Distance Learners as Designers

As I reviewed *Case Study 5 - Don Garthon and Susan Harper: Professional Development for K-6 Teachers in Remote Areas* (Ertmer & Quinn, 2007), the need to identify opportunities to motivate, engage and encourage teachers became an important point in advancing the implementation of *321 Countdown*. It was remarked upon several times that the challenges of teachers in remote areas are unique in some key areas. Therefore, the teachers' participation, input and assessment of the material and delivery method may prove an important part to the design process

An assessment of students participating in video-conference (VC) learning of math and science in rural Canada noted challenges highlighted the importance of teacher support: strong administrative leadership, focused training and practice of VC for teachers and quality technical support assisted teachers in focusing on the material and learning process rather than troubleshooting technological tools (Li, Moorman & Dy jur, 2010). They also found when researchers and mentors worked directly with teachers, the result was more relevant and interesting units of study (Li, Moorman & Dy jur, 2010).

Access to technology, level of sophistication and exposure to instructional design applications, time to participate,responsiveness to needs over time and distance need to be addressed in the designed for maximum benefit. Thus it will prove an important strategy to engage teachers in the design process to best suit their needs and ensure maximum effectiveness.

References

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