I was born and raised in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and lived in what was named “The Settlement of Picacho.” My father and all of his age respectfully called my village “Picacho Viejo” [Old Picacho]. I graduated from a local high school in Las Cruces. I was the youngest of six children connected to what Fray Angelico Chávez would coin in his book several years later as *Chávez: A Distinctive American Clan of New Mexico*. In my early years (while we were still financially stable), we would travel to El Paso/Juárez [El Paso, Texas, USA, and Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico] on the old Hwy. 28. Once in El Paso, Papa would always park his car around “La Plaza de Los Lagartos” [The Plaza of the Alligators]. He would have his shoes or boots shined while I served as parking meter “look-out” with nickels on the ready for the meter as well as gawk at the alligators somehow thriving in such a cramped space in the middle of La Plaza. Papa, with his cigarette papers and Prince Albert at the ready, would have these long *platicas* [conversations] with “los Señores” [Elders] who frequented La Plaza. Mama and my older siblings went about shopping for dry goods cheaper in El Paso than Las Cruces in those days. Often we took “el puente libre” [the free bridge] between El Paso, Texas, USA, and Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, to have lunch at what was then the place with the best *carta de almuerzo* [lunch menu], at La Poblana (it was a very fine restaurant back in the day), or to purchase provisions at *El Mercado Juárez* (Juárez had two major one-stop market sites, precursors to what are now mega-grocery stores). In the *mercado*, I was enraptured by the cacophony of smells along with the sounds of family and friends conversing or haggling with merchants, children running and playing, and, in the background, mariachis playing their standards, which echoed throughout the *mercado*. While in Juárez, we would many times visit my Mama’s family in La Colonia Melchor Ocampo [a neighborhood] where walking to the corner store with my cousins for *dulces de coco* (A bundled sweetened concoction of shredded coconut—with food dye of all colors—that looked like a hay stack that fit in the palm of your hand) and an orange Fanta were the highlight—in the summer time, it was *raspadas* [snow cones]. Thus began the allure and love for the borderlands as a terrain of engagement for learning, for living, for making my own. A terrain with all its representations that, realized many years later, had populated and organically nourished my cultural and linguistic self, shaping me in ways that would make me who I am today. My Picacho Village life was and is inextricably connected to the border of things, as are the borderlands from whence I made sense of my world. This was my baby boomer distance education that many from my community experienced growing up in, what we thought of as, a normal and natural connected cultural space.

I begin with my brief yet telling position to this foreword simply because the editors Drs. T. Volkan Yuzer and Gulsun Eby expertly expressed in the title of this superb collection that *Emerging Priorities and Trends in Distance Education: Communication, Pedagogy, and Technology* is about the presence of and hope of the millennium in a cultural space that continues to be created and populated. This col-
lection is about how the phenomena of teaching and learning are inextricably connected to the “border of things” from whence the global borderlands are now our realities virtually erased, as in the actual childhood experiences described above. In the era kick-started with electronic email (circa early 1990s) into present day digital technology that continues to evolve at breakneck speeds, I find calm in this collection by Professors Yuzer and Eby. It is a work not just of love for our teaching and learning profession in the digital age; it is also a work where disenfranchised ideas within the still powerful Cartesian mantra of “I think therefore I am...” serve as contrast to this collection’s multi-dimensional inclusions that are culturally engaging, pedagogically profound, and thought provoking approaches to praxising the turn of the phrase “...I think because you exist....”

The majority of chapters are co-authored collaborations sometimes from “just across the hall” and other collaborations from “across the globe,” international in feel and profound in vision as are the single authored pieces. The complex simplicity and richness to the digital/e-learning pedagogical engagement in this volume follows the socio-cultural axiom that we are all learners and we are all teachers grounded in the manifests that learning to teach and teaching to learn are indeed a collaborative act. Again, the editors deserve great credit for the presence of mind to seek and include new engaging voices from across the globe in one volume. The diversity of epistemological “facets” makes this “crystal” volume an imperative. The depth and breadth of the selected pieces should illustrate to any reader that the ever-growing and ever-present crystal of distance education and e-learning with its infinite facets of emerging priorities and grounded trends to communication, pedagogy, and technology create a “gem” of readings that should be thoughtfully engaged and prized for its clarion call: teaching and learning in the digital age of distance education can be a viable and important praxis to realize our democratic project of access, equity, and social justice. This collection is, metaphorically, about borders and the coming of, melding of, and fusion of borders (distant or near) with the phenomena of teaching and learning (actual or virtual) through the affordances of digital tools. Moreover, this volume is a study of how borders can be/should be passé, very real in my day, yet, still, socially constructed. Teachers and learners will have the opportunity to engage this volume’s many ideas to study with intent the many thought-provoking and progressive strategies, taught and learned with passion, and praxised in actual or virtual spaces within the diversity of teaching and learning spaces present and yet to be imagined.

Rudolfo Chávez Chávez
New Mexico State University, USA

Rudolfo Chávez Chávez is a Regents Professor and Distinguished Achievement Professor at New Mexico State University, where he has been a faculty member for 25 years; prior to coming to NMSU, he taught nine years at CSU, Bakersfield. He is a critical multicultural curriculum teacher/scholar. He has edited books, published chapters in various books and handbooks as well as scholarly articles in the areas of bilingual education, multicultural teacher education, critical pedagogy, critical race theory, critical multicultural education theory and practice in teacher education and curriculum theory, and more recently, online education and technology. He also serves on several editorial boards. His presentations and papers given at national/international, state, and regional meetings include his passionate interest in critical multicultural teacher education and curriculum theory/practice, social justice and equity issues within the convergence and intersectionalities of the México/U.S. border, where learners and teachers provide the contextual impetus to re-imagine the concept of diversity and democratic engagement. His curiosities continue to focus in MCE teacher preparation, critical theory, and pedagogy, with growing interest in the dynamic fields of critical race theory and Lat/Crit Theory scholarship within multicultural curriculum and border pedagogy.