Acknowledgements

The editors appreciate the work and collaboration of the many authors whose work is included in this encyclopedia. Creating an encyclopedia of this type requires many rounds of reviews and editing and fine-tuning over many months, and the authors—individually and collectively—were very responsive at the many points in the process. Their dedication and commitment to online learning and their particular perspectives is well-evident in the many entries.

The editors also deeply appreciate the opportunity to work collectively on this project. A project of this scope depends on the team effort of everyone involved. The editors also wish to thank our respective families and friends who were so supportive during the process of bringing this project to fruition.

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The preparation of a book of this kind is dependent on excellent colleagues and the four of us have been fortunate in this regard. Through inspiration and encouragement, it has been a team effort, start to finish.

Caroline Howard, Judith V. Boettcher, Lorraine Justice and Karen Schenk

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This is my second edited book with Idea Group. When I first received the invitation from Mehdi Khosrow-Pour, I was a bit taken aback. A whole encyclopedia? On what time-line? Whew! I knew what it took to finish *Designing Instruction for Technology-Enhanced Learning* (see http://www.idea-group.com/books/details.asp?id=274) and I became tired. But I also knew what a team Mehdi had behind his idea for a multi-volume set of books on distance learning. I knew I would have strong back up and help!

I also knew I could rely on several key people to help me pull together an important set of articles from around the world to represent the whole milieu of the distance learning environment. My editorial and advisory board: Som Naidu at the University of Melbourne, Australia, Shelley Bibeau at Saint Paul Technical College, Don Descy at Minnesota State University, Mankato, Lynda Milne at the Office of the Chancellor of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Shannon (Avery) Nelson at Bemidji State University, and Allen Schmieder of JDL Technologies, K-20 Education and Technology Futures.

I must single out Dr. Allen Schmieder for a special "thank you." His years of service to the United States, his work in education at many levels, and his current work with companies supporting education, while very

important, pales next to his ability to create poetry from what some might consider dry technology. Allen is a visionary and technology leader. Maybe it is the poetry that gives him so much energy! I was honored when he accepted the task of writing a foreword for this book (see Allen's biography at: http://www.k-12world.com/Schmieder.htm).

My sincere thanks and appreciation for the many authors who contributed to this encyclopedia. As I scan their names in my database and note the many countries represented, I cannot help but have great hope for all of us in the global community. Truly, those involved in distance learning, teaching, and using technologies are beyond political and natural borders and barriers: we are joined in the community of teaching and learning and are linked through technologies that literally connect us all. My deepest thanks for your willingness to join hands as educators, scholars, developers, and researchers and create this encyclopedia on distance education.

The authors of the articles you are about to encounter are some of the top thinkers in distance learning and teaching. As this is an international group of authors, I think you will find their collective wisdom will be a great asset for your research into the whole world of distance learning and teaching and the technologies that support the online learning environment. For print purposes of this encyclopedia, the original text language is English, but for all practical purposes, you will see the common language is education. We are all educators concerned with the needs of our learners, no matter what their age.

Special thanks also go to the publishing team at Idea Group Inc. In particular to Jan Travers and Sara Reed, who continuously prodded via e-mail for keeping the project on schedule. The final wrap-up was handled with flair by Renée Davies. As always my thanks and appreciation to Mehdi Khosrow-Pour, whose enthusiasm and great energy motivated me to accept his invitation for taking on this project. I am tired, but at the same time…energized!

Patricia L. Rogers

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The editor would like to acknowledge the help of all involved in constructing this large international project. A special note of thanks goes also to all the editorial advisory committee members for suggesting contributing writers and serving as referees for articles written by other authors. The entries throughout are better because of their constructive and comprehensive reviews. Additionally, I want to note that the some of the content of the editor's contributions to this encyclopedia appeared in other forms specifically in *The Knowledge Medium: Designing Effective Computer Based Learning Environments* (Information Science Publishing), and in *Why Distance Learning: Higher Education Administrative Practices* (Praeger), and well as various journal articles.

Special thanks also go to the publishing team at Idea Group Inc. In particular Jan Travers for help in organizing this complex project, and to Mehdi Khosrow-Pour for the invitation and vision for this project.

Finally, I wish to thank all of the authors from around the world for their insights and excellent contributions to this truly international encyclopedia.

Gary A. Berg