As distance education expands around the world, it is important that those with adequate expertise are available to design, deliver, and support distance education programs. This timely book presents information on distance education experts required for successful implementation of distance education. The book co-editors are well respected globally in the field of distance education. Based on my extensive experience in the distance education field, successful distance education programs must have the staff with the correct expertise to develop and implement the programs. Some organizations will implement distance education programs using the same staff from traditional face-to-face instruction without any orientation or training to provide the staff with the expertise to function in the distance education environment. As a result, the leaders blame the distance education if the programs are not successful, rather than staff not having the right expertise. This book informs leaders of the distance education experts that are required for designing and implementing successful distance education programs. Another important characteristic for successful distance education programs is leadership skills of leaders to champion the distance education implementation and use appropriate management skills to make sure programs are implemented at a high quality and within the timeframe. Usually to develop high quality distance education programs, a team approach is used with professionals with different expertise. A major challenge of the distance education leader is to make sure the team work together to develop high quality learning materials. This is important since distance education materials are being delivered electronically to large audiences globally and organizations want to make sure their names are associated with high quality learning materials. This book also identifies the challenges when designing and implementing distance education and how having staff with the right expertise can make distance education successful.

As distance education emerges, organizations are using innovative technologies to deliver the learning materials and to provide support to learners. As a result, distance education experts who have the knowledge and skills to develop e-learning, mobile learning, blended learning, and flipped classroom delivery are required to implement the next generation of distance education. These experts must also keep up with the technology so that distance education is using the most appropriate technology to deliver learning materials. The distance education expert must be a change agent to get staff to buy into distance education so that it is successful. For those who are interested in becoming a distance education expert there are suggestions in the book on programs that are available to develop distance education experts. Finally, an important area that the book covers is the skills a distance education expert must have is to be able to conduct high quality research in distance education so that research informs practice for improving distance education.
Foreword

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