rather its utility, usability, adaptability, flexibility, and functionality serves as a task to humans for further development and production. As technology continues to transform, so too will new models for its utility, especially in the area of education.
TECHNOLOGIZING OF SCHOOL SYSTEMS
- Standardized competencies
- System-side assessments and accountability
- Incentivization of funding
- Regulated processes and methods

De-professionalizing the teacher's role

LEARNER- AND USER-CENTERED PHILOSOPHIES
- Convenient, anytime/anywhere access
- Constructivism
- Field-based and informal learning
- High-touch connectivity

MOVES TO AUTOMATE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN
- Standardized taxonomies for learning outcomes and instructional design
- Data-driven generation of rule-based instruction
- More flexible, adaptable authoring tools
- More modular, re-usable design

THE DIGITAL SHIFT: ADVANCES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES
- Archivability
- Searchability
- Replicability
- Hypertext linkability
- Communication tools
- Representation and modeling tools

GLOBAL MARKETPLACE
- Economies of scale
- Globally distributed labor pool
- Disaggregation of products and services
- Commoditization of instruction
- Mixing of commerce and education

RADICAL FORCES INSPIRED BY GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY
- Web as democratizing, emancipating, empowering force
- Open source
- Self-publishing and knowledge sharing
- Peer-to-peer networking
- Self-organized learning- and performance-support groups
- Threats to credentialing, degree-granting institutions
- Global education as an alternative to a national curriculum

CHANGING PARADIGMS OF THOUGHT IN INSTRUCTION DESIGN
- From strategy to activity
- From individual to activity
- From social to value
- From multiple scales to integration of scale
- From linear causality to systemic impact

Figure 8: Key Trends Relating to Education, Distance Education, and Learning Technologies
Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations that were observed which presented themselves throughout the culmination of this project. The researcher has listed the limitations of the study.

1. The investigator was also the instructor for the introductory child welfare course. This study employed convenience sampling. This method was the most appropriate given the population and the instructor’s role and interest in learning more about the human element (sense of community, interaction, and feedback) in the distance-learning environment courses and in the traditional classroom environment.

2. The researcher did not use two separate groups. One class was asked to give their perspective on two separate classes, one in the distance-learning environment and the other in the face-to-face environment. ANOVA could not be used for this reason. Instead, paired-samples t tests were used. The research may have been more reliable if two separate groups were used - one specifically to measure sense of community, interaction, feedback, and the human element in the distance-learning classroom environment and one to specifically measure sense of community, interaction, feedback, and the human element in the face-to-face classroom environment.

3. One possible threat to validity is noted. Selection bias occurs when one makes comparisons between groups that are erroneously believed to be equivalent (Sylvia & Sylvia, 2004). In this case, students were asked to compare two classes...
that they completed, one was a distance-learning course and one was a face-to-face course. Students were asked to measure sense of community, interaction, feedback, and the human element in both of the classes. However, the instructor did not have any control over the face-to-face class that the students selected to compare to the distance-learning class. This design does not guarantee that the courses are similar in content, teaching style, assignments, class dynamics, sense of community, interaction, feedback, and the human element.

4. Another threat to validity is noted. Students' interpretation of the questions on the instrument may have been impacted by their reported results on the survey, thereby threatening the testing method. The researcher did not interpret any portion of the scale for participants.

5. The researcher did not use a reliable scale to measure interaction, feedback, and the human element, as none were found. The researcher created an instrument which measured the variables. However, a reliable scale was found and was used to measure sense of community. Reliability helps to show that something measures what it is supposed to measure.

6. The course not fully online, only a component (25%) of the course was online. Students had total access to the course. The instructor set up chat rooms for the students to use to work on assignments. Some students may have spent more time online than others. In the future, similar studies should be attempted on courses that are more integrated and/or fully integrated.
7. There were no best practice models in social work to use as a guide in this research. Future research on social work distance education should keep this fact in mind.

8. The ideal population would have been one which consisted of all social work students. The introductory Child Welfare course is open to all university students. Because of this, the students enrolled in the course had varying backgrounds and disciplines.

9. Can not be generalized to private universities as all students surveyed were from a public state university.

Despite the limitations noted, this research is valuable to social work education because it provides a framework: The human element, which is a factor that precipitates and contributes to effective learning in the distance learning classroom. Administrators, course designers, and students can focus their education so that the process elicits maximum benefits for everyone. The incorporation of distance education in Social Work is a phenomenon whose time has come.
APPENDIX A

Number of Accredited and Candidacy Programs

Master's Social Work Programs

![Bar chart showing number of Master's Social Work Programs from 2000 to 2004.]

Baccalaureate Social Work Programs

![Bar chart showing number of Baccalaureate Social Work Programs from 2000 to 2004.]

Adapted from the 2003-2004 annual report of the Council on Social Work Education. The numbers are accurate as of June, 2004.
APPENDIX B

Adaptation of Burgess’ (1997) The Oryx Guide to Distance Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>COURSE CATEGORY or TITLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 University of Alabama College of Continuing Studies</td>
<td>Human Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 University of Alaska Fairbanks Center for Distance Education and Independent Learning</td>
<td>Child Development Psychology Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Arizona State University College of Extended Education</td>
<td>Human Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Rio Salado Community College Distance Learning Office</td>
<td>Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Arkansas Telecommunications Consortium</td>
<td>Gerontology Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 California College for Health Sciences Distance Education Programs</td>
<td>Childhood Education Health Services Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Consortium for Distance Learning (Northern CA)</td>
<td>Child Development Gerontology Psychology Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 The Fielding Institute (Worldwide)</td>
<td>Human Development Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 INTELECOM Intelligent Telecommunications (Southern CA)</td>
<td>Child Development Psychology Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 University of California Center for Media and Independent Learning</td>
<td>Psychology Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Colorado State University Distance Education</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 KRMA/Denver Council for Public Television</td>
<td>Psychology Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Metropolitan State College of DenverExtended Campus Programs</td>
<td>Psychology Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Florida West Coast Public Broadcasting, Inc. Instructional TV</td>
<td>Psychology Sociology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX B (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Program(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Miami-Dade Community College Distance Education Kendall Campus</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Social Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Southern College Continuing Education Department</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 University of Florida Department of Independent Study and Distance Education</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sociology</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 University of Georgia</td>
<td>Family Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 University of Idaho - Engineering Outreach College of Engineering</td>
<td>Human Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Belleville Area College Telecourse Office</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Governors State University Center for Extended Learning</td>
<td>Child Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sociology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Harold Washington College Center for Open Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 The University of Illinois at Springfield Telecourse Office</td>
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<td>24 Western Illinois University Educational Broadcasting and Independent Study</td>
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<td>25 Indiana State University Independent Study</td>
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<td>26 Taylor University Independent Study</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>27 Iowa Public Television Educational Telecommunications</td>
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<td>28 North Iowa Area Community College Telecourse Department</td>
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<td>29 University of Iowa Division of Continuing Education</td>
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<td>Social Work *</td>
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<td>30 Kansas State University Division of Continuing Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 University of Kansas Division of Continuing Education</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Kentucky Telecommunications Consortium</td>
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<td></td>
<td>KETV/Kentucky ETV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>University of Maine System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education Network of Maine</td>
</tr>
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<td>34</td>
<td>College of the Air</td>
</tr>
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<td>Maryland Public Television</td>
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<td>North Carolina State University Office of Instructional Telecommunications</td>
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<td>University of North Carolina Independent Studies</td>
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<td>North Dakota Interactive Video Network North Dakota University System</td>
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<td>University of Toledo University College Division of Distance Learning</td>
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<td>Oklahoma State University – Independent Study University Extension</td>
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<td>Rogers State College Distance Learning Program</td>
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<td>Telecourse or Study Area</td>
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<td>Division of Continuing Education</td>
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<td>University of Houston – Off Campus Institute</td>
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APPENDIX B (continued)

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Programs Offered</th>
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<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>West Virginia Higher Education Instructional Television Consortium</td>
<td>Child Development, Family Life</td>
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<td></td>
<td>West Virginia Public Broadcasting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College of the Air</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin – Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent Learning</td>
<td></td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>Wisconsin Educational Communications Board</td>
<td>Child development, Psychology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Telecourses - Educational Programming</td>
<td>Social Work *, Sociology</td>
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<td>89</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nontraditional Programs</td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>University of Wyoming</td>
<td>Psychology, Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School of Extended Studies and Public Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Burgess (1997). Burgess' assessment includes studying 434 universities which offered media-assisted courses. The number of colleges does not include all community colleges. Some community colleges participate in a consortium or collaboration.
APPENDIX C

Questionnaire

Traditional Classroom and Distance Learning Formats in Social Work Education

Data collected from this confidential survey will be used for completion of a Doctorate degree in social work at Clark Atlanta University. The information gathered will be used to research and compare the traditional learning format and the distance learning format.

The survey questions will be about sense of community, interaction, and feedback in both learning formats.

You have been invited to participate because you have participated in a class which incorporates distance learning.

You must be eighteen years of age or older to participate. There are no risks or benefits to you in participating in this survey. You may choose to participate or not. You may answer only the questions you feel comfortable answering, and you may stop at any time. If you do not wish to participate, you may simply return the blank survey, with no penalty to yourself. If you do participate, completion and return of the survey indicates your consent to the above conditions.

Please do not put your name on this form. The survey should take approximately 5 to 7 minutes to complete. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the principal investigator, Sevaughn Banks, at sdbanks@sfsu.edu or the research advisor, Professor Robert Waymer, at Rwaymer@cau.edu.

INSTRUCTIONS:
Place a check mark in the box next to the appropriate item. Choose only one answer for each question. You may use either a pen or pencil to complete the questionnaire.

Section I: Demographic Information

1. Type of School I Attend:
   1) □ Public
   2) □ Private

2. My Social Work Program:
   1) □ BSW
   2) □ MSW
   3) □ Ph.D.

3. My Gender:
   1) □ Female
   2) □ Male

4. My Ethnicity:
   1) □ Caucasian
   2) □ African-American
   3) □ Latino/Hispanic
   4) □ Asian/Pacific Islander
   5) □ Other

5. My Age Group:
   1) □ 18 – 26
   2) □ 27 – 35
   3) □ 36 – 44
   4) □ 45 – 53
   5) □ 54+

165
6. Type of Distance Learning Course:  
   1) □ Policy  
   2) □ Research  
   3) □ Practice  
   4) □ Ethics  
   5) □ Clinical  

7. Percentage of Course Online:  
   1) □ 25%  
   2) □ 50%  
   3) □ 75%  
   4) □ 100%  

8. How many Distance Learning Courses have you taken?  
   1) □ None  
   2) □ 1-2  
   3) □ 3-4  
   4) □ 5 or more  

9. Are any Distance Learning courses required?  
   1) □ Yes  
   2) □ No  

10. Type of Distance Learning course required:  
    1) □ Policy  
    2) □ Research  
    3) □ Practice  
    4) □ Ethics  
    5) □ Clinical  
    6) □ N/A  

11. Type of Face-To-Face Course:  
    1) □ Policy  
    2) □ Research  
    3) □ Practice  
    4) □ Ethics  
    5) □ Clinical  
    6) □ N/A  

Instructions: Place a check mark in the box next to the appropriate item in the Distance Learning and in the Face-to-Face sections of the questionnaire. Choose one answer under the Distance Learning section and one answer under the Face-to-Face section.

Section II: Sense of Community

KEY: 1 □ Strongly Agree 2 □ Agree 3 □ Somewhat Agree 4 □ Disagree 5 □ Strongly Disagree

| 12 | Students in this course care about each other | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ |
| 13 | I feel connected to students in this course | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ |
| 14 | I feel connected to the instructor in this course | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ |
| 15 | I do not feel a spirit of community | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ |
| 16 | I feel like I belong to a team | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ |
| 17 | I feel isolated in this course | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ |
| 18 | I trust others in this course | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ |
| 19 | I feel that I can rely on others in this course | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ |
| 20 | I feel that members of this course depend on me | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ |
| 21 | I feel confident that others will support me | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ | 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ |
APPENDIX C (continued)

Section III: Interaction

**KEY:**

1 □ Strongly Agree 2 □ Agree 3 □ Somewhat Agree 4 □ Disagree 5 □ Strongly Disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) DISTANCE LEARNING</th>
<th>2) FACE-TO-FACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 Student to student interaction was more difficult than in other courses (reverse coded)</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Student to instructor interaction was more difficult than in other courses (reverse coded)</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Class discussions were more difficult to participate in than in other courses (reverse coded)</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 It was easy to follow class discussion</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 The instructor attempted encouraged student interaction</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Interaction with students and with the instructor became more natural as the course progressed</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Once we became familiar with the technology (i.e. Blackboard, WebCT, iLearn) it had very little impact on the class</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Student interaction with faculty and other students is frequent</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Student interaction with faculty and other students is facilitated through a variety of ways, (voice mail, e-mail, Audio/Visual, Internet.)</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Technology hindered interaction</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section IV: Feedback

**KEY:**

1 □ Strongly Agree 2 □ Agree 3 □ Somewhat Agree 4 □ Disagree 5 □ Strongly Disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) DISTANCE LEARNING</th>
<th>2) FACE-TO-FACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32 The instructor's response time is appropriate</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 The instructor answers questions and comments promptly</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Feedback on student assignments and questions is constructive</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Feedback on student assignments and questions is provided in a timely manner</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 Students' response time is appropriate</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 Students answer questions and comments promptly</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 The feedback process is appropriate</td>
<td>1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section V: COURSE OBJECTIVES

Please rate how well the instructor adhered to the course objectives in this course. The course objectives for SW 350: Child Welfare are as follows:

39. I am able to identify the broad scope of child welfare policies, programs, and services, and their impact on children, families, communities, workers, and agencies.

1 □ Strongly Agree 2 □ Agree 3 □ Somewhat Agree 4 □ Disagree 5 □ Strongly Disagree

40. I am able to demonstrate knowledge of and application of the range of values, assumptions, beliefs and ideologies shaping and influencing the child welfare system.

1 □ Strongly Agree 2 □ Agree 3 □ Somewhat Agree 4 □ Disagree 5 □ Strongly Disagree

41. I am able to demonstrate an understanding of issues of diversity in U.S. families and the disproportionate representation of children of color in the child welfare system.

1 □ Strongly Agree 2 □ Agree 3 □ Somewhat Agree 4 □ Disagree 5 □ Strongly Disagree

42. I am able to demonstrate an understanding of the child welfare system from a historical perspective.

1 □ Strongly Agree 2 □ Agree 3 □ Somewhat Agree 4 □ Disagree 5 □ Strongly Disagree

43. I am able to demonstrate an understanding of the impact of economics on children, youth, and families.

1 □ Strongly Agree 2 □ Agree 3 □ Somewhat Agree 4 □ Disagree 5 □ Strongly Disagree

44. I am able to demonstrate knowledge of the continuum of services to children, youth and family from preventive programs to residential treatment programs.

1 □ Strongly Agree 2 □ Agree 3 □ Somewhat Agree 4 □ Disagree 5 □ Strongly Disagree

Section VI: MISCELLEANEOUS

45. Current educational level
   1 □ Freshman 2 □ Sophomore 3 □ Junior 4 □ Senior

46. Anticipated grade in this course
   1 □ A 2 □ B 3 □ C 4 □ D 5 □ F

47. Overall GPA ____________
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