This book would not be possible without the help, advice, and guidance of several individuals. We are grateful to the following people who coauthored with us on various chapters and/or sections within chapters. Their expertise helped to fill gaps in our knowledge base and make the book stronger.

For Section I: Foundations of Instructional and Learning at a Distance, we would specifically like to thank Dr. Tim Murphy, Associate Professor and Assistant Department Head for Graduate Programs in Agricultural Education, for his contributions on learning theory; and Dr. James A. Buford, Jr., Division Director, Ellis-Harper Management and Adjunct Professor at Troy State University and Auburn University for his contributions on benchmarking competency-based training.

For Section II: Adult Learning Theory, we would like to thank Susan Wilson, graduate assistant and student in the Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A&M University for her contribution on learner differences.

For Section III: Systematic Instructional Design, we would like to thank Dr. Atsusi Hirumi, Associate Professor of Instructional Technology at the University of Central Florida, for his thorough discussion on learner-centered instructional design and interactions to promote engagement in distance education. We would also like to thank Drs. Barry Boyd, Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A&M University, and Kathleen Kelsey, Associate Professor at Oklahoma State University, for their guidance on learner-centered assessment.
For Section IV: Technology Knowledge and Skills, we would like to thank Dr. Walt Magnussen, Director for Telecommunications at Texas A&M University, for his contribution on technology infrastructure. We would also like to thank Dr. Rhonda Blackburn, Lead IT Consultant at Texas A&M University’s Instructional Technology Services, and Ms. Yakut Gazi, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University, for their contribution on multimedia design issues.

For Section V: Administrative and Management Issues, we would like to thank Dr. Kathleen Kelsey for her expertise on best practices in distance education evaluation.

For Section VI: Future Directions, we would like to thank Chehrazade Aboukinane, a doctoral student in the Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A&M University, for her contributions on educational and technological trends and the glossary and index.

We also needed a fresh set of eyes to read over and edit the narrative for content and style. We would like to thank Dr. James Christiansen, our mentor, colleague, and friend, for editing this book. We solicited vignettes on the future of distance education and would like to thank all who provided timely and thought-provoking comments. Dr. Lynn Jones, Associate Professor at Iowa State University, was the viewpoint chosen, along with Dr. James Christiansen, to represent this group.

Janet Poley, CEO of the American Distance Education Consortium (ADEC), has been a friend and colleague for years. We appreciate her insightful foreword and are pleased to add this to the book.

The artwork for the Making Connections, Internet Connections, Thought and Reflection, and Application Exercises was designed by Christine Stetter working at the Instructional Material Services at Texas A&M University.

Our Department Heads, Drs. Glen Shinn, Christine Townsend and Jim Scheurich, provided true leadership, support, and encouragement while we were writing this book. Without their leadership to create an environment that encourages scholarship, it would have been difficult to complete this project. To our collective faculties, who have had to live with us while we worked on this book ... the next round is on us. We appreciate your support, encouragement, and friendship. You have made our work not only rewarding but fun. Thank you!

We would like to thank the following people for their various contributions: Meera Algaraja, Eric Cartrite, Margarett DeGange, Mike Farrow, Teri Gerst,
Kim Hays, Jim Hynes, Kevin Jackson, Bob Keeshan, Yan Li, Aggie Manwell-Jackson, Penny Pennington, Lance Richards, Robert “Corky” Sarvis and Jemima Yakah.

And finally, we would like to thank our families for their love and understanding, and for just putting up with us as we worked on this book. Their encouragement allows us to excel at our jobs and, more importantly, in life.